

Transition Shipston

And Surrounding Communities

Newsletter February 2010

<http://transitionshipston.blogspot.com/>

LandShare

For land, food and people

For those of us with green fingers the new growing season is nearly upon us once again but for many residents in Shipston the desire to grow their own vegetables is hampered by the lack of a suitable space or land.

The council allotment waiting list grows ever longer with no sign in the foreseeable future of more land being acquired to use for allotments and in any case the council is unlikely to ever be able to offer an allotment to everyone who wants one so what other solutions could be found?

It's time to start thinking more creatively and for Shipston as a community to consider different ways to facilitate local food production for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of residents as well as the local and wider environment that 'growing your own' brings. Here is food for thought.....(no pun intended!)

For those of you with an allotment or two(!) would you consider relinquishing one, or offering to share a part of your growing space with someone on the waiting list? Perhaps you are finding your allotment more difficult to manage but aren't ready to give it up completely – someone may be willing to help you out in exchange for an area to use for their own vegetables.

Allotments are not the only place to grow vegetables though. Local

businesses with outside space, housing associations and residential homes with land surrounding their properties might all consider whether some of this space could be offered for use by local residents to grow food on. Farmers or land-owners in the area may consider offering land for use by the local community to grow vegetables or even formally offer land for sale to the council for allotments.

To this end Transition Shipston would like to make more local people aware of the Landshare website promoted by Channel 4 and the River Cottage programme fronted by Hugh Fernley-Whittingstall. Landshare was set up to put people who want to grow vegetables in touch with those who have land or space available for growing on. It's straightforward to create a message requesting land to use or offering land to grow on. Interested parties then respond to you through the website.

Another possibility is a 'Garden Share' – Transition Shipston would like to gauge interest from residents about setting up a scheme whereby people with gardens that are not utilised fully, struggle to manage their garden or who maybe have no interest in gardening may allow keen growers to use some space in return for a share of the produce, or help with garden maintenance. For anyone interested please make your views known.

Anyone interested in participating in any of these initiatives should contact Rebecca Stewart Harris (Tel: 07770 948124 becssh@googlemail.com)

Beekeeping News

Introduction to Beekeeping

Shipston Beekeepers are holding an "Introduction to Beekeeping" day on Saturday 13th March at the Old Free

School, Brailes. The day will deal with the basics of beekeeping for the complete beginner or those with very limited experience of this craft. Arrive at 09.30 for coffee prior to a prompt 10.00 start. Refreshments and a light lunch are included in the day's price of £10. The event is scheduled to finish at 15.00 approx.

Contact Douglas Nethercleft on 01295 680041 or djn0001@aol.com to book your place. Numbers are limited.

Funding for 'Beekeeping in the Community' initiative

The WCC Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee recently awarded a grant from the Community Development Fund towards our *Developing Bees in the Community* project – an initiative being progressed in partnership with Shipston Beekeepers. The funding will pay for an Observation Hive supported by three colonies of bees and the equipment and materials necessary to carry our 'green' message into the local community.

We are delighted that we will now have the means to create an educational resource to take to local schools and other organisations, to promote the craft of beekeeping in South Warwickshire and to improve the pollination of food crops grown by neighbourhood communities.

Transition Shipston & Surrounding Communities ENERGY OPEN SPACE

Powering Shipston

**How can we work together
to power our community
beyond cheap energy?**

*St Edmund's Church meeting room on
Saturday 13th February, from 10.00
am to 1.00 pm (doors open 9.30)*

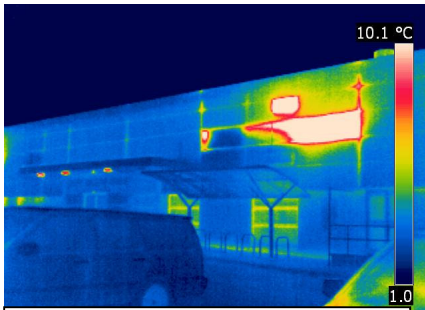
With the Earth's climate changing as a result of carbon emissions, we need to find ways to reduce the demand for energy and our reliance on fossil fuels as energy sources. Rising energy prices pose a challenge for those on low incomes, as well as for businesses which have taken low energy costs for granted.

