

**Transition Town Bridport** - a project working to bring together the people of Bridport to plan a life beyond dependence on oil, to reduce the carbon footprint of the town and to make it resilient to change.



## Newsletter No 45 – October 2020

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### From the editor:

This year we had to cancel many of the Green Fortnight events on Fast Fashion, and we hope to restart that campaign next year. Open EcoHomes has also not taken place, and we all miss our monthly Green Drinks at the Tiger.

However as you will read below, there has been a lot going on, particularly around the topic of food, making Bridport resilient to stresses on our food supply, threatened by Covid, Climate Change and Brexit. There are many opportunities for a wider group to get involved with creating a sustainable food system around our town.

If you are a member of TTB you will shortly receive an invitation to our AGM (online) on 19 November at 6.30. Anyone can join us and we welcome your input into how we can go forward. The link to the zoom meeting is [here](#). Save the Date!

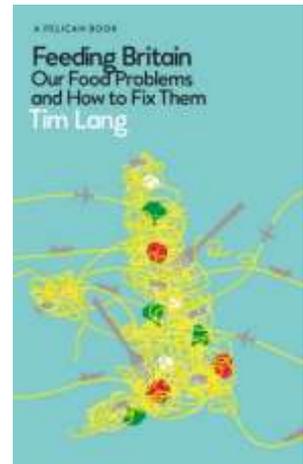
This newsletter is available in full or in abridged form – click on the 'Read more' or 'Read less' to toggle between the two. - Sam Wilberforce

### Does it matter if and how Britain feeds itself?

Some of us in TTB, and others interested in food issues, attended this webinar by Professor Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy, on October 6th. It was hosted by Tina and Robert Golden. Robert has made a film, to be launched in January 2021, called This Good Earth. The trailer can be seen [here](#).



Tim has written a book called *Feeding Britain: Our Food Problems and How to Fix Them*. His presentation gave a broad overview of the numerous issues affecting food supply and food security in Britain, which at any time would be serious enough, but in the context of Brexit, have the potential to be very scary. He very kindly let us have a copy of his presentation slides which can be viewed [here](#). Who was it said 'we are three meals away from anarchy'? We know that when the lorry drivers went on strike the just-in-time supermarket distribution system nearly collapsed. Nine big companies control most of our food system. Most of the UK's food is stored in lorries driving up and down our motorways.



### [Read Less](#)

We face a situation of food insecurity; we are the 5th richest country but rank 17th for food security and 24th for sustainable food security. We cannot feed ourselves. We import far more than we export, with the exception of Scotch whisky. Not only can we not feed ourselves, we cannot feed ourselves well: we eat more 'ultra processed food' than other EU countries. The negative health outcomes of this are well known. Professor Lang presents detailed information on these and other food-related threats (see copy of slides) such as the environmental impacts of our food production system, the link between cheap food and cheap labour, the enormous problem of food waste, and the inability of our depleted military and naval power to protect food supplies. He says we need to realise that we are 'locked-in' to this unsustainable system, because all these problems are interrelated. Sustainable food requires attention to multiple criteria: economy, health, social values, governance, environment, and quality. A tall order.

