

Transition Stratford application for "official" Transition Town status

Date: 16/08/09

1. About our community

	Point	Response
1	What's the population of your community?	>115,000 in Stratford-on-Avon District as a whole (which we have defined as our <i>initial</i> area). Within this, Stratford upon Avon (pop. 23,000) is the largest town and the administrative centre, but there are several other communities within the District with populations of >5,000 which we hope will establish their own Transition initiatives over time: these include Alcester; Bidford-on-Avon; Henley-in-Arden; Kineton; Shipston-on-Stour; Southam; and Wellesbourne. See also response to Q5.15 below.
2	How would you describe your community?	Mixture of town, village and rural. The geographical area covered by Stratford-on-Avon District Council (which we have identified as our initial area) covers nearly 400 sq miles and is predominantly rural, but as explained in response to Q3.1 above there are a number of substantial towns and villages, including Stratford upon Avon itself. See also response to Q5.15 below.

2. About our initiative and our team

	Point	Response
1	Where did you first hear about Transition Initiatives?	No single answer to this - different people became aware of Transition at different times and by different routes
2	What will you call your Transition Initiative?	Transition Stratford
3	Do you need a wiki site or are you developing your own?	<input type="checkbox"/> Preferred name for wiki space: eg http://transitionnetwork.org/exeter or http://transitionnetwork.org/transitioncityglasgow <input type="checkbox"/> http://transitionnetwork.org/
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If you have your own website, tell us here - we'll link to it from the Transition Network site Currently http://www.transitionstratford.blogspot.com (this is likely to change soon to www.transitionstratford.com - we'll let you know when the changeover takes place, but in the meantime the current site is being actively maintained)
4	What form will your initiative take? (tick just one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Transition Initiative See response to Q5.15 below
		<input type="checkbox"/> Local Coordinating Hub Description of "catchment" area
		<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Initiating Hub List of communities in "catchment" area
5	Who will be the primary contact for Transition Network?	name James Pavitt (Facilitator)
		email james@nettlesoup.com
		phone 01789 414002
		name Barbara Cooper (Secretary)
		email barbaracooper@108shipston.freemove.co.uk
		phone 01789 298503

6	How many people do you have right now potentially wanting to work with you on this initiative?	core team	8 - 12
		community at large (eg on emailing list)	100 plus - currently 60 registered supporters (our term for individual members) plus around the same number on mailing list but not yet signed up
7	Please write a brief snippet about some of the core members of the team including how long each has lived in your community	brief biog	
		<u>Hugh Chatwin</u> Chartered surveyor, land economist and arranger of public-private funding for high-value projects. Director-trustee of >£500M community based project for social and physical regeneration of dysfunctional council housing, Birmingham. Interests include Sustainable Communities legislation and Community Land Trust vehicles for providing truly affordable rural housing.	60+
		<u>Barbara Cooper</u> Secretary, Transition Stratford and author of the initial Constitution. Professionally qualified as chartered secretary. After 20+ years in electricity industry, now self-employed consultant and writer specialising in corporate governance. Incompetent gardener, active member of Warwickshire Master Composter scheme and proud co-owner of Stratford's first solar PV array.	13
		<u>James Cracknell</u> <i>[NB James will sadly be leaving Stratford shortly, but this is included here in view of his huge contribution to getting us started, not least through fantastic publicity in the local press]</i> I have lived in Stratford since October 2007 and am a professional writer and journalist with the local newspaper, the Stratford Herald. My key skills are in communication and this has been put to use in the promotion of the Transition Stratford group. I am 24-years-old, and originally hail from Bristol.	2
		<u>Lim Ho</u> Convenor of Eco-Congregation in Stratford Methodist Church. I'm a retired research scientist from Horticulture Research International at Wellesbourne. I believe the only way to have a brighter and sustainable future is to change our life styles in the context of a caring community.	14
		<u>Roger Matthews</u> Treasurer, Transition Stratford and convenor of working group on local economy. Self-employed management consultant whose recent work includes climate change strategy for city of Birmingham.	13
		<u>Lila Morgan</u> I spent the first 30 years of my working life with an international bank In both London and Birmingham, rising to become a manager. I retired at 50 from banking, and formed with a partner a small company in the care service. During this time I served as a Justice of the Peace on the Solihull bench. I am now involved in Warwickshire Carers Support Service, Stratford Hospital League of Friends and Stratford Soroptimists Club. I have a passion for ensuring local food supply for the future, plus a clean and litter free town.	20+
		<u>James Pavitt</u> Facilitator, Transition Stratford and convenor of Food working group. Former co-ordinator of the National Association of Farmers' Markets. Currently local food & social enterprise consultant, part-time manager of Lifeways charity and director of the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives.	19
		<u>Shelagh Sandle</u> Former teacher and postmistress. Parish councillor (Stratford Town Council) since 2006 and currently Deputy Mayor. A passionate recycler, she firmly believes that it is possible to make Stratford-upon-Avon a town free of plastic bags, in line with other forward thinking towns.	21

