



Spring/Summer 2010

Transition Town Berkhamsted

Working towards a strong sustainable community.

www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk

Spring is here...

... and we're looking forward to a summer of positive activities: cycling, tending the garden or allotment, and helping to launch Berkhamsted's first ever car-free day. Car Free Day is on the 22nd June, and aims to get people thinking about alternatives to the private car. We're especially looking to the schools for help with this and we'll be contacting local businesses too. Please volunteer to help us organise this and make it a success.

Seb has written a great article about the fast-approaching feed-in tariff for renewable generation, and we're looking for local companies and householders who may be interested in making money from their roofs! Underpinning everything we do, we are trying to promote a vibrant town, a strong social network, a resilient local economy and a reduced environmental impact. Forthcoming events are listed below.

Danny Bonnett

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Forthcoming Events

Home Grown is Best. Talk and Quiz (with seed packet prizes) by John Negus (of local radio fame)

Thursday 25th March 2010, 7:30 to 9:30pm Civic Centre, 161 High Street, Berkhamsted HP4 3HD

'Grow your own' fruit and veg event

Sunday 23rd May 2010, 11.00 to 16.00 - Sunnyside Rural Trust buildings, Ivy House Lane, Berkhamsted HP4 2PP

Includes ideas for new gardeners, and planting your own fruit and veg hanging basket. If you have a gardening skill you would like to share with us at this event, please let us know.

Berkhamsted's Car Free Day

Tuesday 22nd June 2010

Join in and help organise this.

Swish

8th June 8:00pm
The Court House HP4 2QX

A chance to swap the stuff you don't wear for something you will.

AGM

19th May, 7:30 to 9:30pm, venue to be decided

Garden exchange

This matches people who want to garden but don't have space, with people who have too much garden for their needs. If you'd like to find out more, please contact tbexchange@gmail.com or telephone 01442 864101

Hemel in Transition have produced an excellent web page detailing all sorts of places for buying locally produced food www.hemelinttransition.org/local-food/

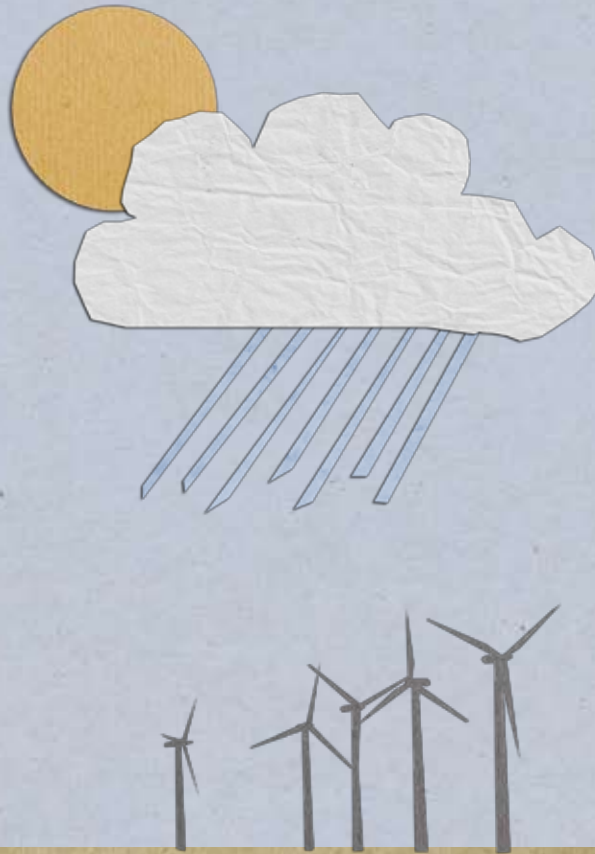


Energy

Following the Government's decision to introduce new feed-in-tariffs for micro-generation technologies (see back page for details) we will be actively promoting renewable energy technologies – particularly solar electricity and micro-wind technologies. We have purchased equipment to help measure the potential for wind and solar energy at different sites and are planning to loan this out to interested householders around the town.

We are also promoting improved energy efficiency in the town by loaning out OWL energy efficiency monitors to interested people. These help householders to understand how they use energy and have proved extremely effective in helping reduce energy use. To borrow one contact **Susan on 01442 864101** or susan.holmes@shcs.net

Working with some independent companies to promote energy efficiency in the town, we've already undertaken 10 energy efficiency audits and are seeking more householders who would like to explore how to reduce energy use and save money. Why not give it a go. **Contact Seb on beloe@live.co.uk**



Eco teams

Eco Teams are groups of 6-8 households who meet at roughly monthly intervals over 5 months. Led by trained facilitators from TTB, groups debate how to take action on key issues such as waste, energy, water use and travel. The power of the process is in measuring the impact of the actions that households take to change their behaviours. There are cost savings as well – around £170 pa is the current estimate.

