
Transition Network Conference

Ruskin Mills, 31-May-07

Session Notes

Rob Hopkins: Introduction

Today feels like a landmark event . When we unleashed TTT on 1st sept 06, there was one in UK and one in Ireland, and there are 38 communities represented here today and it's extraordinary and mind boggling. And today is to see what's happening and put faces to the emails.

80 delegates representing 38 different transition projects (town/village) here today

There term Transition Town is now largely irrelevant. We have transition peninsulas, villages, boroughs, districts, colleges, and valleys. What we want to do is find a different name. What we might actually brand ourselves. You all know better than me here why you are here.

There were some of you here who have started open space days, have unleashed, hope to share our experiences.

My reasons for being here are:

- I want to meet everybody
- To hear of your experiences
- The future with less oil could be preferable to the present if we design it with creativity and adaptability.... Etc

The effort to climb up the peak can be used to go down the other side. This is one of the largest research projects in the UK today - the 12 steps experience from Totnes and applying it in your own areas and finding out what works. "we aren't following a predetermined map we are making it up as we go along – it's really exhilarating"

Tudor trust has funded us for the first year.

Another reason for me to be here is to be part of something historic; the unleashing events are designed to be something historic and today has that sense of history.

Today is opportunity to celebrate - There is the amazing feedback we get about once this process starts. What we are trying to do is enormous.

The key to all this is the transition network [which is here] to inspire, encourage, support and train transition groups across the country.

Richard is here to for those moments we dread when someone asks a question you don't know the answer. I used to dread someone in the audience standing up and saying "I'm from the oil industry and everything you are saying is wrong". But in fact it has happened four times and each time the person said, "you are right". Someone is going to floor you with a killer question so Richard is here to help you answer those questions.

Today is also opportunity to celebrate I want to honour that and acknowledge that what you have done in your communities is extraordinary - and it can be difficult.

There's no money and it can feel very exhausting but there is the amazing feedback that we get in about once this process starts. Someone called from Lewis and said 'you won't actually believe what has been unleashed after that unleashing here'.

It is quite an extraordinary process. Want to celebrate all the amazing work you've been doing. What we are trying to do is enormous.

Just a couple of things we've been doing in Totnes...

We've been running transition tales in schools with year 9 kids. Imagining themselves in 2030 and had to tell the news. One group did a 'Top Gear' style car review of the latest transport sensation in Totnes, which consisted of hopping on his friend's back and having a piggyback round the room. Another group did the weather ("cloudy and windy, so if you have solar panels, bad luck, you'll have to wait until tomorrow to do your washing, if you've got a wind turbine, you'll have a great day")

And we've hit some interesting roadblocks. For our local food directory project, the Regional Development Agency said they couldn't fund local projects relating to food because of WTO rules!!

One of most amazing things for me there is that there's something about TT that's very serendipitous, it happens the right people come along, it has been quite exceptional .

After an event someone said, "When I think of what TTT is doing I feel so hopeful I could cry".

The work we are doing here is something the most important work in the county today. You are asking the right questions that no one else is asking. What would the world look like if we were using significantly less fossil fuels and how could we get there?