

Making the transition, together

The first question might be, why do we need a transition? From what to where?

For the Transition Towns movement, of which Ealing Transition Initiative is a part, it means the journey from our currently unsustainable economic and social system to one which is sustainable and healthy for ourselves and for the wider community of life.

Currently we are consuming the Earth's resources at a rate requiring 3 planets to sustain it. Clearly this cannot continue. If we do not take conscious and realistic charge of our future direction, we allow disaster.

The Transition movement is principally an organisation for local action in response to this crisis. In Ealing over the past 11 years, Ealing Transition Initiative (ETI) has run a programme of education and awareness raising through film events, talks and meetings and harnessed the energy of the community into creating their own local projects to contribute to addressing the big problems, although within our local area.

Concern about the wasteful and unhealthy food system led, through self-managed Open Space events, to the creation of projects to model local solutions. Our Edible Ealing organic produce box scheme pioneered this approach, sourcing and distributing locally produced and organic fresh food at affordable cost. Another group established Village Park community allotment project in South Ealing where people could learn to grow together. Our Bee Project has taught bee keeping and supports itself by paying a honey dividend to shareholders. We have planted community orchards and public edible gardens to show how and where real food comes from. Our concern about CO2 emissions led a local group to help with simple home insulations steps while our Ealing Solar Schools Project has helped facilitate the largest number of solar school installations in London.

These examples of small groups of local people taking initiative and action may seem modest, but by acting together we have grown in confidence, in ambition and in power. Drawing on this confidence, we have been facilitating community meetings over the past 2 years to create wider plans for a sustainable Ealing. We've done this through 'time-travelling' to imagine the kind of sustainable future we want to see and then 'back-casting' the steps necessary between where we are now and where we want and need to be in 10 years' time.

The fruits of these community events and the energy behind them have been used to engage with the Council, as our most significant local organisation, to develop an action plan for Ealing. On 19th January 2021, the Council Cabinet formally adopted their Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy which will now set the direction and targets for all Council actions going forward. We are now building on this, with other local community groups by launching 'Act for Ealing', as an online hub and network through which existing and emerging community groups can come together and work towards effective climate action and nature restoration across the borough.

The Transition has begun. The more people come together to contribute to it the better it will be and the faster it will be achieved. We can all look forward to being much richer as a result, since what we will have earned through its achievement is the satisfaction of creating and living in a healthy and vibrant community and the mutual recognition and support of our neighbours with whom we will have achieved it.

Trevor Sharman

Member of the Ealing Transition Initiative Steering Group

Links

Ealing Transition Initiative www.ealingtransition.org.uk

ActForEaling <https://www.facebook.com/ActforEaling/>

L.B. Ealing Climate Action Plan information

info.https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/2691/climate_action/1