

# transitionnarberth

Newsletter, April 2011 / **Newyddion, Ebrill 2011**

Welcome to the April edition of the Transition Narberth Newsletter. This edition features news of past and future events throughout the area. There are also relevant articles on climate change and peak oil. Plus, news from around the Transition movement.

If you have any suggestions for future content or comments on the format of the newsletter please email me at [communications@transitionnarberth.org.uk](mailto:communications@transitionnarberth.org.uk)

The deadline for articles to be considered for inclusion in the newsletter is the 26<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

Many thanks, Mike

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## 1. Transition Narberth News

- **Community in Transition**

Thursday March 17 saw 25-30 people enjoy an inspiring presentation from Graeme Perks (Ludlow( and Cris Tomos (Cwm Arian- Hermon, Glogue and Llanfranach) Graeme coming from a town of 10,000, entertained us with a view through time, imagining what Ludlow could be like in 2015. Graeme's vision was seen through the eyes of 3 different characters clearly demonstrating the importance of listening to the whole community in these times of transition.

Cris Tomos showed what can be achieved in a small community (450) when support is given to community leaders who have the confidence of their local area. Cooperative community ownership of the local infant school. Now an expanding community centre. The creation of The Blue Rock Festival; A community energy project with a £400,000 grant for two wind turbines, providing sustainable energy back to the people. It all started when the people of Cwm Arian decided to buy a large marquee to act as a community building. The marquee became a money spinner and confidence grew.

A thoroughly informative and entertaining evening.

- **Span Plant sale. Sat 30<sup>th</sup> April**

Transition Narberth need plants to sell at the Span Plant Sale on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April. If you can donate plants please e-mail Chris [chrislawrence@cooptel.net](mailto:chrislawrence@cooptel.net)

- **Fruit and Nut Tree Project.**



The final planting in the Transition Narberth Fruit and Nut Tree Project took place with a good crowd of people planting trees a Millpond Lane. It was a lovely morning and again it had that party feel with tea and coffee provided by local resident, Yvonne Llewellyn.

Also in the same week fruit and nut trees were planted at the Narberth Junior School with the help of pupils from the schools eco club.

- **Proposed Cooperative Supermarket in Narberth**

An appeal has been lodged by the Cooperative to the Planning Inspectorate, following the refusal for planning permission by the Local Planning Authority to: 'Part demolition, change of use and extension for Class A1 retail foodstore' on the Site of the former Brains Brewery and Retail shop in Spring Gardens, Narberth.

I quote from the letter:

"Any comments already made at the application stage will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. If you wish to submit any additional comments then three copies of the same must be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate, Crown Buildings, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ within 6 weeks of the starting date, **by the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2011.**

You may view the planning documents at County Hall Haverfordwest, weekdays between 9:00am and 5:00pm. If you wish to obtain a copy of our booklet 'Guide to taking part in planning appeals' free of charge, please contact the Development Management Section at the Planning Department, County Hall, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire or through 'publications' on the Planning Inspectorate's website: [www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk). If you wish to receive a copy of the appeal decision, you must write to the Planning Directorate direct to request one at" (the address given above).

- **The Earth Charter**

At a recent 'Hearts, Body and Mind' meeting we had a preliminary overview of *The Earth Charter*. With the feeling that this was important to Transition we felt we should make the membership aware of it and ask you for feedback and opinions as to how we should proceed with it.

The following text is an introduction to *The Earth Charter* text proper and has been taken from the Charter's website. The address is given here so that, if enthused, you can gallop ahead and read, ponder the whole thing. If not, we will be issuing parts of the charter in smaller doses so that you can assess its possible implications for Transition Narberth.

## **History**

Following the ‘The World Commission on Environment and Development report in 1987, a discussion about an Earth Charter took place in the process leading to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, but it was not until 1994 that this started to officially take shape. In 1994, Maurice Strong (Secretary-General of the Rio Summit) and Mikhail Gorbachev, working through organisations they each founded (Earth Council and Green Cross International respectively), launched an initiative (with support from the Dutch Government) to develop an Earth Charter as a civil society initiative. The initial drafting and consultation process drew on hundreds of international documents.

An independent Earth Charter Commission was formed in 1997 to oversee the development of the text, analyse the outcomes of a world-wide consultation process and to come to agreement on a global consensus document. After numerous drafts and after considering the input of people from all regions of the world, The Earth Charter Commission came to consensus on *The Earth Charter* in March 2000, at a meeting held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. *The Earth Charter* was later formally launched in ceremonies at The Peace Palace in The Hague.

### **1. Mission**

The mission of the Earth Charter initiative is to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy and a culture of peace.

### **2. Vision**

We envisage individuals, organisations, businesses, governments, and multilateral institutions throughout the world, including the United Nations General Assembly and UN Agencies, acknowledging *The Earth Charter*, embracing its values and principles, and working collaboratively to build just, sustainable, and peaceful societies.

