



Transition  
Haslemere

## Newsletter September 2010



It was a busy weekend for Transition Haslemere with the DIY Event at Haslemere Educational Museum on Saturday and our Landshare Group Open Day on Sunday at Lower Roundhurst Farm.

Both events were well attended and many thanks go to all those at Transition Haslemere and the stall holders who supported them.



A wide variety of stalls were present at the DIY Food event and our Mayor even volunteered to make her own ECO Fruit Smoothie by pedal power!



**“Love Food Hate Waste”** were one of the invited stall holders at the DIY event. They are run by the Surrey Waste Partnership (Surrey County Council working with the 11 district and borough councils in the county) and aim to raise awareness of the need to reduce the 8.3 million tonnes of food and drink that goes to waste in the UK. This amounts to a massive annual cost of £12 billion.

Surrey families could save up to £50 a month on their food bills by taking heed of their advice, such as:

- ✿ Get your family to help and suggest what meals they'd like to have that week.
- ✿ Work out a weekly meal plan.
- ✿ Make a shopping list so you only buy what you need.
- ✿ Before you do your next big shop, check what you have left, be creative and try something new.
- ✿ Weigh and measure food to achieve perfect portions, removing the guesswork.
- ✿ If you do make too much, use leftovers for lunch the next day or freeze to eat it later.
- ✿ Keep your fridge, freezer and cupboard stocked with basic food staples so you can use them with leftover vegetables, salad or meat.
- ✿ Store food properly – preserve and your food will live extra days, weeks and even months.
- ✿ More information can be found at their website <http://www.lovefoodsurrey.com/>

## Cost Effective Ways to reduce your carbon footprint



The final talk in the 2010 series of **Transition Haslemere Evenings** is on Wednesday October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 in the Haslemere Museum.

Sandy Polak will talk on ***“Cost-effective ways to reduce your carbon footprint”***

He will give practical advice on how to be greener and save money at the same time.

Sandy's informative and practical talk will focus is on what we, as individuals and householders, can do in home heating, reducing electricity consumption, travel and transportation and he will give us insights into ECO technologies.

Sandy will give us some “easy wins” – actions or devices which save CO<sub>2</sub>, save money and do not require any change of lifestyle. And there are others, (including some which have been promoted by the government), which are a waste of time, money and energy. And a whole spectrum in between.

The entrance is just £1.00 (which we hope you will recover by following Sandy's tips and advice!).

## Haslemere Design Statement



As we reported last month we have been actively involved in the preparation of the Haslemere Design Statement; particularly in the areas of sustainability and transportation. **We urge all those interested in keeping Haslemere the special place it is to attend the public meeting at the Georgian Hotel at 7.30 pm on October 6<sup>th</sup>.**

## Swan Barn Farm



**National  
Trust**

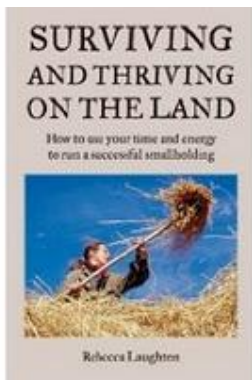
The National Trust is embarking on a project at Swan Barn Farm (to the east of Haslemere High Street) to put up a locally sourced environmentally friendly building for housing long term volunteers. The building has been designed with local woodsman Ben Law whose own house became well known having featured on Channel 4's grand designs programme.

The timber framed building will be made of wood sourced from local National Trust woodlands and the project also includes the installation of new sustainable heating and micro generation systems for the buildings at the Farm. The new building will be called Speckled Wood, after the woodland butterfly which thrives in the habitat created in the coppice woods where the materials for the building will come from. If you are interested in finding out more you can keep up to date via the project's blog at :

<http://swanbarnfarm.wordpress.com/>

The project team are currently working on fundraising and a planning application, but hope that if this goes well the construction work will be able to start in spring of next year. There will be opportunities for people to come and see the construction as it is happening, and there are a number of footpaths leading from Haslemere High Street through Swan Barn Farm which give an opportunity for people to explore some of the beautiful woodlands which will supply the materials for the project.

## Grow your own vegetables



Rebecca Laughton, a author living locally, has written a few tips for Transition Haslemere supporters on growing your own vegetables.

