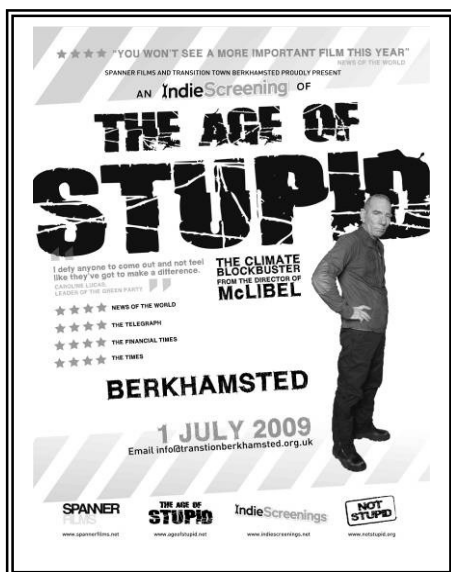


# Transition Town Berkhamsted

working to build a strong sustainable community

## Climate blockbuster shows in Berkhamsted



Despite temperatures of 30 degrees, almost 300 people turned up for TTB's showing of Fran Armstrong's acclaimed film "The Age of Stupid" starring Pete Postlethwaite

The film is a challenging call to those who watch it that we are hurtling

towards a tipping point where the effects of climate change will accelerate beyond our control. The emphatic message is "time is running out but we still have time (just) if enough of us take action now".

Joining us in the Centenary Hall, we were privileged to have director Franny Armstrong with us for the evening and answer questions from the audience. Franny's passion and energy brought even more immediacy and urgency to the issue. Joining Franny on the panel were Danny Bonnet from TTB who took the opportunity to put some of the film's messages into the context of what TTB are working to achieve at a local level, and David Strong from Inbuild shared additional technical expertise around some of the questions on renewable energy. To create an atmosphere for the evening that would encourage people to chat and to showcase the ideas of TTB, we set up a "foyer" meeting place with stalls where people could learn

more about TTB, about the "Not Stupid" campaign and also about the work that Oxfam is doing to help those affected by climate change right now.

Stopping climate change is thirsty work so we also provided a bar stocked entirely from local suppliers and traders, including beer from Tring Brewery, cider and apple juice from Millwhites in Boxmoor, wine from Frithsden vineyard and the Flying Corkscrew.

Feedback from the event was extremely positive and we achieved our main goal of getting as many people as we could to see the film. Thanks to everyone who helped make the evening such a success. It would help us to know how you heard about the showing. Please email Wendy on [wsja6@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:wsja6@tiscali.co.uk)

*Danny Bonnett's views about the film on page 4*

### We're making progress!

Transition Town Berkhamsted was founded as part of the worldwide *Towns in Transition* movement in 2008. There are now over 130 transition towns worldwide; including Tring, Berlin and Sydney. Transition Towns aim to change from high energy dependence to sustainability with lower energy use, and to preserve our communities as pleasant places for the future. We have several action groups working to make Berkhamsted a more sustainable town, better able to cope with rising energy prices and climate change.

After a lot of hard work over the last eighteen months, our efforts are beginning to show fruit. The number of people attending our launch meeting and film nights show that people in the town are concerned about environmental issues. Action groups are getting under way seeking local solutions to energy, transport and food issues, and our first "exchange" promoted the virtues of fresh local produce and exchanging. More exciting initiatives are planned for the coming months.

So please get involved if you share our concerns and would like to make Berkhamsted a less wasteful, less polluting and more resource efficient place to live. You can find contact details at the back of this newsletter.

### Future Events 2009

**9th August and 13th September**  
**11:30 - 14:00**

#### The Sunday Exchange

Friends Meeting House, 289 High Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 1AJ  
Sunday Exchange of your home grown vegetables, fruit, plants, jams, cakes

**Mid September, 10:00 - 13:00**  
**Second Transport Forum**

Berkhamsted Civic Centre  
See website for details

**1st October, 7:30pm for 8:00pm**  
**Swish Party**

The Court House, Berkhamsted, HP4 2AX  
Entrance fee: £3.00 includes refreshments  
If you love fashion, then you'll adore Swishing!  
Swap the stuff you don't wear, for something you will.