### **3. Goals**

1. To raise awareness worldwide of *The Earth Charter* and to promote understanding of its inclusive vision.
2. To seek recognition and endorsement of *The Earth Charter* by individuals, organisations and the United Nations.
3. To promote the use of *The Earth Charter* as an ethical guide and the implementation of its principles by civil society, business and government.

4. To encourage and support the educational use of *The Earth Charter* in schools, universities, religious communities, local communities, and many other settings.
5. To promote recognition and use of *The Earth Charter* as a soft law document.

Taken from: [www.earthcharterinaction.org](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org)

Please add your thoughts to the melting pot – by sending them to:  
[jenn@transitionarberth.org](mailto:jenn@transitionarberth.org)

## 2. Group News

- **Hearts, Mind & Soul Group**

### **Hearts Mind and Soul Group;**

We had a relaxing evening watching the wonderful film “The Man Who Planted Trees” An animated film which inspired generation of individuals to think they too could change aspects of life on earth with simple acts, like planting trees. The film lead on to a good discussion around this time of global transition.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> April when the group will be watching a documentary on eco communities throughout the world. Should be great.

Anyone interested can contact Chris at [chrislawrence@cooptel.net](mailto:chrislawrence@cooptel.net)

- **Food Group**

For details of forthcoming Food Group meetings please email  
[Geraldine@transitionarberth.org.uk](mailto:Geraldine@transitionarberth.org.uk)

- **Narberth Area Renewable Energy Group.**

This group is still trying to get off the ground. More people are needed to constitute and make sustainable energy a reality for the people of Narberth; If you are interested please contact Chris [chrislawrence@cooptel.net](mailto:chrislawrence@cooptel.net)

However, an event is planned by the steering group of the Pembrokeshire Energy Trust to consult organisations actively engaged in energy or community development in Pembrokeshire.

You are invited to come to this event to hear more about the proposal, to

discuss and feedback your thoughts, and to commit to the formation of this body if you so wish.

Local communities across Pembrokeshire are developing their own renewable energy projects to earn profits to increase the sustainability of their local areas. The Pembrokeshire Energy Trust proposal seeks to create a revolving investment fund providing all communities in the county with cost effective local finance for renewable energy projects.

**Three key questions will be asked at this event:**

1. Do stakeholders across the county want a Pembrokeshire Energy Trust or similar body to be formed?
2. What role and functions would people want it to fulfil?
3. What financial contribution might local community renewable energy businesses be willing to make?

This event is funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Assembly Government's

Ynni'r Fro programme. For more information on Ynni'r Fro please contact: Ben Ferguson-Walker [ben@swea.co.uk](mailto:ben@swea.co.uk) or 07740519397

### **3. Get Inspired, Get Involved!!!**

- **13<sup>th</sup> April** Heart, Mind & Soul Group Meeting. See group news above for more information.
- **30<sup>th</sup> April**, SPAN Plant sale in Narberth. Plants needed for the Transition stand.
- **6<sup>th</sup> May**. Deadline for submission of comments to the Planning Inspectorate regarding the proposed Cooperative supermarket in Narberth (see above article)

### **4. Climate Change**

- Research suggests that climate change contributed to the floods in England and Wales in Autumn 2000, with human greenhouse gas emissions increasing the odds of floods occurring at that time. Using a computer climate model developed at the Met Office Hadley Centre, scientists simulated the weather in Autumn 2000, both as it was, and as it might have been had there been no greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the 20th century.
- Are you confused or curious about climate change? The Met Office are inviting the public to ask questions about climate change as part of our

contribution to the Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) project. Anyone can send their questions via the OPAL website and Met Office scientists will answer them online. Climate change is surrounded by myths and misunderstandings and the OPAL Climate Centre, developed by the Met Office, aims to untangle some of them.

## 5. Peak Oil

### **BBC Discussion about the future shortage of oil.**

Please find below a segment from a play that was broadcast on the Radio 4 program, Broadcasting House on the 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2011. The play describes the future when oil runs out in the future, the very near future.....in 7-10 days time. The play is followed by a discussion with John Hoffmeister, the former President of Shell Oil. The discussion includes his estimate of when oil will begin to run out.

mp3 10 min file

<http://welshtransition.org/data/bbcBH270311.mp3>

### **Commentary: Restrictions on World Oil Production**

By Robert Hirsch

(Note: Commentaries do not necessarily represent the ASPO-USA position.)

Restrictions on world oil production can be divided into four categories:

1. Geology
2. Legitimate National Interests
3. Mismanagement
4. Political Upheaval

Consider each in reverse order:

**Political upheaval** is currently rampant across the Middle East, resulting in a major spike in world oil prices. No one knows how far the impacts will go or how long it will take to reach some kind of stability and what that stability will mean to oil production in the Middle Eastern countries that produce oil. We are thus relegated to best guesses, which span weeks, months, or years before there are clear resolutions. One pre-Middle East chaos country limited by political upheaval is Iraq, which is believed to have the oil reserves to produce at a much higher level, but Iraqi government chaos has severely limited oil production expansion. In another long-standing case, Nigeria has been plagued by internal political strife, which has negatively impacted its oil production.

