

ALL ABOUT TRANSITION IN THE FACE OF AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Transition to what, why, how & when?

A brief introduction to Transition Principles for
the 4th Nov. 2009 full council meeting of Frome
Town Council

FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

- **Climate uncertainty** (SCC position on Climate)
 - CO2 emissions at tipping point towards **runaway climate change**
 - **Uncertain Global agreement** on CO2 emissions reduction & carbon trading at Copenhagen
 - Permafrost, Polar & Glacier ice melt over this century will cause:
 - **rising sea levels** (c.1.4-6m), higher tides & storm surges bringing localised flooding that threaten:
 - Food production in Somerset lowlands
 - Energy production (**Hinkley Point?**)
 - Transport & Communication networks
 - release of vast amounts of **Methane greenhouse gas** (23 times more potent than CO2)
 - Changing weather patterns increase risk of violent storms and flooding
 - Warmer and wetter UK climate +2-6 deg. over next 80 years

FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (Cont'd)

- **Energy uncertainty**

- **Peak Oil** is imminent – Demand for conventional **Oil & Gas** will shortly outstrip production as **resources & reserves dwindle**.
- North Sea Oil & Gas production has been in irreversible decline since 1999
- There are no substitutes for **Oil & Gas** in the quantities required to meet current and projected demand
- There is a growing **UK energy gap** and
- **Dependence** on sources of energy from less stable regions
- Increasing risk of **energy disruption**, escalating costs & market volatility
- Increasing high risk of pervasive & **rampant energy poverty**

FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (Cont'd)

- Economic uncertainty

- July 2008 record high Oil & Gas prices precipitated the Global Recession
- Exposing reckless Banking & Investment practices causing a credit crunch & financial crisis
- The worst economic conditions for 60 years
- Massive Government bailout of Banks at public expense
- The increasing risk of growing unemployment payments & reducing tax revenues will continue to inflate record high National Debt & repayments as the recession continues, leading to:
 - Massive Government spending cutbacks & decline in public services
 - Further increasing the risk of economic collapse &
 - The end of economic growth fuelled by easy credit
- **Transition to a sustainable low-carbon local Steady State Economy by communities in the absence of Governments' ability to continue funding public services and underwrite the unknown full extent of Bank toxic loans.**

FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (Cont'd)

- **Political Uncertainty** (New Politics webcast)
 - Government failure to anticipate and manage economic risks and outcomes
 - Ineffective **immigration policy** (c.3million since 1998)
 - Dysfunctional, bureaucratic & inefficient central government
 - Greater EU interference and control by unelected remote bureaucrats
 - MPs expense scandal expose betrayal of trust & urgent need for
 - Major **Political & Constitutional Reform** prior to 2010 elections including
 - Devolution of powers from Central to Local Government
 - Empowering communities via the **Sustainable Communities Act**
 - Need for greater community engagement and responsibility in the democratic process through **Direct Democracy**
 - Growing dependence on the 3rd Sector to assume greater social support roles

FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (Cont'd)

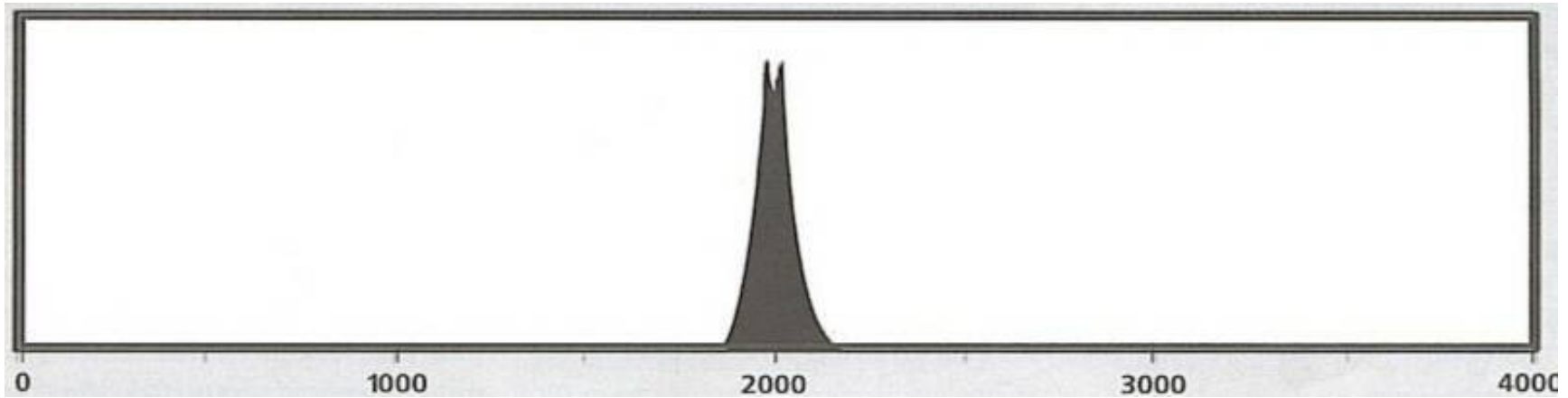
- Employment uncertainty

- Rising unemployment due to the ongoing recession & global competition
- Local employment opportunities for the settled population displaced by **uncontrolled immigration** and outsourcing
- Demand led education, skills and experience gap (**Leitch Report**)
- Unclear local demand led employment strategy
- No strategy for urgent implementation of local **sustainable agriculture** & renewable energy projects to enable **Relocalisation**

