Bournemouth University

Spreading Seeds of Sustainability: Factors Affecting the Development of the Transition Movement in Dorset

School of Conservation Sciences

Hopkins 2008a p. 3

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Abstract

Global environmental problems such as climate change have highligted the need for succeeding in what decades of campaining by conventional environmental organisations seem to have failed to truly accomplish, changing environmental behaviour. The success of commmunity initiatives, such as the Transition Movement, in realising such change in environmental behaviour has sparked the interest of policymakers, practitioners as well as academics (Jackson 2005). Yet despite this interest, relatively little research has been carried out to explore the processes involved in the work of such initiatives (Seyfang 2007).

This study set out to address that gap by critically evaluating the key achievements and challenges of the Transition Movement in Dorset by the means of a mixed-method comparative case study. The main data collection method was a creative and participatory self-evaluation workshop based on the principles of empowerment evaluation designed to provide Transition Initiatives with a useful and relevant tool for reflection while creating valuable qualitative data for this study.

Through qualitative analysis of the outputs of the workshops it was established that the Transition Movement has formed a strong network of motivated and enthusiastic Initiatives in Dorset and shows great potential for growth and development. Due to evident commitment to the Transition Model, the main challenges and achievements of the Initiatives were related to the Model. While the supportive and positive atmosphere of the Initiatives as well as their ability to reconnect the community and engage a diverse range of people were seen as their strenghts, the groups were found to struggle with accomodating the different people involved in the groups as well as balance the non hierarchical structure of the Transition Model and the control and organisation necessary to steer the group forward.

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the processes through which community initiatives work and could, along with the self-evaluation tool developed by this study go on to assist in the further development of the valuable work of Transition Initiatives.

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> Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

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Chapter One

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Chapter Introduction

This chapter will present the rationale, aim and objectives of this study, introduce the study location and describe the research approach.

1.2. Rationale

As global environmental issues such as climate change have risen to the public consciousness more than ever, governments, policy-makers and organisations have woken up to the crucial importance of creating change in environmental behaviour, sparking the interest of academia in the various strategies for achieving this change.

Due to the approach employed by the conventional environmental movement, graphic images of environmental degradation have become commonplace. This strategy is based on the Awareness-Information-Decision-Action model, the idea that the more information people have the more likely they are to act (Hopkins 2006). However, although environmental problems are indisputably acknowledged by a wider public than ever, arguably little change has been created through this increase in awareness (Barry 2009). This has led Rob Hopkins (2008a), the founder of the Transition Movement, as well as several academics to argue that the "gloom and doom" approach of the conventional environmental movement does little but spread feelings of apathy and helplessness (Barry 2009, Kaplan 2000). As people will instinctively avoid contexts that make them feel helpless, many will not strive to change their behaviour but will avoid the topic altogether (Kaplan 2009). Furthermore, many argue that the action proposed by environmental organisations "individualises" responsibility, presenting individual consumer choices as the response to global environmental issues. Not only is this clearly an ineffective solution to the complex issues the world faces, but individualising responsibility has been shown to disregard the social nature of behaviour (Wilhite et al. 2000) as well as the importance of groups in changes to lifestyles and therefore environmental behaviour (Heiskanen et al 2009).

The power of community initiatives in realising environmental change has therefore sparked the interest of practitioners, policymakers and academics. A substantial evidence base demonstrates that providing individuals with feedback on collective impact can counter disempowerment and helplessness (Tukker et al 2008), and that for long lasting change individuals need to be empowered and engaged in a participatory activity to find solutions that meet their needs (Kaplan 2000). Several successful community based initiatives based on these principles have been created around the world, among them the Transition Movement, a network of community initiatives working to "tap into the creative genius" (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008 p.8) of their local communities to create more resilient and localised communities

> Far more fulfilling and enriching more connected and more gentle on the earth than the lifestyles we have today (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008 p.9).

However, despite the growing interest in the area, there is still a "dearth of" research on the topic (Seyfang 2007) in terms of both the wider literature as well as the Transition Movement. More specifically there is a need for further study to understand the processes through which community action takes place (Seyfang 2007), to discover "what works and what does not work" (Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (SCR) 2006 p.51) in order to develop the valuable work of these initiatives.

This study will therefore strive to contribute to the wider sustainable communities literature as well as the development of the work of the Transition Movement by gaining an insight into the achievements and challenges faced by Transition Initiatives in Dorset to identify the drivers and barriers to the growth and development of the Movement in the area.

1.2.1 Transition in Dorset

The roots of the Transition Movement are in the countryside south-west of England in small market towns with a history of more localised economies that the Initiatives reflect upon in creating more resilient communities (Hopkins 2008a). The movement therefore rapidly spread to Dorset where such market towns with a local history are also abundant. However, the movement quickly evolved from the concept of Transition Towns to include rural areas,

villages and even islands, and Transition Towns were renamed Transition Initiatives (Hopkins 2008a). Echoing the roots of the movement, the most common initiative is still a small town and its rural surroundings as demonstrated in Figure 1 which illustrates the geographical types of Transition Initiatives in the United Kingdom.
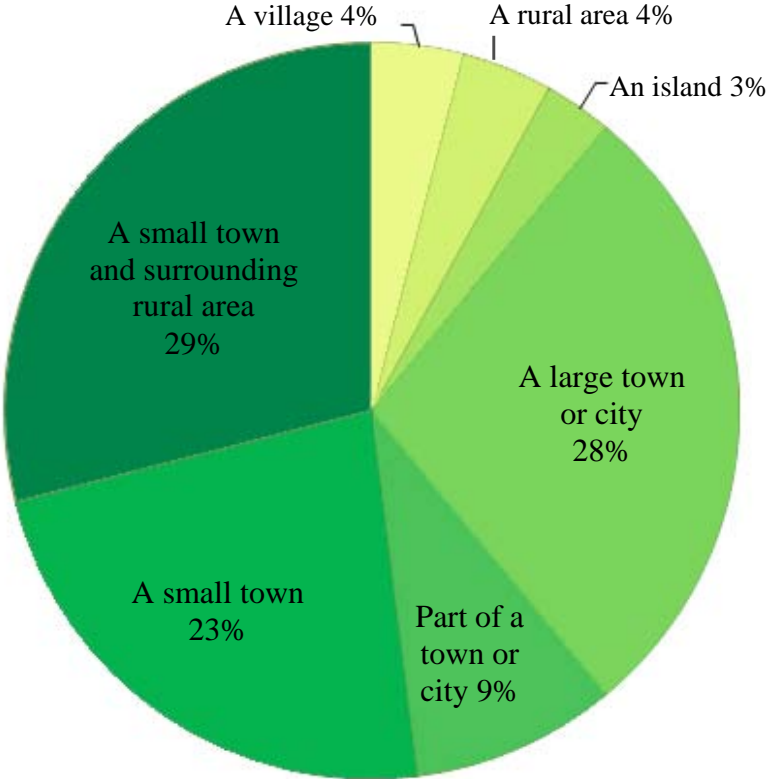
Figure 1. Types of Transition Initiatives in the United Kingdom
(Adapted from Seyfang 2009)

The Transition Movement now has a strong network of 14 active Initiatives in Dorset (Transition Network 2010a) as illustrated by Figure 2. Reflecting the trend of the movement, a majority of these are small towns, often including the rural surroundings.

However, Initiatives have been set up also in bigger cities such as the Transition BH hub as well as parts of towns such as Transition Christchurch. Transition villages are represented by Transition Thorncombe village and rural areas by Transition Purbeck. Hence the only type not represented in Dorset is Transition islands. The study area was therefore deemed suitable due

to the strong network of Initiatives found to represent both the roots and the present situation of the Transition Movement.
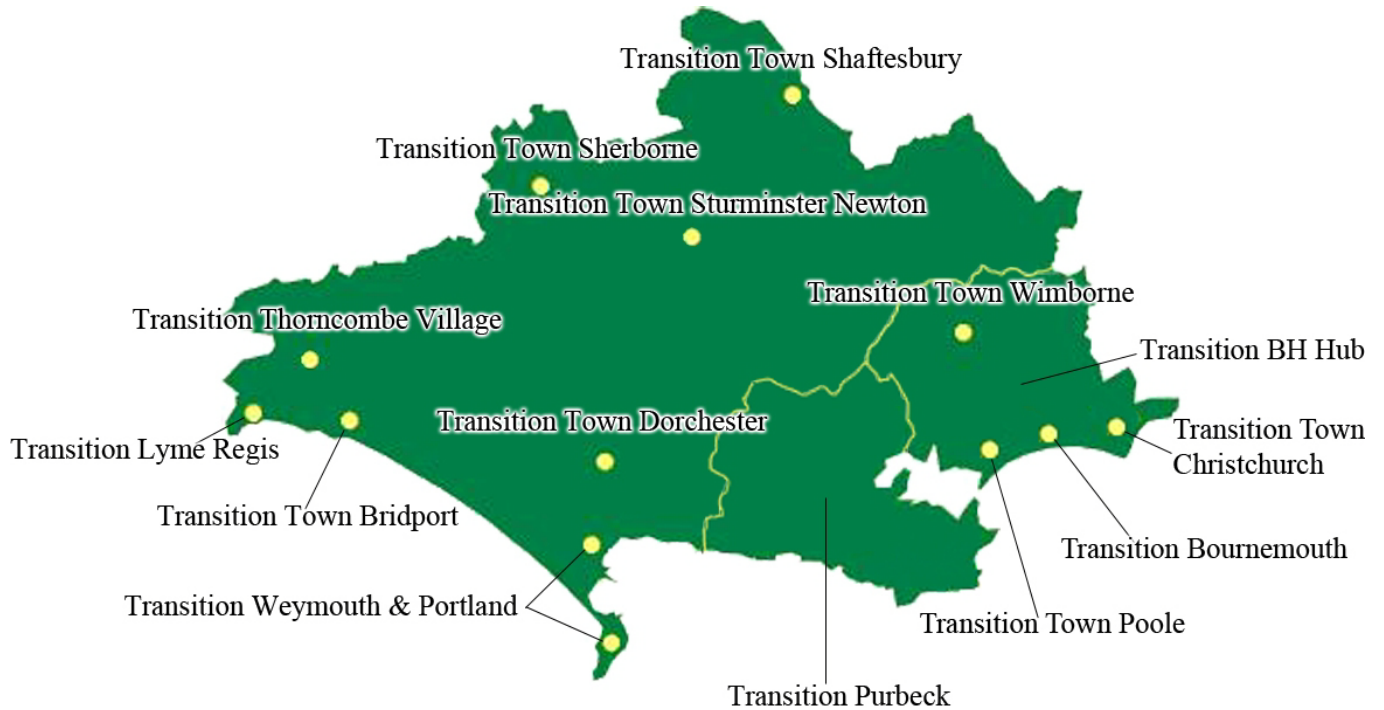
Figure 2. Transition Initiatives in Dorset (Adapted from Rankwell 2008)

1.3. Aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to critically evaluate the key challenges and achievements of Transition Initiatives in Dorset.

Objectives:

1. To review relevant literature on community based environmental work and the Transition Movement.
2. To explore the key achievements and challenges of Transition groups in Dorset.
3. To synthesise data and identify key themes.
4. To conclude on the key challenges and achievements of Transition Initiatives in Dorset.

1.4. Approach

This study will begin with a review of the relevant literature, as outlined by objective one, to gain an understanding of the background of the Transition Movement as well as the wider sustainable communities literature. The methodology chapter will develop a research process to satisfy objective two and the aim of the study as well as evaluate the limitations of the selected research design. The results and discussion chapter will address objective four by presenting, analyzing and discussing the findings and relating them to previous research. The conclusion chapter will then address objective four by drawing conclusions from the findings in relation to the aim and discussing the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

1.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has described the rationale for this study as well as its location leading to the aim and objectives of the study. The approach of the study was also presented to clarify the structure of this dissertation to the reader.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2. Literature Review

2.1. Chapter Introduction

This chapter will introduce "the hydrocarbon twins", the global environmental issues of peak oil and climate change underlying the Transition movement and discuss the weaknesses of conventional environmentalism and its ability to tackle these issues. Sustainable communities will then be discussed as an alternative response and Transition Movement introduced as a case of this approach.

2.2. The "hydrocarbon twins"

2.2.1. Peak oil

The concept of peak oil, first introduced in the 1950s by US geophysicist M.King Hubbert (Wilkinson 2008), is defined as the "tipping point":

> when further expansion of oil production becomes impossible because new production flows are fully offset by production declines. (Skrebowski cited in Hopkins 2008a p.21)

As early oil extractions are characteristically quicker and easier, the remaining oil will be harder to extract (Jeffery 2008). As demand overtakes supply, price of oil will rise rapidly and consumption will eventually have to fall. Since oil is indisputably a finite resource, there is no debate over whether global peak oil will eventually occur, but division of opinion remains about its imminence and consequence (Wilkinson 2008).

The growth and industrialisation of modern societies has been driven by over a century of cheap and plentiful fossil fuels, leading to a situation where the world is heavily (80%) dependant on fossil fuels and the transport sector is up to 95% dependant on oil (Bauen 2006). Given this as well as the International Energy Agency (IEA) scenarios estimating up to a 40% increase in world energy consumption by 2030 (IEA 2009) many, like Hopkins (2008a), express concerns that Peak Oil may cause global recession and restructuring of economies. Others argue that alternative forms of energy will take over as the price of oil rises, and forcedly speeding up the shift from fossil fuels to currently more expensive alternatives could

harm economic competitiveness (Wilkinson 2008). However, even studies presenting optimistic views on future sources of energy, such as Bauen (2006), rely in the long term not only on debatable technologies such as bio fuels, with implications on environment as well as food production (Antonio 2009), and hydrogen, with high production cost and energy demand (Romm 2004), but on improvements in energy efficiency and behavioural change.

Projections of global oil production are burdened with uncertainty complicated by unwillingness of countries and oil companies to publish data. Nevertheless, supported by observations of rises is oil prices (Jeffery 2008) and falling rate of new discoveries (Hopkins 2008a), several projections such as Figure 3. from the Association for the Study of Peak Oil (2008) place peak oil in the near future (Hirsch et al 2005).
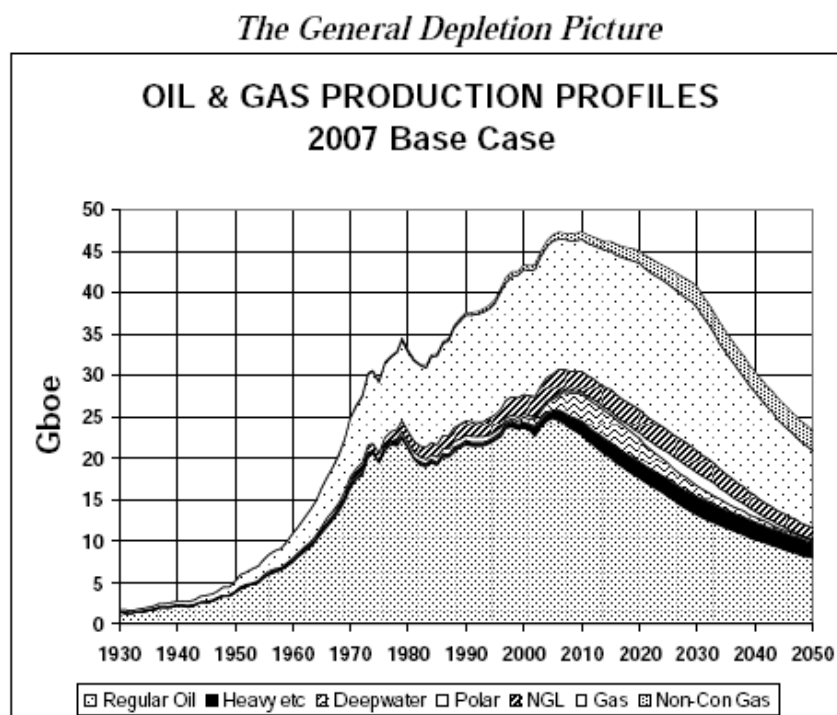
Figure 3. Oil and gas Production Profiles. (Jeffery 2008 p.2)

As a consequence, and despite recognition of the temporary fall in energy demand due to the financial crisis, the 2009 report of the IEA warns that:

> continuing on today's energy path, without any change in government policy would mean rapidly increasing dependence on fossil fuels, with alarming consequences for climate change and energy security (EIA 2009 p.6).

2.2.2. Climate change

The pre-industrial atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) concentration was 278 parts per million (ppm) and did not vary by more than 7 ppm between 1000 and 1800 Common Era. In 2005 the CO_2 level was at 379ppm and rising between 1.5 and 3ppm/year reaching approximately 385ppm by 2008 (Chamberlin 2009). In its latest report, the Fourth Assessment Report (2007) the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which remains a valued scientific authority despite recent problems with credibility flaunted by their critics, asserts that the evidence for human influenced climate change is "unequivocal" (Antonio 2009). Referring to evidence from this report, 192 world leaders at the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December 2009 agreed that global warming must be kept below 2.0°C to avoid substantial global impacts such as species extinction and millions of people at risk from drought, hunger and flooding (IPCC 2007). However, several climate change activists question the reliability and feasibility of that promise without a legally binding treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Vaughan and Adam 2009) as keeping within the 2.0°C will require drastic and fast reductions. Particularly in the light of recent studies (Spratt and Sutton 2008) providing evidence that the 2.0°C level is inadequate as drastic changes should be expected changes at lower temperatures than previously projected.

2.3. Conventional environmentalism

2.3.1. Hopelessness and apathy

As environmental issues have risen to the public consciousness more than ever, graphic images of environmental problems broadcast by environmental organisations have become commonplace. An example of conventional environmental campaigning is a recent video spread by Greenpeace to campaign against Nestlé buying palm oil from companies which destroy the rainforest. The video features a man unwrapping a Kit Kat bar to discover the finger of an orang-utan which he proceeds to chew despite the blood pouring down his chin, followed by an image of an orang-utan in the last standing tree of an area of cut down rainforest (Greenpeace 2010a).

This strategy is commonly used by environmental organisations and is based on the Awareness-Information-Decision-Action model, the idea that the more information people have, the more likely they are to act (Hopkins 2006). Some, like Hopkins (2006) argue that this strategy does little but spread apathy and feelings of hopelessness. A typical poll of public opinion summarises the problem: Although British people in 2007 were "convinced about the dangers of global warming" no noticeable changes in behaviour were observed; car journeys and flights had increased as well as energy consumption (Skimshire 2008). According to another survey 57% of people "do what they can for the environment" but feel it doesn't make a difference because "other citizens" and "large polluters" do not (Eurobarometer 2005). While public support for environmental issues is wider than ever, it is also frighteningly shallow (Barry 2009). Some, like Hopkins, argue that this is because conventional "negative" campaigning discourages rather than encourages action as people will instinctively avoid contexts that make them feel helpless (Kaplan 2000).