For her book, "Surviving and thriving on the land" Rebecca interviewed over seventy existing smallholders to discover the secrets of their success, as well as the main sources of stress. The result is a book is jam packed with real life examples of day to day life at organic market gardens, self-sufficient communities and eco-farms. We are pleased to offer her tips as follows:

### What to grow?

- ✓ Choose vegetables that you enjoy eating.
- ✓ Start with easy vegetables that are likely to succeed – perpetual spinach (leaf beet), Swiss or rainbow chard, broad beans, French beans, tomatoes, courgettes, squash, potatoes and beetroot are a few that I would recommend to beginners.
- ✓ If you have a small garden, choose vegetables that have a long cropping period, rather than ones that take up space and then will be used in one fell swoop. Choose "Nine star perennial broccoli" which will produce a stream of mini cauliflowers, rather than ordinary cauliflowers, or kale (curly, Black Tuscan or Red Russian) which will provide you with leaves all winter rather than cabbages, which are used all in one go.
- ✓ Go for produce that would be more expensive to buy, such as salad leaves (eg cut-and-come-again lettuce mixtures, rocket, mizuna, red mustard, shungiku), sugar snap peas or french beans, rather than potatoes if you are short of space or time.
- ✓ Choose produce that benefits from being eaten fresh, such as salad leaves or sweet corn.

### You don't have to dig!

Contrary to popular belief, digging can actually cause more damage to the soil than benefit. Turning over the soil disturbs the micro-organisms, different ones of which thrive at specific depths, and exposes the soil to oxygen which speeds up the break-down of valuable organic matter. Digging can also be exhausting and off-putting if you have a weak back. Instead try the "No-dig Alternative", by following these ten easy steps

- ✓ Choose and area of grass or weedy ground and cut the grass/weeds to 1-2cm from the ground.
- ✓ Mark out the area of you would like to use as a bed with sticks and/or string. Make sure that you can reach all parts of the bed from the edge so you don't need to stand on the bed at any time. Walking/standing on your beds causes compaction, and means that air cannot get to the plant roots so easily.
- ✓ Ideally, choose a day when the ground is wet, so you can seal in the moisture.
- ✓ Cover the bed area with a 3-5cm deep layer of well rotted manure or compost.
- ✓ Lay cardboard (with tape and staples removed) or a couple of layers of whole newspapers over the manure. This smothers the weeds and prevents them growing through the straw. If possible do this when it is likely to rain soon, as wet cardboard/paper is less likely to blow away, or pre-soak the cardboard (however, this makes it heavy and awkward to handle).
- ✓ Cover the cardboard/newspaper layer with straw mulch. This weighs it down and makes the bed look really beautiful. Avoid using hay instead, since this introduces grass and

- weed seeds, which will be hard to get rid of later.
- ✓ Leave for 2-4 weeks so the turf can start to break down.
- ✓ Plant reasonably large vegetable plants (this works well with courgette, squash, french beans and potatoes), by cutting holes through the cardboard/paper layer and digging a slightly larger hole than the plant roots need. Press soil around plant firmly and water.
- ✓ Weeding and watering will be kept to a minimum due to the mulch.
- ✓ The following year, either top up the mulch with more cardboard and straw if you wish to plant things that will benefit from mulching, or rake away the mulch and compost it. You will be amazed that a fine tilth will have formed under the mulch, the grass/weeds will have disappeared, and the worms will have effectively mixed in the manure or compost.

A word of warning – Beware planting anything vulnerable to slugs among mulch, or protect plants with plastic bottles. Slugs love to lurk in mulch! For more about pesky pets see Rebecca's full article [here](#)

### A few final words

- **Feed the soil not the plants** – A healthy soil, which has regular dressings of manure or compost will enable healthy plants to grow. Make friends with a local farmer or someone who keeps horses and get hold of some manure. Allow manure to compost for six months before using. Learn about green manures.
- **Stay on top of the weeds** - If you hoe weeds frequently when they are tiny, you will save hours of hand weeding later. Hoeing also benefits the plants, by helping the soil to release its fertility.
- **Remember** – the best fertiliser is the gardener's shadow. Frequent visits and careful observation of your garden will enable you to spot problems and deal with them before they become unmanageable.
- **Enjoy yourself** – Growing your own produce is incredibly satisfying.



Finally, sign up to the National Transition Network newsletter [here](#) for more interesting articles and news about what is going on global in the Transition World.

### Dates for your diary

- October 3<sup>rd</sup> Farmers Market
- October 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting (Town Hall 07.30)
- October 6<sup>th</sup> Design Statement Open Meeting (Georgian 7.30 pm)
- October 13<sup>th</sup> Sandy Polak talk (Haslemere Educational Museum 7.30)
- October 21<sup>st</sup> Energy & Transport Group Meeting (venue TBA)

For more details on any of these dates please see the website [www.transitionhaslemere.org](http://www.transitionhaslemere.org) or email [transitiontown@haslemere.com](mailto:transitiontown@haslemere.com)

For comments on this newsletter please email [tthnewsletter@googlemail.com](mailto:tthnewsletter@googlemail.com)