

Transition Town Letchworth

Annual Report and Accounts 2019

Transition Town Letchworth (TTL) was registered as Charity Number 1156209 on 17th March 2014 and became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

TTL Activities During 2019

Educational Talks

TTL hosted eleven “Transition Tuesdays” during 2019. These events helped to share learning with residents and provided a point of access for anyone interested in getting more involved with TTL initiatives. In January Herts County Council presented their Local Transport Plan and there was a chance to explore the type of changes needed locally to help deliver this plan. The March meeting followed up with a look at how the latest technology is being used in other towns and cities to make transport more sustainable. In June, TTL supported ‘National Bike Week’ by showing the film ‘Beauty and the Bike’, which explores why women cycle less in the UK than in other countries. Local food was the theme for two evenings, with presentations on Local Community Gardens and EdiCitNet (a European project to spread Edible City ideas to which TTL is contributing). Local people were able to ask political party representatives about how the council could help the town lower its carbon footprint at an Environmental Hustings held in April. In May, a visioning workshop applied risk management techniques to try to establish ‘How Climate Change Could affect Letchworth’. TTLs October meeting challenged attendees to find headings for 52 Climate Repair tips, aimed at individuals, that could be shared during the year. Examples of self-build housing were shared to illustrate how this might offer a path to low carbon affordable housing. In September, as a follow up to achieving Plastic Free Status for Letchworth the project team shared lessons from the project and their future plans. The year ended with a festive evening with workshops on easy to make Christmas decorations and gifts.

Transport Projects

TTL facilitate the ‘Letchworth Cyclists’ group, who in 2017 produced a proposal for a cycle network across Letchworth. The group are continuing to work towards getting the Cycle Network incorporated into the local planning processes. During 2019 Letchworth Cyclists identified five schemes which are part of the network plan which would be beneficial if delivered in advance of a complete network and are in discussion with NHDC to try to get these schemes delivered.

At the end of 2018 ‘Letchworth Cyclists’ partnered with Sustrans on a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioners Fund for a project to use an innovative modular road planning kit around school entrances and on school routes to explore if different road layouts could encourage more children to switch to sustainable travel modes. The bid did not receive funding because “the project clashed with existing initiatives”, and TTL continue to try to find a funding source for this project.

TTL continued working in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) to utilise S106 sustainable transport funds to increase cycle and scooter parking at community venues across the town. During 2019 scooter racks, bike racks and bike shelters have been installed at Icknield and Fearnhill Schools and St Pauls church. A shelter and scooter racks have also been arranged for installation in Wilbury School early in the New Year.

TTL provided ideas to HCC for inclusion in the North Central Growth and Transport Plan and provided input to the East-West Rail Link consultation. Transition Town Letchworth proposed a

North Entrance to the station as an idea for utilising the £80k passenger benefit fund allocated to Letchworth, an idea that is being followed up by the station operator.

One bike maintenance course was held in 2019.

Plastic Free Letchworth

In 2018 Transition Town Letchworth signed up with Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) as the Plastic Free Community Leader for Letchworth. Their Plastic Free Community Toolkit set out five objectives that had to be met to achieve Plastic Free status. The project team completed these objectives and Letchworth was awarded Plastic Free Status in June 2019. Plastic Free Letchworth was nominated as a finalist in the Comet (local newspaper) Green Awards and attended the award ceremony in May.

Plastic Free Letchworth hosted a 'Nappy Change Event' in partnership with Waste Aware and the Children's Centre to encourage more people to switch to reusable nappies and help people access secondhand nappies. Talks on the Plastic Free Letchworth project have been given to the North Herts Over 50s Club and the Women's Institute.

Two community litter picks took place, one on the Jackman's playing field and the other on the Grange playing field. TTL have produced a proposal for Litter Cleaning Stations and is working with the Active Letchworth team at the Heritage Foundation to see if a pilot cleaning station can be installed in the town.

Terracycle offer fundraising schemes for collecting difficult to recycle plastic products. A number of local charities, including school PTAs, have registered as Terracycle collection stations. A town centre 'hard to recycle' plastic collection point in the zero waste shop is being managed by Plastic Free Letchworth, who sort the materials collected and pass them to the appropriate local fundraising organisations.

NHDC want to become Plastic Free and Plastic Free Letchworth are supporting the council with this initiative. TTL has made links with Plastic Free groups across the district and made a joint proposal with Plastic Free Hitchin to NHDC Environmental Panel for a scheme to purchase reusable cups for towns.

