



Towards a sustainable community

Notes from Coordinating & Awareness Raising Groups 'Away Day' 29 September 2018

Present: Jean Ball, Derek Bodey Veronica Hawthorn, Charles Huff, Charles Jolly, and from 12:00 Jean Todd

Apologies: Jane Reynolds, Ben Evens

We gathered to take the time to reflect and consider what Transition Buxton is, what it is for, what our priorities should be, and how we can achieve the positive change that we aim to bring about in our local community and the wider world. We had 5 hours and covered a lot of ground, these notes (not minutes) just cover the highlights and conclusions reached.

Transition Buxton is one of the biggest membership organisations in Buxton with 107 Members, 50 of whom opened the last membership email, and a further 350 supporters on our wider email mailing list – these are all people who did not opt out earlier this year when we had a GDPR validation clear out.

Our legal structure as a Community Interest Company (CIC) is fairly simple to administer and remains our best option for the foreseeable future. As a Company we remain committed to transparency, solvency, and good governance on behalf of our members and the wider community that we aim to serve / support.

Having started years ago with the aim to prepare for 'peak oil' the transition movement has evolved into a much broader role to empower individuals and communities to develop sustainable ways of living together with finite natural resources. We believe that collaboration, sharing, and compassion are critical to our collective and individual wellbeing. We stand outside party politics and support positive bipartisan action. To help define our purpose and to raise our profile we agreed a new strap line to be added to our 'brand' as follows: **'Towards a sustainable community'**.

Transition Buxton's Purpose: Building a community
 Influence
 Change habits

How do we achieve our purpose:

Education; schools, outings, films, talks, etc

Projects including: Community Orchard, Plastic-Free, Eco-Transport, Energy Efficiency

Profile, visibility, PR, partnership & Collaboration.

Profile and Communication: Despite successfully doing lots of positive things over the years, the profile of Transition Buxton in the local community is quite low. We feel that there are many people in our community who are concerned about the environment, our carbon footprint, local food, and our impact on future generations, who are not aware of, or don't recognise Transition Buxton as an organisation that they want to get involved in. We want to be seen as the 'go to' group for action and information about sustainability, the 'green voice of Buxton'.

Transition Buxton is currently good at communicating information to our Members and at publicising specific events like film screenings, but less good at being visible as an organisation and attracting people to join in, not just join our membership or mailing list. We agreed to make the following changes to address this:

1. Add the tagline 'towards a sustainable community' to all our communications – CH will provide an amended version of the logo with this included.
2. Create a new Communications working group as soon as possible to be responsible for increasing our visibility and profile including: website, social media, newsletters, occasional column / articles in the local press. A call out to Members to help form this group to start at the 9th October Members meeting. This will have a knock on

effect for the Awareness Raising Group who organise many of our activities – they will discuss at their next meeting incl possible fresh attempt to find champions in local schools.

3. Consider some TB branded merchandise to raise both profile and funds – CH researching cloth bags, tea towels and re-use hot drink cups.
4. Plastic Free Town status – Penzance in Cornwall is the first to have achieved this accolade from the Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) campaign. A quick look at the criteria suggests that this is something that Buxton could achieve and could serve to help establish TB as effective in the eyes of our wider community. DB will research in more detail and present his findings at the February 2019 Members Meeting.

Affiliates: Transition Buxton has and will continue to ‘give birth to’ a number of projects and entities with which we remain closely associated. This allows projects to ‘fly the nest and do their thing’ independently without risk to Transition Buxton, but means that we don’t get much credit or profile for the difference that these projects deliver, and can reduce our capacity by removing active Members from our other activities. We discussed and agreed that, whilst we do not feel that a change of structure, e.g. bringing one or more back in house, is appropriate at this time, we would like to semi-formalise these relationships by encouraging them to:

- Use ‘A Transition Buxton Affiliate’ or ‘In Association with Transition Buxton’ in their communications wherever appropriate.
- Provide regular project updates to Transition Buxton Directors
- Include a Transition Buxton representative on their Board or Steering Group.

Our currently existing / developing Affiliates include:

1. Serpentine Community Farm recently saved from eviction thanks to an active local campaign supported by our MP, now enjoying an influx of new volunteers but, like TB, in need of more willing to take up core roles as fundraisers and Directors to take the farm to the next level.
2. Waterswallows Floating Solar Array: in the light of estimated cost of siting solar panels on water the financial viability of the proposed fairly large renewables installation in an old quarry is only viable if taken on by A.N.Other like the adjacent Tarmac quarry, or an eco-energy supplier like Ecotricity or Green Energy. Armed with the professional Feasibility Study DB will be approaching these businesses to see if one of them might make this vision a reality.
3. Repair Café: looks like it may start operating this autumn or early in the New Year by a group of volunteers who are mostly, but not exclusively, Transition Buxton Members, needs to operate outside TB so as not to incur insurance risks, costs and limitations. TB will publicise and support the Repair Café as a positive initiative that supports the sustainability of our community.

We also work in partnership with many local groups and organisations including: Buxton Civic Association, Buxton Town Team, and Buxton Film Club.

New Directors Required: We currently have 5 of a possible 9 Directors of Transition Buxton, 2 of whom reach the end of their tenure in November 2019 and can’t stand for office again for another 3 years. It is important that between now and our next AGM in spring 2019 that new Directors are recruited to join the Co-ordinating Group. Members to be informed and individuals identified to consider putting themselves forward. If required, Charles Jolly, who is also our Treasurer, is willing to continue to keep our accounts post November after he is no longer a Director, but it would be ideal to find a replacement Treasurer as well.

Other Business:

- Agreed to approach Buxton Town Team with a view to a shared Christmas / end of Year celebration on Tuesday 11 December – JB to email Town Team
- All Members to be encouraged to attend or send in proxy vote for (mini) SGM at the start of the 9 October Members Meeting to finalise amendments to Articles.
- Our existing Energy Assessors will get a refresher and new Assessors trained on 19 January 2019. We are now the owners of a thermal imaging camera to enhance the assessor toolkit and service. All to promote the free service to local householders – registration via website.