Teams can come from anywhere – local schools, PTAs, churches, Scouts/Guides, neighbours – and participants can even be a remote 'virtual' team member.

Being part of an Eco Team is a fun way of saving money and energy so contact Claire Mistry on 0845 309 6058 to join up, or go to our web site. See also www.ecoteams.org.uk

Food

In winter 2009 the Normandy Drive Community mini-orchard was planted with support and funding from Cllr Jon Mole and Dacorum Borough Council. The site now has several apple trees including a local variety, the Lane's Prince Albert, Conference pears, Morello cherries and plum trees. A walnut tree will be planted later this year. The fruit will be available for anyone from the local community to pick for their own use. Let's hope we have a good summer to help the fruit get juicy and the trees established with strong roots! If you know of other sites around the town where we could plant more fruit trees, please contact **Marion on 01442 874732**

Our aim is to increase the amount of food that we grow ourselves and buy from local sources thereby supporting our local growers and the local economy. We have

been working towards the creation of a "Dacorum Sustainable Food Strategy". This now has the official support of DBC, and we are seeking funding to get it started. We hope to work with others to create a "Dacorum Food Partnership" and engage everyone in Dacorum who is involved in food production in any way.

Transport

Transport has been identified as a really key issue for our Transition Town and through a series of well attended meetings and discussions we have discussed how best to address a range of issues including: improved facilities and safety for walkers and cyclists, creation of a coordinated public transport system, development of community car clubs and lift share initiatives, and how best to support local schools and businesses.

Sustainable transport is a big subject, however with good links to the local authorities, decision makers and local environmental organisations we believe we can all work together to enable positive change.

Recently we worked with Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign on the 20's Plenty Campaign for the town to lower speed limits. This was presented in January to the County Council's Transport Committee. We have taken up an invitation to contribute to Berkhamsted's draft urban transport plan which is due for consultation in the summer; and had meetings with schools about how best TTB can support them locally. Contact **Emma on emman72@hotmail.com**

Local Schools

In early February we met with the local head teachers group to talk with them more about TTB and where we may be able to help them collectively with sustainability projects in their schools. As a result of this meeting a number of activities are either underway or in discussion, including Grow your own initiatives, battery recycling, school car traffic reduction and borrowing the TTB wind monitoring equipment to assess potential suitability of one school site for a turbine.

We were encouraged by the enthusiastic response from the head teachers group and we are looking forward to supporting them as they take these initiatives forward.

Transition Ashridge Business School

We are in the heart of the Ashridge estate near Berkhamsted, and are one of the world's leading business schools. Although it is only 50 years old, in many ways Ashridge has been intimately connected with the surrounding communities since the thirteenth century and, with nearly 400 staff, remains a major local employer. Ashridge's engagement with 'sustainable development' can be traced back to the early 1990s. It's been growing in momentum ever since.

In February Ashridge signed up to the 10:10 campaign and appointed a new Sustainability Manager: Quintin Lake. Sustainability is a concept that increasingly informs the way we work with the managers and organisations we engage with as well as how we steward our own resources. We are asking ourselves what it means to be a 'transition business school', and welcome partnering with our local communities to help us make this a reality. Our collaboration with TTB has just started and we look forward to what develops.





Renewables: Feed-in-Tariff

Starting April 2010

Making money and saving the planet

Earlier this year the UK Government finalised the so-called Feed-in Tariff, also known as the 'Clean Energy Cashback' scheme. This means that from April 2010, homeowners who install different types of renewable energy (solar; wind etc.) will be paid a substantial premium for all of the electricity they generate making many renewable energy systems a fantastic investment, as well as an insurance against rising electricity prices and a way to cut carbon.

What are the Feed-In Tariffs?

They are a set of Government defined tariffs which your utility company must pay you for every kilowatt hour of electricity you produce from your own renewable energy systems. The Feed-In Tariffs are for everyone – homeowners, tenants, businesses, schools or landlords.

How long do the tariffs last?

A minimum of 20 years, except for solar PV which will last 25 years and the payments will rise with inflation over this time.

Is that long enough to cover the installation costs?

Yes, is the simple answer. In fact, most customers are expected to earn enough money from the tariffs to pay off their installation costs in 7 to 10 years. According to the Government, which has set the tariff levels, the average user will earn a return of around 8-9% per annum with higher band tax payers seeing almost double that.

When do they start?

Tariffs will be paid starting in April 2010. However, any suitable system installed from now on will be eligible for the tariffs when they begin.



How much money are the Feed-In Tariffs worth?

- First of all you will save money by having to import less electricity because you will generate a lot of what you use.
- Second, your utility company will pay you up to 41.3p/kWh (kilowatt-hour) whether you use it or not. It depends on exactly what systems you use and how large they are as to what the exact tariff level is.
- Third, your utility company will pay you an additional 3p/kWh for the electricity you export back to the grid.



A full version of this piece, together with worked examples, is available on the TTB website
www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk

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