



Building strength in our communities  
to face the challenges of  
peak oil and climate change

## NORTH KESSOCK OPEN EVENING 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011

Transition Black Isle arranged an open evening for its members in and around North Kessock, and other locals interested in ways to improve the resilience of the village.

The evening started off with a showing of sections of a DVD produced by Transition Scotland Support. The first section showed the types of activities carried out by transition groups throughout Scotland, and set out the "Transition Vision" – starting from the idea that we should be taking steps to reduce our dependence on oil and other fossil fuels, but developing that logic to support anything that makes our communities more self-reliant and less dependant on external factors.

For the second half of the evening, smaller groups discussed the answers to specific questions:

1. How can we help people to become less dependent on their private car?
2. How can we reduce, reuse and recycle more of our waste?
3. How can we build the capacity of the community to take local action?

There were some general themes which arose:

- Personal contact is a much better source of advice and help than a more impersonal agency or website.
- There aren't that many people with the time to get actively involved in organising things, but plenty who are interested enough to participate.
- Transition Black Isle can offer support, but village initiatives really need someone local to take ownership.

More specifically, there were a number of excellent suggestions, and action points to move them forward (suggestions are in **bold**, action points are in *italics*):

**A community composting scheme should be considered.** This would involve taking suitable waste from households and businesses in the village and composting it. The compost would be available to locals to use on their gardens and veg plots. It seemed important to identify a site at an early stage, and it was recognised this could be difficult. Suggestions were at the school, by the pier, under the bridge, or a site on the shoreside, beyond the caravan site, which is in the control of the Community Council. Transition Black Isle is considering developing a wider project looking at community composting; *Anne Thomas agreed to act as a North Kessock representative to liaise with the wider TBI project.*

**A Green Johanna could be used by organisations producing larger amounts of cooked food waste.** A Green Johanna is a hot composter designed to take all food waste, including meat and cooked waste. It's designed in Sweden, so should work in our climate. Cost is of the order of £100. The proposal is that organisations such as the school, hotel and café should be encouraged to buy one of the devices in order to recycle their waste. *Janet Jardine to consult with Wendy Price to get details, and then to approach the hotel.*

**A Facebook site along the lines of that used in Invergordon should be set up for buying/selling/ swapping.** (Does anyone have the URL for the Invergordon site?) There are already

alternatives around (Freecycle/ Gumtree) but they aren't all that local. (Having just looked, there is already a page on [www.kessock.net](http://www.kessock.net) for sales/ wanted items). *TBI to promote the site at the community market.*

**Lift sharing to be promoted, ideally using a web-based system.** It was noted that the levels of traffic on the Kessock Bridge had reduced dramatically during the recent road works – showing that people can reduce car use. It seems Highland Council already has a lift-share website, and it would be good to promote this more widely if it is suitable. *Penny Edwards to investigate the Highland Council site.*

**Efforts should be made to simplify and improve information about public transport.**

Timetables are complicated, especially when there are a number of different services which cover the same journey. *Owen Smith to take this up via the Community Council.*

**There should be a “Leave the Car at Home” day.** Again, this follows on from the experience when the bridge was restricted to two lanes. Cycling from North Kessock to Inverness is a good alternative to driving and public transport, so it would be an idea to combine the day with National Bike Week, see <http://www.bikeweek.org.uk/>. The 2011 event was in June. *Teen Ross, Rhona Adam and Owen Smith to liaise on this idea.*

**The [www.kessock.net](http://www.kessock.net) website should be promoted as a source of local information.** There was a feeling that more could be made of this site, and that it was better to use it than to try to establish a new method of publicising events, etc. *TBI to cross-link with the [www.kessock.net](http://www.kessock.net) site.*

**An effort should be made to establish a “Grow North Kessock” group.** This built from the experiences of those who had participated in TBI's Grow North training course in growing fruit and vegetables. The proposal is that interested local gardeners get together from time to time to help out in each other's gardens, compare experiences and advice, and have a cuppa. *Teen Ross to put an invitation on the [www.kessock.net](http://www.kessock.net) website. Anne Thomas to circulate the proposal to other local Grow North participants.*

**Sites for a community orchard should be investigated.** Two “gap” sites were suggested which could be put to use for fruit trees for community use. One was at Bellfield Road (thought to belong to Highland Council), the other Gordon's Park, on the left as you go down the hill, just before the village hall. A strip of land along the side of the A9 was also suggested. No action points were agreed for this, but there is some experience in Culbokie of residents taking over a previously under-managed bit of land owned by THC, so if anyone wants to follow this up, they could contact Martin Sherring.

Those present for the meeting were:

Martin Sherring, Penny Edwards, Anne Thomas, Wendy Price, Teen Ross, Owen Smith, Iain MacGregor, Margaret Macdonald, Jim Prentice, Jane Arnold, Gordon & Rhona Adam, Anne Hamilton, Janet Jardine, Alison Fenton, Myra & Ian Carus, Grant Lowe, Rosemary Simpson, Sue Henderson, Kate Lindsay.

Apologies were received from Sylvia Macdonald.