2.3.2. Individualisation

Another criticism goes further, to discuss the action proposed by environmental organisations. In his article Maniates (2001) criticises what he calls the "individualisation of responsibility", presenting individual consumer choices as the response to global environmental issues. He argues that although environmental organisations seek to encourage people to act, their recommended solutions are often limited to shallow individual actions. In fact, a quick glance at the "what you can do" sections of major international environmental organisations provided the following responses: writing a letter (Greenpeace 2010b), buying environmentally friendly products, recycling (World Wide Fund for Nature -UK 2009) and donating (Friends of the Earth 2010). Conca et al (2001) argue the reason behind this contrast is the dependence of environmental organisations on the middle class and therefore their inability to challenge the middle class consumerist lifestyle. For the same reason organisations tend to concentrate the blame to the "evil" companies (such as Nestlé) rather than challenging the consumerism driving them.

This criticism of individualising responsibility is not new, two decades ago Murray Bookchin (1989) argued:

> It is inaccurate and unfair to coerce people into believing that they are *personally* responsible for present-day ecological disasters (cited in Maniates 2001).

Besides the ineffectiveness of individual responses as such, individualising responsibility has been shown to disregard the social nature of behaviour (Wilhite et al. 2000). Lifestyles and principles are learned and maintained through social interaction, and radical change such as renouncing consumerism is easily perceived as anti-social by others (Heiskanen et al 2009). For long lasting change, an individual needs to be empowered (Kaplan 2000) and supported by new infrastructures, institutions and networks (Rohracher 2001, Heiskanen et al 2009).

2.4. Community initiatives

Although the above highlights the difficulties in creating change in environmental behaviour, other literature argues that although not easy, creating behaviour change is possible. In their article Tukker et al (2008) argue that providing individuals with feedback on collective impact can counter helplessness and disempowerment. A substantial evidence base suggests that changing habits is more successful with group support and overcoming social lock-in requires group involvement, as new social norms are negotiated in groups (Sustainable Consumption Roundtable 2006). In his report on changing consumer behaviour Jackson (2005) writes about the importance of recognising this significance of the social aspect of change and argues that creating environmental change must be a social process:

> as much about building supportive communities, promoting inclusive societies, providing meaningful work and encouraging purposeful lives as it is about awareness raising, fiscal policy and persuasion (Jackson 2005, p.134).

In his article Kaplan (2000) suggests participatory problem solving as a solution, engaging groups in a participatory activity to find solutions to environmental problems that meet their needs, empowering them to be the objects instead of subjects of change. These principles have sprouted several different responses from sustainable and low-carbon communities to grassroots community initiatives. Although with different focuses, they all seek to empower and build the community to enable lasting change in environmental behaviour. The increase

and success of community initiatives around Europe (Heiskanen et al 2009) has sparked the growing interest from practitioner, policy and academic circles in the importance of community in realising pro-environmental change (Jackson 2005, Middlemiss and Parrish 2009) and lately established community initiatives firmly into the sustainable development plans on both national and local level in the UK (Bournemouth Borough Council 2009). However, despite this growing interest, there is still "a dearth of" research on the topic and a need for further study to "understand the processes through which it takes place" (Seyfang 2007 p.131). In its report the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (SCR) recognises this and emphasises the need for research focused on improving the work of community initiatives:

> At this stage, the priority must be to learn more about what works and what does not work from existing initiatives (SCR 2006 p.51)

and further recommending that Defra fund a:

> network for organisations delivering behaviour change for sustainable living at the community level to: share learning and information about resources and effective techniques with each other and with the research community (SCR 2006 p.53).

2.5.   The Transition Movement

> We live in momentous times: times when change is accelerating, and when the horror of what could happen if we do nothing and the brilliance of what we could achieve if we act can both, at times, be overwhelming (Hopkins 2008a).

The idea for the Transition Movement was born out of a project Hopkins developed with his permaculture students in Kinsale Ireland in 2005. This project created "an Energy Descent Action Plan", a year-by-year plan envisioning the town's transition to a lower energy future. The plan was first of its kind in the world and was formally adopted by the Kinsale's local government in 2005 (Hopkins 2008a). Inspired by the process Hopkins founded the Transition Movement, a network community initiatives defined by the Transition Network as follows:

> A Transition Initiative (which could be a town, village, university or island etc) is a community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and increasingly, economic contraction (Transition Network 2010b).

2.5.1. Transition concept

In "The Transition Handbook" Hopkins (2008a) identifies permaculture as the philosophical underpinning of the Transition Movement and introduces the four assumptions on which the Transition concept is based as follows:

1. Life with dramatically lower energy consumption is inevitable and it's better to plan for it than to be taken by surprise.
2. Our settlements and communities presently lack the resilience to enable them to weather the severe energy shocks that will accompany peak oil
3. We have to act collectively and we have to act now
4. By unleashing the collective genius of those around us to creatively and proactively 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 (Hopkins 2008a p.134).

2.5.1.1.   Permaculture

Permaculture, according to Hopkins (2008a) is notoriously difficult to explain in one sentence. In essence, he says it is "a design system for the creation of sustainable human settlements" (Hopkins 2008a p.136). Originally conceived in the 1970's at the time of the first oil crises, permaculture moved away from monoculture in agriculture towards multi-layered systems making use of perennial plants and productive trees, but soon broadened from agriculture to include to the concept of "permanent culture", including other aspects of society. According to Hopkins (2008a), permaculture has introduced the tools and philosophy for "post-peak society" early but is often guilty of distancing itself from mainstream society rather than seeking to change it. He therefore introduces permaculture as a "design template" for the "transition our settlements and communities will inevitably have to undertake" (Hopkins 2008a p136).

2.5.1.2. Assumption 1: Future scenarios

In "The Transition Handbook" Hopkins (2008a) discusses the "intertwining" of peak oil and climate change arguing that the two must be considered together in order to create a response that will truly address the future ahead. To address only peak oil, he argues could have a catastrophic climatic effect through utilization of other fossil fuels. Responding to climate change as a distinct issue on the other hand could lead to creating a world of lower emissions still fragile in terms of its vulnerability to the effects of peak oil. When the two are considered

together he concludes, it is clear that life with less energy is inevitable, what is left to consider is how we prepare for it. Hopkins (2008a) discusses several possible future scenarios provided by peak oil activists such as David Holmgren and scenario planner Pierre Wack. These different scenarios are synthesized by Chamberlin in his book "Transition Timeline" (2009) as illustrated by Figure 4:

Figure 4. Future Scenarios (Chamberlin 2009 p.22)

The first two consider the continuation of business as usual, where the first "denial" represents what he argues to be still the dominant view and the second "hitting the wall" the result of acknowledging the challenges but continuing business as usual. The third vision describes the thinking that new technology will rescue us and the final vision represents the "Transition vision" where a cultural shift is made in a way to truly answer the challenges of Peak Oil and Climate Change (Chamberlin 2009).

2.5.1.3. Assumption 2: Resilience and Localisation

An integral part of this "Transition Vision" is the concept resilience (Hopkins 2008a).

> Resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks. (Walker et al 2004)

Hopkins (2008a) argues that this ecological concept translates to communities in their adaptability and resistance to shocks such as oil or food shortages. He presents an argument

for striving towards such resilience through re-localising communities, offering the following definition of localisation:

> the process by which a region, county, city or even neighbourhood frees itself from an overdependence on the global economy and invests its own resources to produce a significant portion of the goods , services food and energy it consumes from its local endowment of financial, natural and human capital (Hopkins 2008a p.68).

Localisation has been supported by a range of authors from critics of globalisation to opponents of "big-box" large retailers (North 2009) and those arguing it is an inevitable outcome of peak oil (Hopkins 2008a). It is a call not for complete self sufficiency but meeting needs as locally as possible, enhancing the resilience of the community (North 2009). Criticism of localisation ranges from those who believe it unnecessary concept (Hopkins 2006) or vague due to the subjectivity of what is "local" to those who argue it will have disastrous effects on communities in poorer areas (North 2009) to which the localists respond with a call for reorienting the approach to development aid to providing resources for building resilience in poorer areas (Hopkins 2006). Hinrichs (2003) warns against the danger of defensive localisation, emphasising cultural and social boundaries in a defensive manner. She adds however that if approached correctly, localisation can also promote increased receptivity to difference and diversity through new social exchanges. As Hopkins (2006) notes, none of the critics of localisation discuss the impacts peak oil may have on international relations or trade.

2.5.1.4. Assumption 3 and 4: Psychology of change

The Transition concept is very much based on finding solutions within the community. The Transition Network (2010b) synthesises what is discussed above in "community initiatives" thus:

- if we wait for the governments, it'll be too little, too late
- if we act as individuals, it'll be too little
- but if we act as communities, it might just be enough, just in time.

In addition to discussing the strength of communities, Hopkins draws on literature on psychology of change and addiction. In his argument, backed up by addictions specialist Chris Johnstone he quotes no other than George W. Bush in stating that humans are "addicted to oil" (Hopkins 2008a p.86). Hopkins argues that this complicates the psychological process of

moving away from oil and may exacerbate the feelings of shock when discovering the magnitude of the issues of climate change and peak. To ease the transition and avoid the effects of negative environmental campaigning discussed in section 2.3., he draws on the literature to recommend actions such as giving people forums to discuss these issues called "heart and soul" groups and in particular calls for "harnessing the power of a positive vision" (Hopkins 2008a p.94), using visioning and positivism to empower and motivate people.

2.5.2. Transition Model

The Transition concept is based on the idea of tapping into the creativity and knowledge of the local community and creating a response unique to that community (Hopkins 2008a). Little formal structure beyond the loose criteria for becoming an official Initiative (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008) is therefore established to enable the spread of independent grass-roots initiatives rather than an established movement.

2.5.2.1. The 12 ingredients

The 12 ingredients are evolving guidelines for setting up an initiative based on experience of existing groups illustrated in Figure 5 and further described in Appendix A. They are not designed to be exhaustive or prescriptive but rather "intended to suggest pieces of the puzzle you may choose to assemble" (Hopkins 2008a p.148), a concept of freedom embedded as one of the ingredients "let it go where it wants to go".
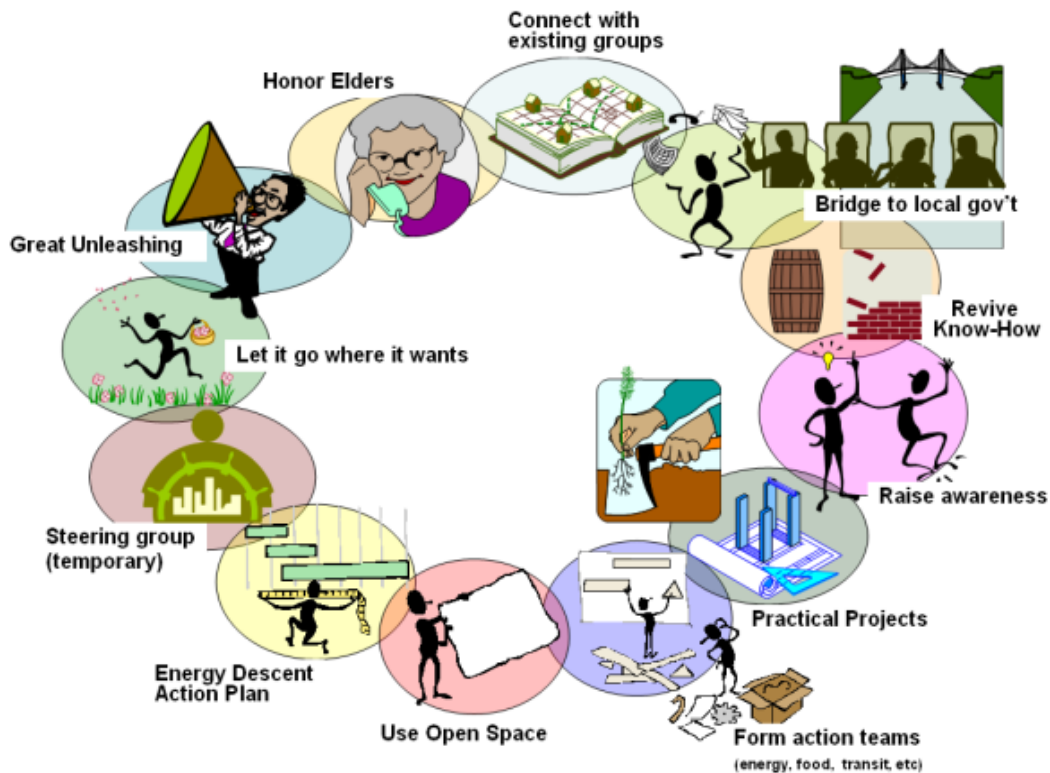
Figure 5. The 12 Ingredients of Transition (Anon 2010)

The other ingredients include structural suggestions such as setting up a central steering group to guide the initial project and later action teams to tackle specific areas such as energy and food (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008). Creating practical projects and raising awareness are ways to inform people of peak oil and climate change and the work of the Transition Initiative as well as demonstrate the work in action. Once a suitable amount of people is involved in the process a Great Unleashing is organised, to formally "kick-off" the project. Connecting with existing groups such as environmental and other volunteer groups as well as building a bridge to local government is encouraged to gain valuable support and experience (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008). Honouring elders, using open space and reviving know-how relate to the Transition concept. Open space is a participatory tool used to host events where discussed topics are those brought forward by the participants, reviving know-how is a process of re-learning practical skills necessary for a more resilient community such as growing vegetables and repairing things. According to Hopkins "there is a great deal we can learn from those who directly remember the transition to the age of cheap oil" (2008a p.171). Honouring the elders

is therefore an important step towards re-structuring the community to a more resilient and localised one, the road to which is signalled eventually by the Energy Descent Action Plan, a community specific plan to transform to this more resilient, localised and less energy intensive community, the final working goal for most groups (Hopkins 2008a).

2.5.2.2.   Tools for Transition

Tools for Transition are practical ideas, methods or workshops described by Hopkins (2008a) to assist in different aspects of the process. They include guidance on writing press reports, tools for running discussions and meetings such as Open Space, designing productive meetings and tools for visioning and empowerment from "post-peak tour guides", imaginary guided tours through the town's future resilient centre to visioning tools for education in schools. A list of Tools for Transition is provided in Appendix B.

2.5.3.   Transition Movement

2.5.3.1.   Development and spread

Since the launch of the first Transition Initiative, Transition Town Totnes, in autumn 2006, the Transition movement has quickly become "one of the fastest-growing community-scale initiatives in the world" (Hopkins 2008a p.133). By February 2009 there were 94 Transition Initiatives in the UK and a further 40 around the world (Seyfang 2006). In 2010, the Transition Network lists 292 official Transition Initiatives in 6 countries and a further 118 "mulling it over", working their way to become an official initiative (Transition Network 2010a). However, keeping track of the spread of the movement around the world is complicated by the viral spread of the movement and initiatives have been set up also at least in the Netherlands, Sweden, Brazil, Japan, Sweden, Austria, South – Africa, Finland, Spain, China, Hungary and Portugal (Transition Network 2010b) meaning the movement has spread to 18 countries within three and a half years. A vast majority of this development has taken place in England, where 204 initiatives are currently listed. The UK based Transition Network was set up a formally-constituted organisation to support the growing number of groups through networking and coordinating activities such as Transition training (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008). It is no surprise therefore that in the summer of 2008 the Transition Handbook, published in a number

of other languages, was voted the 5th most popular book taken on holiday by Members of Parliament (Hopkins 2009).

2.5.3.2. Critiques of Transition

Critiques of Transition are mainly critiques of the concepts underlying the movement such as climate change, peak oil or localisation rather than the movement itself. However, Chatterton and Cutler (2008) provide a detailed examination and critique of the Transition movement. They criticise the movement mainly for shying away from politics and campaigning, and question the effectiveness of a depoliticised movement. They also question the lack of established structure within the Initiatives and the movement and argue that connections with local and national governments should be reconsidered to avoid possible situations where the agenda of the governing body affects that of the Initiative and not vice versa and responsibility for creating change is partly or largely transferred onto the Initiative.

While acknowledging the value of such an outsiders view, in his review of their report, Hopkins (2008b) argues that the authors identify areas where Transition differs from other forms of social activism, which represent distinct yet complementary efforts, and are a part of the underlying concept of providing a unique, positive and solutions based response based on models from psychology of change. He also notes that these underlying concepts are thoroughly explained and justified in the Transition Handbook, which the authors failed to read (Hopkins 2008b).

2.6. Research gap

While Transition Initiatives do not directly identify themselves as low-carbon or sustainable community initiatives, grassroots initiatives for low-carbon communities can be situated in the wider sustainable communities literature (Middlemiss and Parish 2009, Kenis and Mathjis 2009) providing the wider context in which this study is placed. Reflecting the scarcity of research in this area, despite rapid spread and positive publicity (The Times 2008, Hickman 2009) received by the Transition movement there has been "little empirical research into the development and character of…and the barriers to be overcome" by Transition Initiatives (Seyfang 2009 p.2). A recent survey by Seyfang is the first larger scale study which seeks to

establish a "snapshot of the movement's growth and development, issues arising and emerging trends" (2009 p.13). However, she recognises that more research is needed to examine these initiatives and their mechanisms and strategies in detail. Her study, as she suggests is a valuable "foundation for this sort of in-depth work" (Seyfang 2009 p.13). As recommended by the SCR, research within the field of sustainable communities "must be to learn more about what works and what does not work" (2006 p.51). This need to develop by learning from past experience is echoed by the Transition Network in their endeavour to build a "cooperative network where people are sharing best practice (and) helping each other" (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008) as well as Hopkins:

> Each community that gets involved is contributing valuable research as to what works and what doesn't (Hopkins 2008a p.202).

However, no process, tool or "ingredient" is currently in place to facilitate the first and most vital step of sharing these lessons, evaluating the work of an Initiative. Such an evaluation would have the potential to improve the work of the Initiatives as well as provide the Transition Movement and the wider research community with valuable insight into their work. To be usable and appropriate for the Transition Initiatives and Movement, such a tool should reflect the Transition Model and the concept underpinning it. This study will endeavour to develop such an evaluation tool and use the qualitative data generated by the process to critically evaluate the achievements and challenges of Transition Initiatives in Dorset.

2.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced, discussed and analysed the concepts of peak oil and climate change, conventional environmentalism and sustainable communities, the underpinning concepts of the Transition Movement. From this, a gap in the research in the wider sustainable literature as well as more specifically within the Transition Movement has been identified. Also a methodology has been determined to address the need for evaluating the work of Transition Initiatives in order to share and utilize that information. This will be more thoroughly explained in Chapter 3.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3. Methodology

3.1. Chapter introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, more in depth knowledge is required about Transition Initiatives in order to gain a better understanding of their work and develop it while contributing to the wider sustainable communities literature. This chapter will describe the design this study will employ to achieve this goal as well as address its aim.

3.2. Research philosophy

Research philosophy contains fundamental assumptions about the way one views the world, which underpin the research strategy and methods chosen for a study (Saunders et al 2007). It is therefore important to review the philosophy underpinning this research here to understand its bearing on the research approach and strategy.

This study will take on the interpretive epistemological approach arguing that social phenomena is complex, and rich insights into the world are lost if this complexity is reduced entirely to law-like positivist generalisations. (Saunders et al 2007). Furthermore, human behaviour, thoughts and feelings are in part determined by their context and can only be truly understood through getting to know that context. As objectivity can ignore important data for creating this understanding (Gillham 2000), this study is based on a subjective ontological approach (Saunders et al 2007).