**Mid October Workshop: How make your Victorian home more energy efficient.**

See website for details

**1st November 10:30 - 11:30**  
**The Sunday Exchange**

The Court House, Church Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 2AX  
See previous exchanges for details

**Monday November 2nd 2009, 8:00pm**

**Talk: Patrick Holden - Director of the Soil Association**  
**Farming in Transition**  
St. Martha's Church, Park Rd, Tring

**Energy Group** The Energy Action Group is focusing most of its time on piloting an 'energy efficiency audit' with British Gas. A first pilot of 5 homes, the library and a church ran earlier this year and we have since met and fed back to British Gas on how the audits could be improved. A second round of audits is now being planned for the summer. We hope ultimately to promote the service which is aimed at helping households, businesses and other groups to implement energy efficiency measures to reduce CO2 emissions and save money.



Other projects that the group has in hand include:

- setting up a network of local people who have installed micro-renewables (solar PV, solar thermal, wind turbines, wood-chip boilers etc.) as a source of expertise for others in Berkhamsted.
- organising trips to visit local energy projects.
- working on joint projects with other local groups (e.g. Tring in Transition).
- potentially submitting applications for funding of specific renewable energy projects.

If you would like to be involved contact: [beloe@live.co.uk](mailto:beloe@live.co.uk)

**Waste Group** The Waste Group is currently developing ideas and consulting with the council and local shops about several areas of concern:

- encouraging local consumers to think more carefully about both product packaging and end of life product disposal. An example would be purchase of milk in a returnable bottle rather than disposable containers.
- helping those Berkhamsted residents who are physically unable to carry their recycling waste to the kerbside for collection by the Council.
- clearer information about waste segregation i.e what goes in which bin?
- disposal of food waste.

For more information contact [waste@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:waste@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk)

**Transport Group** Many of us love to live in Berkhamsted because it's green, it has a friendly town centre where you can stop for a chat, and because it's a place that feels safe and welcoming for people of all ages. But living in a small market town can make us very car dependent – which means more and more traffic and fume choked streets. It's a threat to many of the good things we value – as well as making us less, rather than more able to face a future where high carbon living just isn't an option.

The aim of the Transport Group is to promote sustainable transport that is available to all - lessening the dominance of cars, making our town a better place to live, and reducing our ecological footprint. We've begun to work with schools, helping join up their action to promote walking and cycling. Transition Town Berkhamsted has also been very vocal in opposing the ill-thought-out extension to the station car park. If it happens at all, we believe it should form part of a broader transport strategy for the town. We held Transport Open Forum in July to decide our next steps. Over the next few months the group will carry out research to find great examples of towns like ours that have sustainable travel (if you know any, get in touch); we will continue our work with schools; investigate the potential for car clubs and community bus schemes; link up with the county, borough and town councils' work on transport and do a survey to find out what would make people change their habits and switch to greener transport.

If you'd like to get involved in any of these projects or find out more email [transport@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:transport@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk)

**Food Group** Do you know how many local food and drink producers there are in Berkhamsted and surrounding areas? What do you think about the development of a Sustainable Food Strategy for Dacorum that helps promote food security? Any ideas what gentlemen farmers were eating in the seventeenth century in Boxmoor? Well if you get involved in the food group these and other questions can be answered.

A small group with big aims is probably the best way to describe us. The umbrella heading of "food group" covers such a wide area and we are still in the very early stages of looking at what we can achieve and how best to use our energies. We use our WIKI page to give people ideas of what to grow and when to harvest and eat it and also to provide links to other initiatives that may be of interest; for example encouraging people to register for Landshare; letting people know about edible forests and how not to let food go to waste. The first very successful Sunday Exchange, particularly of locally produced fruit, veg and plants, took place on Sunday 12 July (see the separate report below).

Strategically we have been involved in the early stages of linking in with Dacorum to gain support for the development of a sustainable community agricultural policy. It makes sense for there to be such a policy drawing together all local stakeholder individuals and groups.

