



Transition Haslemere

Address at The Transition Haslemere Green Fair, March 27th 2010

The Transition Town movement is a pioneering initiative which enables communities to address today's major challenges of peak oil, which are the decline of affordable fuel, climate change and the depletion of the earth's natural resources.

It all starts off when a small collection of motivated individuals within a community come together to form an initiating Group and then adopt the Transition Model. That happened in Haslemere in October 2008 when a group of us met, inspired by the vision of our Chair and Vice Chair; Clive Davidson and Naomi Clarke.

The Transition Movement itself was started in 2005 and has developed through experience into if not a well-oiled machine then a set processes and procedures that will guide communities such as ours into becoming more self sufficient, more resilient to change and quite simply better places to live.

There is a process we have to go through to prove that we are serious and effective. We have progressed far enough through that process to have been recognised as an "Official Transition Town" and today in the rather quaint terminology used by the Transition Network is our Great Unleashing, our Public coming out, our celebration that we are on the way taking the first firm steps to making Haslemere more self sufficient and better able to cope with what lies ahead.

In our "citation" the Transition Network highlighted our cooperation with the local authorities, saying "Haslemere shows how it can be done. A very impressive set of coordinated actions with their local authorities and councils."

In truth we were very fortunate that from our inception we had a dedicated and enthusiastic Deputy Mayor and now Mayor, Melanie Odell who joined our steering committee. We were also very well supported by the previous Mayor William King. With that kind of support it is much easier to work with the local authorities.

Thank you Melanie, we hope that your support and enthusiasm will continue when you are EX Mayor!

There are currently some 278 official Transitions Towns including Farnham and Godalming locally. Transition Towns include places as diverse as

- Henley on Thames and Bristol,
- Brixton and Ottery St Mary,
- Stoke Newington and Stratford upon Avon,
- Ipswich and the Isle of Wight.

Internationally we are joined by major cities in 16 countries across all continents such as Sidney, Vancouver, Ottawa, Berlin, Nelson in New Zealand and US communities such as Houston, Oklahoma and Santa Barbara among many others

In just over 18 months we have achieved many things, here are just some of them...

- Our cooperation with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in their local food mapping project which aims to explore the benefits of local food to the local communities and surrounding areas

- We have worked with St Bartholomew's School on mapping their energy usage and helping them reduce their carbon footprint and our Schools Group is now reaching out to other local schools
- We had a very successful and enjoyable Sustainable Harvest Picnic at Imbhams Farm
- We have been involved with a number of international environmental campaigns such as Earth Hour which occurs this evening at 8.30, 350.org carbon awareness campaign, The 10:10 energy reduction campaign, WWF's The Wave climate change march and others.
- We are working with Haslemere Town Council, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council to influence their policies and actions on the environment
- You will see us at Haslemere functions such as the Christmas Fair, the Charter Fair, the monthly Farmer's market.
- We are very excited in that our Landshare Group has just launched our first Community Garden project in which Transition Haslemere volunteers will grow organic food and vegetables. This exciting project is well under way on two acres of land donated by Roundhurst Farm and we have plans for the same thing to happen at Imbhams Farm with land donated by them. If you would like to join this exciting project then please come and talk to us.

Finally we are launching a monthly series of talks and films called Transition Haslemere Evenings which cover a varied selection of topics on the environment, climate change and how to lead a greener life.

The first talk by Sharon Duggan will take place today at 2.30pm here in Haslemere Educational Museum. Sharon is a professional singer and vocal coach who has lived a green life since the 1970s. She has been commissioned to write on sustainable living issues for WWF, Surrey Advertiser and Waverley Borough Council, and been a guest in a series of programmes on County Sound Radio as their "green guru". She also ran a Sustainable Living Project with 10 volunteer families from 2006-8.

Sharon's talk "living the Green Life" is at 2.30 here and is not to be missed.

Future talks and films will take place on Wednesday evenings. You can pick up a leaflet with all the details from our stand.

We hope these varied talks and films will be enlightening and informative for everyone interested in sustainability and the environment. All of the speakers are advocates of living the green life and will talk about their own experiences, offering practical insights into how we all can lower our carbon footprint

Perhaps most importantly we now have over 300 people in Haslemere and the surrounding area signed up as supporters. We are all volunteers whose shared vision is to make Haslemere a vibrant happy and sustainable community for our children and generations to come.

We are lucky in that Haslemere is well suited to the model, with an active community, excellent local food sources, thriving local businesses, supportive council, a lively cultural calendar... and beautiful natural surroundings. It has good rail links, and is already a Fairtrade Town. We think it is well worth the effort to ensure our sustainability and improve our resilience to Climate Change.

That's enough from me....We have a stand here so do come and see us to chat to find out more about what we are about, and enjoy the Green Fair.

I will now hand over to our Mayor Melanie Odell