Food

Letchworth Organic Gardeners (previously known as Grow It Yourself Organic), offered a varied programme of talks and visits alongside some of their more popular meetings in peoples gardens. Geoff Hodge, broadcaster and author, talked about 'pests and diseases' at the group's annual event in April.

The Growers Market, where surplus home-grown food can be exchanged by residents in the town centre, took place each month from May to October. This year the stall was relocated to be adjacent to the Wynd Community Garden and an additional element of a child and parent activity was added with the aspiration that this would encourage more families to get involved with the community garden.

During 2019 TTL provided support to a community growing area at North Herts Leisure Centre, but unfortunately the council removed this growing space following the project manager's resignation from his job. TTL met with the council to discuss lessons learned and to explore future opportunities. The project showed that there is an unmet need to help families learn to grow their own food. A new project has commenced to set up an Education Allotment on the Woolgrove Allotment site to meet this need. The project will support up to four four families (possibly with children with special needs) to start growing their own food. A charitable grant was obtained in

December 2019 for £600 from the Heritage Foundation for a shed, compost and tools. NHDC is supporting by providing the allotment as a Charity Allotment (rent free). Local schools have been approached to help raise awareness of the project with families.

Autumn apple pressings took place at the Beer and World Food Festival and St Michaels Church. An apple pressing was also provided at a local pre-school.

Letchworth Heritage Foundation is a partner on a European Funded project to develop edible cities. TTL has joined the 'City Team' and have supported work to identify how learning from other project partners could help Letchworth develop as an 'Edible City'.

Thermal Imager

In 2014 TTL were awarded a Letchworth Heritage Foundation grant for a Thermal Imaging Camera which can be used for investigating how to reduce draughts and improve insulation in the Letchworth housing stock. As attendance at camera training sessions had been falling a new strategy of loaning the camera to people who respond to advertising on our website and in our Bulletin was trialled. The camera has been loaned out eight times this year. A talk was given on Thermal Imaging to the North Herts Over 50s Club.

Housing

TTL continued to participate in the District Council's 'Local Plan 2011-2031' examination process, to try to ensure that sustainability issues are properly addressed. This has involved sending a response to the NHDC Local Plan Main Modifications consultation.

TTL sent detailed comments to the Heritage Foundation on the shortlisted entries to their 'Re-imagining Garden Cities Competition', where architects had submitted high level plans for providing 900 new sustainable homes on a green field site bordering the existing town.

TTL have submitted to the Heritage Foundation proposals for modifications to their Design Standards, which would address where the existing standards are preventing people from improving the energy efficiency of their houses.

Education Resources for Guiding and Scouting

Resources that TTL developed in 2018 to support Brownie and Cub units working on their environmental badges were used during visits to three cub packs and one scout pack during 2019.

School Eco-Groups

TTL met with Highfield school council to provide ideas on how TTL could help them start an Eco-group. Following the meeting the school has initiated groups to address the topics of waste and gardening.

TTL met with Garden City Academy about possible TTL support for a scheme where the children have to achieve 10 promises that help the community. Ideas discussed were Terracycle Recycling, litter picks, making short films with sustainability messages, developing a connected woodland area for wildlife and learning, promoting low carbon food, designing a community orchard or garden and reducing school energy use.

Links have been established with the Lordship Farm eco-council, the first school in Letchworth to change the way their school milk is provided to reduce plastic waste.

TTL has met with Knights Templar 'Green Knights' to find out about their activities and to share ideas for projects which the school might like to undertake. Advice has also been given on how to resurrect their vegetable garden.

Development and testing of a series of School Eco-Club Climate Repair Activities has started. The idea is to provide schools with ideas for small eco projects which will allow students to contribute to the repair of the climate.

Green Audits

TTL was invited by the vicar of St Pauls to undertake an environmental audit of the church. Following a number of visits to activities run by the church a report has been submitted to the PCC which recognised existing good practice and made suggestions for further carbon savings.

Letchworth Festival

TTL was a lead sponsor of the 2019 Letchworth Festival, supporting the Children's Art Competition, where children were asked to create a picture of wildlife in their garden or create, install and photograph a feature to support local wildlife. There were 425 entries which were displayed in the town for the two-week festival. In addition to supporting the competition, TTL were involved in seven other events in the festival programme which included a community litter pick on the Grange Estate, a talk on the Medicinal Uses of Plants arranged by the Letchworth Organic Gardeners Group, A sustainable Food Trail for children which was supported by shops in the Town Centre, A production of the play "Peace Child - the story of how young people save humanity from climate change", a Tour of Letchworth's Community Food Gardens and two talks in collaboration with CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers) entitled 'Addressing 'Built-In' Energy Inefficiencies in Our Homes' and 'Understanding How Buildings Affect Their Environment'.

