

Transition Town Letchworth (TTL)

Annual Report and Accounts 2020

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Charity Number 1156209)

TTL Activities During 2020

Educational Talks

TTL hosted three “Transition Tuesdays” prior to Covid-19 event restrictions. These events helped to share learning with residents and provided a point of access for anyone interested in getting more involved with TTL initiatives. January’s talk focused on the different online tools that are available to help individuals understand the activities that contribute most to their carbon footprint. TTLs February talk provided an introduction to ‘Open Streets’ and attendees discussed how this type of event could be introduced into the Letchworth Festival. In March Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) officers presented their “North Central Growth and Transport Plan” and there was a chance to discuss the transport solutions proposed for the district.

During the Covid-19 pandemic a number of online meetings took place which explored the food topic and the possibility of setting up a cooperative business for providing a transition space and scrap-store, these were the new project ideas which generated most interest in a survey of members conducted in Spring 2020.

TTL gave presentations on the Transition movement to a Guilden Morden village meeting and St Pauls Church Mothers Union. TTL also gave a presentation on the EdiCitNet Project to the Salvation Army Ladies Fellowship.

Transport Projects

TTL facilitate the ‘Letchworth Cyclists’ group, who in 2017 produced a proposal for a cycle network across Letchworth. During the lockdown period in 2020 the group took the Cycle Network Proposal to the next level by:

- exploring options to redesign road space (where this can give a lower cost solution than new cycle tracks),
- extending the Proposal to include schemes to improve the walking network,
- developing a series of schemes which can be delivered in stages, but once all delivered will provide a full cycle network across Letchworth.

A community plan for Letchworth Cycle and Walking Network was published in two reports, the first described the methodology underlying the proposed schemes, including the traffic solutions, and the second provided detailed scheme descriptions grouped by areas of the town. The detailed scheme information was also presented in an online Openstreet Map. The group put together a marketing strategy and have presented the work to Letchworth Area Committee with the aim of trying to get the proposal adopted as the ‘North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) Letchworth Cycling and Walking Network Plan’.

TTL continued working in partnership with NHDC to utilise S106 sustainable transport funds to increase cycle and scooter parking at community venues across the town. A cycle shelter and scooter racks were installed in Wilbury Junior School early in January.

One bike maintenance course was planned in 2020 but had to be postponed before completion because of the Covid-19 restrictions.

Plastic Free Letchworth

The Plastic Free Letchworth team started the year with a litter pick on an area of the Greenway.

Working in Partnership with North Herts Road Runners a HCC councillor locality grant was secured to purchase litter picking equipment for use by groups in the town. A series of mini-litter picks was arranged as part of the Autumn Clean event and the Plastic Free Team ran a second mini-litter pick in December. Plastic Free Letchworth also contributed to the Plastic Free Communities Brand Audit as part of its Autumn Clean.

Plastic Free Letchworth now participate in a North Herts District Council Plastic Free Group where learning is shared, and district wide Plastic Free campaigns are agreed.

A local media campaign, which included Facebook posts, daily Tweets, a TTL website blog and a press release, was delivered to support the Plastic Free July national initiative. The campaign shared ideas on how individuals can reduce their dependence on single use plastic.

Terracycle

Terracycle offer fundraising schemes for collecting 'hard to recycle' plastic products. A number of local charities, including school PTAs, have registered as Terracycle collection stations. TTL raise awareness of the scheme and provide a 'hard to recycle' plastic collection point in the town centre sorting the materials collected and passing them to the appropriate local fundraising organisations.

The scheme had to adapt to Covid-19 restrictions which resulted in the collection point relocating into Morrison's supermarket. Storage and sorting space are ongoing issues for the project, but a potential solution of an eco-portacabin has been identified in partnership with Wilbury School, and a plan agreed to apply for grant funding in the New Year. In December, National Lottery Funding, distributed through the Transition Network, was secured for a bike trailer that will allow a zero-carbon transfer of collected materials around the town.

Food

An educational allotment for up to four families was set up on the Woolgrove allotment site in time for the 2020 growing season. Covid-19 made it difficult to provide the educational element to this project. However, the eight raised beds were used by four local families, who had some knowledge of food growing, who were seeking growing space and an outside activity during lockdowns. Two of the families have gone on to obtain their own allotment. It is hoped that in 2021 the educational element of this project will finally be possible, but in 2020 the allotment has been a valuable resource for members of the local community.