There were difficulties with the convenor's e-mail so please get back in touch if you were on the original mailing list and haven't heard for a while. We will continue to update the WIKI page with lots of ideas and then come the early autumn will meet again and look at how we move forward. We are in this for the long haul so do come and join us! Get in touch by emailing us on [food@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:food@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk)

**Sunday Exchange** Our first Sunday Exchange was held in the open air on a lovely July summer day at the Friends Meeting House. We had a splendid and colourful array of produce and plants from local gardens and allotments including; exotic black potatoes ( excellent for roasting), rainbow-coloured chard, glistening redcurrants, gooseberries, fragrant lavender bundles, sparkling lettuces, all piled up high to tempt our visitors.

Alongside were treats for gardeners grow-your-own goodies like blackcurrant bushes, globe artichokes, courgette plants already in flower, butternut squash seedlings, herbs like basil, parsley and, not to forget the flower garden nicotiana, nasturtium and agapanthus.

While they browsed, our visitors sampled local drinks: scrumpy and cider from Millwhites in Boxmoor, beer from Tring brewery and local mint tea. Other refreshments included local apple juice, caraway seed cake from a local 1750s recipe, Berko omelette, delicious crusty bread from local flour and a tempting array of jams and cakes.

Live music heightened the pleasure too. Local musician Hamish Currie played his guitar and sang folk songs; a group led by local mum and teacher Jane Parker then played lively tunes for the children to dance and march to on the green lawns in front. Danny ran the bike fix stall, and had a constant stream of customers queuing to get safely back onto the road.

The aim of the exchange is to introduce people to the idea of exchanging something they don't need or that they can spare for something that they want. We are starting a list of services and skills swap so if you've got some skill that you can share, be it pottery or plumbing, don't keep it to yourself, share it with us please.

Contact us on [info@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:info@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk)

**The next Exchange event is on August 9th at the Friends Meeting House 11:30-1400 so put it in your diary and please start growing and making goods to exchange. You'll be surprised at what you can swap!**

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## News from our neighbours

**Tring in Transition** are now well established. They have held litter picks, shown the "Age of Stupid" and have produced an A2 leaflet outlining sustainability tips and ideas. This has been distributed to all homes in Tring. An all day CAFE energy audit training programme will be held on Monday 5th October. An Eco Fair will be held in the Victoria Hall in Tring on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October from 10am to 4pm. The next meeting is on Monday November 2nd, at 8pm in St Martha's Church and the speaker will be Patrick Holden of the Soil Association on "Farming in Transition and related issues". The meeting thereafter is on Tuesday 25th February.

For more information contact: [transition@tringintransition.org.uk](mailto:transition@tringintransition.org.uk) or call 01442 824494

**Hemel Hempstead** intend to launch as a Transition Town in Autumn 2009. So far they have met over 20 local community organisations and held film evenings. For more information email [info@hemelintransition.org](mailto:info@hemelintransition.org) or visit the website at [www.hemelintransition.org](http://www.hemelintransition.org)

**Chesham in Transition** are in an embryonic stage. In the Summer of 2008 they formed an initial steering group and from Spring 2009 have had a steady programme of awareness campaigns including meetings with BTCV / Every Action Counts , Allotment Holders Group, Environmental Group, CHaP - Chesham Action Partnership and Chesham Town Council. A regular social event is held on the last Thursday of every month at the Drawing Room Café 19:30 to 21:30. Contact [info@cheshamintransition.org.uk](mailto:info@cheshamintransition.org.uk)

**Dacorum Environment Forum** comprises individuals, environmental groups, schools, businesses and both statutory and non-statutory organizations. Over the last 15 years it has been leading work towards the promotion of a cleaner and healthier environment in Dacorum. The Forum meets quarterly and there are a number of sub-groups that meet more regularly. Meetings are open to anyone with an interest in the environment and are held at Dacorum Borough Council's Civic Centre, Hemel Hempstead. The next meeting is Thursday 15th October 2009 at 19:30 hrs in the Bulbourne Room at the Dacorum Civic Centre. For more information visit [www.dacenvforum.org.uk](http://www.dacenvforum.org.uk) or contact Lizzie Savage, Environment & Sustainability Officer, Dacorum Borough Council on 01442 228739

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**The Hertfordshire Climate Change Strategic Framework** aims to:

- illustrate the key climate change challenges for Hertfordshire.
- set out a range of objectives and action statements.
- avoid prescribed target setting.
- avoid replacing existing Climate Change Strategies across the county.
- outline key considerations for decision-making, policy and action planning within partner organisations.
- place an emphasis on a strategic, enabling approach.