Building Partnerships

TTL recognise the need to work with existing social and government organisations within Letchworth to promote an orderly change towards a more sustainable future. TTL participates in town events where there is an opportunity to promote our aims and objectives.

TTL has continued to work with Letchworth Heritage Foundation. We send a representative to their Active Letchworth group where we have a particular interest in Cycling and management of Green Spaces. TTL partnered with the Heritage Foundation event on 'Have a Field Day', which included a Plastic Free Picnic, TTL ran a litter pick and craft activities. TTL also have representatives on the EdiCitNet project team.

TTL have built up working relationships with councillors and officers in both the District and County Councils, and have worked collaboratively on waste and transport sustainability projects.

NHDC declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019. TTL responded to this by sharing with NHDC TTLs ideas for six priority areas where we thought council actions could make the biggest difference or provide a quick win in tackling the climate emergency. TTL have also attended and contributed to a series of Environmental Panel meetings hosted by NHDC.

TTL have maintained contacts with other Transition minded groups in our locality and supported Transition Buntingford with their electric car display.

During 2019 TTL have shared information via a regular email bulletin, website and Facebook on TTL activities and other events in and around town that align with our objectives. TTL monitor national and international events relating to transition and climate change and share our learning.

Finance

TTL does not engage, and does not employ any agency to engage, in fundraising for the charity. The charities funds come from contributions made from people who take part in or benefit from our activities. Many of TTL's activities have no financial implications and can be delivered through volunteer time. Small amounts of money are required to fund some of our activities, in particular, where a hall needs to be hired or event promotion is required. Attendees at events are asked to make a donation, the suggested donation is set to ensure that an event will pay its direct costs and make a contribution to TTL's annual running costs. This financial strategy has allowed TTL to meet its costs this year and to end the year with a balance of just over £868.37 plus a £600 grant to be spent on the Allotment Project. TTL have set a reserves strategy of £500. The accounts are presented at the end of this report.

Summary

TTL have maintained our influence and presence in the town with our activities this year. TTL have attracted some new participants in our activities by hosting Transition themed events which covered a wide variety of subjects and activities.

Transition Town Letchworth Receipts and Payments Accounts Year ending 31st Dec 2019

Receipts during 2019

Cash at 1 January 2019	£43.79
Bank balance at 1 Jan 2019	£795.98
Activities:	
Transition Tuesdays	£407.67
Growers Market	£71.30
Garden Organic Annual Event	£320.15
Apple Pressing	£212.72
GIYO Membership Fees	£69.00
Thermal Imager Donations	£39.00
Rob Hopkins Meal Tickets	£70.00
Speaker Donations	£37.10
Letchworth Festival Events	£244.52
Plastic Free Letchworth	£72.74
Allotment Project Grant	£600.00
Total Receipts	£2144.20

Payments from activity during 2019

Transition Tuesdays (venue hire and sundries)	£444.24
Public Liability and Equipment Insurance	£112.00
Website Hosting and Domain Fees	£50.39
Apple pressing Expenses (publicity and sundries)	£3.60
Growers Market (printing and sundries)	£48.10
Garden Organic Event (venue hire, speaker fee, cafe and publicity costs)	£309.85
Garden Organic Group Membership Fee and Local Administration Costs	£69.00
Plastic Free Letchworth (publicity and sample products for stalls)	£82.34
Letchworth Festival Art Competition Sponsorship	£110.41
Hall Hire / Printing and Refreshments for Festival events	£193.99
Refreshments for Rob Hopkins visit	£82.06
Total Payments	£1505.98

Liabilities at End of Year	£0.00
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Assets at End of Year

Bank and Cash Balance	£1477.99
Thermal Imaging Camera (10% annual depreciation applied)	£1087.20
Apple Scratter (10% annual depreciation applied)	£136.79
Apple Press (10% annual depreciation applied)	£215.60
DVD and Book Library, Gazebo, Tables, display stand, PC Speakers, Heater, Electricity Monitors	

Auditors Notes

A sound set of accounts showing a carefully managed balance between income and expenditure.

Overall the net wealth of the club excluding assets increased by £638.22

This is primarily due to the Allotment Grant of £600

Treasurer: Julia Sonander

Auditor: Roger Lovegrove