

# Meeting of Transition Towns at Inverness Spectrum Centre on 24.03.2009

Meeting began ~18:40 meeting finished ~20:30 with further discussion with people remaining at the end until 21:00.

~20 people were in attendance with representatives from 5 Transition projects: Forres (<http://transitiontowns.org/Forres/Forres>), Black Isle (<http://sites.google.com/site/transitionblackisle/>), Inverness, Strathspey, AIness. (<http://transitiontownalness.org.uk/>) This meant that a large number of local environmental groups were also represented. <http://www.transitionscotland.org/map> has an interesting map of Transition Communities in Scotland.

This document is an attempt to summarise the main ideas mentioned at the meeting, it does not mean that the people at the meeting agreed with those ideas or that they are endorsed by the Transition movement. However it is hoped that this document will prove useful.

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## Introduction

Carin from Transition Forres started the meeting

She recommended that we look at the SEABS report 2008: email will go out sent by Wendy – it is an important report.

She introduced Sophie and Naresh who are from Totnes the original Transition town – they are involved in Transition Training and have just back from training people from all over the world. They were up here to talk to Moray Council.

## **Work of Sophie and Naresh with Moray Council**

They have found this interesting as normally they are working with the converted but in the council it is much more mixed as to whether they care or not.

They found that the majority were interested in becoming a Transition Council.

We can continue to lobby for transition training for local authorities.

We know one keen councillor with Highland Council – they can ask to speak to Moray Council to find out what Moray Council have learnt.

*We then had a dialogue for the rest of the meeting about various topics.*

### **Q: Which practical projects have TT found people are most interested in?**

- Food
  - Food is a issue which really focusses people:
  - People can grow their own food and food security is important.
- Energy
- Built environment
- Not transport
- It varies from place to place depending on the people.

### **Totnes Micro-generation company – why, what and how**

- Transition Totnes has a micro-generation company to install renewable energy.
- Reason for starting company:
- Existing companies are buying up all the sites suitable for renewable energy generation.
- In 5 years everything will be owned by large companies.
- Company set up so that local people can own the local resources.
- A separate company controlled by its shareholders and locally based so that local investors put lots of money (or a little) into it. A cooperative basically – one member one vote and restricted to local people.
- You need someone who knows the technical information and the market in order to kick start the company.
- Community energy Scotland website has money for putting micro-generation in local communities. <http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk/>
- Wind for all. <http://www.powerofwind.com/> [?not sure this is the right link?]
- There are lots of options for investing in wind farms. The question is who is in the driving seat? Is it driven by company or by the local community?
  - One option (which Totnes used) is an industrial provident society.
  - The Great Glen Energy Cooperative <http://www.greatglen.coop/> was mentioned as an example of something similar in the Highlands – though in this case they don't own the turbines. Energy 4 all offer various options of organisation of community owned schemes. See [http://www.energy4all.co.uk/scotland/scotland\\_home.asp](http://www.energy4all.co.uk/scotland/scotland_home.asp)

### ***Local Control***

Local people having control and ownership in their resources is important for transition – local

people need to own the food and energy resources as a large company does not care whether local people live or die.

### ***Replicable projects from Totnes***

Totnes are trying to build replicable projects. There should hopefully be a prospectus on their website. [http://totnes.transitionnetwork.org/Central/Projects\\_list](http://totnes.transitionnetwork.org/Central/Projects_list)

### ***Governments and the Status Quo***

Governments interested in status quo – keen on large scale projects rather than the best projects, trying to attempt keep economy growing. Governments are not so interested in local projects like people growing their own food.

They should be encouraged to do things like feed in tariffs, recently micro-generation wind has had its 'ROCs' (payments for units of energy generated) doubled to encourage local projects. [There are some concerns that doubling ROCs goes against their purpose as micro-generation is not twice as carbon saving as large renewable projects but this probably does not matter]

### **How do you reach beyond people already know about Climate Change and care?**

How do you get people to grow their own food when they don't eat fresh food? When they don't know the difference between a raspberry and a strawberry (at least they know it is a berry – some people don't).

### ***How do we reach out to people once we have a good sized core group:***

- Most people who come on training are White Middle Class and Educated.
  - Inclusion is important,
  - Transition reaches out to people who would not normally be interested in the environment.
  - Dartboard: some people are easy to bring in as they already care, some people who are thinking about it, some people in complete denial. It takes too long to convince those in denial.
  - A lot of people involved in Transition Towns have moved to the place where they are now involved in TT and are not 'natives'.
- Need to talk on different levels/languages:
  - those who only care about their family/business/home people are or are interested in the environment.
- Website:
  - We have to reach out to lots of people – important to keep update website and reach out to people – we need to snowball.
  - If the website is not up to date then Journalists will ignore it and so the story will not get out.
  - Lots of projects set up websites when the start and then don't maintain them – as they are busy doing the project.
  - It is important that the website be easy to maintain.
  - Google calendar should be able to allow people to subscribe to the events with different groups and find out what is going on.
- A lot of people want to do things but not go to meetings.