3.3. Research Approach

Often linked to interpretivism is the inductive research approach, in which data are collected and a theory developed as a result of the data analysis, as opposed to the deductive approach where a theory and a hypothesis (or hypotheses) are developed and research designed to test the hypothesis (Saunders et al 2007). It can be argued that associating research approaches with research philosophies is potentially misleading (Saunders et al. 2007). However, the inductive approach emphasizes gaining a close understanding of the research context and the

meanings humans attach to events, permits a more flexible structure to allow changes of research emphasis as the research progresses and accepts that the researcher is a part of the research process (Saunders et al 2007). Due to these characteristics, induction is a fundamental characteristic of case studies (Gillham 2000) and a particularly appropriate choice for this study.

3.4. Case study

A case study is defined by Dul and Hak (2008) as follows:

> A case study is a study in which one case (single case study) or a small number of cases (comparative case study) in their real life context are selected, and scores obtained from these cases are analysed in a qualitative manner (Dul and Hak 2008 p.4).

While acknowledging the difficulty in defining "a case", Gillham (2000) offers the following definition:

> A unit of human activity embedded in the real world, which can only be studied or understood in context, which exists in the here and now, which merges with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw (Gillham 2000 p.1).

A case study research strategy was selected for this study for several reasons. Firstly the naturalistic style of case study research makes it particularly appropriate to study human phenomena (Gillham 2000). Also, as discussed in Chapter 2 previous research into Transition Initiatives provides a base as well as calls for more in-depth research into the Initiatives. Case study research allows the researcher to "get under the skin" of a group or organisation to find out "the informal reality which can only be perceived from the inside" (Gillham 2000 p.11). The case study strategy also allows the researcher to carry out research into the processes leading to results rather than into the significance of the results themselves (Gillham 2000). This concern with process is vital in understanding the work of Transition Initiatives and can be key in understanding what needs to be done to develop and support such initiatives (Gillham 2000).

3.4.1 Selection of cases

A comparative case study is a study in which several parallel cases are selected (Dul and Hak 2008). These cases must be selected to replicate each other to either predict similar results (literal replication) or produce contrasting results but for predictable reasons (theoretical replication) (Yin 1994). However, an important distinction needs to be made between replication and sampling, which suggests selecting a sample from a population to represent the entire population (Yin 1994). In case study research there is no such population to which results are generalized (Dul and Hak 2008).

This study represents a comparative case study with theoretical replication (Yin 1994). Transition Initiatives are formed as bottom-up community groups which create a response unique to their community (Hopkins 2008a). Consequently any Initiative is predicted to produce unique results, particularly as each group is in a different stage in its development. The whole of Dorset was therefore initially selected as a sample, and all Transition Initiatives in Dorset were approached either in person, by e-mail or phone to invite them to participate in the evaluation workshops.

3.5. Mixed method

Mixed method research uses qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques (Saunders et al 2007). This use of multiple sources of evidence is a "key characteristic" (Gillham 2000) and a major strength of case study research (Yin 1994) that allows the researcher to "address a broader range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues" (Yin 1994 p.92). Other major advantages of mixed method research are the ability to utilise different methods for different purposes within a study (Saunders et al 2007) and data triangulation through converging lines of enquiry which increases the validity and reliability of the results (Yin 1994).

Typically either quantitative or qualitative techniques predominate within mixed method research (Saunders et al 2007). This study undertakes a predominantly qualitative approach, where participatory research is used for the collection of essential contextual data (Saunders et

al 2007) and to support the findings of the main data collection method, an evaluation workshop used to collect more in-depth data from the selected cases. Questionnaires are used as a minor data collection method to support the validity of the main method and ensure its relevance and usefulness to the groups.

3.5.1. Participatory research

Participatory research has gained momentum in the last twenty years and is now increasingly appearing in a number of articles in peer-reviewed journals (Delemos 2006, Savan 2008, Alde et al 2009). In participatory research, also known as participatory observation, collaborative research and community based research (Stoecker 2004) the researcher takes an active part in the activities of the subjects becoming a member of the community, group or organisation hence also involving them in the process of the study (Saunders et al 2007). The value of becoming involved in the community is the ability to see the informal reality (Gillham 2000) and perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone "inside" the case study. Such a perspective can be invaluable in producing an accurate portrayal of a case study (Yin 1994).

Furthermore, participatory research aims to break down the gap between knowledge and practice (Alde et al 2009) in order to ensure that "knowledge contributes to making a concrete and constructive difference in the world" (Savan et al 2009). Integration as well as the flexibility and reflexivity integral to participatory research enable creating solutions that are relevant and applicable in practice (Alde et al 2009). Furthermore, it is not only the end result of the research that is seen to create solutions, but the process of the study itself through sharing information and simply as a result of the presence of a researcher asking questions, clarifying procedures and collecting data (Gillham 2000). This perspective was seen as particularly central to this study due to the need to contribute to the work of Transition Initiatives as outlined in the research gap in Chapter 2 as well as the Research protocol by the Transition Network calling for research that is "of use to the Transition Network as a whole" and "useful to the communities that participate in the research" (Transition Network 2009).

Participatory research was used within this study to gain contextual data, to create the evaluation workshop and to support the findings of evaluation workshops.

3.5.2. Self-Evaluation workshop

The main method of data collection for this study was a self-evaluation workshop for Transition Initiatives developed by the researcher in co-operation with Transition Initiatives and representatives from Dorset Agenda 21 and Transition Network.

3.5.2.1. Development

The idea of a self-evaluation workshop was formulated on the basis of the data gathered through participation and was discussed with and supported by representatives of Transition Network and Dorset Agenda 21 (personal communication Linda Screen February, 24, 2010 and Paul McIntosh December 11, 2009). Learning from each others experiences is seen as an integral part of the process for Transition Initiatives by Transition Network (2010a), Hopkins (2008a) as well as the Initiatives themselves. Yet no tool, "ingredient" or process is in place to facilitate the first and most vital step of sharing experiences, evaluating the work of an Initiative. An evaluation process is also considered a valuable tool for any programme or organisation foster improvement through identifying problems and areas of improvement (Tari 2008). Furthermore, such an evaluation has the potential to provide valuable qualitative data for this study while contributing to the work of the Initiatives.

To be usable and appropriate for the Transition Initiatives and Movement it was decided that the evaluation tool should reflect the Transition Model and the concept underpinning it. The workshop was therefore designed not as an excessively critical assessment of the work and accomplishments of the Initiatives but as a creative and positive reflection exercise with a strong focus on building on previous experiences in planning for the future. Empowerment evaluation, further explored in the following section, was therefore used as foundation for the workshop.

3.5.2.2. Empowerment evaluation

A key issue in building the evaluation was selecting an approach that best fits the particular context of this study from a growing body of literature focused on the strengths and weaknesses of diverse evaluation approaches (Schnoes et al 2000).

> Empowerment evaluation is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-determination (Fetterman 2001)

This approach was perceived as particularly appropriate for this study due to several of its features. Firstly, as defined above, the process of empowerment evaluation is particularly committed to using evaluation as a tool to refine and enhance the efforts of the group (Fetterman 2001,Schnoes et al 2000). Secondly, in a view very similar to that outlined for this study in section 3.5.1, Fetterman (1996) promotes close involvement between the evaluator and the group to in order to produce more meaningful and useful evaluation results as well as encouraging stakeholders to take an active part in the evaluation process.

The elements of involvement, participation and data usefulness are also key concepts of other evaluation approaches such as participatory, stakeholder-based and utilization-focused evaluation (Schnoes et al 2000). However, the characteristic which can be argued to distinguish empowerment evaluation from other approaches is the emphasis on enabling stakeholders to become independent in the evaluation of their work (Schnoes et al 2001), an element which also makes it particularly suited to the context of this study.

Empowerment evaluation has three steps that were integrated into the evaluation workshop as three distinct visual phases further explained in Appendix C and visualised in Figures 6-8..

1. Mission: Establishing a mission or vision statement.
2. Taking stock: Identifying, prioritizing and evaluating the most significant program activities.
3. Planning for the Future: Charting a course for the future by establishing goals and specifying strategies (Fetterman 2001).

3.5.2.3. Pilot study

Piloting is an important process whereby research methods can be tested in order to ensure their feasibility and problems with the process are identified and eliminated (Blaxter et al 2006). However, this study was conducted with community groups volunteering their time and effort for the work of the Transition Initiative as well as the purposes of this study. Therefore it was considered more appropriate to pilot the method through recorded unstructured

interviews with individuals and allowing for adjustments after the first workshop, rather than through the labour and time intensive process of creating a pilot workshop involving the entire group (Krueger and Casey 2006). The interviews were held with three members of Transition Initiatives as well as a representative of Dorset Agenda 21 and Transition Network and changes further outlined in Appendix C were made according to feedback.

3.5.2.4. Execution

The finalized evaluation tool was a visual and interactive workshop based on the principles and phases of empowerment evaluation. The workshop was therefore divided into three distinct phases. As illustrated by outputs from the workshops in Figures 6-8, each phase was visualised by a diagram or illustration and in line with the principles of empowerment evaluation the stakeholders were given the control to establish their own mission, key activities, goals and strategies and to assess themselves in terms of these (Fetterman 2001). The researcher therefore acted as a facilitator of the reflection process rather than an outside evaluator. The evaluation process was recorded and the sheets produced in the workshop were collected by the researcher for data analysis. Digital versions of the outputs (inlcuded in Appendix F) were collated and sent to the Initiative to enable further use and discussion of the results. A more detailed description of the workshop is provided in Appendix C.

Figure 6. Phase 1:Mission. Transition Town Sturminster Newton

Figure 7.Phase 2:Taking Stock. Transition Purbeck
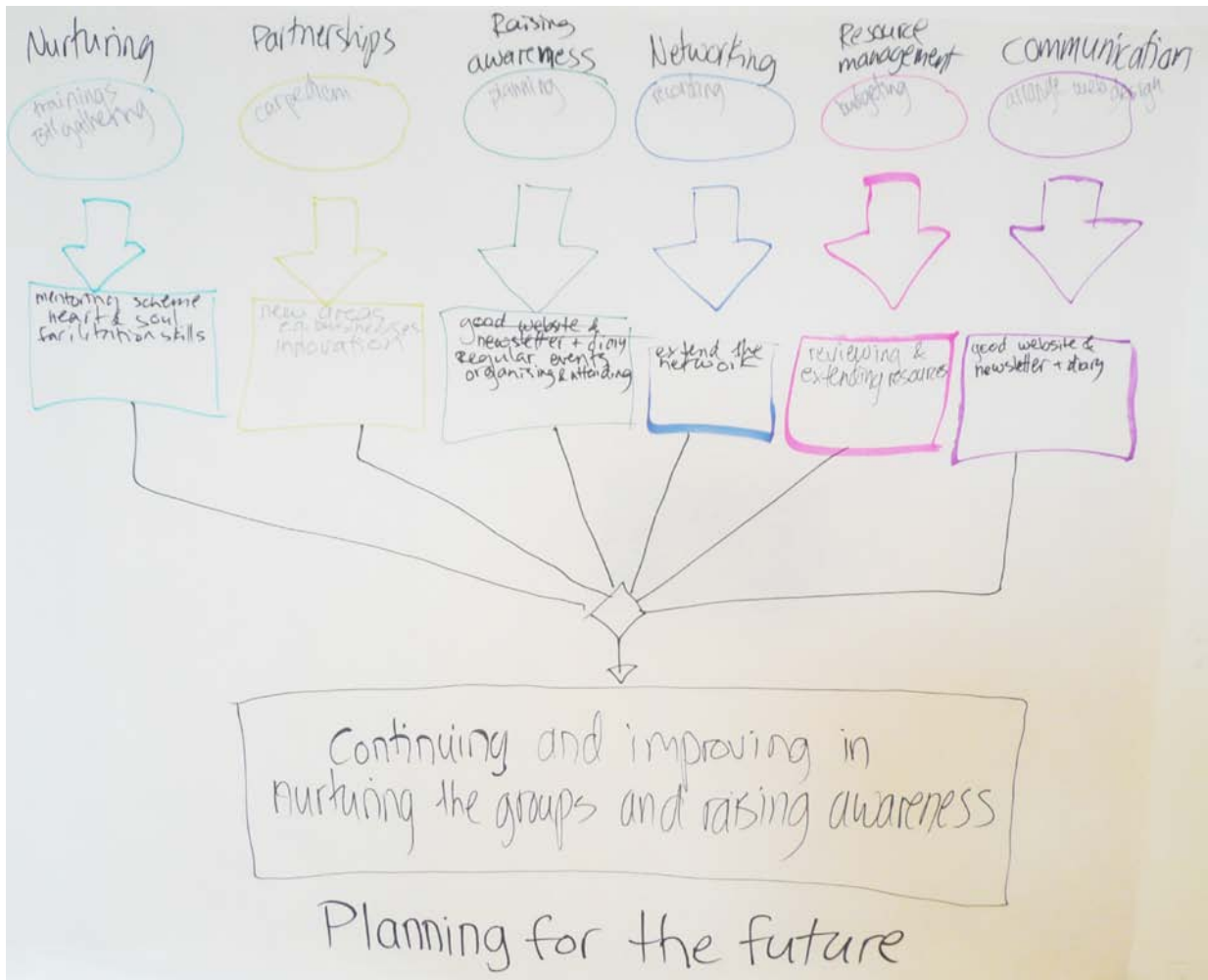
Figure 8 Phase 3: Planning for the future. Transition BH hub

3.5.3. Questionnaires

Short questionnaires were conducted with the participants of the evaluation workshops to assess the usefulness and relevance of the evaluation tool and hence also provide information on the validity of the main data collection method. Furthermore some questions were aimed at assessing the success of the method in creating a tool which enables the Initiatives to carry out independent evaluations and share results with each other in the future.

One of the main features of questionnaires is impersonality and anonymity which allow potentially embarrassing questions to be answered truthfully (Walliman 2004). Questionnaires were therefore used to gain the honest opinions of the participants who might have been

unwilling to disclose negative thoughts about the process. For full details of the questionnaire refer to Appendix D.

3.6.   Data analysis

3.6.1. Qualitative

A majority of the data collected for this study are qualitative, including data from the main method, the self-evaluation workshop. The focus of the data analysis was therefore heavily on the qualitative data. Although there is no standardised approach to qualitative data analysis (Saunders et al 2007), three main phases of analysis can be identified:

1. Data reduction
2. Data display
3. Conclusion drawing
(Walliman 2004, Saunders et al 2007)

3.6.1.1.   Preliminary analysis

A key characteristic of qualitative research is preliminary analysis during data collection (Walliman 2004). Notes, recordings and images from participatory analysis were therefore processed and analysed as soon as possible after events. Workshops were transcribed and the outputs were collated into a word document to be sent to the groups promptly. As workshops were recorded to support the data collection through the visual workshop, full transcribing was not deemed necessary and abridged transcribing was used to summarise the workshop and note relevant conversation (Krueger and Casey 2000). The transcript of the Transition Purbeck workshop is provided as an example in Appendix G. The process of preliminary analysis guided and refined the data collection (Walliman 2004).

3.6.1.2.   Data reduction

Data reduction summarises, simplifies and focuses collected data (Saunders et al 2007). Using coding allows the researcher to link and organise meaningful segments of data and begin conceptualization (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). During the preliminary data analysis data were

coded and categorised into four preliminary categories as outlined below allowing the identification of emerging themes.

Participatory Data

Challenges

Achievements

Workshop Data
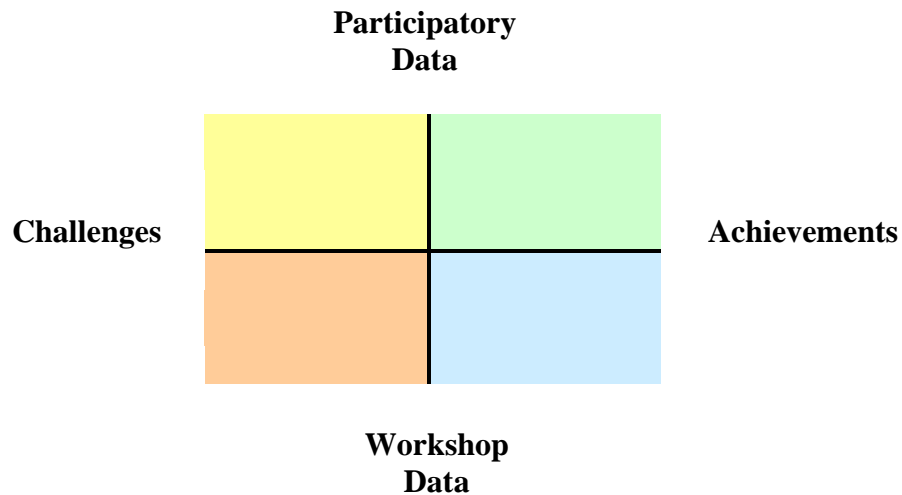
Figure 9. Data categories

After the data collection was completed, the categories were divided into subcategories according to the themes that had emerged during preliminary analysis. The data were then reviewed in terms of these subcategories and the subcategories verified in the process.

3.6.1.3. Data display and analysis

Data display involves organising and assembling reduced and selected data into visual displays (Saunders et al 2007). The reduced data was visualised through a data matrix visualising the different categories and subcategories (Walliman 2004) which enabled drawing conclusions through further analysis of themes highlighting extensiveness and specificity of evidence (Krueger and Casey 2000).

3.6.2. Quantitative

The questionnaires were conducted solely on the participants of the workshops in order to support the main method and formed only a small part of the data collection. Statistical analysis of the results was therefore considered inappropriate and results were used to simply

measure and illustrate the successfulness of the tool and the satisfaction of the participants in the method.

3.7.   Ethics

Research ethics relate to the rights of those that become the subjects of research or are otherwise affected by it (Saunders et al 2007). Ethical issues specifically regarding this study are addressed in Figure 10 below whilst the general ethical issues of research are covered by The Research Ethics Code of Practice of Bournemouth University (Bournemouth University 2009) guiding this study.

Ethical issue	**Implication for research**
Confidentiality of data	Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of any quotes from or references to individuals within Transition Initiatives
Privacy of participants	Authorisation was obtained where individuals were named
	Requesting consent for recording interviews and workshops
Using and reporting of data	Requesting consent for use of data created in workshops
	Informing participants of the circulation of the finished report and providing them with a copy
Right to refuse and withdraw participation	Ensuring participants of workshops contributed voluntarily and could withdraw from the workshop
Role of researcher	Overt participation(Dawson 2007).Openly stating the aim of the research and role of the reseracher in all attended events
Participants reactions to data collection: stress, discomfort	Involving Transition Initiatives in developing the method, allowing the group to guide the evaluation workshop

Figure 10 Ethical considerations. Adapted from Walliman (2004)

3.8. Limitations of methodology

3.8.1. Method

The main limitations of this study relate to the available time and resources of the researcher and the participants, which limited the researcher's ability to participate in events as well as the time used for the self-evaluation workshops. As involvement in workshops was voluntary for Initiatives as well as individuals within them the results are slightly biased as views of those unwilling to participate (Saunders et al 2007) were only gained through participatory research.

