

Teign Estuary Transition Core Group Meeting on Wednesday 24th September 2014

Present: Mike (R), Tim, Liz , Mike (S), Mary

Community Composting

Mike (S) read a report from Fran on the Teign Community Composting initiative. This initiative formed in the autumn of 2012 had progressed well under the stewardship of Fran, Bill, Mike(S) and Liz and with the full and enthusiastic support of the local council. After an extensive search an excellent site was located within Teignmouth. The group consulted with the landowners and among others, the Environmental Agency, county planners, RSPB, the water board, the Highways Agency, Western Power and the National Composting Network. All these bodies gave their support as well as the town council and the Recycling Officer at Teignbridge. With this support neighbouring residents of the site were leafleted and spoken to and also gave support. This timing coincided with Teignbridge discussing the possibility of charging for the green bin collection, so they could see the advantage of having a community owned local site for green waste.

After so much effort and so much support it was with great disappointment that we learned the scheme could not go forward due to the vitriolic objections of one local resident. The group had been in discussion with a County Hall Planning Officer and received comments through a Pre-application Advice Form; it was surprising therefore to be advised by the same officer that their application should be withdrawn. They were advised that even if they had challenged the objection and received planning permission it would only require one more objection – even from the same person - and the site would have to be closed. It became clear that this was not a battle which could be won and the group have withdrawn the application. The search continues for a new site in the Teignmouth area.

The Abundance Network

Liz introduced the Abundance Network initiative which is thriving in other parts of the country and has just taken off in Exmouth. Local Abundance groups are made up of teams of volunteers who harvest the fruit (apples, pears, plums, quinces, cherries, grapes...), distribute it, make jams and preserves, or sell the surplus to local restaurants and shops on a non-profit basis – the money going back into the local Abundance project or to local not-for-profit organisations.

Each group is individual and determines its own operating methods of how fruit is harvested and distributed. Some work with local schools or other community groups. The produce is sometimes turned into jams and chutney's and sometimes group picking events are organised. It may be decided to donate all or part of the produce to other community groups or specific causes like the Food Bank.

Initial discussions around this idea were enthusiastic. Mike (S) said that here had been some discussion about planting fruit trees on the Community Composting site now that composting there has had been abandoned. It may also provide a site for sharing, swapping and/or distributing produce. It was agreed that Liz would put some words together and that these would go on our

website and an email sent out and an editorial put in the local paper to gauge interest – particularly from people who already have surplus in their gardens.

Liz is happy to take this idea forward but of course cannot do it alone. She is going to make the initial push and then we will reconvene to see what needs to be done next.

Action: Liz

Community Garden

There was some discussion around the noise and damage which has taken place in the garden and the response from rangers that puts the responsibility on us to remove chairs and make the shelter less attractive and comfortable. After some discussion it was felt that if local residents complain about noise they should contact the local police to deal with it and indeed if anyone witnesses damage taking place in the garden. Further discussions ranged around the possibility of allotments being created in the rest of the walled garden so that the area is better used and possibly closing the garden overnight. More discussion is needed around these topics to explore the ramifications. It was agreed we should have further discussions with Sian at Teignbridge re local resident complaints.

Action: Mike

Potato Bake

It was proposed that we make a date for a potato bake in the garden on a Sunday at lunchtime. The favourite date was Sunday 2nd November or Sunday 9th November. More discussions will take place in the Community Garden.

Action: Mary

Clothes Swap

A Clothes Swap has been booked for Saturday 18th October. The space will be prepared on Friday 17th from about 5pm for those who can get there at that time. It has been agreed that we will buy 3 new rails for the clothes swap as the rails we managed to put together last year were really unstable. Details of the Clothes Swap have been put on the website and emails sent out. Fran is looking up the details from the last leaflet and Mary is getting an image done for the poster. This will go on the website as soon as it is done.

Anyone who will be able to help on the day should contact Flo, Fran or Mary. Action: Fran, Mary & Flo

Non Fiction Book Club

Mike(R) in initiating a non-fiction book club around sustainability issues and the first meeting will be on at 7.30pm Thursday 16th October at TAAG.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29th October. Mike (R) will chair and Mary will take notes.