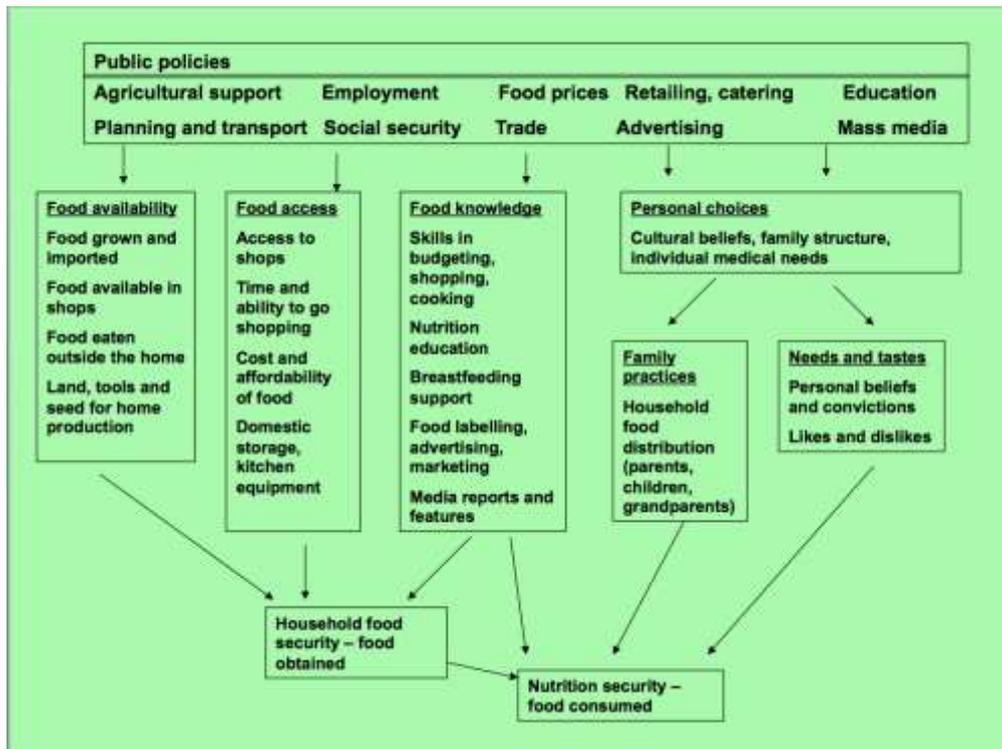
He calls for a 'Great Food Transformation' - with a new Food Resilience and Sustainability Act with legally binding targets. These targets should be set for 'diets and food which are low carbon and tasty, affordable but not displacing damage on to future generations'. We should set goals to produce more of our own food, but sustainably. His mantra is 'horticulture, horticulture, horticulture'. We need to remove the barriers to sustainable home production and provide land for young growers, and better pay and conditions for workers on the land. We need urban and rural food and farming colleges to replace the agricultural colleges that were sold off. There are many other wonderful ideas in his book. This slide gave a suite of ideas:

- **Supply** → grow more of what we can (but sustainably)
- **Land use** → more land for trees, wilding, / less for farm animals
- **Food for health** → health to guide land use (more horticulture)
- **Sustainable dietary guidelines** → clear goals to link consumers
- **Market controls** → rebalance money flows / more to primary sectors
- **Horticulture** → skills and training (urgent need from FE)
- **Food infrastructure** → rethink what's needed for a good food system
- **Civil awareness** → revamp Resilience Forums to include food

One thing I remember from his talk was this chilling assertion: 'we are a species which has outgrown its niche, and cattle are our competitors.' Livestock need to be returned to their appropriate ecological niche and plant-based diets become the norm.

A truly inspiring and thought provoking evening. Thanks to Tina and Robert for putting it on. [Read Less](#)

Here is a slide I got some years ago from Dr Martin Caraher of City University, showing the complexities of how food ends up in your fridge and on your plate. It explains and challenges at the same time. (Incidentally he has also written a fascinating piece on the surplus food issue.)



And here is one of the best illustrations I have seen for including more vegetables in the diet, thanks to a Danish health promotion group!



