

Transition Belper – Chairs Report 2016

It's been another busy year in the world of Transition and for everybody involved in Transition Belper. Despite the many challenges such as ongoing climate change, government policies, local authority cuts, threats to green fields in Belper and conscientious people just being too busy, Transition Belper continues to develop, grow and launch new projects.

There have been many highlights in the year including;

The launch of B-Hive, starting with a simple question from Becky on Transition Belper's facebook page and we now have a name, a logo and a regular stall on the Farmers Market.

After many years of TB trying, Clair has established an Inner Transition group, which already has a number of different offerings and groups available, including the Dream Catcher sessions, the Women's Circle, Coffee Evenings and the newly formed Men's circle.

Belper Goes Green continuing to get bigger and better, with most importantly, a larger team helping David share the load & deliver an amazing event free of charge for the local community, whilst at the same time raising important funds for Transition Belper.

Recently Belper has won a gold in the East Midlands 'In Bloom' competition with the activities of Kate's station crew at the Train Station, Belper Goes Green and Blooming Junk being acknowledged by the judges. In 2017 they might even find out about the great work currently going on in Crich Gardens led by Richard!

Transition Belper has become part of the fabric of Belper and individual supporters and groups continue to support and get involved in many projects all supporting the aims of making Belper a more sustainable and resilient place.

- Many TB supporters and the Travel and Transport group in particular continue to support and help the development of the Neighbourhood Plan for Belper (NP4B), focussing on the sustainability issues in the plan.
- A Climate Vigil was organised by TB Inner Transition in the market place and involved many groups with Belper with similar concerns raising awareness at the time of the Paris talks.
- Within the World Heritage Corridor Ian has continued promoting water power (past, present and future) with talks, walks and open days. Ian is now on the Derwent Valley Mills steering group promoting Belper and sustainability issues along the world heritage site.
- Transition Belper have been involved in the newly launched Derwent Valley research framework, hopefully attracting research and investment into sustainability topics in the area.
- 12 monthly Transition Belper meetings covering a variety of topics and usually having over 20 attendees.
- We continue to support and encourage the Derwent Valley Cycleway project.
- TB supporters have helped with the launch of the monthly Freedom Food project at No. 28.
- A new project, funded by Derwentwise and the DVMWHS, is currently being set up to train Weir Watchers, a project initiated with the support of Transition Belper.
- The activities of TB are supported promoted by the excellent new online Nailed – Belper Alternative News.
- Not forgetting the monthly 'social' green drink evenings, organised around Belper, supporting local pubs and brewers and offering a different way for interested people to get involved with Transition Belper.

Among the challenges we have faced this year;

- The Ambergate Hydro project is still on hold following the change in government support at the end of 2015. The project team, landowner and community supporters are still keen to progress the project but at the moment the project is financially unviable, but we continue to look for a positive way forward.
- With the activities of Transition growing and becoming established in the community, governance becomes a challenge and it has been a difficult year for the current officers and trustees to have enough time to support new trustees and facilitate all the activities expected of Transition Belper. This will need to be a priority for the new team of trustees going forward, ensuring we support and focus our efforts in the right places. Currently training and support for trustees is being looked into. Again, if you or somebody you know could help in this area please let us know.
- Several planning applications have been submitted in recent months on green field sites around Belper and where possible, Transition tries to share information to help people object to unreasonable and unsustainable developments. This is an area where we do need more help to monitor and respond to new applications and help with the development of the Belper Neighbourhood Plan and the new Amber Valley local plan.
- We worked with a number of other organisations in a funding bid to bring Electric Cars hire into Belper and unfortunately the bid failed. The effort put into the application was worth it with new and improved relationships with Amber Valley Council, the Derwent Valley Community Rail partnership and the Peak District & Derbyshire Marketing team.

We have had a new treasurer in Tony C who has come on board this year and made a tremendous difference, after resolving a number of financial, banking and tax issues with the help of Chris and is now tackling the governance and charity status of Transition Belper, as the financial activities of Transition Belper grow through Belper Goes Green. A priority for 2017.

We also have a new editor of the Transition Belper newsletter which is currently going out to 814 supporters, so it's a big thank you Ed for the work you have done over the last couple of years and Tony W who has picked up the mantle so effectively.

The various facebook sites launched by Transition Belper members continue to be active and the main Transition Belper site now has 500 members.

I must thank everybody who is supporting and encouraging Transition Belper and especially those members actively giving so much time, effort and energy to the cause, encouraging anybody interested in getting more involved or helping with the day to day running or a specific project or group to get involved.

In the spirit of Transition I complete the report looking forward to new projects being started in the new year, hoping we can also launch a regular Transition Café in Belper following the success of the recent Café held in October at No.28, alongside the Farmers Market, thanking Pippa and George for allowing Transition Belper to use No. 28 to promote Transition Belper, raise awareness and raise money.