3.8.2. Data

Criteria such as data generalisability and reliability are often overemphasized in qualitative research and seen as its weaknesses (Krueger and Casey 2000). However, the findings derived using non-standardised qualitative research methods are often designed to reflect reality at the time and in the context they were collected and therefore not necessarily intended to be repeatable or generalisable (Saunders et al 2007). Baxter and Eyles (1997) and Golafshani (2003) argue that these are standards for positivist-quantitative work not valid for judging interpretive qualitative research such as this study. The rigour of this study is therefore determined in Table 1 in terms of the criteria outlined by these studies: Transferability, credibility, confirmability and dependability.

Table 1. Data considerations

Criteria	Definition	Issues	Implications for this study
Transferability	Fit within contexts outside the study situation	Results tied to the context and time in which they were collected	Readily replicable research design, particularly evaluation workshop Thick description is used to allow for assessing transferability to other contexts
Credibility	Authentic representations of experience	Gaining a valid understanding and providing truthful description and interpretation of experiences of the participants	Use of mixed method Supporting questionnaires Involving Transition Initiatives in developing the method, allowing the group to guide the evaluation workshop
Confirmability	Influence of biases, motivations and interests of researcher	Researcher bias in data collection and analysis, particularly in participatory research	Involving Initiatives in developing as well as executing the evaluation workshop Recording data Quoting participants Use of triangulation in data analysis
Dependability	Consistency of process and product of research	Slight changes in evaluation workshop process Results distinctive to the time, context and person	Alternative perspectives to data through participatory research and use of mixed method Recording data Triangulation of data Thick description of method

(adapted from Baxter and Eyles 1997)

3.9. Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the research philosophy and approach of this study as well as identified a mixed-method comparative case study as the research design applied by this study in order to reach its aim and objectives. Limitations of the selected method were then discussed.

Chapter Four

Results and Analysis

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Chapter Introduction

This chapter will present and analyse the findings of this study and discuss their relation to previous research.

4.2. Participation

The activities participated in included meetings and events held by individual groups as well as a Dorset wide Transition gathering organized by Dorset Agenda 21. A list of activities is included in Appendix E. Also conversations in person, through the phone and by e-mail as well as informal interviews were used in gathering the data. Notes, pictures and recordings were used to collate data. All written data was noted down either during events or directly after.

4.3. Self-evaluation workshops

Although the idea for a self evaluation workshop received a very positive overall response from the Initiatives, the groups are run on volunteer basis and therefore several of them did not have the resources or time to participate. However, three groups agreed to arrange time for the workshop and several other Initiatives contributed their time and experience through informal interviews and allowing participation in their meetings and events.

The self-evaluation workshop was run with the core groups of three Transition Initiatives; Transition Town Sturminster Newton (TTSN), Transition Purbeck (TP) and Transition BH hub (TBHH) as illustrated in Figure 11 below. The cases therefore represent three very distinctive types, a Transition Town (TTSN), a local coordinating hub (TBHH) and a larger rural area (Transition Purbeck). Further description of each Initiative and the workshop outputs are included in Appendix F.

As discussed before, the groups had very limited time available and therefore two of the evaluations were conducted as "piggyback" workshops attached to previously established

meetings (Krueger and Casey 2000). Each workshop lasted 2 hours on average. Due to time restrictions the process was altered slightly as appropriate for each workshop. These alternations are further described in Appendix F. Consequently, after the first workshop the decision was made to omit the discussion on current and future effort levels in the following workshops. However, this feature of the workshop received good feedback during the piloting stage and was therefore retained in the description of the self-evaluation tool (Appendix C) as an optional feature for possible future use.

Figure 11.Map of selected Cases (Adapted from Rankwell 2008)

4.3.1. Questionnaires

All participants were requested to fill in a questionnaire at the end of the workshops to assess their satisfaction with the process as well as the usability and usefulness of the model. As visible in Table 2 below, a large proportion of the responses are from the Transition Purbeck workshop. This is due to the larger size of the core group. Also, questionnaires were not completed by two members of Transition Town Sturminster Newton who participated only in a part of the workshop.

Table 2. Summary of questionnaire responses	
Transition BH hub	4
Transition Town Sturminster Newton	4
Transition Purbeck	9
Total	17

The results of the questionnaires were very positive. Below illustrated are the responses to Question 5, demonstrating a very high satisfaction of participants.

Question 5. How useful did you find this evaluation ?
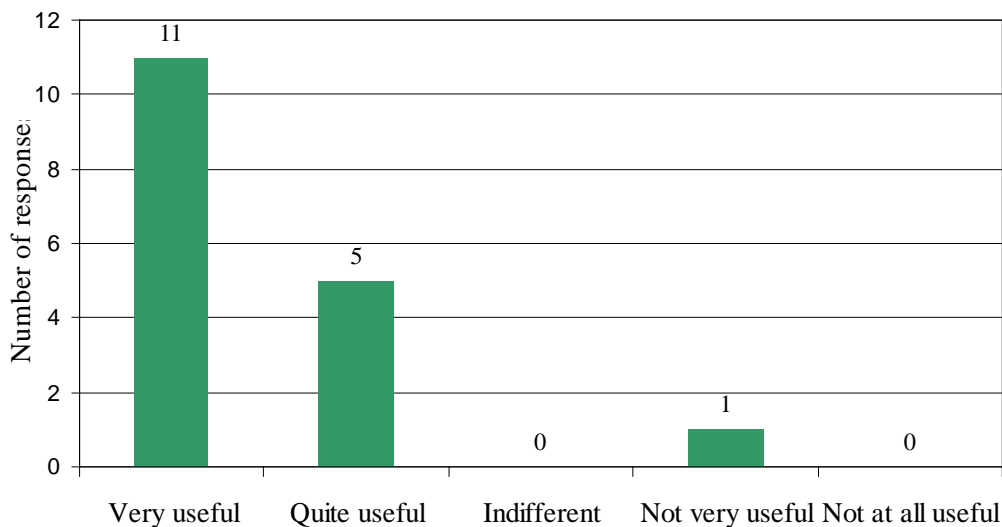
Figure 12. Results of Question 5

To Question 9: How strongly do you agree with the following statement: "This evaluation gave me new insight into our work." 64.6% of participants responded "strongly agree" (23.5%) or "agree" (41.1%). And as illustrated by Figure 13, 52.9% of the participants believed the evaluation will influence the groups work "a lot" in the future (Question 8). The workshop therefore seems to have generated results that are very relevant to the work of the groups.

Question 8: Do you think this evaluation will influence the work of your group in the future?

Not much, 1

Maybe, 0

Not at all, 0

Yes, a little, 7

Yes, a lot, 9
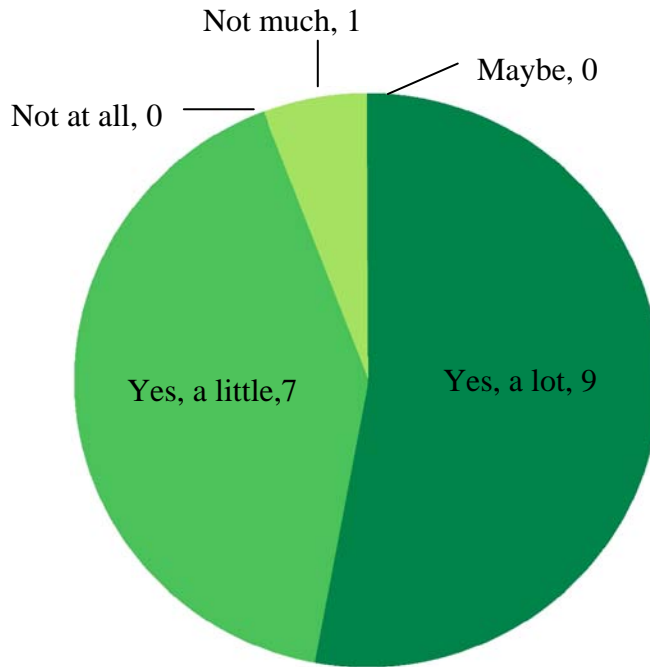
Figure 13. Results of Question 8

Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 14, 29.4% of the respondents would "definitely" want to repeat this evaluation with their group in the future and 35.3% would "probably" like to do so (Question 6). When asked how easy they would find repeating the evaluation, 29.4% responded "very easy" and 47.0% "quite easy".

Question 6. Would you want to repeat this evaluation with your group in the future?

Number of respondent

	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	Maybe	Probably not	Definitely not
Value	5	6	5	1	0
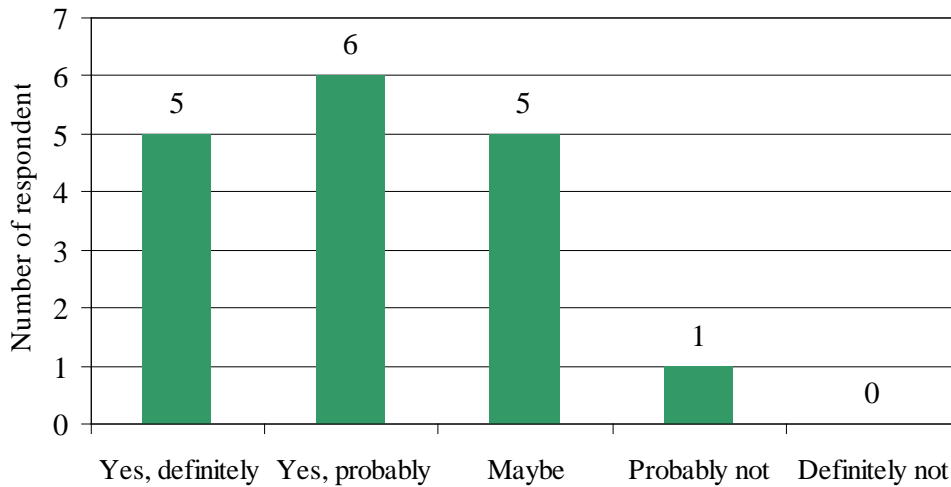
Figure 14. Results of Question 6.

These results support the conclusion that the workshop was useful and relevant to the work of the groups and further suggests that the process was an appropriate design for the Initiatives that could relatively easily be used by other Initiatives in the form of a Transition tool. In fact, 41.1% of the participants believed that sharing the information from this evaluation would "definitely" be useful and 35.3% thought it would "probably" be useful. However, some additional comments, such as the following provided by the participants of Transition Purbeck reflect again their satisfaction in the process, but also suggest that the process may be particularly valuable to groups in need of a clearer direction and structure.

> Gave a very good framework for moving things forward, which I don't think we would have done otherwise

> This group really needed direction and help with setting goals and this evaluation helped a lot

4.4. Key themes

The Transition movement in Dorset has succeeded in creating a strong network of Initiatives that clearly value and apply the Transition model. Most of the key challenges and achievements of the Initiatives are therefore related to "mechanically applying" the Transition Model.

4.4.1. Enthusiasm and optimism

Probably the biggest achievement of the Transition Movement in Dorset is creating an enthusiastic, positive and supportive atmosphere. This atmosphere is clearly evident in events and meetings of Transition Initiatives and was strongly reflected in the evaluation workshops. When asked to discuss positive experiences participant 3 from Transition Purbeck (TP) said:

> Sense of community. It's about an inbuilt group of people who share the same values which is very very nice

This view was also reflected by the positive aspects presented by Transition Town Sturminster Newton (TTSN) illustrated in Figure 15.

| Meeting inspiring people | Seeing people get excited about the future (not scared) | Meeting imaginative, creative people |
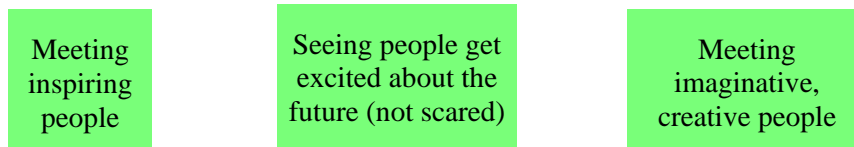
Figure 15. Positive experiences, TTSN

This clearly demonstrates the Initiatives' success in reflecting the ideology of the Transition Model to create a positive, empowered community. This distinct positive atmosphere was noted already in an early study of UK Transition Initiatives (Grace 2007) as well as presented as an important "ingredient" in terms of the success of Transition Initiatives by a recent study of a Transition Initiative in Belgium (Kenis and Mathijs 2009). A key part of this ingredient seems to be that further than creating a community capable of "recognising the importance of enjoying it" (participant 7, TP) and creating "Fun activities" (participant 3, TP), the Initiatives have succeeded in incorporating the importance of support integral to the Transition model (Hopkins 2008a):

> That journey from them having their first conversation or picking up their first leaflet, that's a very rocky road of questioning yourself and there's all sorts of thoughts and we need to cradle people through that (participant 2, TP).

This support provided through a positive community as well as specific heart and soul groups set up by some groups is an integral aspect of the Transition model in terms of avoiding individualisation of responsibility and fighting feelings helplessness when dealing with severe global environmental problems (Hopkins 2008a). The effectiveness of this supporting approach is demonstrated by the continued popularity of the heart and soul groups as well as a personal positive experience shared by participant 2 (TP): "Being helped through my personal transition with the group". Furthermore, as expressed by participant 2 (TP), creating a positive atmosphere is strong basis for future development and work of the group.

> The community that's created…is a very strong basis for being a strong group that people know about.

Participant 8 (TP) demonstrated strong enthusiasm and faith in the concept of Transition when sharing a positive experience: "The support Transition Model and Transition movement gives people to do anything". This view, perhaps created or strengthened through the strong sense of community, is echoed by participants in the Transition Purbeck workshop when requested to share lessons they've learnt (Figure 15) and positive aspects (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Lessons learnt, TP

Figure 17. Positive experience, TP.

4.4.2. Reconnecting the community

The Transition Initiatives have succeeded in creating "group(s) of people who are very different" (member of Transition Town Bridport(TTB)) through diverse types of activity as well as creative use of different media from Facebook and Google groups to websites, posters and printed newsletters in order to reach out to the community. An illustration of reaching out to the community was offered by Participant 6 (TTSN):

> We've been to the last three community lunches, which is a big lunch held in this hall and they have speakers and all sit down and have a meal together and its people from the community but realistically its in the middle of a weekday so its nearly all retired people which is great and we were lucky enough to speak in it and that was great because it got all these people talking and thinking about transition and we sat down and had lunch with these people and…it was fantastic.

A distinctive strength of the Transition Movement, also discovered amongst Australian Transition Initiatives (Goldwasser 200) is the trend of incorporating community members not previously involved in environmental movements. This trend was also reported by Kenis and Mathijs (2009) who suggest that the "secret ingredient" by which the Transition Movement engages people not tempted by the conventional environmental movement has to do with the way in which Transition empowers people and enagages them in a participatory way. This inclusivity is a part of a key element of the Transition model, "tapping into the creative genius within our local communities" (Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008 p.8) through networking with existing groups and involving a range of people from the community in the Transition

Initiative (Hopkins 2008a). This element was reflected very directly in a point "to consider" from the workshop of Transition Town Sturminster Newton in Figure 17:

Putting together the captive genious of the community

Figure 18. Point to consider, TTSN

As well as demonstrating inclusiveness, the groups showed a commitment to bridging between other active groups and bringing together the community:

> There's like a hundred groups in this town…And they're obviously all doing wonderful things and they're all interesting, they're just more specific. The real thread of that whole thing is Transition. Transition is the potential thread of every one of those groups and every one of those groups is important to this (Participant 1 TTSN).

> Really we want this to be something that's part of our local community and pulls our local community together (Participant 3 TP).

As a result of this push to bring together the community and include different members of it, rather than finding the resistance that some other environmental groups report, the Initiatives' experiences support the claim of Bragwyn and Hopkins (2008) that Transition Initiatives seem to encounter more support than resistance. A similar trend was found in studies of Australian and Belgian Transition Initiatives, which identified inclusivity and collective action stemming from the Transition model was as a particular asset to the local Initiatives (Kenis and Mathijs 2009, Goldwasser 2009). Experiences of positive community response from participants of Transition Purbeck workshop are illustrated below in the positive aspects (Figure 18) and lessons learnt (Figures 19).

The are lots of people out there who care

There are loads of other people who care

Finding out that lots of people already support steps to Transition
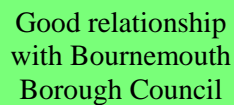
Figure 19. Positive aspect, TP.   Figure 20. Lessons learnt, TP.

41

This point is also echoed by a member of Transition Bridport reflecting on the groups already active in the area: "It's like Bridport having Transition but didn't know it". The same open doors seem to apply to the groups when building their relationship with the Local Government. Although one group reported some issues in this area, several groups described a strong relationship with their local government, including the Transition BH Hub (TBHH) who reported as a positive aspect:

Good relationship with Bournemouth Borough Council

Figure 21. Positive aspect, TTBH.

This relationship is reflected in the Climate change and sustainable Bournemouth community action plan where the Bournemouth Borough Council commits to supporting the Transition Town movement (Bournemouth Borough Council 2009).

Similar results were also found in a recent survey of Transition Initiatives in the United Kingdom (UK), where 46,6% of Initiatives reported a sense of achievement in the area of building links with schools, other groups and particularly (28.8%) local government. 68.5% reported achievement in the area of "awareness-raising and community engagement". However, also similarly to this study, the UK Initiatives survey found a small amount of Initiatives (8.3%) presented "Lack of support from businesses/local government" as a challenge (Seyfang 2009) and 30.6% of Initiatives reported "Reaching out to wider community" as a key challenge (Seyfang 2009), demonstrating that although an area of great effort and accomplishment, this is naturally also a key challenge for the groups, a point further explored below in section 4.3.

4.4.3. Engaging people

In a recent survey, 76.4% of Initiatives in the UK reported "growing the movement" as a challenge (Seyfang 2009), an issue echoed in the process of this study. However, Transition Initiatives have reported great achievements in the area of community engagement within this

study as well as previous research. This clearly demonstrates that while an area of great achievement, engaging people is also an area of great challenge. This topic is therefore further explored below.

4.4.3.1. Accommodating different people
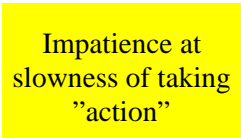
Involving different people from the community is clearly a great achievement and asset to the Transition Initiatives. However, this diversity also presents a challenge in accommodating to the wishes and ambitions of different people. This is a difficult task and requires flexibility and patience from the members of the core group who often reflect the feelings described below in a conversation in the Transition BH hub workshop:

> Participant 2: While one might have what one consideres an appropriate sense of urgency, one doesn't always have the capacity to spend in order to ensure that things move as quickly as one would like and not everybody else shres that sense of urgency so it can be frustrating.
>
> Participant 1: It's partly a personal thing and partly other people just not getting there.
>
> Participant 2: I have to manage my expectations to match the capacity of the transition group.
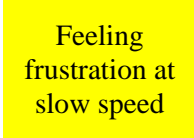
These feelings of frustration were reflected in the challenges presented by Transition Purbeck (Figure 21) and Transition BH hub (Figure 22).

Impatience at slowness of taking "action"

Feeling frustration at slow speed

Figure 22. Challenge,TP   Figure 23. Challenge, TBBH

An interesting insight into the reasons behind this conflict was provided by participant 4 (TP).