EdiCitNet is a European Funded project to develop edible cities. Letchworth Heritage Foundation (LHF) was a partner in this project and had formed a City Team in which TTL participated. In January TTL helped arrange a visit from Brighton University and Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to Letchworth and contributed to the discussion on what projects and ideas would be relevant to a Master Plan for the town. In March possible food growing project ideas were discussed with Fearnhill School in relation to the EdiCitNet project. Disappointingly, LHF pulled out of the project in the summer due to financial issues linked to Covid-19. TTL was actively involved in trying to get the project management passed to NHDC so the town could continue to benefit from the project, but unfortunately this option has not been acceptable to the project co-ordinators.

TTL annual public apple pressings were not possible with Covid-19 restrictions. However, TTL members who press and store significant amounts of juice were invited to attend a socially distanced apple pressing session so they could preserve their harvest.

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. The camera was out of service for the end of the 2019-20 winter season due to a user interface failure. However, a spare part was eventually sourced, and the camera has been repaired. TTL have continued with the strategy of loaning the camera to people who respond to advertising on our

website and in our Bulletin, which has allowed us to loan the equipment whilst complying with Covid-19 restrictions. The camera has been loaned out six times during 2020.

Housing

TTL continued to participate in the NHDC ‘Local Plan 2011-2031’ examination process, to try to ensure that sustainability issues are properly addressed. This involved providing written submissions and participating in the Local Plan online hearing sessions that took place during November and December 2020.

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 LHF sending a representative to their Active Letchworth group, where we have a particular interest in cycling and management of green spaces, and participating in 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. TTL have also attended and contributed to the NHDC Cabinet Panel on the Environment.

A number of Transition Network events have occurred online this year, which has allowed TTL members to attend and contribute. TTL presented our work on developing a cycle network plan as part of the ‘Transition Bounce Forward – What Is’ talk series.

TTL monitor national and international events relating to transition and climate change and share our learning. During 2020 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.

In February 2020 TTL got agreement to provide a monthly article, themed on actions individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint to the local paper, The Letchworth and Baldock Comet. In 2020 we provided articles on ‘using our car a bit less’, ‘finding safe cycle routes’, ‘flight free holidays’, ‘starting to grow some of your own food’, ‘lifestyle changes that tackle both Covid-19 and climate change’, ‘make do and mend’, ‘gardening to support wildlife’, ‘joining in with Plastic Free July’, ‘preserving the harvest’, ‘a green Christmas’ and ‘New Year’s resolutions for Climate Repair’.

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. With Covid-19 restrictions we have been unable to deliver the events that generate an income whilst still incurring running costs for the organisation. We have however ended the year with a bank balance of just over £585 and £74 of outstanding liabilities and are just meeting the TTL reserves strategy of £500. The accounts are presented at the end of this report.

Summary

Despite the challenging circumstances this year, TTL has managed to identify and pursue activities aimed at delivering climate repair. Members have adapted to new online ways of working and embraced opportunities to participate in relevant online national events and training sessions.

Transition Town Letchworth Receipts and Payments Accounts Year ending 31st Dec 2020

Receipts during 2020

Cash at 1 January 2020	£40.00
Bank balance at 1 Jan 2020	£1437.99
Activities:	
Transition Tuesdays	£75.30
Thermal Imager Donations	£50.00
Speaker Donations	£100.00
Plastic Free Letchworth	£33.35
Total Receipts	£258.65

Payments from activity during 2020

Transition Tuesdays (Sundries)	£13.20
Plastic Free Letchworth	£6.60
Educational Allotment	£764.95
Cycle Maintenance Course	£5.25
Thermal Camera Repair	£170.38
Public Liability and Equipment Insurance	£112.00
Website Hosting and Domain Fees	£50.39
Phone Number	£28.80
Total Payments	£1151.57

Liabilities at End of Year	
Transition Tuesdays (venue hire)	£74.16

Assets at End of Year

Bank and Cash Balance	£585.07
Thermal Imaging Camera (10% annual depreciation applied)	£869.76
Apple Scratter (10% annual depreciation applied)	£113.99
Apple Press (10% annual depreciation applied)	£191.64
DVD and Book Library, Gazebo, Tables, display stand, PC Speakers, Heater, Electricity Monitors	

Auditors Note:

I have reviewed and checked the Treasurer's annual account/balance sheet. Overall, the bank statements and the balance sheet presented correlate and are all in order. However, due to Covid restrictions, it has not been possible to check individual incomes and expenditures for all the individual activities. (It has been possible to check 2 of the expenditures). However, the totals balance and we can be confident the accounts are in order. My thanks to the Treasurer for a straight forward, well balanced set of accounts.

Treasurer: Julia Sonander, Auditor: Roger Lovegrove