

Henley in Transition Report to Henley Town Meeting 5th April 2018

Henley in Transition (HiT) was formed in 2008 by a group of about a dozen local residents. It now has a mailing list of approximately 275. There is no membership fee.

We seek opportunities for the community to collaborate in finding ways to move to a more sustainable local economy and to build resilience against shortages of key resources. Our eventual aim is to produce an Energy Descent Action Plan to point the way to Henley becoming a sustainable community, and in particular to becoming self sufficient in its energy use.

HiT is registered as an official transition town - see www.transitionnetwork.org/initiatives

Activities over the last year include:

Transport Strategy

Progress is at last being made on several aspects of the town's transport strategy. Policies in which HIT have been heavily involved include:

Buses Working Party. Announcement awaited on tenders for a new bus and timetable

Trees and Greening to absorb pollution in the town centre

Particulate monitoring. Unofficial monitoring by David Dickie - see below - has shown that particulates are a serious problem as well as NOx emissions. This monitoring would be SODC compliant so that there can be no argument over the figures.

Kill Your Engine Campaign, Henley Car Club, Cycle Paths - see below

Clean Air for Henley

David Dickie has led four initiatives during the last year:

Particulate Monitoring. David Dickie has taken measurements of the damaging particulates from vehicles at a lot of places round the town centre and has a dataset that gives cause for concern – and has encouraged the Town Council to look at more formal monitoring - see above

Close the Door. David and his team visited all the businesses in the town to encourage them to put stickers on their door to show they “Close the Door” to keep pollution out of their premises.

Clean Air for Henley Leaflet David, and his team of volunteers, distributed over six thousand leaflets to Henley households informing of the problem with pollution and how individuals can help reduce its effects.

Kill Your Engine Campaign - about to be launched - focusing on:

Schools; the school run and parking outside school ('Don't be an idle parent')

Public Transport; contacting bus and taxi companies to involve their drivers in the campaign,

Public Awareness; leaflets, stickers for rear windows of cars, events in Market Square, boards at the side of roads, Henley Standard & Henley Herald etc

Car Club

A Henley Car Club is ready to go and SODC is being approached for seed funding for the first couple of years. It is also hoped that they will provide spaces in the town centre car parks.

The aim is to get two or three electric or hybrid cars that people can use on an ad-hoc basis - 'Pay as You Go' motoring. Members then have no insurance, MOT, servicing etc to worry about. Typical costs are £5 per hour with a £25 joining fee.

Cycle Paths

Ron White campaigned to get cycle paths established in Henley in 2014/15 reported that his recommendations were reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan and that he has current contact with SODC that could lead to implementation.

Northfield End

We are working with HTC to get pollution absorbing trees and plants planted on the grass triangle at Northfield End

Community Energy Scheme for Henley

We hosted a successful meeting with Tony Hoskins from Reading Community Energy. They have completed a successful phase in Reading which saw solar panels installed on a dozen buildings. Investors get a reasonable return. The occupiers of the building get free installation of the solar panels and reduced electricity bills. A portion of the returns go to a community fund for other local sustainability projects.

Community or commercial buildings with a roof area of 30m² can join the scheme. If you think that you know of a building / organisation that would benefit then do get in touch!

May Fair

We had a stall at the May Fair. We planted runner bean seeds in pots with local children to encourage the families to have a go at 'growing their own'. We hear that some made it through to runner beans to eat!

Schools Environment Competition

Patrick Fleming has succeeded in generating a lot of enthusiasm and interest from local schools. 7 schools have entered. At least 8 projects have been promised on a wide variety of topics including: "Plant Growth", "Plastic Waste", "Soil Nutrition and Pond Habitats" and "Climate Change". The presentations at the River & Rowing Museum on 6th June are likely to be very stimulating! Pledges of support have been received from Quintessa, The Veterinary Centre in Henley, Henley in Bloom and the Thamesfield Youth Association.

South Oxfordshire Sustainability (SOS)

We maintain relationships with similar groups in Wallingford, Watlington and Thame through SOS. Sue Roberts from Wallingford is now coordinating the group and is asking for greater involvement from the other major towns. It is hoped that Didcot will also be involved in future. The major challenge to sustainability in South Oxfordshire, is the number of proposed new houses. This can only be tackled at County and National level.

Plastics

Thanks to Julia Carey the movie "Bag It" has been shown 3 times over the last year.

We aim to show both movies again next year

Julia has set up a plastics reduction group on Facebook which currently has around 300 members. We initiated a "Refill" campaign – places where people can get a refillable bottle replenished for free. This has the aim of reducing the use of single trip water bottles. Six restaurants/cafes have signed up so far. A stall in the market place promoted the scheme and sold quite a few refillable bottles from Oxfam.

Julia organised a successful meeting attended on local recycling with a presentation from SODC. She is also organising an exhibition at the River and Rowing Museum in August / September 2018 on plastics reduction.

Film 'Demain' / 'Tomorrow'

We showed the film “Demain” (Tomorrow) about the response of communities across the globe to the challenges presented by climate change. It is planned to show the film again in the near future.

Tilebarn Wood

Malcolm Dodds was instrumental in getting Tilebarn Wood planted back in 2008. The 300 trees we planted then are doing well with a satisfactory survival rate and rate of growth. There has been a surprising, and pleasing, outbreak of “pyramidal orchids”.

HIT also works with other groups on projects of mutual interest:

Henley Allotments Assn, encouraging residents to 'Grow Your Own'

Henley Health and Wellbeing Group who provide free complementary health treatments at The Kings Arms Barn every Monday between 12 – 2.00pm. A healing glade has been planted in Mill Meadows.

Henley in Bloom to encourage the planting of trees to absorb traffic pollution and house plants to alleviate pollution indoors.

Henley Wildlife Group. The aim is to work together more closely in future. At present this is mainly done by encouraging members to support each other's projects.

Henley Community Orchard

HIT supported HTC and the town's new Conservation Officer, Marcus Millitello in the planting of the community orchard in Paradise Road. There is to be a second planting day on 24th March.

Apples for Eggs

HIT has supported Jessica Hayes since she launched her 'Apples for Eggs' food swap in Henley last year. If you bake, grow, pickle, preserve, brew, gather or otherwise create your own food or homemade gifts or crafts then do come along and swap with other local producers.

Contact Jessica on her email twpi22@sky.com or look on www.applesforeggs.com

Tree for Every Child

Henley in Transition is supporting Mayor Kellie Hinton's campaign to plant a “Tree for Every Child” to re-green Henley.

Eco Henley

A “green wall” has been installed by local Henley artist, Clive Hemsley. The 30ft Living Wall is positioned on the side of his home, Longlands House, a Grade II listed building on Hart Street.

For information about any of the above projects please email henley.in.transition@gmail.com or telephone Dave McEwen on 01491 578658 or 07703 102688

Dave McEwen
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