

Minutes of the TL2 Steering Group Meeting on 17/12/2007 at the Civic Hall, Llandeilo

Present: Sue Weaver (Chair), Isabel Lovelock, Anne Van Mechelen, Anson Allen, Jo Horsley (Environment Wales – EW), John Gaffney, Neil Keidan, Rhiannon Rowley, Gerry Gold, Steve Brown

Apologies: Simon Bowkett, Cathie Hasler, Dan Morris, Alice Davies

Minutes from 21/11/2007

Agreed.

Introductions

Gerry was new to the group. He is an author and is involved with A World to Win <http://www.aworldtowin.net/>

Rob Hopkins meeting

Rhiannon reported that Rob will now come to Llandeilo on Tuesday April 29th. We do not know if Ben will now be involved. Rob will be available until the Wednesday morning.

The chief executive of Carmarthenshire County Council wants to talk to Rob about Transition Towns in the county – this meeting will take place during his March 5/6 visit to S W Wales during which he will be speaking in Haverford West. One or two of us may attend too – Sue offered to be involved.

The group will consider what we want Rob to do at the April sessions before the next meeting and bring suggestions to that meeting.

Reaching out to the community

Steve has made contact with the WI - Diana Harper who is an executive for campaigns of the Carmarthenshire WI. She explained that the WI in Wales is already committed to eco-awareness. She is taking part in a challenge involving each person measuring rubbish generated, water oil and gas consumed, distances travelled etc. She has also been involved in going into schools helping with cookery lessons – bringing in fresh, locally-sourced ingredients. She would be interested in arranging talks, and forming links to our campaigns! The WI website should suggest where we have common ground. She did point out that, on the food issue, there is a problem with affording high quality locally produced ingredients when living on a pension – and more than half their members are retired.

Rhiannon will phone her.

Alice has passed on YFC contact details to Steve but she may be happy to make contact with them herself. **Steve and Alice to liase.**

The group will bring ideas to the next meeting on how to root ourselves more deeply in the community – (deferred).

Funding

Rhiannon has contacted WREN - <http://www.wren.org.uk/> - who would be a possible source of funds after we are constituted, especially for planting trees.

No application has yet been made to EW for a start up grant.

Constitution

Much of the meeting was taken up with discussing the draft constitution produced by Anne, Cathie and Isabel with assistance from Jo.

This draft has been circulated separately to steering group members. We discussed a structure involving three kinds of bodies – the steering group, theme groups, and work groups. The theme groups more or less correspond to chapters in the Energy Descent Plan, and would not separately constitute, while the work groups represent practical responses and may require their own constitutions. The constitution under consideration was designed to cover the steering group, theme groups and any work groups not separately constituted.

Response to the document and the accompanying diagrams was very positive, and it was felt that it captured the right spirit, emphasising that power and autonomy should be at the grassroots and not at some 'top'.

Some of the issues that were debated included:

- What is a 'member' or a 'nominated member'?
- Which of the current subgroups should be theme groups and which working groups?
Who can come to steering group meetings, and who vote at them (though voting is regarded as a last resort when consensus cannot be reached)?
- How do we prevent one subgroup dominating TL2 while allowing everyone with energy and enthusiasm to participate as fully as they wish, and regardless of their subgroup affiliations?

Particularly important is the issue of transparent and fair handling of funds (3.4 in the current draft) and we failed to agree on what size of fee should require a tendering process.

Before the next meeting everyone will consider the document in detail and bring back concrete proposals for next time. We aim to reach a decision at or soon after the next steering group meeting, since we are unable to get funding without a constitution.

Anyone with ideas should pass them to Isabel, Anne or Cathie before that meeting.

Steve will remind members of this responsibility shortly before that meeting.

