

Transition Town Letchworth

Annual Report and Accounts 2015

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

TTL Activities During 2015

TTL hosted five “Transition Tuesdays” during 2015 generating just over £216 in donations from attendees. These events helped to share learning with residents and provided a point of access for anyone interested in getting more involved with TTL initiatives. The meetings included the AGM where TTL members presented and discussed the groups achievements and ambitions followed by a tasting of locally produced cider and apple juice. The other meetings were themed on the square metre garden, the consumerist habit, transition streets and planned obsolescence. As a follow up to the square metre garden evening TTL hosted a permaculture learning event.

The food group continued to be busy in 2015. 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. The Grow It Yourself (GIY) group met at the beginning of the year for a seed swap and continued to meet each month at a different garden or allotment with the aim of helping each other get the best from their plots. Residents have also received advice from TTL Grower's guides to help them start a vegetable garden. Members of the GIY group have been active in a joint initiative between the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and the RHS to build a community garden in the centre of Letchworth.

There was a good fruit harvest this year and TTL moved the location of the public apple pressings to the town centre. This resulted in improved awareness and participation in apple pressing by people in the town. TTL invested in an apple scratter and sufficient donations were received from people bringing apples to cover the cost of this investment. Lordship Farm School invited TTL back to have an apple pressing event with the children in Year 1 who were learning about the origins of food. Spare apples collected by the school were professionally pressed, pasteurised and bottled by a local firm, and sold to parents to raise funds for the school.

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. During the 2014 to 2015 winter season nine training sessions were provided and 49 people came forward to be trained. The camera was then borrowed 33 times. A number of houses were surveyed by some of the people borrowing the camera. The camera was also borrowed by Knights Templar School Energy and Sustainability Team. High temperatures at the end of 2015 meant commencement of the community thermal imager service had to be postponed until January 2016.

One cycle maintenance courses took place in 2015. This six week course, which is run in a local church hall, teaches attendees how to maintain and get the best from their bicycles.

The Personal Resilience group met in 2015, exploring how to nurture yourself whilst making a difference so there is enjoyment and not just burn out from getting involved.

Transition Town Letchworth participates in town events where there is an opportunity to promote our aims and objectives. In May TTL Grower's Market and apple pressing teams took part in the Food Festival. TTL also promoted a garage sale and launched its work on new housing with a series of mini-bus tours and a report launch at the local bookshop as part of its contribution to the Letchworth Festival in June 2015.

The 2015 garage sale that TTL promoted was the biggest yet with 64 households participating. Crowd-funding by participants was used to pay for the publicity allowing this event to be self-

financing for the first time. TTL encourages less waste and where waste exists the most environmentally friendly recycling. A TTL working group to explore supermarket food waste, where it goes and whether any can be diverted to foodbanks, started in 2015. To increase knowledge on environmentally friendly recycling a visit was arranged to see the new Anaerobic Digester, located just outside Baldock, in May 2015.

With recent proposals for new housing in Letchworth, TTL undertook a project to review previous housing developments and to consider desirable features for new developments (both small and large). A report entitled 'Sustainable New Neighbourhoods for Letchworth Garden City' was produced and the report has been shared and discussed with the Letchworth Heritage Foundation and will be discussed with the district council. TTL aim is to influence design briefs and design principles to ensure housing promotes low energy living and vibrant communities.

This summer members of TTL visited the Hockerton Housing project to find out about the experience of living in a co-housing development with low carbon house construction.

In Autumn 2015 TTL launched Letchworth Transition Streets. TTL produced an information pack to work through at a series of seven meetings. Topics covered are energy, water, food, waste and transport, and participants share their ideas and experience and each individual decides what action they might like to take. Participants should benefit by saving on household bills, cutting their carbon footprint and getting to know their neighbours. The first transition streets group met in November 2015.

TTL provides opportunities for like-minded people to get together and this year successful Summer and Christmas gatherings were organised so that members of different working groups could get to know each other better. 'Green drinks' have also been introduced which occur in the months when there is no Transition Tuesday.

During 2015 TTL have shared information via our regular email bulletin and our website on our activities and other events in and around town that align with our objectives. Regular blogs are now posted on our activities. TTL monitor national and international events relating to transition and climate change and share our learning.

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 has continued to work with the Heritage Foundation and arrange meetings to discuss areas of interest, this year discussions have mainly focused on new housing.

TTL give presentations to local organisations. The energy group provided short Thermal Imager workshops as part of the Knights Templar School Energy and Sustainability Team (EST) year 6 event. A talk was also given about TTL to the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

TTL Trustees have been participating in the Sustainability Working group which was set up in 2013. This group is supported and facilitated by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, but is intended to include as many local stakeholders as possible. Its aim is to identify and pursue measures to make Letchworth sustainable in a future where energy is limited and expensive.

TTL have maintained contacts with other Transition minded groups in our locality. TTL members have links with Transition Cambridge and Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire Transition initiatives. TTL members helped with and presented at the Bed, Bucks and Herts Transition Roadshow in April 2015.

TTL have become regular members and contributors at the CDA Herts Community Network Meeting. These quarterly meetings bring together anyone interested in reducing their carbon footprint in Hertfordshire. Considerable learning is shared in the themed discussions that take place.

Finance

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 insurance costs. This financial strategy has allowed TTL to meet its costs this year and to end the year with a bank balance of just over £350 along with some new assets. The accounts are presented at the end of this report.

Summary

In 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. TTL have also built up our links to neighbouring organisations and groups to improve knowledge sharing.

Transition Town Letchworth Receipts and Payments Accounts Year ending 31st Dec 2015

Receipts during 2015

Cash at 1 January 2015	£40.50
Bank balance at 1 Jan 2015	£498.88
Activities:	
Transition Tuesdays	£216.14
Hub Nights	£22.75
Apple Pressing	£254.17
Cycle Maintenance	£75.00
Thermal Imager Donations	£165.00
Garage Sales	£94.41
Housing Report Launch and Tours	£27.00
Growers Market	£42.68
Bio-gen visit	£57.00
Total Receipts	£954.15

Payments from activity during 2015

Venue Hire and sundries for Transition Tuesdays	£210.40
Venue Hire for Hub Nights	£0.00
Venue Hire for Cycle Maintenance Courses	£75.50
Public Liability and Equipment Insurance	£349.80
Publicity for Garage Sale	£93.88
Publicity for apple pressing	£18.96
TTL publicity leaflets	£26.00
Heater to Demonstrate insulation benefits using Thermal Imaging Camera	£26.37
Transition Streets Manual and publicity printing	£64.47
Anaerobic Digester visit – printing supporting information	£38.93
Apple scrapper	£227.98
New Neighbourhoods Report Launch – donation for borrowing projector	£10.00
Total Payments	£1142.29

Liabilities at End of Year

Printing of New Neighbourhoods report and housing tour resources	£62.70
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Assets at End of Year

Bank and Cash Balance	£351.24
Thermal Imaging Camera (10% annual depreciation applied)	£1956.96
Two Electricity Monitors (10% annual depreciation applied)	£101.61
Apple Scrapper	£227.98
DVD and Book Library, Gazebo, Tables, display stand, PC Speakers, Heater	