> I wonder if it is a bit of a confidence thing. Us lot are here probably because we're pretty used to being in other groups anyway so we're used to doing it...but some people are not so maybe its sort of different problems stop things. Do we look at the reasons why things aren't happening?

Although Transition Initiatives appeal to people who are perhaps already active in various environmental movements, their key strength is also appealing to a larger group through their endeavour to unify and strengthen the local community as well as reconnect with traditions and history of the area. They therefore also attract people who have no earlier experience in such work. The implications of this are understood and considered by the members of the core groups:

> I think it's more a supporting thing. People aren't asking because they need permission, people are asking because they just want a bit of a confirmation that they're doing the right thing. Because everyone's a bit nervous at the moment and they need confidence and you need someone to say no that's cool! Go for it! Some reassurance (Participant 5, TP).

> People don't have the confidence to just go and do it. They need someone to tell them how important that is, what you're doing (Participant 1, TBHH).

Again reflecting the inclusive and supporting ideology of the movement, the members strive to accommodate these differences through providing support as demonstrated above as well as well as the "point to consider" presented by TBHH (Figure 23) and challenge from TP (Figure 24). A practical suggestion was also brought forward by participant 2 (TBHH) suggesting the group "provide some kind of safe environment in which to try out approaches to meetings".

Nurturing Newbies

Ensuring people feel included and engaged

Figure 24. Point to consider, TBHH   Figure 25. Challenge, TP

4.4.3.2. Sharing the workload

The problem of truly engaging a diverse range of people also presents itself in difficulties of spreading the workload. This problem was also expressed by several groups in the Dorset Transition Gathering as well as a recent survey of UK Initiatives, in which 36.1% reported "a need for more active group members to take on some of the workload" (Seyfang 2009). This problem presented itself in two ways in the workshops. Firstly, the challenge of "getting people to volunteer and avoiding the pressure being on some people" (participant 1 TBHH)

was reflected in the "Points to consider" of TTSN (Figure 25) and TP (Figure 26) as well as a challenge presented by TBHH (Figure 27):

No one really picks up challenges	It's important to spread the load and ask for help if needed	Getting people to do things to avoid burnout
Figure 26. Points to consider	Figure 27. Points to consider, TP	Figure 28. Challenge, TBHH

Secondly, the groups reported a problem that greatly affects the work of any group, specifically when working with volunteers: "People don't always do what they say they're going to do, even with the very best intentions" (Participant 5, TP). Further than the trouble of getting volunteers is the problem of ensuring the work is carried out: "That's the problem, isn't it, it's volunteers that offer to do it and aren't doing it" (Participant 1, TBHH).

Although this problem was reflected in all groups, it is not one where a solution is simply found. The groups seem to deal with these issues in diverse ways. Participant 1 (TP) suggests the solution is creating a big enough group:

> Raising awareness until you have a sufficient body of people involved so you can pluck people out of the pool who are willing to take on the responsibilities.

Participant 1 (TBHH) suggested volunteer job descriptions to encourage volunteers to come forward and commit to a specific task, while the following conversation in the workshop of Transition BH hub illustrates thoughts echoed by several active members of Initiatives, the need for stepping back to allow new volunteers to come forward.
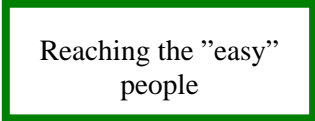
> Participant 3: I think the problem is there's loads of things that I would personally love to be involved in but you realise as soon as you start meddling then youre suddenly in charge of it, and you think no no I can't do that I want someone else to organise it and then I can participate
>
> Participant 4: Often it means stepping back
>
> Participant 1: And letting other people make mistakes because part of the reason you dive in is because you think I can do better than that

4.4.3.3. Prioritising

The Transition Model is concerned with constructing a response unique to the local community (Hopkins 2008a). Although this enables the groups to work with the resources and groups already within the town or area, it presents the challenge of prioritising and "deciding what kind of group we are" (Member of TTB). This problem was addressed in the Transition Purbeck workshop where participant 2 presented as a challenge: "Conflict/balancing where we put out energy", reiterated by participant 1: "We need to be clearer about who our target audience is going to be". After a conversation concerning "are we going for those ones (reaching high) or are we going for those ones (reaching around)" (Participant 2), the group agreed the following target for awareness raising:

Reaching the "easy" people

Figure 29. Goal for awareness raising, TP

Participants in the Transition BH hub workshop introduced a similar topic in discussing raising awareness. Participant 1 expressed the need to "Prioritise a target, which events we want to be at". This point was further explored by participant 2, expanding not only on choosing a target audience, but on the difficulty of catering for different audiences while reflecting the supportive ideology and atmosphere of the Transition Movement:

> It's about understanding your audiences. Different people are in different stages of approaching the change.

Further than the difficulty in choosing audiences and catering for them in terms of raising awareness, lays the challenge of prioritising also practical projects. This issue was discussed by several groups in the Dorset Transition Gathering and in the workshop of Transition Town Sturminster Newton:

> There seems to be this obsession with doing big things rather than things we can actually manage (Participant 1).

As well as Transition BH hub, where the issue was summarised by participant 1: "Make it achievable".

4.4.3.4. Creating opportunities
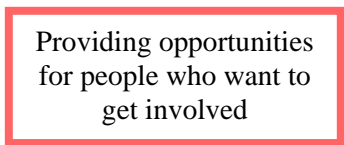
Another aspect of the issue of prioritising is the balance between raising awareness and gaining support, and engaging those people in the practical work of the Initiative as reflected in the following comment:

> We have brought a lot of people in but we've not kept a lot of them. That's the problem. Because we're a bit disjointed…There's not a draw down of people from excitement to action (Participant 3, TTSN).

Similarly, the following was presented in the workshop of Transition Purbeck:

> We have 50-60 people coming to meetings and I think that's a huge number of people if, IF those people were engaged, but properly engaged…I think the problem is we had these meetings with 50 or 60 people and we talked about stuff but we didn't give them anything, they didn't go away with anything to do (Participant 3).

The group therefore agreed to commit to the area of creating opportunities with the following goal:

Providing opportunities
for people who want to
get involved

Figure 30. Goal for creating opportunities, TP

The issue was also reflected in the Dorset Transition Gathering, where creating practical projects rather than just meeting and talking was presented as a challenge by several groups. The push for creating activities is partly created by the Initiative's wish to engage more people and the aim of the Transition Model to create practical solutions to environmental problems (Hopkins 2008a), but also by the need to accommodate the diversity of people involved. As noted by Participant 2 (TP): "There's people that won't do meetings, they'll do something practical".

This also highlights a key difference between the Transition Movement and conventional environmental movements. As illustrated below, the focus is clearly on involving a diverse range of people from the community to engage in positive practical solutions, rather than conventional campaigning and changing individual behaviour (Hopkins 2008a).

> For me it's about transforming society toward sustainability and so you want to give people opportunities to do something, and there's a list of things here but the more people you get the more you will get people with different interests that can create a whole menu of opportunities (Participant 1 TP).

In her study of UK Transition Initiatives, Grace (2007) introduces an interesting and valid point about the opportunities the Initiatives seek to create. In her view, the individual actions being taken in the Transition Towns, although interesting, are not particularly novel. It is their combination and the way parts of the Model link together that make Transition Towns different.

4.4.4. Group governance

Another major issue reported by the UK Transition Initiative's survey was group governance, accounted as a key challenge by 52.8% of the Initiatives (Seyfang 2009). This issue also became evident during the course of this study. In the Dorset Transition Gathering, Dorset Agenda 21 presented the primary results of a skills survey of Transition Initiatives, conducted to map specific skills required and acquired by individuals and groups within the Transition Movement. One of the skills most sought after by the groups was governance, reflecting concerns in this area.

This topic relates back to the issues discussed in the sections above, as some members suggested a steering group was needed for effective networking "in order to go to speak to other groups" (participant 1, TP) and prioritising "to get together and decide what our projects are so we can really go for something" (Participant 5, TP). Furthermore, the issue of group governance relates particularly to the Transition Model. As discussed earlier, the Transition Model is designed to allow freedom for the groups to evolve in a way which reflects their local community (Hopkins 2008a).

> 'Let it go where it wants to go' (*One of the 12 ingredients of the Transition Model*) is a very open ended concept. We believe in that a great deal (A member of TTB).

The above statement reflects both the groups' endorsement of this concept of freedom as well as the Transition Model itself. However, a reflection of the same "ingredient" demonstrates how issues of governance are related to the Model:
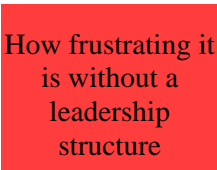
> Definitely. We might have done rather too much of that. Not enough steering, too much running (participant 1, TP).

When dealing with this element of freedom, several groups, especially less established ones, struggle to find

> that balance between the discipline and control necessary to actually achieve things and the fun aspect where you draw people in (Participant 5,TTSN).

The Transition Model does include a suggestion on governance of a Transition Initiative, a "steering group" of core people first set up as an initiating group and later re-formed to include members of action groups created to tackle specific areas such as food or energy (Hopkins 2008a). However, differences in opinions of what a steering group should be and do complicate establishing and running such a central group. This struggle to balance the non-hierarchical structure of the Transition Model "with the need for organisation, structure and progress forward" (Goldwasser 2009 p.42) was also discovered amongst Australian Transition Initiatives.

Furthermore, as discussed in section 4.3.3., the Initiatives have succeeded in creating a diverse group but therefore struggle with accommodating those different views and interests: "As much as you're a group with the same aim you don't all want to work in the same way" (Member of TTB). This conflict of interests was reflected also in the survey of UK Initiatives where 22.2% of groups noted "managing group dynamics" a challenge, as well as in "lessons learnt" from participants from TP (Figure 30) and "points to consider" TTSN (Figure 31) reflecting very different views on the topic:

How frustrating it is without a leadership structure

No more meetings

Figure 31. Lessons learnt, TP   Figure 32. Points to consider, TTSN

Some groups are therefore concerned that "by having a steering group we restrict our growth to people that like coming to meetings" (Participant 2, TP) and yet many argue that:

> The key part of what the steering group needs to do is to facilitate the setting up of….projects to get people to go do very practical hands-on things (Participant 1, TP).

The discussion of structure and extent of leadership in the Initiatives was summarised by Participant 1 (TP): "It can work in any number of ways, but the only way it can't work is if nobody does it", reflecting also on previous difficulties of the group in working without a steering group structure. This issue was therefore discussed more extensively in the Transition Purbeck workshop and as a result the group agreed to set up a steering group and established preliminary plans for it through the process of the workshop.

4.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed and analysed the findings of this study. The key trends of enthusiasm and optimism, reconnecting the community, engaging people and group governance, identified during the data collection and analysis were discussed in terms of previous research in order to draw final conclusions in Chapter 5.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Chapter Introduction

This final chapter seeks to draw the study to close, summarising the findings and discussing their implications as well as providing a retrospective evaluation of the research and recommending areas for future research.

5.2. Conclusions

The literature review of this study discussed the growing interest from practitioner, policy and academic circles toward the power of community based initiatives, such as the Transition Movement, in realising pro-environmental change. It was concluded that there appears to be a lack of research within the wider sustainable communities literature and particularly the Transition Movement. This study therefore set out to critically evaluate the achievements and challenges faced by Transition Initiatives in Dorset. The data was aimed to be used to identify the drivers and barriers to the growth and development of the Movement in the area, in order to contribute to the wider literature while helping to develop the work of the Initiatives.

5.2.1. Self-evaluation workshop

The main data collection method, a self-evaluation workshop, was designed to be a creative and positive reflection tool with a strong focus on developing the work of the Initiatives while generating valuable qualitative data for this study. The workshop generated a very positive response from participants and was found to be a useful and relevant tool for Transition Initiatives, with the potential to be relatively easily used by other Initiatives particularly when in need of discussion and clarification of the group's direction and structure. In fact, other groups within Dorset as well as groups outside the study area have expressed interest in utilizing the tool.

5.2.2. Key Achievements

5.2.2.1. Optimism and enthusiasm

It was found that the Transition Movement seems to have succeeded in creating a supportive and positive atmosphere within groups that are committed to the Transition Model and ideology. This atmosphere of support and enthusiasm is a key element of the Transition Model and was found to counter the individualisation and feelings of helplessness that were identified in the literature review as the main barriers to creating change through conventional environmental movements.

5.2.2.2. Inclusivity

Furthermore, the Initiatives were also found to have succeeded in absorbing and utilizing another key aspect of the Transition Model. Inclusivity. The groups seek, and seem to have accomplished, to bring together their local community through networking with existing groups and the local government as well as engaging a diverse range of people. This enables the groups to begin to build a response to peak oil and climate change that truly reflects, and is endorsed by, their local community.

5.2.3. Key Challenges

5.2.3.1. Engaging people

Although engaging their communities is a key achievement of the Initiative's, their greatest challenges also lay in this area. While involving a diverse group of people is an asset, it also presents the challenge of accommodating the wishes, needs and opinions of different people as well as sharing the workload between them.

Also, the freedom integral to the Transition Model allows the groups to create practical responses to environmental issues that truly reflect their local community. However, due to this freedom, some groups were found to struggle with prioritising projects and selecting a target audience as well as setting up those practical projects and creating opportunities for truly engaging people in their work.

5.2.3.2. Group governance

Another key challenge related to the Transition Model is the issue groups were found to face with finding the balance between the non hierarchical structure of the Transition Model and the control and organisation necessary to steer the group forward. This issue was found to relate to the challenges discussed above as differing notions of leadership of individuals within groups further complicated the process of creating a functional structure and yet such an agreed structure was found to be crucial to support the processes of prioritizing work and engaging people.

5.2.4. Implications

The key challenges and achievements of the Transition Initiatives were found to relate strongly to the Transition Model. This reflects a high commitment to the Model and the ideology within the Initiatives which demonstrates the power of the Transition Model in creating a positive, enthusiastic community as well its adaptability to different communities, also revealed through the global spread of the movement. Furthermore, it was found that the areas of greatest challenge were also those of great achievement suggesting the Initiatives' success in coping with the challenges they face. This and their commitment to the Model suggest that although not without issues, the Model empowers the Initiatives to manage the challenges they face.

It was also found that while useful and relevant to the work of Transition Initiatives, the self-evaluation workshop was particularly useful to groups in need of discussion and clarification of direction and structure. While group governance was reported as a challenge by most groups, more established groups seemed to have adapted to this challenge suggesting that this issue might be a phase in the development of Transition Initiatives that could be overcome or eased through a process like the one created here through the self-evaluation workshops.

Overall, although a young movement, the Transition Movement has clearly established a strong network of motivated and enthusiastic Initiatives in Dorset and shows great potential for growth and development. This growth is supported by the work of Transition Network and Dorset Agenda 21 to facilitate training, sharing ideas and networking, allowing the groups to learn from each others experiences. This sharing of experiences is valuable in encouraging new groups and developing the movement further.

In terms of the wider sustainable communities literature, this study has illustrated the power of a community based initiative in positively engaging their community. Bringing global environmental problems to the community level and developing practical solutions to these issues locally has the power of making these issues relevant to people therefore engaging individuals previously not involved in environmental work. The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the processes through which community initiatives work and could, along with the self-evaluation tool developed by this study go on to assist in the further development of the valuable work of Transition Initiatives.

5.3. Limitations of research

It is felt that this study succeeded in achieving its aim and objectives and answering the questions presented in the introduction. However, although limitations of the research design were discussed in chapter three and an attempt was made to minimize these issues, certain limitations of this study remain.

Due to time constraints, two of the workshops were conducted as "piggyback" workshops, integrated within a meeting of the core group. This restricted the time to be used for the workshop and was compensated for by omitting some stages of the original workshop to allow time for the discussion generated by the process. Transition Purbeck workshop, also limited in time but less so than the "piggyback" groups therefore generated more data. This was considered in the data analysis stage by ensuring the data collected in the other workshops was equally considered.

As participation in the workshops by Initiatives as well as individuals within them was voluntary, the views Initiatives and individuals that chose not to participate were not represented which biased both the overall results as well as the results of the questionnaires. This bias was balanced through participatory research to gain the views of groups outside the workshops. However, although participant observation is very high on ecological validity due to studying social phenomena in their natural contexts (Saunders et al 2007) it creates the issue of observer bias. While acknowledging the impossibility of objectivity particularly in this

context, the author sought to refrain from reflecting personal views in the findings and used data triangulation to increase credibility and confirmability of the results.

The results of this study provide a snapshot of the selected cases that is highly tied into the time and context of this study. Therefore, although they seem to reflect the results of a recent survey of UK Initiatives as well as other studies of Transition Initiatives, the findings of this study are not readily generalisable beyond the selected cases, although participatory data provides an opportunity for drawing some conclusions on the movement in Dorset. However, the method of this study is readily transferable to Transition Initiatives in other areas and other sustainable community initiatives.

5.4.   Recommendations for future research

As the findings of this study are limited to a relatively small geographic area, further research could be done to expand this study. The possibility to also expand the time spent on the evaluation workshop and gaining the insight of members of Transition Initiatives unwilling to participate in meetings and workshops through personal interviews would increase the depth of the research.

Further research could also explore whether the issue of group governance is a phase in the development of Transition Initiatives as suggested by this study, and further investigate the usefulness of tools such as the self-evaluation workshop presented in solving those issues.

A comparative study with other sustainable community initiatives could provide an insight into how the results of this study relate to other initiatives as well as explore whether the achievements and challenges discovered within this study are truly related to the Transition Model.

Furthermore, this study concluded that an asset to the Transition Model is its adaptability to different communities and cultures. In light of the main criticism of localisation, its impact on poorer areas, a particularly interesting concept to explore would be the adaptability of the Transition Model to developing countries and/or poorer areas within the countries where the movement has been established.

5.5. Chapter summary

This chapter has summarized the key challenges and achievements of Transition Initiatives in Dorset as discussed in chapter 5 and concluded on their implications to the Transition Movement as well as the wider sustainable communities literature. The limitations of the research were then discussed and recommendations made for further research.

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Appendix A The 12 Ingredients of Transition

<div align="right">(Adapted fom Bragwyn and Hopkins 2008 p.24)</div>

The 12 ingredients of Transition

The 12 ingredients have grown out of the observation of what seemed to work in the early Transition Initiatives, in particular Totnes. They are not meant to be in any way prescriptive. Each project assembles these in different ways, adds new ones, disregards others. They do, however, offer what we think to be the key elements of the journey, and will hopefully help over the first couple of years of the work.

1. Set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset

This stage puts a core team in place to drive the project forward during the initial phases. We recommend forming a Steering Group with the aim of getting through stages 2 – 5, and agree that once a minimum of four sub-groups (see Ingredient 5) are formed, the Steering Group disbands and reforms with a person from each of those groups. This requires a degree of humility, but is very important in order to put the success of the project above the individuals involved. Ultimately the Steering Group should become made up of 1 representative from each sub-group.

