

## Transition Chesterfield AGM 2022 Secretary's report on activities Aug 2021 – July 2022

This year has seen much focus on activities to do with waste issues. We continued to run our regular events as low key as possible throughout Autumn and Winter, adapting to guidelines as necessary. In March we organised a successful regional gathering of groups connected with Repair and reducing waste. And in July we succeeded in putting together a new project of a Crafters Bazaar, encouraging groups of crafters to put their hoard of unwanted crafting materials back into circulation at an event on Chesterfield Market. We again organised two walks in Chesterfield's Walking Festival 2021, one being particularly popular and have continued to seek ways to work with other like-minded groups where appropriate.

Over the year, one of our Core Group moved to Sheffield (Greg Hewitt) and resigned and another member (Dawn Ward) is due to stand down at the AGM for the same reason. Other members (Darryl Cowley and Polly Bentley) are due to stand down as they have completed their term of office. So, we look forward to welcoming new members onto the Core Group to steer us over the next few years.

### Potato Day



Despite Covid issues we continued with our 14<sup>th</sup> Potato Day on the last Saturday of January. After discussion of whether we could return to the pre Covid format of selling on the day from the shop donated by Chesterfield Borough Council we decided the shop would continue as pre order collection only but surplus stock sold from a market stall. This went well apart from the very windy weather!

Once again we handled orders for Transition Loughborough which they collected to have their own Potato Day plus an

order for Hathersage and Hope Valley which is collected by them.

We made a profit of just over £1000 which was split between Transition Chesterfield and Inspire Community Garden.

### Repair Cafes and the Right to Repair

Since last August we have been holding monthly events, keeping things low-key whilst Covid was still a concern and ensuring that distance was maintained along with good ventilation. Over the year, interest in the events has grown and people have slowly registered that we are back!

In March, with funding from the Restart Project, we organised a regional gathering of fixers (**Fixfest East Midlands**) in the Market Hall which was very successful in bringing together Repair Café organisers and campaigners from as far afield as Leek and Lincoln and as near as Chesterfield and Clay Cross.

We collect repair data at all our events and continue to support the campaign for a **REAL Right to Repair** and are involved in a growing UK network of community repair groups. From August 2022, Ann Birks and Wendy Pinchbeck will be taking over the day to day running of the events. Margaret will continue with the networking side of things.

**Many thanks to all our volunteers who continue to help out at all our Repair events.**



## Abundance



Much fruit from the trees in Chesterfield and crops from allotments is surplus to requirements. *Abundance Chesterfield* is a project to harvest the excess and distribute it for free to volunteers and the community. Crops from trees in 2021 were very poor, apart from damsons, one or two isolated apple trees due to prolonged dry spells. However, donations of allotment vegetables were better and either cooked or delivered to foodbanks, due to extra networking and setting up collection points.

New sources of supply have been found and links with local and national groups including One Planet. Apple Pressing Day was organised with Chesterfield Council's *Year of Outdoors* events.

**Many thanks to Alison Cowley and Polly Bentley for organising and all volunteer pickers.**

## Seed Swap



'*The Seed Swap*' continues to be run under the banner of Inspire Gardens and Transition Chesterfield. We are using seeds collected from Inspire Gardens and donated by volunteers to swap with members of the public. The goal is to raise awareness of growing your own plants and food, encouraging people to save seed and avoid waste by providing them with the opportunity to replenish their gardens and allotments from our collection whilst adding their unwanted seeds to our stock for someone else to use and enjoy.

We have taken The Seed Swap to several events including Potato Day, The Great Chesterfield Get 2gether, FixFest East Midlands, the Waste Not Café, Hasland Gala and the Plastic Free Festival where it has generated much interest.

**Many thanks for Lizzie Henshaw and Martin Baxter for keeping the project going.**

## Plastic Free Chesterfield

It has been a year of transition for *Plastic Free Chesterfield*, which works with local businesses and the community to reduce single-use plastics. Our second Plastic Free Festival was held in June with a mixture of music and speakers and had even more visitors.

Our wooden Christmas tree, donated by S41 magazine and decorated with plastic-free decorations is a popular feature at the Crooked Spire's Festival of Christmas Trees.

As an established accredited Plastic Free Community, PFC now needs to renew its momentum, ideally with new volunteers keen to engage with local businesses and community groups to avoid unnecessary plastic.

**Many thanks to Greg Hewitt and Karl Deakin for their coordinating roles with the group.**



## Crafters Bazaar



This was a new venture for Transition Chesterfield. The idea of using Chesterfield Market to hold an event where any crafter could hire a stall and trade their unwanted crafting materials had been discussed for some time and at the beginning of the year a group of members got together to make it happen. Finally on 10<sup>th</sup> July, over 40 stalls were booked, metres of bunting were made, and the weather turned out warm.

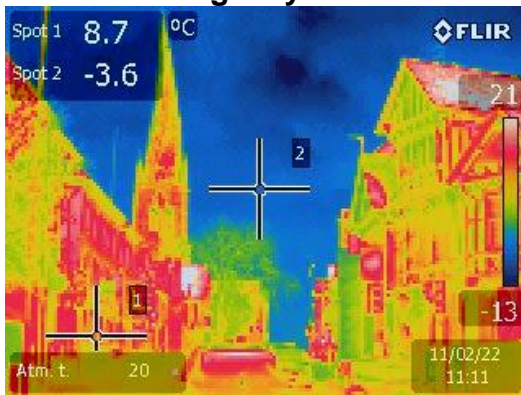
Combining with the Record Fair and

the Vegan market also being held in town created a great community feel.