3. Criteria

	Criteria	Response
1	An understanding of peak oil and climate change as primary drivers and the intention of writing them into your constitution or governing documents	Yes: our initial Constitution states that the purpose of Transition Stratford is to "promote local action in response to the challenges arising from climate change, economic instability and the end of cheap non-renewable energy and to help local people, businesses and organisations to take steps towards a low-energy, sustainable and equitable future."
2	A group of 4-5 people willing to step into leadership roles (not just the boundless enthusiasm of a single person)	Yes: our initial Constitution was signed by eight people, details of whom are listed in the response to question 4.7 above. These make up the current steering group, but another 15 - 20 individuals are already involved in working groups/projects and we are actively recruiting others.
3	At least two people from the core team willing to attend a two day Transition Training course	Yes: one member of steering group and one other activist have already attended training. Others intend to do so when time/health permit.
4	A potentially strong connection to the local/district council	Yes: Stratford Town Council (parish council) is already very supportive and we are building links with both District and County Council.
5	An understanding of peak oil, climate change and the 12 steps of Transition across the entire core team	<p><u>Peak oil and climate change:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - yes: members of the steering group are well-informed (but we all recognise that there is much more to learn...) <p><u>12 Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having debated long and hard, we feel strongly that each community must find its own path through Transition and that what is appropriate in one place will not necessarily fit another. Accordingly, we take heart from the statement in the Transition Handbook that the 12 Steps <i>"are not meant to be prescriptive; rather they are intended to suggest pieces of the puzzle you may choose to assemble. You do not have to follow them religiously, step-by-step: you can use the ones you feel useful, discard the ones that don't, and add in new ones that you come up with"</i> - that said, we think we have made a good start on those of the 12 Steps that we feel are useful for Stratford, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o our initial Constitution provides that the current steering group will resign at the inaugural general meeting to be held in September and be replaced by a steering group made up of elected officers plus working group representatives (Step 1) o Transition Stratford or its predecessor organisations have held an eco-fair, organised a film festival and taken stalls at local events to raise awareness of peak oil and climate change ((Step 2) o to date we have responded to requests from local organisations for presentations on what we are doing, but we are now taking the initiative by approaching groups systematically to offer talks etc (Step 3) o working groups (Food, Energy, Economy) are already up and running and others (Skills, Heart & Soul) are in the process of setting up (Step 5) o an Open Space on the question: "How will Stratford feed itself beyond the era of cheap oil?" was held in May. An Energy Open Space (question to be determined) will take place in October (Step 6) o projects in progress or under development include a Transition garden; a garden-sharing scheme; and a "loyalty card" to encourage purchasing of locally-produced goods and services (Step 7) o a Skills group is being set up expressly to look at skills for sustainability - who has/wants what in terms of skills, what training can we offer/facilitate ourselves, what funding might be available for external training (Step 8)
6	A commitment to ask for help from the Transition Network and other Transitioning communities	Yes.

7	A commitment to keep the wiki or your own webspace updated	Yes. As noted above, we have an active webspace at http://www.transitionstratford.blogspot.com which is likely to change to www.transitionstratford.com in the near future. We'll let you know when the changeover takes place, but in the meantime the existing webspace is being kept up to date.
8	A commitment to write up something on the Transition Towns blog periodically	Yes.
9	A commitment to network with other TTs	Yes - we have existing links with Transition Leamington and look forward to networking with other initiatives
10	A commitment, once you're into the Transition, for one of the group to give a presentation to at least two other communities (in the vicinity) that is considering embarking on this journey (a "here's what we did in our community" talk)	Yes - we have already made a presentation in Shipston-on-Stour on where we've got to so far.
11	A commitment to work cooperatively with neighbouring Transition Initiatives	Yes.
12	Minimal conflicts of interests in the core team	The steering group has formally adopted (and minuted) the following principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - steering group members will not seek any form of personal advantage (financial or otherwise) from their role - any of steering group member who has any involvement (as a member, employee, owner etc) in another organisation with which Transition Stratford or any of its working groups is proposing to do business of any kind will ensure that fellow steering group members are aware of that involvement - if in these circumstances steering group considers that the member's involvement in the other organisation is likely to bias their opinion, s/he will not take part in the discussion or any vote on the matter
13	A commitment to work with whatever entity emerges as the national coordinating group for Transition in your country	Yes - but we hope that, as the national coordinating group, the Transition Network will put in place a democratic and participative structure (as we have tried to do in our own constitution)
14	A commitment to strive for inclusivity across your entire initiative.	Yes: the initial constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - states explicitly that Transition Stratford will promote sustainability, inclusivity and social justice and uphold the UN Declaration of Human Rights - requires registered supporters to undertake to respect and value the contribution of others without discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, age, class, political views, religious opinion, gender, sexual orientation or disability
15	A recognition that although your entire county or district may need to go through transition, the first place for you to start is in your local community.	Yes: we have defined the geographical area covered by Stratford-on-Avon District Council as our <i>initial</i> area, but our constitution states explicitly that this is not intended to preclude the establishment of other Transition initiatives within the District. <u>We have no ambition to be a "hub" of any sort.</u> We fully recognise that the District is far too big for us to cover adequately and hope/expect that the area we cover will actually shrink over time (probably to something nearer to Stratford Town) as Transition initiatives start up in other communities within the District. To ensure that this happens, we are actively assisting embryonic Transition initiatives elsewhere in the District (eg Shipston-on-Stour)
16	One person (preferably more) on the core team should have attended a permaculture design course.	Yes: four members of steering group and several other activists have attended courses, either at Ragmans Lane or at a specially-organised event in Stratford.