2. Awareness raising

This stage will identify key allies, build crucial networks and prepare the community in general for the launch of the Initiative. For an effective Energy Descent Action plan to evolve, its participants have to understand the potential effects of both Peak Oil and Climate Change – the former demanding a drive to increase community resilience, the later a reduction in carbon footprint.
Screenings of key movies (Inconvenient Truth, End of Suburbia, Crude Awakening, Power of Community) along with panels of "experts" to answer questions at the end of each, are very effective. Talks by experts in their field of Climate Change, Peak Oil and community solutions can be very inspiring. Articles in local papers, interviews on local radio, presentations to existing groups, including schools, are also part of the toolkit to get people aware of the issues and ready to start thinking of solutions.

3. Lay the foundations

This stage is about networking with existing groups and activists, making clear to them that the Transition Initiative is designed to incorporate their previous efforts and future inputs by looking at the future in a new way. Acknowledge and honour the work they do, and stress that they have a vital role to play. Give them a concise and accessible overview of Peak Oil, what it means, how it relates to Climate Change, how it might affect the community in question, and the key challenges it presents. Set out thinking about how a Transition Initiative might be able to act as a catalyst for getting the community to explore solutions and to begin thinking about grassroots mitigation strategies.

4. Organise a Great Unleashing

This stage creates a memorable milestone to mark the project's "coming of age", moves it right into the community at large, builds a momentum to propel the initiative forward for the next period of its work and celebrates your community's desire to take action. In terms of timing, we estimate that 6 months to a year after the "awareness raising" movie screening is about right.
Regarding contents, the Unleashing will need to bring people up to speed on Peak Oil and Climate Change, but in a spirit of "we can do something about this" rather than doom and gloom. One item of content that we've seen work very well is a presentation on the practical and psychological barriers to

personal change – after all, this is all about what we do as individuals. It needn't be just talks, it could include music, food, opera, break dancing, whatever best reflects community's intention to embark on this collective adventure.

5. Form working groups

Part of the process of developing an Energy Descent Action Plan is tapping into the collective genius of the community. Crucial for this is to set up a number of smaller groups to focus on specific aspects of the process. Each of these groups will develop their own ways of working and their own activities, but will all fall under the umbrella of the project as a whole. Ideally, working groups are needed for all aspects of life that are required by your community to sustain itself and thrive. Examples of these are: food, waste, energy, education, youth, economics, transport, water, local government. Each of these working groups is looking at their area and trying to determine the best ways of building community resilience and reducing the carbon footprint. Their solutions will form the backbone of the Energy Descent Action Plan.

6. Use Open Space

We've found Open Space Technology to be a highly effective approach to running meetings for Transition Initiatives. In theory it ought not to work. A large group of people comes together to explore a particular topic or issue, with no agenda, no timetable, no obvious coordinator and no minute takers.

However, we have run separate Open Spaces for Food, Energy, Housing, Economics and the Psychology of Change. By the end of each meeting, everyone has said what they needed to, extensive notes had been taken and typed up, lots of networking has had taken place, and a huge number of ideas had been identified and visions set out. The essential reading on Open Space is *Harrison Owen's Open Space Technology: A User's Guide*, and you will also find *Peggy Holman and Tom Devane's The Change Handbook: Group Methods for Shaping the Future* an invaluable reference on the wider range of such tools.

7. Develop visible practical manifestations of the project

It is essential to avoid any sense that the project is just a talking shop where people sit around and draw up wish lists. The project needs, from an early stage, to begin to create practical, high visibility manifestations in the community. These will significantly enhance people's perceptions of the project and also their willingness to participate. There's a difficult balance to achieve here during these early stages. The project needs to demonstrate visible progress, without embarking on projects that will ultimately have no place on the Energy Descent Action Plan.

8. Facilitate the Great Reskilling

If we are to respond to Peak Oil and Climate Change by moving to a lower energy future and relocalising our communities, then we'll need many of the skills that our grandparents took for granted. One of the most useful things a Transition Initiative can do is to reverse the "great deskilling" of the last 40 years by offering training in a range of some of these skills. Research among the older members of our communities is instructive – after all, they lived before the throwaway society took hold and they understand what a lower energy society might look like. Some examples of courses are: repairing, cooking, cycle maintenance, natural building, loft insulation, dyeing, herbal walks, gardening, basic home energy efficiency, making sour doughs, practical food growing (the list is endless). The Great Reskilling programme will give people a powerful realisation of their own ability to solve problems, to achieve practical results and to work cooperatively alongside other people. They'll also appreciate that learning can truly be fun.

9. Build a Bridge to Local Government

Whatever the degree of groundswell a Transition Initiative manages to generate, however many practical projects are initiated and however wonderful your Energy Descent Plan is, it will not progress too far unless a positive and productive relationship is cultivated with the local authority. Whether it is planning issues, funding or providing connections, they need to be on board. Contrary to expectations, Initiatives are often pushing against an open door.

We are exploring how we might draft up an Energy Descent Action Plan for Totnes in a format similar to the current Community Development Plan. Perhaps, one day, council planners will be sitting at a table with two documents in front of them – a conventional Community Plan and a beautifully presented Energy Descent Action Plan. Some day the planners will look from one document to the other and conclude that only the Energy Descent Action Plan actually addresses the challenges facing them.

10. Honour the elders

For those of us born in the 1960s when the cheap oil party was in full swing, it is very hard to picture a life with less oil. Every year of my life (the oil crises of the 70s excepted) has been underpinned by more energy than the previous years. In order to rebuild that picture of a lower energy society, we have to engage with those who directly remember the transition to the age of Cheap Oil, especially the period between 1930 and 1960. While you clearly want to avoid any sense that what you are advocating is 'going back' or 'returning' to some dim distant past, there is much to be learnt from how things were done, what the invisible connections between the different elements of society were and how daily life was supported. Finding out all of this can be deeply illuminating, and can lead to our feeling much more connected to the place we are developing our Transition Initiatives.

11. Let it go where it wants to go…

Although developing a Transition Initiative may start with a clear idea of where it will go, it will inevitably go elsewhere. If you try and hold onto a rigid vision, it will begin to sap energy and appear to stall. The groups role is not to come up with all the answers, but to act as a catalyst for the community to design their own transition. If the group keeps focus on the key design criteria – building community resilience and reducing the carbon footprint – the collective genius of the community will enable a feasible, practicable and highly inventive solution to emerge.

12. Create an Energy Descent Plan

Each working group will have been focusing on practical actions to increase community resilience and reduce the carbon footprint. Combined, these actions form the Energy Descent Action Plan. That's where the collective genius of the community has designed its own future to take account of the potential threats from Peak Oil and Climate Change. The process of building the EDAP is not a trivial task. It's evolving as we figure out what works and what doesn't.

Appendix B Tools for Transition

1. The self-teaching peak oil talk

An interactive way to introduce the concept of peak oil to a group. Participant have a slide each from a peak oil presentation and are instructed to mingle to learn about each others slides.

2. The Web of Resilience exercise

An interactive group exercise to illustrate the intricate, complex and delicate networks of nature, the possible impacts of human interference and how cheap oil has transformed our society. Each participant is described a role in an ecosystem (such as oak tree, soil, fox, rainfall and so on), participants then pass around a string while describing their roles relationships to each other. Once a net of interaction is created, interventions to an ecosystem (such as cutting down the oak tree) are described and the participants let go of their strings as their roles are mentioned and witness the web eventually collapse.

3. The humble potato becomes a tool for breaking our oil addiction: An exercise

A creative exercise to fight addiction to oil. Each participant is requested to create a personal twelve step programme to reduce oil dependency and build a personal superhero with qualities and powers they perceive important in fighting addiction to oil.

4. The board game – a tools for identifying your vision and making it real

An interactive tool for the identification and design of a projects phases from start to finish. Participants brainstorm objectives and steps of the project, creating a visual map through their project.

5. Post-peak tour guides

A visioning exercise to invoke creative local responses to peak oil. Participants are requested to lead imaginative tours through the town. The scenario is that it is 2030 and that the area successfully made the Transition to a lower energy, more localised model and participants are requested to introduce the developments that lead the town to its resilient state.

6. Using visioning as a tool in peak oil education in schools – Transition Tales

A tool for introducing the importance of oil on our lives and societies as well as the concept of peak oil and its implications to schoolchildren. Students are requested to find answers to questions about peak oil online, debate over topics and to find an object in the classroom not made using oil as well as decribe how oil is used in their communities today and how it was used in 1930. Creative responses to the issue are then invoked through asking groups to produce news from 2030.

7. Making the most of your public events

Ideas to engage the participants of a meeting or film screening. Sparking conversations, getting feedback through a comments wall and a post-it note tool, endorsing celebration and fun events, networking through follow ups and mailing lists.

8. Writing a goof press release

Assistance to dealing with the media, a detailed guide to writing a press release to ensure it gets published.

9. Designing productive meetings

Tools for different meetings to ensure meetings are productive, interactive and enjoyable. Go-rounds, to ensure all participants get the opportunity to briefly present their opinions and necessary information, open agendas, creating the agenda together at the beginning to avoid creating a feeling of hierarchy, endorsing celebration and clear beginnings and endings to meetings.

10. How to run an Open Space Event

A guide to running an Open Space event, a tool for engaging large groups of people in discussions without an agenda or timetable. Participants define the topics they wish to discuss in terms of the bigger topic of the event. A timetable is then drafted for the topics and conversations are held simultaneously in different parts of the room/building. Participants move freely between different disucssions facilitated by the person who proposed that topic unless they wish to pass over the control and move to a different discussion.

11. How to run a fishbowl discussion

A tool to facilitate a deep focused exploration of an issue while keeping an open forum for medium to big groups of people. A small circle of chairs is arranged with a larger circle around it and a topic is introduced. When a participant wishes to speak they take a chair on the inner circle and join the discussion until they've finished and move back to the outer circle. Only the participants in the inner circle speak, and only to each other.

12. Running a world café event

A tool for exploring specific questions and issues with large groups of people in a relaxed atmosphere. It allows for exploring more specific questions than an open space event. Tables with different questions around a topic are set up. Participants sit down to discuss the topics and draw/write their ideas on a piece of paper on the table. At certain intervals a bell rings and each participant changes tables, this creates also a powerful networking aspect of the tool as most participants will meet each other during the event.

Appendix C Self- Evaluation Workshop

The workshop is designed as an interactive evaluation tool for the use of a Transition Initiative, its core croup or sub groups in any stage of their work. The process is flexible and can be adapted according to the needs of the group. Each phase is drawn up of a flipboard as the workshop progresses to ensure the process is guided by the participants. Changes made to the method after the piloting stage are described in red text boxes

Phase 1: Mission

In this stage the group will establish their long and short term mission and discuss their work in terms of the 12 ingredients of the Transition Model.

Step 1. Establish the long term mission of the group to establish the group's direction.

Step 2. Discussing the progress of the group in terms of the 12 ingredients. Although the ingredients are not designed to be prescriptive, they relate back to the Transition Model allowing the group to reflect on their direction and activities in terms of the Transition Model. Furthermore, the 12 ingredients are a common denominator between Transition Initiatives and give a snapshot, however incomplete, of the status of the Initiative.

The 12 ingredients (as listed below and further explained in Appendix A) are discussed one by one with the group and the 12 bowls symbolising the ingredients are colored accordingly as follows:

The group has done this or are currently in the process. (continuous tasks such as raising awareness)

The group has just started this or has started planning it

The group has not started this or plans to not do it.

The 12 ingredients:

1. Steering group	6. Open space	10. Honor the elders
2. Raising awareness	7. Practical manifestations	11. Let it go where
3. Lay the Foundations	8. Great reskilling	it wants to go
4. Great Unleashing	9. Build a bridge to	12. Energy descent
5. Form groups	local government	action plan

Step 3. The group then establishes a short term, more achievable mission, a working aim, for the group.

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Mission

Overall mission:_____

> The 12 ingredients were originally visualised in a linear fashion. The illustration was changed after the pilot phase due to feedback from Linda Screen that the Transition Network is to renaming the 12 steps as 12 ingredients to avoid impression of linear prescriptive structure.

The 12 ingredients:
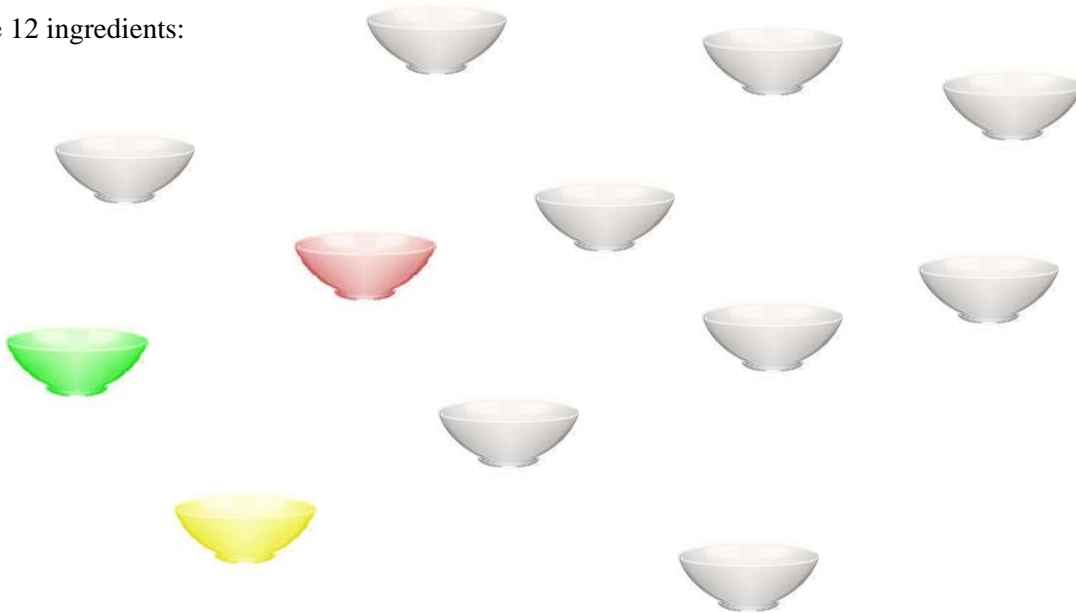
Short term mission: _____

Done/   Started /   Not yet
Doing   Soon

Phase 2: Taking Stock

In this stage the group will reflect of their previous activites and discuss positive and negative experienves as well as the lessons that have been learnt from them.

Step 1. The group establishes its key areas of activity, the number of listed activites depending on the structure and work of the group. The diagram is designed to visualise that the areas of activity are the core processes of the group, the underlying seeds of the results of their work. As an example, awareness raising or education could be core areas of activity leading to results such as events, film screenings and so on.

Step 2. Once the activities have been established, each activity is rated on a scale 1-5 according to how much push or effort the group feels is placed in this area.

Step 3. Each activity is then also rated 1-5 according to how well the group preceives it is progressing in this area.

Step 4. An indicator is decided for each area of activity, ensuring that it coincides with the rating given on the overall performace in this area. This indicator can then be used to assess development after the workshop.

(As in this study, steps 2-4 can be omitted from the workshops to shorten the process)

Step 5. Each participant is requested to write their experiences on color coded stickers (as illustrated below), and discuss each point with the group while sticking them on the diagram.

Positive experiences	Challenges/ Negative experiences	Things to consider in the future/ Lessons learned

Taking Stock

Results

Effects

Goals
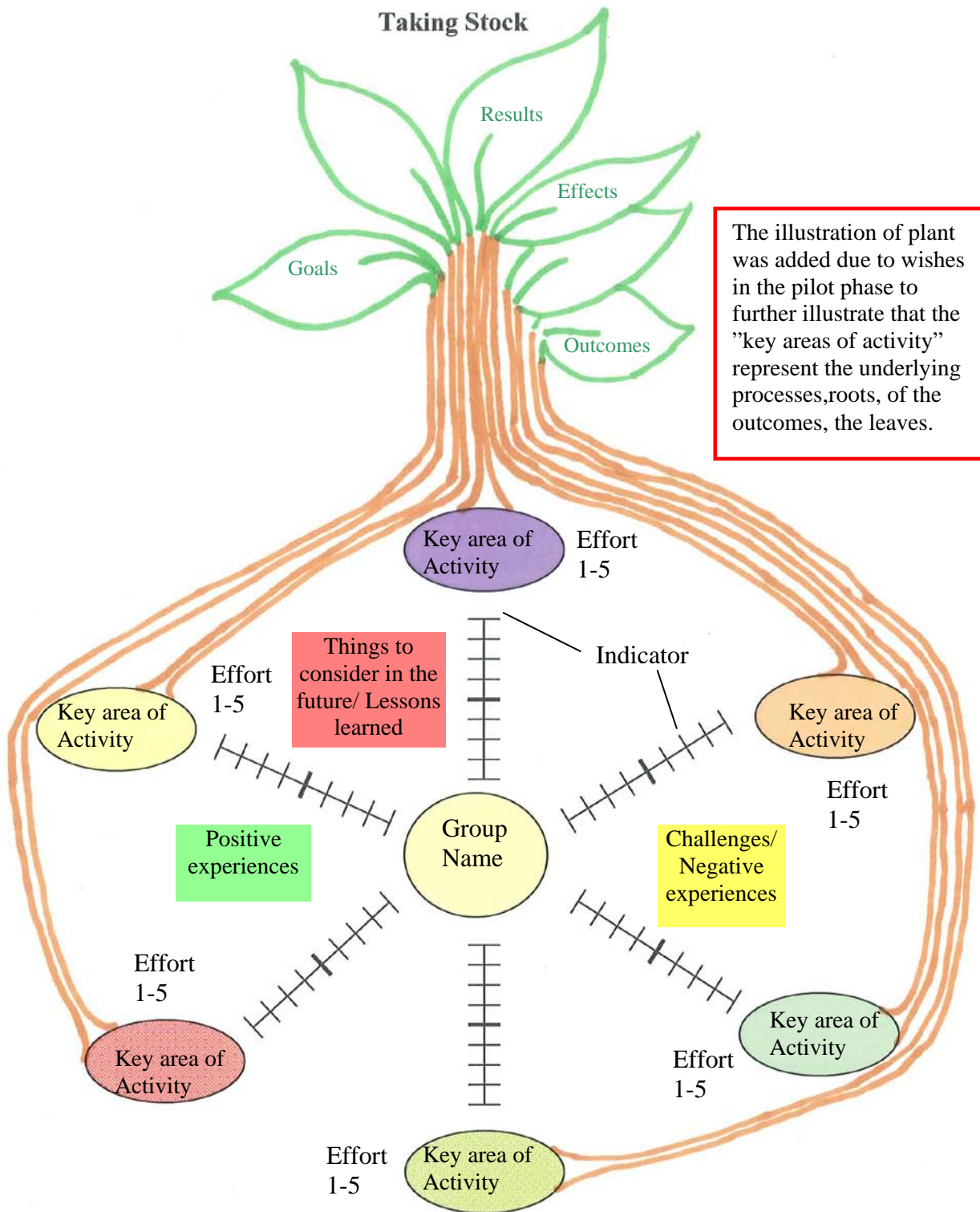
Outcomes

The illustration of plant was added due to wishes in the pilot phase to further illustrate that the "key areas of activity" represent the underlying processes, roots, of the outcomes, the leaves.