## News from St Mary's Edible Garden, Glut stalls and future plans.



The collaboration between TTB, HOME in Bridport, Opera Circus and St Mary's Primary School has lasted for over 7 years and has been highly successful. Generosity, kindness, sharing of skills and the focus being on the children, parents and the staff of the school has created a sustainable project called The Edible Garden. This has developed the school garden at St Mary's and all the linked projects this has supported, trips to farms, garden and eco clubs, funding to build the Cobb Oven, the new Tree House, wild flower areas, the main poly tunnel, the new orchard and edible hedges, new gardening equipment and to fund the two brilliant gardeners, and the volunteers, who grow the produce, enable the events and work with the children. [Read Less](#)

A discussion has started with Bridport Primary to explore Edible Garden 2. TTB and HOME in Bridport with the support of the school and the expertise of

Teresa Perrella and Sarah Wilberforce, the lead gardener and project manager for St Mary's gardens, are planning how to develop the current abandoned garden space at Bridport Primary into a forest garden, with raised beds, revive the pond, to create space for a poly tunnel and working with the school create a beautiful garden for learning and enjoyment for the children and staff.

A new team of volunteers has to be found from parents, with the involvement of certain members of staff, guided by Teresa, Sarah representing TTB and Tina and Robert for HOME.

We are delighted that Bridport Town Council has committed £500 to TTB to begin this work on the Edible Garden and to Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation through Opera Circus, for their funding the new Tree House, new garden equipment, seeds and other support for St Mary's. We are waiting to hear about further funding applications for Edible Garden 2, to give Bridport Primary a good supportive start in this process.



*Photograph by Robert Golden*

Kitson Trotman has funded the Edible Garden for 3 years and we thank them immensely for their generosity and support. Additional funding has been raised from Ernest Cook, West Dorset Council, Awards for All, the National Lottery and others. Without the work of the volunteers and organisations raising the funding, and those who so generously support, this sustainable and hugely beneficial project would not have survived, in particular when it comes to funding those who make the garden such a special part of the school and community's life. [Read Less](#)

This is a wonderful example of open and trusting partnership collaboration for the benefit of local children and their families, offering additional support to school's

community hub developments and adding to the health and well being concerns around poor diets, excess sugar and lack of knowledge of healthy diets.

HOME and TTB helped St Mary's develop their healthy school lunches programme with the leadership of Amanda Downes, Head Cook at the school, and would hope to support a similar process with Bridport Primary at the appropriate time.

HOME is exploring the **Food for Life** and **Chefs in Schools** programme to encourage the learning from these programmes.

We all understand that at this very difficult time for schools, what we, as partners, must do is offer supportive and funded programmes to the schools, not adding any burden or extra work for the schools and their staff, but improve their offer to the children, helping to provide activities and well-being support where we can.

Special thanks to Mrs Kate Batorksa, the Head Teacher of St Mary's for her inspiration and welcome. Thanks also to Darryl Chambers and his team for their work on the tree house. And thank you to everyone who has made all of this possible, especially Robert, Tia, Mitch, Amanda  
- Sarah Wilberforce and Tina Ellen Lee

## A Food Hub for Bridport?

Consultations are continuing about the possibility of creating some kind of food hub for Bridport: this has included an online Round Table for consumers and community groups on Sept 23, with another planned for producers and retailers on Oct 20. There are widespread forecasts of more crop failures and food shortages in the years ahead, and a main reason for considering a hub is to increase local food security by raising demand and production of sustainable, healthy local food. There is considerable interest in the idea of a physical location for a hub, which could encourage more people to buy local produce through activities such as cookery classes and shared meals and social activities. A hub could also provide information about existing suppliers and resources, and could provide support for the food poverty initiatives which are already happening.

The consultation is being led by Seeding our Future, a small, local non-profit team: see more at [www.futuresscanning.org](http://www.futuresscanning.org). If you'd like to see the latest proposals and comment, please contact Candida Dunford-Wood: [candida@dunfordwood.com](mailto:candida@dunfordwood.com). The deadline for the consultation process is Oct 22, and updated proposals will be issued in November.  
- Alan Heeks

## West Dorset Environmental Alliance.

A group including two members of TTB, West Dorset Friends of the Earth, Turn Lyme Green and Beaminster ECO group has formed to establish communication with our MP, Chris Loder. In August we had a fruitful meeting with Mr Loder on transport including bus travel and cycle paths; green homes grants; planning for the future; farming and land use; renewable energy; and plastics. Our next meeting will focus on renewable energy, particularly Dorset community energy's work on setting up local networks; and the green homes grants to retrofit heat-saving measures in homes (see Lesley's piece below).  
- Sam Wilberforce

## The new Green Homes deal

'Build Back Better' is what we heard last week from the government, 'Spread opportunity more widely and fairly!'