Feedback from Subgroups

Food and Farming (Isabel) – The Apple project has funds earmarked from Horticulture Network Wales. Possible name Afallon Teilo (place of apples, Avalon). It will be constituted by January as a workers' coop. Tir Gofal has agreed to mail farmers and find out where apples are already being grown. There is a possibility of an outing to an orchard at Crickhowell or to Ragman's Lane, which could involve the Pemaculture group.

Alice and Sue are organising a questionnaire of local producers and suppliers with the aim of strengthening the ties between them and helping to increase the availability of local food.

Alice is mentoring farmers, helping them to think about horticulture.

Isabel would like an event centred around a meal with local produce, plus music, to happen...volunteers to arrange it needed!

Allotments. Dan was not present. Good progress is being made towards securing the new site.

Hemp (Anson). The trip to Gower has not happened yet. **Anson will post details of the next meeting to the web forum.**

Permaculture (John). Angie Polkey has offered dates for running a Permaculture course, including dates in January. The course would ideally be at the allotments site. Jo said that the allotments would not be available that soon. The number of participants required for one course is 8-12. There may already be 12 people interested, so there could be a need for a second course. Looby Macnamara and Chris Evans, who are Permaculture instructors living in Brynaman, are interested in being involved with the group. **John will convene a meeting of the group.**

Alternative Energy. Simon was not present. 6 people attended a meeting on Nov 26. Extract from Simon's report of that meeting:

Interests and projects ongoing are: energy storage, CHP, gas fuelled vehicle, low rpm alternator for hydro applications, various wind projects and a range of tests involving various insulation and energy conservation measures.

The group currently comprises a strong practical contingent of builders and fixers of some evident experience, so it is currently very much a technology development group by gifting and inclination.

The Blue energy (www.bluenergy.com/davishydro turbine.html) system was considered as a system worthy of feasibility study for a local town-based local grid application. This could make a huge electrical energy contribution simply tethered mid stream with no adverse effects on fish and the like. It needs evaluating for this application.

There were other discussions about the G24i (see www.g24i.com) dye sensitized Titanium Oxide thin film Photo Voltaic system produced at Wentloog near Cardiff was discussed, and large scale waste wood Combined Heat and Power generating systems.

The group will give a sounding board to innovators, inventors and developers, in order to help group members to create realistic, demonstrable examples of what can be done.

The next meeting is to be more widely promoted and is scheduled for January 7th 2008 in the Upper Room at the Civic Hall.

Provisions Market

There is a consultation meeting taking place on December 20th at the Civic Hall to discuss proposals. This is called by Morgans Group and Grŵp Gwalia with the county council. TL2 is not in a position to have a policy in relation to these proposals, and no one attending has a mandate to speak for TL2 as an organisation.

'A Crude Awakening'

The film showing will be on Thursday 17th January. The hall will open to us at 6pm. Sue will organise refreshments. More publicity materials were distributed.

A volunteer is needed to introduce the film and facilitate a discussion afterwards.

Transition Training

Following courses in Totnes, London and Bristol, the first training course in Wales to be led by the Transition Network will take place on the 19th and 20th April at Llwynbwch (Sue's). More information on the course is at <http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/TransitionTraining>. Participants will be applying from all over Wales. There will probably be places for between 2 and 4 of us. Anyone interested should contact Sue.

Plastic Bags

Anson reported that Annie is keen that a campaign to make Llandeilo plastic bag-free would be an excellent thing for the Waste group. The group supports the idea – but at the moment there is no visible Waste group! We invite Annie to consider convening one.

Resources

Anson strongly recommends regularly catching up with the daily digest from the Soil Association at

http://www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/Media/todays_news.html

Steve would also like to put in a plug for Rob Hopkins' blog at

<http://transitionculture.org/>

The next meeting will be held at the Civic Hall on 21st January at 7 pm. **Sue will book the room.** All are welcome to attend and participate, not just those listed above.

Please bring:

Comments on the draft constitution

Ideas for how to make the most of Rob Hopkins' visit

Ideas on getting more involvement from the community