

Transition Chesterfield AGM 2021 Secretary's report on activities Aug 2020 – July 2021

In spite of the obvious constraints of running a community group like ours, we have not been idle over the last year. We have moved over to Zoom for regular monthly meetings and held several informative sessions on climate-related issues, in particular our Countdown to COP series. We have continued with our campaigns on planning and other issues and challenged the Council on their actions relating to the climate emergency. We organised two walks in Chesterfield's Walking Festival 2021, one being particularly popular. Our website has been re-launched and we have introduced our Postcards from the Future. Our projects have also been run, where possible, with adjustments.

Potato Day



Our thirteenth annual Potato Day in Jan 2021 was a peeled back arrangement. Early on, the decision was made to reduce the varieties available and manage by pre-orders only with appointments for collection. Seed packing was managed by separate bubbles and Loughborough Transition were again involved by managing their orders at a completely separate time. Over 50 volunteers helped and we sold 42 varieties of seed potatoes, plus peas and beans, alliums, plus other types of seeds, green manure etc.,

Surplus potatoes were sold, or donated to schools and community groups. This was a joint event with Inspire with profits evenly split.

Big thanks to Alastair Meikle who worked carefully through the various Covid protocols and managed to negotiate a shop from which to run the whole pre-packing.

Repair Cafes and the Right to Repair

Earlier on fixers focussed on carrying out their own repairs at home. However, in October with huge support from the Baptist Church we were able to hold a small event with appointments only. Following that, we answered enquiries as far as possible via email, maybe directing people to local repairers and one amazing fixer agreed to handle repairs in his home with drop off and collection in the organiser's porch. Pictures of repairs were supplied to keep the ethos of the Repair Café: that people can get broken stuff repaired for free, diverting waste from landfill, and learn a bit about fixing along the way. From April, monthly 'appointments only' sessions have been held at the Baptist Church to limit numbers and all have been immensely popular. Items for repair have been mainly electrical but have included torn clothing, broken furniture, and garden tools.



Along with many other community repair groups we also signed up to the petition for a REAL Right to Repair. In addition, Margaret has been taking part in monthly meetings to launch a nationwide network for Repair Cafes – hopefully in October.

This has been organised by **Margaret Hersee** but could not have continued without huge support from a core group of fixers.

Abundance



There are hundreds of fruit trees in Chesterfield where fruit goes to waste. Abundance Chesterfield is a project to harvest the fruit and distribute it for free to tree owners, volunteers and the community. Apples were collected and distributed in Autumn 2020. Other produce has now been included with Polly bottling much surplus produce and re-distributing to community projects, such as food banks and Gussie's Kitchen.

Many thanks to Alison Cowley and Polly Bentley.

Seed Swap – not been available due to lack of community events taking place.

Plastic Free Chesterfield

A *Transition Chesterfield* project since 2020.

Plastic Free Chesterfield works with the Chesterfield community to reduce single-use plastics. Since the group launched in mid-2019 they have signed up over 60 businesses to become Plastic Free Champions, 50 community organisations and centres as Plastic Free Allies, and 10 schools as Plastic Free Schools.

When Covid hit, the group switched to online webinars from major organisations including

Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and Ethical Consumer Magazine. Attendees came from all over the country, with several joining from other countries. In December 2020

Chesterfield Borough Council officially signed up to the campaign and passed a motion at a full council meeting followed by major employer CCS Media in early 2021. They showed

their support by donating towards Chesterfield branded reusable cups. In May 2021, the group became an accredited Plastic Free Community and to celebrate, they are organising a Plastic Free Festival in August with stalls, workshops, food, drink and performances.



Climate Emergency



Over lockdown we have been running a series of practical workshops aimed at reducing carbon emissions including a series of Ecohomes workshops (DIY solar lighting, Air Source Heat Pumps and Insulating your home) and in 2021 we started a series of monthly Countdown to COP events designed to celebrate and prepare for the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow. These events covered different

climate themes, including zero carbon homes, transport, food, education, circular economy, tree planting, carbon capture and flood management. They brought together experts and examples of best practice to identify the actions needed to achieve a zero carbon society, and reached new audiences with over 50 people at some events. We also posted on our website a few 'Postcards from the Future' setting out our vision of how we want Chesterfield to look in future. We have also submitted public questions to the council on their Climate Change Action Plan and produced a report on carbon emissions in Chesterfield.

Divestment

As of July 2021, 5 member councils (including Chesterfield Borough Council) of the Derbyshire Pension Fund had passed motions supporting divestment thanks to the lobbying of the Divest Derbyshire campaign. Together with the Derbyshire Pensioners Action Group we conducted a survey of Pension Fund members and responded to a Pension Fund consultation on their climate strategy. We have submitted public questions to LGPS Central, the investment pooling company owned by DCC and seven other councils, sent reports on the impacts of their investments to the Derbyshire Pension Committee and written to all Councillors in Derbyshire asking them to support a motion on divestment.



Planning and communications

We submitted an objection to the Council's Station Masterplan which had prioritised car access over walking and cycling, and comments of support to the proposed East-West Walking and Cycle route from the Royal Hospital to Brookside. We also joined a new 20's Plenty for Derbyshire campaign, picking up a campaign we supported 10 years ago to get residential speed limits in Chesterfield reduced to 20mph. Over 40 Parish Councils across Derbyshire have now joined the campaign. **Many thanks to Roger Green** who is checking the planning applications on a weekly basis. **Big thanks to Chris Brooks** for managing the twitter account @transitionchez, and **Sheila Curzon, Greg Hewitt and Dawn Ward** for updating our Facebook page.

Associate Groups

Inspire Community Garden

A demonstration organic community garden, now a separate charity. Work continued through lockdowns with social distancing, although garden shut in winter. Visits to garden managed by appointment. Planting advice received from new volunteer with suitable horticultural training. Cubs been invited to garden to learn about seed planting, idea being to encourage more younger people to enjoy the benefits of gardening. **Many thanks to all the volunteers** who continue to support the garden through this time.



Dr Bike & Inclusive Pedals



Local social enterprise *Inclusive Pedals* has held monthly '*Dr Bike*' bike repair sessions in the Queen's Park car park since 2017 which continue to prove extremely popular and very busy. When the sessions resumed after the first lockdown a booking system had to be put in place because of the number of people wanting repairs. This has continued simply to space out bikes and reduce the queue! With support from Cycling UK providing funding for equipment and spares they have been able to provide free repairs

since 2019.

Inclusive Pedals other projects include 'adapted cycling' in the Queen's Park for those with disabilities and their carers, a Community Cycling Club running 'Couch to 10 Mile' programmes and 'Cycling Without Age'. These projects are supported by a team of 20 volunteers.

Margaret Hersee (Secretary), August 2021