

# TRANSITION CHICHESTER



Transition Chichester was founded in June 2008 as part of the Transition Town movement initiated in Totnes by Rob Hopkins. The aim of the Transition movement is to take action at a local level to counteract climate change, and in so doing to build a sense of community which is lacking in many contemporary towns and cities. The Transition movement has spread worldwide - and there are several hundred groups in Britain alone.

## **First steps**

Initially a number of focus groups formed around themes like Transport, Education, Economy, Energy, Waste, Grow Your Own, Heart and Soul. A programme of films was shown to raise awareness and develop knowledge of 'green' issues. People met on a monthly basis at Green Drinks to share ideas. After a year or so, some of the focus groups set up projects. Over the years a number of events have also been organised.

## **EVENTS**

**I Am Joy Festival:** In 2010 TC contributed to the I Am Joy Festival in Priory Park with an eclectic mix of activities which included a yoga tent, a solar powered cinema and a Green Library.

## **Green Fairs**

From 2011 - 2016 TC organised 6 annual Green Fairs in the Assembly Room, supported by City Council funding. These have showcased TC projects and other local environmental organisations. Each fair was attended by 700 - 1,000 people.

## **Brewery Field**

More recently TC has worked with Residents' Associations since 2015 to organise community events on the Brewery Field behind the Registry Office. These events have replaced our annual Green Fair. Every other year dray horses from Fullers Brewery return to the field and offer rides, providing a great attraction for local community members.

## **Speakers**

TC has hosted several major events where influential environmental activists have spoken to us:

- Nicola Peel: waste reduction, dealing with oil pollution
- Rob Hopkins: Founder of the Transition movement
- Chris Johnstone: Author of Active Hope
- Polly Higgins: Eradicating Ecocide

## **CURRENT PROJECTS**

### **Swap Shop**

One of the first actions taken - and still one of the most popular - was to hold a Swap Shop where people bring unwanted items and swap them for items they find useful. Swapping prevents unwanted items from going to landfill, and Swap Shops must have saved hundreds of kilos of waste over the past 9 years.

No money changes hands when goods are exchanged, but funds to cover the cost of the venue are raised through a Fairtrade café. We haven't kept an exact tally but as Swap Shops have been held quarterly over the last 9 years, we must have had over 30 of them. More recently clothes have been collected at Swap Shops for Calais refugees, and clothes swaps have been organised in several venues in and around Chichester. Swap Shop took part in the Weald and Downland's Spring Fair which focused on repairing, re-using and recycling.

### **Eco-cinema**

Another of TC's longest-lasting projects, Eco cinema has provided a programme of monthly films and talks on environmental issues for the past 8 years. This serves as a focal point where members can meet on a monthly basis. The films and talks are followed by a lively discussion session. With 10 - 11 sessions a year, an incredible 70-80 sessions have been arranged since the project started.

### **Energy**

The Energy group gained funding for 200 electricity monitors which have been installed in Chichester homes and for 2 thermal imaging cameras which were used to monitor heat loss from homes. In 2014 the group formed an independent community energy company, SOLESCO, which aims to develop and manage a series of renewable energy installations in West Sussex, particularly in the Arun and Chichester Districts.

**Heart and Soul:** The Heart and Soul group used to meet each month for discussion and study. Among the many activities undertaken by the group was a community art project which produced a large painting: What would you do on this wild and wonderful day? This painting is now on display at St Richard's Hospital. The group currently organises yoga sessions.

### **Grow Chichester**

One of TC's most active projects, Grow Chichester developed out of the Grow Your Own group which met to share garden produce and swap gardening tips. A 35-tree orchard was planted in November 2011 behind the Festival Theatre. A second orchard was planted on a piece of waste ground behind the Whyke Estate in 2013. Community gardens in the Bishop's Palace Garden and Oaklands Park were opened in 2014.

Three weekly sessions are provided in Bishop's Palace Garden and one weekly session in Oaklands Park. Two weekly sessions are facilitated by a therapeutic horticulturalist and are attended by up to 14 volunteers, some of whom have special needs. Other sessions are provided for people with mental health issues. Literally hundreds of volunteer hours are put in on our gardens each year.