Key area of Activity — Effort 1-5

Things to consider in the future/ Lessons learned

Effort 1-5

Indicator

Key area of Activity

Effort 1-5

Key area of Activity

Positive experiences

Group Name

Challenges/ Negative experiences

Effort 1-5

Key area of Activity

Effort 1-5

Key area of Activity

Effort 1-5

Key area of Activity

Effort 1-5

Key area of Activity

Phase 3: Planning for the future

During this phase the group will build on the experiences discussed during phase two and create a plan for the future.

Step 1. The key activites established in the previous stage create the foundation of the diagram, as well as the short term mission of the group written at the bottom. The group is then requested to create feasible goals for each area of activity in terms of the short term goal. If applicable, the indicators can be used to establish the goals.

Step 2. When goals have been established for each activity, the group is requested to outline their strategies to reach those goals.

Step 3. The group then discusses the amount of effort or push should be given to each area of activity in the future again on a scale 1-5. This step relates to Steps 2-3 and can also be omitted if necessary.

Step 4. The last step is to check the plan. With these strategies and this amount of effort can the goals be reached.? If the goals are reached has the group then filled its short term mission? If the group wishes, this plan can then be used to create a more detailed action plan and/or divide up tasks and areas of responsibility

Planning for the future
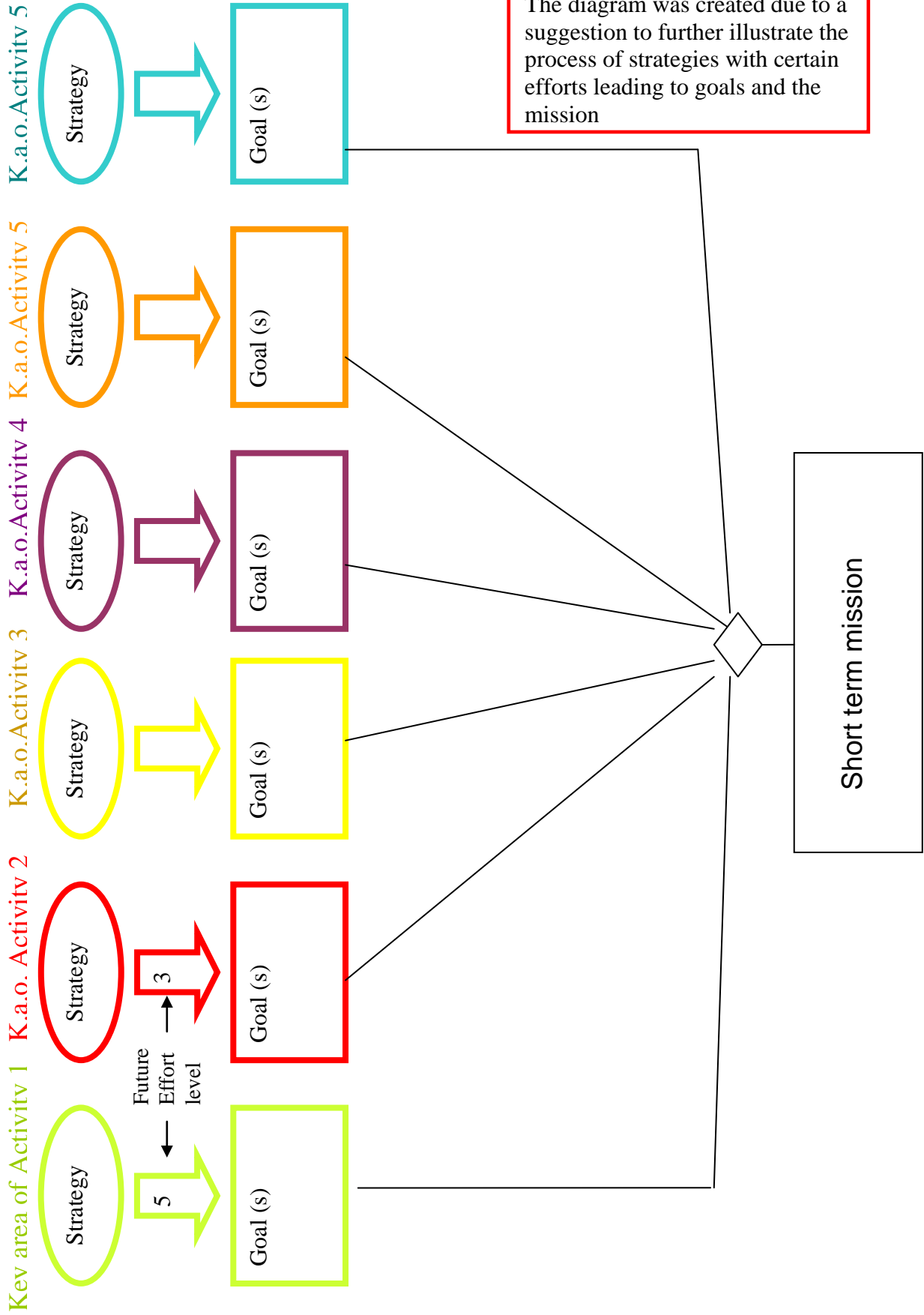
This phase was originally presented as a list of Activities with Strategies and goals below. The diagram was created due to a suggestion to further illustrate the process of strategies with certain efforts leading to goals and the mission

K.a.o.Activity 5 — Strategy → Goal (s)

K.a.o.Activity 5 — Strategy → Goal (s)

K.a.o.Activity 4 — Strategy → Goal (s)

K.a.o.Activity 3 — Strategy → Goal (s)

K.a.o. Activity 2 — Strategy → 3 → Goal (s)

Future Effort level

Key area of Activity 1 — Strategy → 5 → Goal (s)

Short term mission

Appendix D Questionnaire for workshop participants

1. Which Transition Town(s) are you involved in?

_____

2. Which activity/activities of Transition Town(s) are you mostly involved in?

_____

3. Age category (in years):
A. 0-19   B. 20-29   C. 30-39   D. 40-49   E. 50-59   F.60-69   G.70+

4. Gender
       Male / Female

5. How useful did you find this evaluation?
       Very useful
       Quite useful
       Indifferent
       Not very useful
       Not at all useful

6. Would you want to repeat this evaluation with your group in the future?
       Yes, definitely
       Yes, probably
       Maybe
       Probably not
       Definitely not

7. How easy would you find repeating this evaluation within your group (if given instructions)?
       Very easy
       Quite easy
       Manageable
       Quite difficult
       Very difficult

8. Do you think this evaluation will influence the work of your group in the future?
       Yes, A lot
       Yes, A little
       Maybe
       Not much
       Not at all

9. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: "This evaluation gave me new insight into our work."
       Strongly agree
       Agree
       Tend to agree
       Neither agree nor disagree
       Tend to disagree
       Disagree
       Strongly disagree

10. Do you think it would be useful to share this evaluation information between Transition Towns?
       Yes, definitely
       Yes, probably
       Maybe
       Probably not
       Definitely not

Any comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E List of activities for participatory observation

Informal Interview, Paul McIntosh, DA21, 14 October 2009.

Informal Interview, Linda Screen, Transition Network, 24 February 2010.

Green Drinks, Transition Town Dorchester, 2 March 2010.

Green Drinks, Transition BH hub, 4 March 2010.

Dorset Transition Gathering, 13 March 2010.

Transition BH meeting, 15 March 2010.

Transition Bournemouth meeting, 16 March 2010.

Transition Sturminster Newton meeting, 20 March 2010.

Informal interview, member of Transition Bridport, 1 April 2010.

Appendix F Description of cases and workshop outputs

Transition Town Sturminster Newton

Description of workshop:

Number of Participants: 7

Date: 20 March 2010

Location: Sturminster Newton

Length: 1h 50min

A "piggyback" workshop organised in connection with a steering group meeting. Due to lack of time discussions of current and future effort levels were omitted from the workshop. Also the goals and strategies of the energy group were not discussed as representative of the group was not present.

Description of Initiative:

(Transition Town Sturminster Newton 2010 and personal communication)

Website: http://transitiontownsturminsternewton.wordpress.com/

Initiative status: Muller

Initiative type: Local Initiative

Community type: Town

Approximate number of members: 40

Transition Town Sturminster Newton (TTSN) was started in late 2008 with a mission to make Sturminster Newton as self-sufficient and resilient as possible and to raise awareness in the community and begin the work towards sufficiency and resilience. Transition Town Sturminster Newton organises monthly meetings as well as green drinks, film screenings and awareness raising and networking events and has begun to build links with the community and the town council through speeches and participation at events such as the Annual Sturminster Town public meeting and community lunches. Four working groups have recently been for the following areas: Energy, Community, Education and Food.

Mission

Overall mission:
To make Sturminster Newton as self-sufficient and resilient as possible

The 12 ingredients:

Great reskilling

Setting up a steering group

Great unleashing

Using open space

Bridge to local government

Forming groups

Letting it go where it wants to go

Lay the foundations - networking

Honouring the Elders

Raising awareness

Visible manifestations

Energy Descent Action Plan
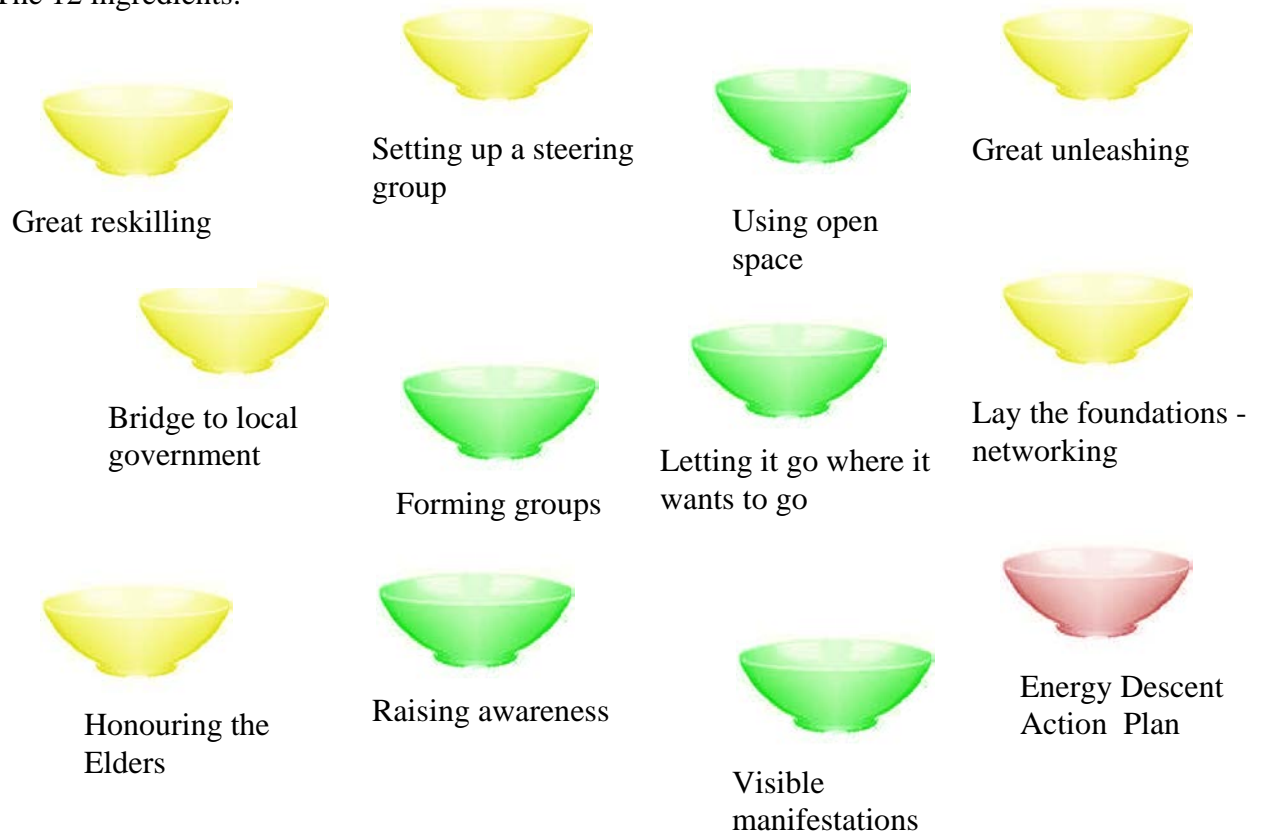
Short term/current mission:

To raise awareness and begin the work towards self-sufficiency and resilience

Done/ Doing

Started / Soon

Not yet

Taking Stock

Energy

Raising awareness

Community

Only big projects rather than small

Bridging between groups already active in SN

P.R/Promotion

Guerrilla gardening idea

Discussed veg growing with many people

Meeting times

Getting people to walk

Individuals having a grudge

No more meetings

TTSN

Linking connection

Money/grants to make things work

Negativity

Meeting inspiring people

Pr plan set

Set groups

No one really picks up challenges

Gaining self-confidence

Education

Food

Save power by cutting street lights at midnight

New website

Meeting imaginative creative people

Seeing people get excited about the future (not scared)

Putting together the captive genious of the community

Positives

Challenges/ Negatives

Things to consider / Things we've learned

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Planning for the future

Energy → [ ]

Education: Jamboree, events, website, magazine → Raising awareness about resilience and sustainability

Food: Acquire allotments → Get land and get people digging

Community: Networking, connecting, celebrating → Build and reconnect the community

To raise awareness and begin the work towards aelf-sufficiency and resilience

Transition BH hub

Description of workshop:

Number of Participants: 4

(From: Transition Poole, Transition Bournemouth, Transition Christchurch and Transition BH hub)

Date: 15 March 2010

Location: Bournemouth

Length: 1h 45min

A "piggyback" workshop organised in connection with a steering group meeting. Due to lack of time discussion of future effort levels were omitted.

Description of Initiative:

(Transition Network 2010a and Crossland 2009)

Website: http://transitionbh.org/

Initiative status: Official

Initiative type: Local Coordinating Hub

Community type: City/Urban

Approximate number of members: 100

The Transition BH Hub was set up in 2008 to support and encourage the growth of local Transition Town groups in the BH postcode area of south-east Dorset, which includes the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation.

The BH Hub has three aims:

1. To raise awareness of people living and working in the BH postcode area of the issues arising from climate change and future energy scarcity

2. To encourage the creation of a collective positive vision of a low-carbon future

3. To support and encourage the development of Transition initiatives within the BH postcode area in a fair and equitable manner

The Hub provides a network of communication between the local groups within its area. These include Transition Town groups in Christchurch, Wimborne, Poole, Bournemouth, the Purbeck and the New Forest. Meetings of the hub are organised monthly for mutual support around activities, to share resources and represent a united front to formal organisations and have good contacts with the local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. The hub and its participating Initiatives have regular film screenings, social events and an active Google group discussion group.

Mission

Overall mission: **Make the BH area as sustainable and low carbon as possible**

The 12 ingredients:

Great reskilling

Setting up a steering group

Using open space

Great unleashing

Bridge to local government

Forming groups

Letting it go where it wants to go

Lay the foundations - networking

Honouring the Elders

Raising awareness

Visible manifestations

Energy Descent Action Plan
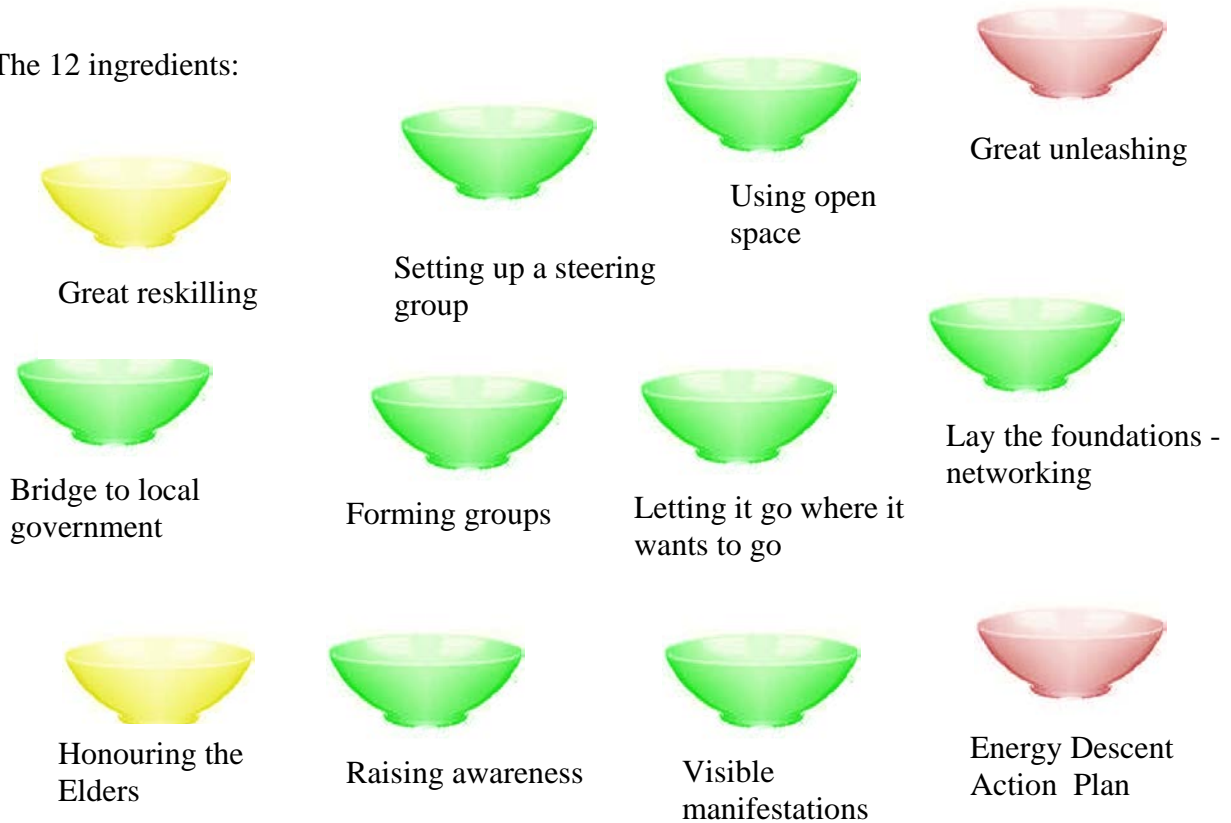
Short term/current mission:

Continuing and improving in nurturing the groups and raising awareness

Done/ Doing

Started / Soon

Not yet

Taking Stock

Communication

4

Nurturing

1

Getting people to do things to avoid burnout

Google group

Delegate and know your limits

4

Improving web resources for communication

Partnerships

Nurturing Newbies

Transition Together funding

Website – relying on volunteers and updating

BH steering group

Good relationship with Bournemouth Borough Council

Feed the golden goose

Big Green fortnight participation

Raising Awarenes

5

Networking

4

Allowing time for things to happen

Feeling frustration at slow speed

Resource management

2

Positives

Challenges/ Negatives

Things to consider / Things we've learned

Communication

Arranging web design → Good website, newsletter and diary

Resource management

Budgeting → Reviewing and extending resources

Networking

Recording → Extend the network

Raising Awareness

Planning → Organising and attending regular events

Partnerships

Seize the opportunity → New areas e.g. Businesses Innovation

Nurturing

Trainings BH gathering → Mentoring scheme Heart & Soul Facilitation skills

Continuing and improving in nurturing the groups and raising awareness

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Transition Purbeck

Description of workshop:

Number of Participants: 10

Date: 12 April 2010

Location: Wareham

Length: 2h 15min

Meeting arranged specifically for workshop. Due to time spent on valuable and constructive discussion, discussion on current and future effort levels were omitted.