- We should have a projects section on the website. So that people can just sign up to do things.
- Having an Open space is good thing to do.
  - There is a good description in the handbook and on Open space technology (<http://www.openspaceworld.org/>).
- Projects happen because people have the energy and passion to do it.
- Allotments can be quite popular.
  - A wide cross section of people are keen – more so than are interested in the environment.
  - Bring people together from different parts of the community.

### ***Showing films***

- This is a good way of bringing people in.
- Not just a film, first meet and greet (tea coffee etc.) then film, then talk afterwards.
- Can't keep people for more than 2/2.5 hours.
- Need hope as well need promise of a better society or people overwhelmed to message of Doom and Gloom.
- 'The Age of Choice' we can choose to make a better world or trash it.
- The Transition movie coming out this year – collaboration between people from many continents.
- Balance films highlighting problems against those highlighting solutions.
- Depressing/Inspiring – WE CAN make a DIFFERENCE.
- Turn doom and gloom on its head.
- Follow up on films with a general meeting a few days later to talk about what they thought.

### ***Farmers Markets***

Farmers Markets are good places to advertise – FOE:I&R have done this before at various markets and Maggie Dove currently runs a 'Swap your Stuff' stall at Culbokie farmers market which is held on the 3rd Saturday of the Month.

### **Inverness High School: Growing their own food and selling it to people.**

- They have set aside an acre of ground for the kids to grow food.
- There have been some problems.

### **Local Currency**

- Dingwall Environmental Charity shop was interested in the Totnes pound
- People who were involved in setting up the Totnes pound project went around asking if businesses wanted to be involved.
- It acts as a kind of loyalty card and supports local businesses.
- It has value as it is linked to sterling.
- It is important to make it hard to forge and to use good paper (or it falls apart).
- Tourists take away money and can't use it and so the people running the currency make money. (Forres makes £500 every 5 years because of this)

## Miscellaneous

- Multi group meetings for all local Transition groups should be held a couple of times a year.
- Women's Institute (WI) – engage with them they know how to do things – they have local knowledge.

## Transition Scotland Support

- TSS website: <http://www.transitionscotland.org/>
- Has 3 paid members
- Jerry (?) is our local person.
- They are attached to the Portabello transition group

## Environmental activism in areas of low population density

- Activists scattered far apart which could present problems however this needn't be a problem – see it not a problem but as an opportunity. Small pockets of highly motivated people.
- In small communities without pubs having a pub evening can really draw people.
- Meetings
  - Persistent meeting at the same time each month? – but then some people can't make that time.
  - Or well advertised meetings at different times?

## Communities

- Important to build bridges in communities – some are quite fragmented and this makes it harder to get things done.
- We may have to face painful history in order to come together to move forward and solve the problems that face us.
- We have to learn how to share food and energy with each other in order to be able to survive.
- We need to have common ground to come together on, people have to understand the need for change if we want change to happen.

## Summary

We need to work together and unite in order to deal with the problems that face our single and only home planet. We have to show the unity of the world. We have a shared need.

The Wombat film sums up the fact that we are all on one planet.

<http://www.globalcommunity.org/flash/wombat.shtml>

We have an opportunity to build a better world we want to live in. We don't want to waste a crisis.

## Action Points

- Wendy to send out email about SEABs report.
- Project page for Transition Black Isle website – Daniel and Hugh

i.e.

**Project Name** (if they have grown and have lots to say have a separate page that this links to)

Brief project description

**Contacts:** contact details of those involved in a project.

- Daniel and Hugh to look at Google Groups – subgroups and interrelations of different groups i.e. those for Transition Black Isle and Transition Inverness etc.

- Daniel to look at Google Calender and possibilities of having one main calender that subscribes to the calender for each local group to make it easy for people to add things.
- Daniel to tell Transition Scotland Support about Transition Inverness.
- Multi group meetings for all local Transition groups should be held a couple of times a year.

### ***Dates for your Diary***

<http://sites.google.com/site/transitionblackisle/>

Has a Google calender of events being held by various environmental organisations in the area.

### **Forres dates:**

26<sup>th</sup> April – North East gathering of transition towns groups. Open space interactive.

July TBC 4,5<sup>th</sup> Transition Training.

22-24<sup>th</sup> May Transition Town Conference London limited to 350 people. £85

<http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/Conference-UK-2009>

N.B. We didn't speak in hyperlinks, these were added later.