Having waited since the originally promised date in July for the Green Homes Grants to be launched I am disappointed to say it can't be done in Bridport.

The maximum standard grant is £5,000, but some benefit recipients get double. For most people the state offers it as vouchers to pay as much as two-thirds of energy improvement costs, up to a max £5,000 for most. So if it costs £4,000, you pay about £1,320 and get the rest in vouchers. Some on benefits get 100% of costs, up to £10,000, covered. So it seems to tick a box for inclusivity. [Read Less](#)

The first stage is to get vouchers to install a primary improvement, which includes new or top-up (not replacement) insulation and low-carbon heating systems. To apply for the grant, you need to use a government accredited company. If you get that, you can then apply for secondary improvement vouchers up to the same value. This is where much of the good stuff many people want is, including draught proofing, double/triple/secondary glazing (to replace single glazing), replacement doors and heating controls.

Months ago, I had followed the links and made my plan on the Simply Energy Advice website. Believing, as told, that more installers would be added to the list.

The Government suggests getting at least three quotes from different tradespeople (it'll only ask for one when you apply though). Any work MUST be carried out by Trustmark or Micro Generation Certification Scheme - registered tradespeople. Obviously, there is a huge cost for installers to join these schemes. This is where, when applying for the grant you get stuck, for insulation the nearest installer was Wales and he said he had already had over 1000 people registered interest.

Another company told me on the launch date the government still hadn't told them how to complete their part of the scheme.

Oh, and the work needs to be completed in 6 months!

I thought this, as well as hitting some climate emergency targets, was also a job creating measure. Where are all the Bridport based companies on this list, or any of the other Greener home options supposedly available?

Martin Lewis of Money Saving Expert says

"As there's only £2bn funding available, time is of the essence or the funds may dry up, making it a vicious cycle. As a bare minimum I've two asks of the Government to improve it:

1. Release the £2bn in tranches - this would stop a postcode lottery, where only those in areas with installers available now can access it.
2. That it extends the 6month time limit."

Yet another government sham that sounds good on a headline. The UK lies bottom of Europe's warm homes league table. [UK homes are losing heat up to 3 times faster than their European neighbours.](#)

Meanwhile, I face a cold winter ahead.

- Lesley Windsor

## Plastic Free Bridport



Our mayor, Cllr Ian Bark, has declared his intention that Bridport should achieve 'plastic free' status during his current term of office, joining the 700 plus communities around the country who have already achieved this. The objective is to tackle avoidable single-use plastic - from the town and beach, all the way back to the brands and businesses who create it.

[\*Read Less\*](#)

With this in mind, a small working group, including the Mayor, Friends of the Earth and TTB members, has been established to:

Gain widespread community support, by recruiting allies from organisations within the community who agree to minimise use of single-use plastic items, help to publicise the campaign, and declare their support by formally signing a pledge.

Gain support from local businesses to reduce their use of single-use plastics, so that they can be awarded a 'stamp of approval' and spread the word to their customers and colleagues.

Establish a longer-term core of stakeholders who will oversee a programme of ongoing reduction of single-use plastic use in the community.

We also plan to coordinate with other plastic and waste-related initiatives across our community – for instance beach cleans.

We have contacted over 90 community organisations in Bridport and West Bay in recent weeks, have received very positive responses and the pledges are starting to come in.

