

transition news

October 2009

Energising Stratford

Plenty of ideas, energy and enthusiasm were generated on 3 October, when Transition Stratford held a public meeting on the question: "How can we work together to power Stratford beyond the era of cheap energy?"

The 50-strong audience heard short presentations from David Jullien of Act on Energy, who spoke about personal actions to save energy; Duncan Parker from Snitterfield Actioning Climate Change, who described the inspirational community-based activities being undertaken in Snitterfield; and Mike Woollacott of Greenwatt, who set out options for individual, collective and co-operative investment in renewable energy generation.

Like the successful public meeting on Food held in May, the meeting then used the Open Space format to enable participants to determine for themselves what topics they wished to discuss, without the constraints of a pre-set agenda. The audience divided into four lively discussion groups around the topics:

- *Greening Your Street*: how people can be engaged on their own doorsteps to understand their energy use, the actions they can take to reduce consumption and the scope for investment in domestic-scale renewable energy
- *creating a Green Energy Centre in Stratford*: using high street premises to provide a "shop window" for sustainable energy ideas and advice
- *promoting community renewables in the urban environment*: how a Stratford energy services company could work with local planners and businesses to

promote collective investment in renewable energy to ensure security of supply and address fuel poverty

- *energy from food waste*: using anaerobic digestion technology to convert food waste from Stratford's many hotels, restaurants and supermarkets into useful biogas, electricity, heat and fertiliser



Solar panels in Shipston Road, Stratford

Next steps

Transition Stratford's Energy Group will be holding a follow-up meeting at Lifeways Centre on the evening of Thursday 22 October to take forward the ideas generated at the Open Space meeting. The objective will be to determine what needs to be done to turn these ideas into practical projects and—just as important—to identify people who are willing to commit themselves to making them a reality.

The follow-up meeting will be open to all Transition Stratford supporters and members of the public who attended the Open Space. If you didn't make it on 3 October, don't worry—there's still plenty of time to contribute your ideas. For more details of the follow-up meeting, please contact Roger Matthews at rogermatthews@108shipston.freeserve.co.uk

We're official!

On 15 September, we received the fantastic news that the Transition Network - the co-ordinating body for Transition - had awarded us "official" status, just seven months after the first meeting of interested parties. The Network said: "What an inspiring bunch you have involved there - no surprise you've made such amazing progress in such a short time"



This makes Stratford the 210th Transition Town worldwide, joining like-minded groups in Australia, Canada, Chile, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA, as well as England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. To see what other Transition groups are doing to make their communities more sustainable, visit www.transitiontowns.org

Do we have your e-mail address?

We're happy to post copies of *transition news* to anyone who doesn't have access to the internet, but you can help us save money and resources by making sure we have your correct e-mail address. Contact us at barbaracooper@108shipston.freeserve.co.uk

We're on our way!

Transition Stratford supporters were in celebratory mood at the inaugural Annual General Meeting on 23 September, just days after the announcement that we had been awarded "official" Transition Town status (see over).

Formal business conducted at the meeting included the adoption of a written Constitution and the election of officers to replace the informal steering group which has been running the organisation since the beginning of the year.

More importantly, however, the AGM was the first chance to get everyone involved in Transition Stratford together in one place to exchange ideas about our future direction and priorities.

Key topics discussed were:

- *getting practical projects up and running:* supporters were keen to see Transition Stratford taking practical initiatives in a wide range of areas, including garden sharing, community renewable energy projects, reducing food waste and promoting the recycling and reuse of resources not currently covered by kerbside collections

- *growing an active and informed supporter base:* the clear message from supporters is that Transition's key strength is its emphasis on the power of community: we need to build on this by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and skills and empowering people to take positive, practical action to build sustainability
- *building links with the local community:* supporters are clear that the principles of diversity and inclusivity must be fundamental to our choice of local partner organisations. Key links to be developed will include those with local authorities and decision makers, charities, faith groups, voluntary organisations, schools, skills organisations and locally-based businesses.

The priorities identified by supporters at the inaugural AGM will set the agenda for the steering group, made up of the newly-elected officers and working group representatives. Steering group meetings are open to all Transition Stratford supporters. The next meeting of the steering group will take place on Thursday 8 October: if you would like to attend, please contact Barbara Cooper at barbaracooper@108shipston.freeserve.co.uk, tel 01789 298503 for details.

Stop the rot—compost at home

British households throw away more than 4 million tonnes of food a year, including 179,000 tonnes of apples and 5 million potatoes. Much of this currently ends up in landfill, where rotting food waste causes around 15 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions a year.

Those of us with gardens and allotments can take responsibility for our own kitchen waste - and produce a great soil conditioner at the same time - by composting at home. Join us for a composting workshop at Lifeways Garden on Saturday 17 October: if you're new to growing your own fruit and veg, come and find out what composting method is best for your garden. If you're an experienced composter, please come and share your skills.

This is a free event, but please bring gloves, wellies and waterproofs and a vegetarian

dish to share for lunch. If you'd like to know more about the soil in your own garden, please also bring a jamjar of dry soil for testing.



A new lease of life for old pallets!

For more details, or to book your place, please contact Barbara Cooper at barbaracooper@108shipston.freeserve.co.uk, tel 01789 298503.

Contacts

Group representatives

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Officers 2009/10

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General enquiries

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www.transitionstratford.blogspot.com

Dates for your diary

Sat 17 Oct, 10.00 am—4.00 pm Composting Workshop, Lifeways Centre, 30 Albany Road CV37 6PG

Thurs 22 Oct, 6.30—8.30 pm Powering Stratford—next steps: taking forward ideas from Energy Open Space, Lifeways Centre, 30 Albany Road CV37 6PG

Fri 6 Nov, 7.00 pm Film A *Crude Awakening*, Lifeways Centre, 30 Albany Road CV37 6PG

Fri 4 Dec, 7.00 pm Film *The Age of Stupid*, Lifeways Centre, 30 Albany Road CV37 6PG

Wed 9 Dec, 7.30 pm Quarterly general meeting (venue to be confirmed)