- **Population uncertainty**

- **Changing Demographics** and an ageing society
- Population declining fertility
- Unrealistic & unsustainable immigration & **population growth** expectations

The Energy Curve of History?



UK SOURCES OF ENERGY

- Over the past 2000 years, we have consumed most of our **forests** leaving only c.12% of land area forested.
- In the last 200 years we have used up our viable coal resources and closed down all but **four deep coal mines**
- In the last 30 years we have exploited **North Sea Oil & Gas** which has been in terminal decline approaching -10% per annum since 1999

UK POPULATION

- *“The population of the UK will rise from 61m to 71m by 2033 if current trends in growth continue, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said.*
- *Just over two-thirds of the increase is likely to be related directly or indirectly to migration to the UK.”*

However;

- *“The Optimum Population Trust believes that Earth may not be able to support more than half its present numbers before the end of this century, and that the **UK's long term sustainable population level may be lower than 30million”***
- *Watch the BBC documentary – “How many people can live on Planet Earth?”*

Transition to What?

- Radical and rapid **cultural change** adopting sustainable development principles & lifestyles
- A low-carbon economy & phased Energy Descent Action Plan embracing
 - Rigorous **energy conservation** & efficiency
 - **Renewable energy** projects
 - Education & training in self-sufficiency & **sustainable technologies** e.g. Permaculture
- Transition towards **fossil fuel free agriculture, manufacturing and transport**
- Transition from **Globalisation** to **Relocalisation** which will promote & enable
 - **Local renewable energy** and **seasonal food self-sufficiency**
 - Significant reduction of **UK food miles** now in excess of an astonishing 30 billion Km pa
 - Massive reduction in carbon emissions
 - Exponential growth in new local businesses and employment
 - **Resilient** self-sufficient & Sustainable Communities
- Fully Integrated Transport Plan reducing private motor car dependency
- **Electrification** of all forms of **transport**, production & manufacturing

Why should we Transition?

- *“Business as usual” is destroying the economy’s eco-supports, is setting the stage for dangerous climate change and is no longer a viable option.*
- *Global overpopulation & rampant consumption have depleted natural resources to a perilous state and in particular energy resources causing Peak Oil & resource wars.*
- *There are no readily available substitutes for oil & gas in the quantities required to meet current and future global population energy demand*

How do we Transition?

- Local Government Association publication - “Volatile Times, transport, climate change and the price of oil”
- Local Authorities ODAC publication - “Preparing for Peak Oil – Local Authorities and the energy crisis”
- Sustainable Communities Rob Hopkins’ publication - “The Transition Handbook”
- Transition research publication – “Strategies for Local Government and Sustainable Communities”
- Somerset County Council resolution to become the first UK Transition Authority
- Central Government must accelerate the process of devolution to empower Local Government & Sustainable Communities.
- Local Government must become more accountable to the communities they serve
- **Communities must take full advantage of the Sustainable Communities Act and responsibility for their own future – nobody else can or will!**

Transition Initiatives

- In Rob Hopkins' March 2008 publication of “The Transition Handbook”, he defines Transition Initiatives as having four key assumptions:
 - *“That life with dramatically **lower energy consumption** is inevitable, and that it’s better to plan for it than to be taken by surprise.*
 - *That our settlements and communities presently lack the resilience to enable them to weather the severe energy shocks that will accompany peak oil.*
 - *That we have to act collectively, and we have to act now.*
 - *That by unleashing the collective genius of those around us to creatively and pro-actively design our energy descent, we can build ways of living that are more connected, more enriching and that recognise the biological limits of our planet.”*

When to Transition?

- “Frome a town in transition” is already listed as a Transition Town!
- The results of work already undertaken by Sustainable Frome can be viewed on their website

"Transition is a community-focussed response to the twin problems of peak oil and climate change and seeks a creative rather than destructive move away from fossil fuel dependency" - Adrian Tate

For more details visit:

<http://transitiontowns.org/Somerset/Somerset>

<http://www.alexmalcolm.co.uk> &

[Sustainable Frome website](#)

Invitation to Frome Town Council

- To endorse the principles of the Transition Movement and Frome's status as a Transition Town
- To make a statement on Peak Oil and how the Council intend to mitigate energy and climate uncertainty within the community they serve
- To attend Sustainable Frome Meetings, film shows, guest speaker talks and seminars