This 'plastic free status' initiative is co-ordinated by *Surfers against Sewage* and has really caught on nationally. It is a small but important and tangible step that individuals can relate to, and one that will increase awareness of broader climate change challenges. So please keep an eye open for our activities over the coming weeks and months, read the mayor's blog on the council website and **support it in any way you can!**

For more background, have a look at the [\*Mayor's blog\*](#)



- Robin Boston

## From What is to What if

Unleashing the Power of Imagination to Create the Future We Want

Rob Hopkins' [\*book\*](#) has spawned many podcasts, webinars and online conferences. The last, run by Transition Network over three days included many glittering speakers and inspiring stories. You can catch up on these on the [\*Bounce Forward website\*](#).

## The Great Unravelling

For an unflinching analysis of climate change in Australia, read [\*The Great Unravelling: 'I never thought I'd live to see the horror of planetary collapse'\*](#) by Joëlle Gergis 14 Oct 2020 Guardian

[Read Less](#)

Poignant excerpts:

It breaks my heart to watch the country I love irrevocably wounded because of the Australian government's refusal to act on climate change

Australia's horror summer is the clearest signal yet that our planet's climate is rapidly destabilising.

We are the generation that is likely to witness the destruction of our Earth.

Recording-breaking ocean temperatures triggered the third mass bleaching event recorded on the Great Barrier Reef since 2016.

On a personal level, I wonder what to do in the face of this awareness. Should I continue to work my guts out, trying to produce new science to help better diagnose what's going on? Do I try to teach a dejected new generation of scientists to help fix the mess humanity has made? How can I reconcile my own sense of despair and exhaustion with the need to stay engaged and be patient with those who don't know any better?

'As a climate scientist at this troubled time in human history, my hope is that the life force of our Earth can hang on'

If you prefer to be stirred by passionate folk-type singing try *Merry Hell*. Recently their writers brought fresh ideas to the band. They were surprised that three of them had each written songs that gave voice to concerns about our environmental impact and the climate emergency. The result is [\*The Hourglass Trilogy\*](#).



"We are not eco warriors" they say. "However, whilst we recognise both our own actions and shortcomings, we applaud those individuals and groups who inspire us to individual and collective action. Their bravery in the face of political and indeed physical threat ...is an example to us all.... Finally, we applaud our own children, who are, in many cases, far more aware, active and engaged than we are and should have been."

- Joe Burlington

## Online Retreat: Deep Adaptation - a spiritual exploration 6-8 November (Not a TTB event)

Deep Adaptation is the term used by Jem Bendell to invite us to face the radical changes climate change will bring within the next decade. This weekend retreat will focus on the spiritual aspects: seeking purpose, healing, mutual care from a bigger perspective. It is led by Alan Heeks, a member of Bridport TTB, with Amrita Bhohi and Karim Hadden. Six sessions will be held over Zoom with lots of time for personal reflection and practices in between. Costs: £30, concessions £22. For full details and bookings, [click here:](#)

- Alan Heeks

## GETTING INVOLVED

Contact [admin@transitiontownbridport.co.uk](mailto:admin@transitiontownbridport.co.uk) and you will be added to our mailing list and/or put in touch with the group or activity you would like to join. If you are receiving this you are already on the mailing list, but if you'd rather not be, just [tell us](#).

Come along to any event /workshop. Check out our What's On section [here](#), and/or on our website.

Membership of TTB is open to all on application via an email to [admin@transitiontownbridport.co.uk](mailto:admin@transitiontownbridport.co.uk). Membership allows voting at the AGM and eligibility to stand for office. We welcome new members.

If your local group wishes to collaborate with TTB on any project, or has ideas and energy for a new project, just let us know.

We are very keen to expand the pool of active people for the local projects and to get other strands going. Please [get in touch](#) if you would like to help.

If you have any events of a local and eco-friendly nature that you would like us to advertise on our website or in the newsletter, please contact us and we'll see what we can include.

NB We do not use our mailing list other than for our own regular mailings.