The event received assistance from the DCC Councillor fund.

**Many thanks to Sheila Curzon, Kathy Farr and all the other volunteers who gave their time to get the event going. Particular thanks go to Steph Mannion for her assistance in organising the stall bookings.**

## Climate Emergency



Since the 2021 AGM we finished the 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. We also joined the COP rally in Chesterfield in November.

In 2022 we organised some more practical events on the most effective things people can do to reduce the impacts of climate change; including a demonstration vegan Asian cooking run by the volunteers at Saffron Kitchen, at the Asian Association. We also made good

use of a thermal imaging camera kindly lent to us by *Transition Belper* to see where a building is losing heat, either outdoors or indoors, and the benefits of a few simple insulation techniques.

**Many thanks to Lisa Hopkinson for her organisation role in these events.**

## Divestment

In November 2021 we joined a National Day of Action against council pension funds being invested in fossil fuels with a giant oil monster at County Hall, accompanied by masked oil barons and campaigners. In February 2022 we helped organise a webinar with Mark Campanale of Carbon Tracker (an independent, non-profit financial thinktank), aimed at Derbyshire County and District Councillors, designed to look at the evidence about the financial risks of fossil fuel investment. Before the event there was an action at County Hall, prior to the council meeting, to encourage Councillors to come to the webinar.



**Thanks to Lisa Hopkinson for her continued involvement in this important campaign.**

## **Planning and communications**

The good news: In November 2021 DCC finally granted approval for a £1.68 million Chesterfield East-West Walking and Cycling Route between Holymoorside and the hospital. Transition Chesterfield continues to strongly support this new infrastructure. More positively in early 2022 representatives from Transition Chesterfield and CPRE Derbyshire met with planning officers from Derbyshire County Council to learn about a new Supplementary Planning Guidance on climate which DCC have developed in conjunction with local boroughs and districts. We hope this will be published soon and the Borough will adopt it.

The bad news: We were disappointed that the Planning Committee approved an application at Holbeck Close, Waterside, which failed to provide proper walking and cycling access. Prior to the decision *Transition Chesterfield*, *Chesterfield Climate Alliance*, the *Trans Pennine Trail* and *Sustrans* had written a joint email urging Councillors not to approve it without insisting that proper walking/cycling infrastructure is provided. Although we wrote to the Planning Committee last year to ask if we could make a short presentation to explain why promotion of walking and cycling in Chesterfield is important, we never heard back from them. *Transition Chesterfield* also submitted a long response to the draft Derby and Derbyshire Minerals Plan in March 2022. The plan was very weak on climate change and still based on promoting the use of minerals and fossil fuels for economic growth, regardless of whether they are needed or more sustainable alternatives exist. We also submitted a lengthy response to a consultation on the Chesterfield Staveley Regeneration Route (CSSR). We argued that it is not the best solution to many of the issues it is designed to address, and it is likely to make congestion worse or just shift air pollution to other areas. The road will cross the river and canal multiple times impacting on the canal towpath and Transpennine Trail, ruining the tranquillity of the towpath for existing users (see illustrative montage right of the view towards Bluebell Lock– courtesy of Colin Harrison).



**Many thanks to Roger Green for continuing to check planning applications on a weekly basis. And to Lisa Hopkinson for her continued hard work in putting together responses to planning proposals.**

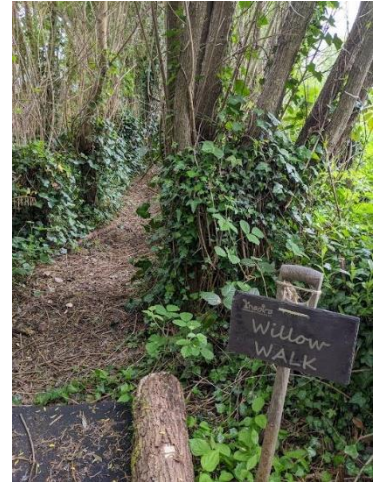
**Also to Kathy Farr and Sheila Curzon for their lead roles for the TC Chesterfield Walking Festival walks.**

**Big thanks to Alastair Meikle for looking after our website, Chris Brooks for managing the Twitter account @transitionchez, and Sheila Curzon, Greg Hewitt and Dawn Ward for updating our Facebook page. Also, thanks to Colin Harrison for his generous assistance with publicity materials for the Fixfest and the Crafters Bazaar.**

## Associate Groups

### Inspire Community Garden

A demonstration organic community garden, now a separate charity. Open to anybody, whether they have gardening experience or not. People work in small groups or individually. All produce is shared with volunteers and surplus donated to local groups. The Scouts have been to garden to learn about using an axe, saw and fire lighting. Other groups learn about planting, idea being to encourage more younger people to enjoy the benefits of gardening. New walk created this year. **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. With word of how successful they have been local Councillor Jenny Flood now funds a monthly workshop at Langer Field, Councillor Ed Fordham and Paul Niblock are also funding a series of 4 workshops at Loundsley Green and Derbyshire County Council have funded a series of 24 workshops and 20 basic bike

maintenance classes in Chesterfield, NE Derbyshire and Bolsover. Profit from these more commercial projects goes to fund our other projects.

*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' which is now taking out residents from care homes most weeks with our two trikes. These projects are supported by a team of 20 volunteers.

Margaret Hersee (Secretary), August 2022