Description of Initiative:

(Transition Purbeck 2010)

Website: http://www.peat-da21.org/transition/

Initiative status: Muller

Initiative type: Local Initiative

Community type: Rural/Town

Approximate number of members: 60

PEAT, The Purbeck Environmental Action Team decided to take on the Transition model in January 2009 and since then five of its members have attended Transition training. Transition Purbeck believes that we already have the answers and that small steps can lead to lasting change so the group is bridging people together and using local skills and resources to create a sustainable Purbeck which will be resilient in the face of both peak oil and climate change.

Events such as film viewings and green drinks are organised throughout Purbeck as well as monthly meetings. The group has built strong connections with other local groups such as, Down2Earth, Dorset Agenda 21, PACT (Partners and Communities Working Together) and SRSNT (Swanage Rural Safer Neighbourhood Team) as well as the local authorities and its first working groups have formed, working on topics such as skill sharing, a seasonal cookbook, and communications.

Mission

Overall mission:
Make ourselves obsolete

The 12 ingredients:

Great reskilling

Setting up a steering group

Great unleashing

Using open space

Bridge to local government

Forming groups

Lay the foundations - networking

Letting it go where it wants to go

Honouring the Elders

Raising awareness

Visible manifestations

Energy Descent Action Plan

Short term/current mission:

Raising awareness, creating opportunities, develop communication

Done/ Doing

Started / Soon

Not yet

Taking Stock

Communication

Creating opportunities

Steering Group

Awareness raising

Celebration

PEAT on the street – spreading the word + gaining support

How frustrating it is without a leadership structure

Should we consider Swanage/Wareham split (not complete split!)

Ensuring people feel included and engaged

Sense of community

People don't always do what they say will, even with good intentions

Lack of time/ resources/ people

There is almost no general awareness of physical limits of the planet

Importance of communication for things to happen

There are some (a few) people who have the same concerns as me

Progress, Time, Conflicts/ Balance

Time

There are loads of other people who care

Easy communication with similar people

PEAT had taught me what PEAK OIL means! But many people don't know.

The are lots of people out there who care

Economics (a bit)

The Basic model

Finding out that lots of people already support steps to Transition

My personal Transition Events Friends Community

Attracting more participants

That this is the only way!

More Awareness raising + activities and events

It's important to spread the load and ask for help if needed

Impatience at slowness of taking "action"

Taken on an interesting new journey = a bit more focus

Meeting like minded people in Purbeck and other groups =Just doing it!

(*name removed*) has a picture she coloured in on her bedroom wall *(from Peat on the street)*

Getting people to believe they can make a difference

Support

Positives

Challenges/ Negatives

Things to consider / Things we've learned

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Communication

Yahoo group
Email Website
Reorganise

→

Reaching people
and connecting
and organising

Celebration

Cake
celebrating in
every meeting

→

Reorganise the
importance of
enjoying it

Awareness Raising

Making a plan
Having more
events

→

Reaching the
"easy" people

Creating opportunities

Reskilling
Groups
Campaigns

→

Providing
opportunities for
people who want to
get involved

Raising awareness and creating
opportunities for people in Purbeck and
develop communication

To ensure privacy of participants, each speaker is referred to as: Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), Participant 3 (P3)… The facilitators input is marked in *italics.* Only relevant conversation is fully transcribed with identified speakers.

Explaining the mission and the study
Explaining the 12 ingredients
Steering group:

P2: ”We did do it... Yeah. We made the decision to do it but it didn't work. And I possibly, I don't, and the reason I think that is because (name removed), rightly so, said by having the steering group we restrict our growth to people that like coming to meetings”

P4: ”It was at that time though wasn't it, we've set up a steering group since then, haven't we and decided to meet but we haven't met have we, we haven't met up after that ”

P2: ”We haven't used the steering group as it should be”

Discussion about what a steering group is

P1: ”So you need another color for tried and failed, but that doesn't mean we can't try again”

P2: ”We haven't failed, that's a bit harsh!” ”We didn't do it did we. I don't think we failed though, because we said we're doing the transition thing, were doing the core groups great ok no big monthly meetings any more and then everything died, we didn't do anything, nobody met..So something failed”

Would you want to take that up again?

P4: ”I think the idea of dissolving the core group without the core group of having a proper chance to actually work was probably not.. I think it needs that I think it needs much more direction than and people who really make things work”

Raising awareness: Definitely done that
Lay the foundations: Doing. **P2**: ”I suppose you can always do that”
Great unleashing: ”We did it first” ”That's how we found our Transition group” ”We need another one” ”I don't think that was really a transition unleashing, that was a PEAT thing” –yellow

Form groups: **P2:** ”If you look at this document you'd think that perhaps we had”
                        P1: ”I think we've don't that quite a successfully, food group, skills group..”

Open space: A couple of times

Visible manifestations: "We're in the process definitely"

Great Reskilling: "Definitely been done" "I'd say in the process"

Local government: **P2**: "Definitely is happening, we had a district councilor..."

Learning from the elderly: **P4**"I think we should do more because we don't"

Let it go where it wants to go: **P1**: "We might have done rather too much of that. Not enough steering too much running"

Energy Descent Action Plan: **P2**: "Nowhere near, miles off"

Explaining about EDAP

What is your short term plan then?

P5: "I think awareness, widespread awareness in the community of what Transition is"

P2: "and a sequence of planned events with a team that isn't overstretched and that is willing...bang bang bang through the year"

P1: "50, 60 people that have turned up more than once to Transition meeting really quite a big catchment, and there is nobody yet that I've seen that has stuck their hand up and said yeh I don't have much to do in life, I can put a lot of time into helping you organize this and as participant 2 just said, she's been doing the website for a year and she wants to give up now, where are we going to find someone to replace her and until we get ourselves better known and more people engaged we're unlikely to find that person or people who've got time to do the grunt basically."

P7: "I mean as nice as Transition is as in there's not meant to be this kind of director of everything its, there needs to be someone who is leading it and pushing it..or a group of people.. "

P2: "I wonder though, if it was a group, if it would be easier.."

P1: "It can work in any number of ways, but the only way it can't work is if nobody does it"

Discussion about structure, whether Transition is bottom up or top-down, whether mission makes it institutionalized

P3: "Really we want this to be something that's part of our local community and pulls our local community together so that people here want to shop locally and they want renewable energy here and all of those sorts of things. So it needs, although it might take those different things, there has to be some other way of making, engaging the community very directly beyond friends and family"

Discussion about Transition with the people near you and relationship between Transition and local government. And about positive campaigning.

P2: "We need to give the council creative ideas"

P4: "They (the governments) are listening"

P2: "We need to get all those people in Purbeck that are interested in this stuff, we need to find them and have them feel like they're a part of this community"... "I don't feel like were following the model very strictly and sometimes it feels like a but of a restriction I feel pressurized that we're supposed to be doing this where actually we are doing it but more virally and I suppose just naturally"

P5: "So that comes back to the same thing that we started off with, that we need more people need more people aware of us"

P2: "And we need someone or some people driving the community because it does go to sleep if you don't"

What is your mission?

P2: "We're just a group of people getting together getting to know each other and passing information. We are just sort of like this community trying to access more people... Although I know other people would step in and say `that's all very well and good but we need to speak to council and we need to have a constitution etc"

P3: "Fun activities"

P1: "I agree with that. I think raising awareness it probably creating opportunities if people become aware but there's nothing for them to do they'll go and do something else" "For me it's about transforming society toward sustainability and so you want to give people opportunities to do something and there's a list of things here but the more people you get the more you will get people with different interests that can create a whole menu of opportunities"

P2: "We didn't know (name removed) and he knows a hell of a lot about energy and now we've got him and he's going to do his second event.. We need to find more though"

Discussion about which things should be included

P5: "I'd want to say learning, so maybe learning new skills or learning what its all about or learning what's the best way to do Transition or even what it is to be sustainable because some people just don't get it and it's unfortunate because with the government and what's on the news and everything its all about being green and people switch off they don't engage with it, they don't understand it. I mean, I know we find particularly with the wind farm, that people are instinctively just "NO I don't want it"

and its like, you want to reach people in a non confrontational way and just, educate sound quite bossy but just really try an explain to them how it works what its about."

P2: "That journey is from them having their first conversation or picking up their first leaflet, that's a very rocky road of questioning yourself and there's all sorts of thoughts and we need to cradle people through that"

P5: "I really think its genuinely really hard for people to understand all this stuff about…You hear so many catch phrases your carbon footprint and this that and the other and you can really start losing yourself and weird phrasing.. and I think we need to educate people very very simply what its about"

P2: "But then it goes back to the question about are we going for those ones (reaching high) or are we going for those ones (reaching around)"

P5: "No but I mean really simply, like going to schools and explaining stuff".. "how can you get people on board if they don't know what its about"

Discussion on age groups and knowledge about environment

P3: "That key thing you said that we have 50-60 people coming to meetings and I thinks that's a huge number of people if IF those people we're engaged, but properly engaged, 50-60 well properly engaged people is a really really big group of people to do something"

P1: "If all those 50-60 people didn't have anything else to do but Transition you could move mountains with that number of people but unfortunately most of use have to go and work"

P3: "Even if it wasn't all the time even if it was a few hours a week 50 or 60 people EACH doing a couple of hours a week I think you could still achieve a hell of a lot but I think the problem was we had these meetings with 50 or 60 people and we talked about stuff but we didn't give them anything, they didn't go away with anything to do"

P2: "Except, you can do whatever you want"

P3: "But if you said to those 50 or 60 people, right this month's were going to focus on doing this and those people went away and even if half of them did it. I think it's better than 50 or 60 going away having a nice evening but not having anything particular to do"

Discussion about funding

P2: "Sadly we don't have people who have time to put them (funding bids) together and we don't have actually have something apart from printing costs"

P5: "I think this is where we maybe need a steering group to get together and decide what our projects are so we can really go for something"

Explaining about the second phase, discussing whether the center of the focus group should be the steering group or the whole Initiative.

More people enter

Explanation of the what we're doing, explanation of the model, discussing the key areas of the activities

P6: "So the blobs are the seeds underground and the petals are the flowers that shoot from them"

P2: " I think we're raising awareness, creating opportunities and liaising with other groups" "Could we had a 5 minute discussion on whether we want a steering group in light of (name removed) point which is really ...what she said is that when you become an institution you spend a lot of time maintaining your institution but we are ..a community acting within a community whether we should spend our energy doing what were doing but trying to get out into the community as much as we can and not worry about or do we really need this group of people to form and push it forward but with very limited institutionalization."

P7: "It also needs to be have you done this yet? You said you were going to run an event, is that happening? Because its not just about giving permission to do something its about pushing it"

P5: "I wouldn't say it was necessarily giving permission, I think it's more a supporting thing. People aren't asking because they need permission, people asking because they just want a bit of a confirmation that they're doing the right thing because everyone's a bit nervous at the moment and they need confidence and you need someone to say no that's cool! go for it!, some reassurance."

P8: "I think that's important that we talk to each other and get that reassurance but I also think that's the problem with all these projects because everyone's just talking about it but because nobody's just said ok when's it happening? Lets have a date. It could have happened moths ago if someone had just been on top of it"

P2: "But nobody wants to be that person, I mean particularly I don't want to be that person"

P4 "But the people who took it on should be responsible for doing it" "I mean that is the idea that you decide to do something and then you go ahead and do it"

Discussion on how things don't get done and about who should take the responsibility

P8: " We need to trust people to go away and do what they say they were going to do. But people get too caught up"

P4: "I wonder if it is a bit of a confidence thing. Us lot are here probably because we're pretty used to being in other groups anyway so were used to like doing it" "But maybe the people that offer to do it, if

they haven't done it before then maybe somehow we can give them some support on a bit more.."we're so used to emailing each other that it just sort of comes as second nature, but some people are not so maybe its sort of different problems stop things" "do we look at the reasons why things aren't happening"

P1: "I think I remember from the Transition handbook designing out the core group right from the start..We certainly don't want the energy of this group of people to get focused into maintaining the institution, that's not what it's about. But on the other hand I am struggling to think of any situation where I have seen a group really take off and work if there hasn't been some core organising function that's actually taken on the responsibility of doing some of that grunt".. "You know, if you just have a group of people sat around in a pub saying that's a good idea that's not going to get anywhere. But when there's a group of them that say alright were actually going to make it happen now, you know you build organisations like the RSPB and the national trust off the back of that. Now you might say we'll we don't want to become anything like that because they're big institutions and all the rest of it. That's fine but it terms of getting it going in the first place"

P2: "getting that momentum"

P1: "It may be that because of the background that I come from which is all about working institutionalized I just can't envisage that if you just leave it to happen randomly all the bits will come together fortuitously at the right time. But the setting up of a core group, that's actually going to drive the group in the beginning, I don't think it's completely opposed to the view that you don't want it to become a big national institution"

P4: "I think it's always a balance isn't it, you find this middle path through things, you don't take the extremes of either of those two things, you just let it happen and you don't structure it to the nth degree."

P6 "I think the difference with this is that actually what you are actually trying to essentially is change people hearts and minds really..every voluntary body has an aspect of where you're trying to sort of convert people if you like but actually what you try to is this because you want to effect the hierarchy and the government in a sense but what you really need to do and where the world Transition probably comes from, is change the way people fundamentally respond to the environment that they live in and that is very difficult to do through an institutionalized body. But I agree with you that you do need some core element as long as the focus of that core is concentrating more on the outreach than it is on the inner structure. And that's always been the problems"

P2: "It's got to be built on trust and individual responsibility. If you could ensure, have an insurance policy of individual responsibility..

P8: "Maybe that's a way of looking at this steering group then is that it exists as insurance"

Discussion on the steering models of other organisations

Explaining the next phase

Collecting each participants negative and positive experiences and "Points to consider"/What we've learnt:

P4: "Positive things: Meeting likeminded people in Purbeck and other groups, because I didn't know a single soul before I joined Transition. And just doing it, because I like the way we don't seem to have to jump through all those hoops or we try to avoid them a bit more… We'll like we've been told making cake can be sometimes a health and safety hazard. So just do it, I like that its very refreshing." "Yellow (written as things to remember): More awareness raising because I think we need to really get into groups because when we invite people they don't always come, because I think they're a bit scared. And have more activities and events, so having things going on all the time that people can get into so they get tricked into it" "A bit need more focus"

P7: Green: "I put on mine, Peat on the street I thought was really good because we managed to get the word out and get a lot of support that we didn't have before" "Red: It's important to spread the load and ask for help when it's needed" "Ensuring people feel included and engaged"

P6: Peat on street "getting people to believe they can make a difference" "A lot of people don't know what peak oil means"

P1: "My green is the basic model. I deal with quite a lot of sustainability stuff professionally and I think its one of the most powerful ways of putting it all together" "My yellow one is attracting more participants" "Red: How frustrating it is without a leadership structure"

P8: "Green: The support Transition Model and Transition movement gives people to do anything. Challenge: time. Learning: How much, when you just talk to other people, things happen"

P2: "Positive: Being helped through my personal transition with the group which kind really led me into things, Friends and community that's created we have a laugh and we become friends, that is a very strong basis for being a strong group that people know about. Challenge: Making progress, time, and conflict/balancing where we put our energy" "I've learnt that this is the only way"

P3: "My green one is sense of community. Its about inbuilt group of people who share the same values which is very very nice" "My challenge one is impatience at slowness of taking action because I'm used to organising very activisty things" "Red one, finding out that lots of people already support Transition, so going out in Wareham and being very pleasantly surprised that the vast majority of people support the wind farm and knowing that lots of people want to buy local and organic"

P5: "Positive: there are lots of people out there who care and doing the wind farm thing and having all those people who actually made a point of coming over and saying 'yes I want to sign the letter' so

they're there, its just a matter of getting them involved." Negative: "people don't always do what they say they're going to do even with the very best intentions, me included. To consider: I know we put the vote forward and it's never been very popular but I do think that trying to do the whole Purbeck thing makes it a challenge and I think.. I don't want to split completely I think we want to keep Swanage and Wareham people together and working together and swapping ideas but I do think it's a barrier trying to say this food project is going to be Purbeck not just Swanage or Wareham"

Discussion on the challenge of distance

P10: "Green is lovely to communicate with similar people and everyone's wonderful and great" "Yellow, lack of time people and resources" "Red: There are loads of people out there who care"
P9: "There are some (a few) people who have the same concerns as me Yellow: there's almost no awareness of the physical limitations of the planet. Its not just about people its about fish and wood and water and everything else. And my red (Learnt) economics If Transition is such a good model you kind of have to ask well why isn't everyone interested. And one reason why the politicians aren't interested in it is because it just doesn't fit with our economy.. We've got an economy completely based on growth. Not just oil based but the economy relies n growth otherwise it'll fall to pieces. And growth, the economists way of defining growth is using more stuff up. Transitions kind of made me read books about that kind of stuff"

Explaining the next phase, conversation on key areas of activity

Awareness raising:
Discussion of whether recruiting is included in awareness raising.

P2: "There's people that won't do meetings, they'll do something practical"
P1: "The key part of what the steering group needs to do is to facilitate the setting up of those sort of reskilling projects to get people to go do very practical hands on things"
P7: " It think communication I think steering group should communication to everybody."
P2: "There's so many ways of communication that we could be using but where not"
P1: "Raising awareness until you have a sufficient body of people involved so you can pluck people out of the pool who are willing to take on the responsibilities"

Discussing the problems with communication, getting emails and who's "responsibility" it is to deal with queries etc., issue with becoming the bottleneck.

Celebrating and affirming:

P2: "They say you should budget 20 % of your time as a core group to like.."

P1: "hugging?"

P2: "The kind of stuff we're all going to laugh about because its hippie stuff, but you know.."

Discussing and checking everything is included in the listed activities.
Explaining the final phase.

Awareness raising: Getting a critical mass, but what is a critical mass. How many people is the goal. How many events is it possible to organize, how to reach people.

P1: "we need to be clearer about who our target audience is going to be"

Discussion on need to develop different tools to reach different people. Some awareness raising is done really well but there's a need to think about other ways of raising awareness. Figuring out the target audience of awareness raising.

P3: "Reaching those people who are already somewhat engaged but haven't quite.."

(**P1:** because once you have those people it'll be easier to reach the others)

Whether they are promoting the model, trying to get people involved or trying to get people to live it out.

P9: Whether talking about models and structure is irrelevant, reaching people that in one way are already in transition like knitting

P1: "But that's where we need the structure, in order to go to speak to those other groups"

Celebrating:

P7: "Recognising the importance of enjoying it"

Creating opportunities:

P9: "It's the positive things that people already want to know but there isn't the capacity here in Purbeck at the moment to learn them"

Discussion on whether you can actually do things with only positive campaigning.
Discussing the possible ways of communication. How and where all the different information needs to go. Checking the plan.