Consultation on this Framework will be open from Monday 6 July and closes Friday 2 October 2009. The Partnership is keen to encourage as wide a consultation as possible and details may be found by searching for climate change on the [www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org) website. All responses and queries should be sent to [climate.change@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:climate.change@hertscc.gov.uk)

# Viewpoint

The Age of Stupid film highlights, in no uncertain terms, the danger to humanity of ignoring both the progress of climate change and our contribution to it. If we can stabilise emissions by 2015, and it is a big IF, and subsequently manage to reduce greenhouse gas emissions going forward towards 2050 then we have a 50:50 chance of stopping 'run-away' climate warming.

The film concludes, that urgent and decisive action is needed. I always find it helpful to think about action on the various levels, as this allows us to work out where we can be most effective in bringing about change (or in this case, in stopping change).

## GLOBAL

The Copenhagen summit is really the last-chance saloon for a global agreement. Gordon Brown is presently not planning to go to Copenhagen – not important enough apparently. One thing which we can do to promote a positive outcome is to show Gordon Brown that the British people ARE bothered (by attending the climate march in London on the 5th Dec, see <http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/march-in-december>). Secondly, you can lobby Gordon to suggest that he should go along to provide the decision making capacity at on the conference floor that is needed: [http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get\\_involved/campaign/actions/push-prime-minister-to-copenhagen.html](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/actions/push-prime-minister-to-copenhagen.html)

## NATIONAL

It is clear that UK emissions should already be falling, and the pace of this reduction must increase rapidly. Our national renewable energy targets are of the right magnitude (at last), and offshore wind is set to provide 30-40% of our electricity in the coming decade. There are many more things that we absolutely must be doing, like tackling the energy efficiency of our existing building stock, reducing transport emissions, investing in a smart electricity grid, etc. For most people, action on this level is about writing to our MP, signing up to initiatives from Oxfam, and in generally transmitting the message that we're ready to make changes, if only the politicians would get on and change the system – we're not holding them up!

## LOCAL

This is the home turf of the transition town. The worst thing we can do is sit back and wait for others, so let's action simple things ourselves:

- Get an energy assessment done on your house, and action the recommendations as far as you can afford to. Contact the energy group for an audit.
- Transform the way we make local journeys in the town. Slow down your life, relax and walk around a bit more. Use your bike when you can.
- When you go shopping, leave the car at home. If your bags are heavy get some 'wheels' as my granny used to call her shopping bag on wheels. Doing this will make sure it is the local shops that you use too.
- Leisure time? Look at places you can go on public transport or by bike. Fewer cars makes the town a more pleasant place, and you will no-doubt, be supporting local businesses and attractions.
- Follow the example set by TTB at the Age of Stupid and drink local beer (Tring Brewery) and local wine (<http://www.ukvines.co.uk/vineyards/frithsden.htm>)
- Plant and harvest your own vegetables. Come to our Sunday Exchange on 9th August and 13th September at the Friends Meeting House, 11.30am, and swap or get some produce.
- Wash your clothes at 30 degrees, and ask if they need to be washed.

Clearly, there are loads of ways that we can all reduce our impact on the planet. It takes a bit of thought, but once you have done that then most of the answers are just common sense. A key message is *DON'T PROCRASTINATE*. We spent about two years thinking about whether or not to install solar hot-water on our house; why did we take so long? Not sure about the installer to use? Would it be good value? What about planning etc? We've done it now and we're really pleased; so learn from our procrastination and be more decisive!

So, the scale of the problem requires urgent and decisive action. Local is easiest, but action on all levels is required to get us out of this pickle. Please contact TTB for ideas and more information.

**Danny Bonnett - 07795 236402**

***This newsletter is published by Transition Town Berkhamsted, a non-religious, non-political and not-for-profit organisation which is supported by Berkhamsted Town Council.***

**For more information** visit our website [www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk](http://www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk) or email us on [info@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk](mailto:info@transitionberkhamsted.org.uk)

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