The project aims to reduce social isolation and increase physical and mental well-being by encouraging people to engage in healthy outdoor activity. Volunteers share any produce grown

Transition Chichester is a not-for-profit organisation, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales as Transition Chichester, Company no. 8300739

and the surplus goes to the Food Bank.

### **Biodiversity and Pollinator Project**

Wildflower areas have been created, and hedges have been planted in several sites around the city to encourage biodiversity. A bat walk and a talk on pollinators were organised in 2018. In early 2019, the TC 'Buckthorns for Brimstones' project resulted in over 300 alder buckthorns being planted in gardens and other open spaces in the area.

### **Repair Café**

The first repair café was held in October 2018 where items which would otherwise have been thrown away were repaired. These included clothes which needed a few stitches, broken china, electrical goods which no longer worked. A refill service for household items like washing-up liquid and a bike repair workshop are also provided. Three more Repair Cafés have been launched with more to come in the future.

### **Refill**

TC sponsors the Refill project organised in conjunction with WSCC. The aim of this project is to reduce the use of plastic water bottles by getting local businesses to sign up to providing free refills of drinking water.

### **Food delivery**

A small team of volunteers regularly collects surplus vegetables from a local veg box supplier and distributes the vegetables to the Food Bank and the Chichester Night Shelter.

### **Monthly Stall at Wednesday market**

TC is sponsoring a monthly information stand organised by Eco Chi, a new environmental group in Chichester. The stall promotes eco-activities in the city and provides a useful information point.

## **PAST PROJECTS**

### **The Tchi**

For several years TC had a local currency called the Tchi, which was used for exchange of skills and services. This project thrived for several years but is now on hold as many of the original members of the group are no longer involved.

### **Food Mapping**

TC carried out a food-mapping survey a few years ago in conjunction with the District Council and produced a report on sources of local food in the area.

### **The Buzz**

The Buzz was a lively newsletter issued during the early years of TC, which included green-themed articles, stories and poems and an account of TC's activities.

### **Sew Don't Throw**

People met on a monthly basis for help and advice with sewing - the aim being to reduce the number of fabric items thrown away because they were in need of repair. This project has now been absorbed into the Repair Café.

Transition Chichester is a not-for-profit organisation, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales as Transition Chichester, Company no. 8300739

## **Re-skilling**

Many re-skilling sessions have been provided where members passed skills like bread baking, simple repairs, gardening, selling things on E-Bay have been organised over the years. Many of these activities have been absorbed into other projects such as Grow Chichester and Repair Café.

## **ORGANISATION**

Transition Chichester became a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Trustees in 2012. This was to enable us to apply for funding and to sign leases for our community gardens. This status has made it possible for TC to support partner projects such as Brewery Field, Refill and the monthly market stall.

Since 2012 thanks to a generous grant from the Roddick Foundation, we have been able to pay for the services of a communications facilitator to help with publicity and administrative work. We have also received funding to help pay for a Garden Facilitator to run therapeutic gardening sessions and help with garden administration.

## **FUNDING**

TC has successfully applied for funding from the following organisations:

Chichester City Council

Chichester District Council

West Sussex County Council

The Roddick Foundation

Groundwork UK (Tesco Bags of Help)

Greening Britain

The Niniveh Trust

Seedbed Christian Trust

National Lottery Community Fund

The Sussex Community Foundation

Collections have also been received from the Brighton Argus, Waitrose and John Lewis, Chichester

## **What's been happening in 2018 - 2019?**

Regular Swap Shops and Eco-cinema

Clothes and other goods taken to refugees at Calais

Grow Chichester: links formed with MIND, CRUSE and Graylingwell Hospital

Funding received from National Lottery Community Fund for Grow Chichester project

Tea in Bishop's Palace Veg Plot, July 2018

Brewery Field Community Picnic, August 2018

Repair Cafés started up in October 2018

Refill project initiated January 2019

Edible hedges and primroses planted around Oaklands Park

Eco-Chi stand at market, April 2019

Swap Shop and Repair Café at Weald and Downland's Spring Fair

Supporting XR (Extinction Rebellion) evening at Council House (May 30)

Transition Chichester is a not-for-profit organisation, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales as Transition Chichester, Company no. 8300739