You can help decide the key issues for group discussions when everyone will be able to contribute their ideas... no lectures, no presentations – just your ideas and planning for local energy initiatives

Refreshments available throughout the morning and entry is free of charge.

For more details see:

<http://transitionshipston.blogspot.com/> or phone Helen Winniffrith 661244



Shipston Swimming Pool Thermal Image showing heat loss area

Letter to the editor

I had to write and let you know about the wonderful Permaculture weekend I have just had at Holycombe in Whichford. I am still buzzing with the ideas that Ruth O'Brien introduced us to, and glowing from the warm, happy atmosphere we all enjoyed as we learned about gardening with nature instead of battling against it.

Permaculture has many definitions but grew from ideas begun by pioneer thinkers in Australia and Japan who observed how nature wastes nothing and that the detritus from one effect is the resource of another. A tree falls in the forest and creates a clearing. Its rotting bark gives nourishment to fungi, bugs and bacteria which remake it into soil; with the tree down, the clearing allows grass and herbs and other seedlings to catch the light and small animals graze on the new growth. Their droppings feed the soil encouraging more growth. This

natural cycle is one of several that underpin the existence of the life on this planet and therefore mankind. See

<http://www.permaculture.org.uk/education>

This can be translated into a system of gardening which our grandmothers used before the days of fertilisers and cheap fuel. The poo from the chicken run went on the compost, along with the vegetable trimmings from a small cottage garden. The effort that went into gardening had to be balanced by what was produced, so people took only what they needed, and waste was recycled naturally to produce the following year's crop.

This answers a simple need in all of us. (After all we hang on to things for years in case we need them!).

Permaculture invites you to use everything and waste nothing, and by thoughtful observation and design, to reduce your labour and maximise your productivity. The effect of course does not stop with us, the individual. This ripples out into our attitude to our community and to the greater global community. How can we continue to take more than we need as a society knowing that we take it from others? This is an idea that has found its time. The cost of fuel is increasing along with an awareness of how little of the earth's surface is available for growing food for an increasing population. We need to share, we need to be more efficient and we need to detach from our oil-rich life-style and develop an alternative, or we will have to stand by and watch others fail.

Whatever you think of the timing of climate change and Peak Oil, changes are already happening. The longer we have to develop an ethical alternative to the existing system, the better, which means we should start now. The innovation and modern scientific knowledge that permaculture uses should fill us with hope, not despair.

We were a small group of 15 souls, bringing varied interests and skills. What we had in common were minds open to new ideas, a concern for the environment and a desire to do

something, even on a small scale, ourselves.

Sally Birtwell had invited us to hold the two-day, introductory course at her beautiful home, Holycombe. The setting, in the folds of small hills with woodland, fields, and still and running water was perfect. Ruth made her course, stimulating, informative and great fun. We hardly noticed the hours passing and even the shyest found ourselves presenting ideas. This is the beginning. I for one can't wait for stage two; there is more to learn!! For more information about Ruth and her courses see

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

If you are interested please contact:

Pat Harris paover19@aol.com

For courses held at Holycombe see <http://www.holycombe.com/>

Transition Shipston Meetings: (All Welcome)

Monday 8th February

Transition Shipston Steering group
7.30 Black Horse Pub, Shipston

Thursday 11th February

Shipston Mid-Summer Festival committee, 6.00 Black Horse pub

Saturday 13th February

Energy "Open Space"
St Edmund's Church Hall,

Monday 22nd February

Transition Shipston Food Group
7.30 Black Horse Pub, Shipston

Shipston Bee Keeping Association

Saturday 13th March - Bee Keeping Training Day, Old Free School, Brailes
Contact Douglas Nethercleft for more information 01295 680041

Film Showings

Saturday 20th February

Transition Town Films

24 Railway Crescent. All are welcome. 'Bring and Share' evening. There will be soup and bread. Ring Pat on 07774165173 to book a spot. or email paover19@aol.com.

For more information about

Transition Shipston contact:

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<http://transitionsipston.blogspot.com>