**Mismanagement** of oil production within a country can be due to a variety of factors, all of which mean lower oil production than would otherwise be the case. Venezuela is the poster child of national mismanagement. The country has huge resources of heavy oil that could be produced at much higher rates. Underproduction is due to the government syphoning off so much cash flow that oil production operations are starved for needed funds. In addition, Venezuela has made it extremely difficult, if not impossible for foreign oil companies to operate in the country. Another example of mismanagement is Mexico, where government confiscation of oil revenues, substandard technology, and restrictions on foreign investment has led to significant Mexican oil production decline.

**Legitimate national interests** include decisions by governments to husband their oil reserves for the long-term benefit of their people. This occurs in various ways, some of them subtle. Not so subtle is the Saudi King's decree that any new oil fields discovered in the near future will not be developed in order that new discoveries can benefit Saudis in future years.

**Then there is geology**, which is the ultimate restriction. Oil is a finite resource. We will never produce more oil than nature provided over millions of years. All that's there is called the oil resource, but we can only produce what is called the "reserves," which is a fraction of the resource. Why? Because the geology associated with each oil deposit sets a practical limit on ultimate production. In a few cases, reserves can total up to half of a local resource. In others, reserves can amount to no more than a few percent of the resource. Typically, reserves are around 30% of the resource. If you think we should be able to do better than 30% on average, take some time to look at some oil reservoirs rock cores. The complexity is often mind boggling.

What's this all boil down to? Based on geology, many analysts have forecast the onset of the decline of world oil production in the next 2-5 years. Legitimate national interests, mismanagement, and political upheaval can only hasten that onset. To explain these and other energy issues we wrote the book entitled "The Impending World Energy Mess." Oil production is a very complicated activity. What happens in oil will impact all of us, so it's worth some study.

Robert L. Hirsch is a former senior energy program adviser for Science Applications International Corporation and is a Senior Energy Advisor at MISI and a consultant in energy, technology, and management. Hirsch has served on numerous advisory committees related to energy development, and he is the principal author of the report *Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, and Risk Management*, which was written for the United States Department of Energy.

## 6. Transition News & Stuff

- **Transition Network 2011 UK conference:**

8th - 11th July, Liverpool, UK

The Network conference this year will be at Hope University in Liverpool on the Hope Park campus. Most accommodation is onsite, with self catering an option. No on-site camping - we asked and cajoled, but they wouldn't budge. Provisional timings are registration opens on Friday evening with the main conference programme starts Saturday morning and finishes Monday lunchtime. Planning has started for a full programme of workshops, themes and events. More details will be announced soon starting with full accessibility info next week.

<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/news/2011-03-23/transition-network-2011-uk-conference-8-11-july-liverpool>

- **The Economics of Happiness - new documentary film is proposing that localised economies can heal the Earth and restore our wellbeing**

There has perhaps been no time more important than now, when the world faces urgent environmental, economic and social crises, to ask, “what’s really going on here?” It turns out that these crises are all connected, and there’s something systemic driving them: globalisation, according to a new documentary film, The Economics of Happiness. But the film offers a message of hope, showing there is a strategic way to address these problems simultaneously – economic localisation.

“The incredible benefits of localising need to be spelled out, and above all in terms of happiness,” believes the film’s co-producer, Helena Norberg-Hodge, who is the founder of The International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC).

Helena spends part of every year in Ladakh in India, working with local people to protect their culture and environment from the effects of rapid modernisation. As one of the first westerners to visit the region when it was opened to tourism and development in 1975, she quickly mastered the Ladakhi language and gained a unique insider perspective as western goods, policies and attitudes impacted the indigenous culture.

What she found at the heart of the threatened Ladakhi culture were the things she realised are key to individual and social wellbeing. “What it’s really about,” she says, “is rediscovering the essential relationships – both with the living world and with one another – that ultimately give our lives meaning and joy.”

But the Economics of Happiness isn’t proposing we go backwards to a previous existence, rather it calls for a change in the economic system in order to bring about a replenishment of what really creates quality of life. Featuring interviews with thinkers and activists from every continent – including Zac Goldsmith, Vandana Shiva, Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation and oil depletion expert, Richard Heinberg – the film suggests that by shifting towards localised economies, we can reduce our ecological footprint while increasing human wellbeing.

“What’s so wonderful about localisation is that there is a path that transcends what most people believe are the only options: communism, socialism or capitalism,” Helena says. “The system we have today is a political choice. There hasn’t been enough discussion about the importance of the human-scale, instead of giant, top-down structures, whether they’re political or economic.”

The importance of sustainable agriculture is a key focus in the documentary. Removing people from the land is the root of all unemployment it argues, while local food systems increase self-reliance and reduce poverty, and biodiverse farms are capable of producing 3-5 times more food than industrial monocultures.

The film hopes to show there is another way. “The mainstream media doesn’t let us know about the resistance to globalisation or about these alternatives,” Helena says. “But now local initiatives are being linked to business alliances, people are beginning to move money into local banks, and of course you have the transition town movement... It really is bottom-up people power.”



