

January 2009

PACT (Penrith Action for Community Transition) is a transition town group formed during 2008, aimed at developing a coordinated local community response to the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change. PACT is made up of an enthusiastic group of volunteers, committed to making a real difference in Penrith and the surrounding area.

Here's our first *Action Update*:

PACT held its successful 'First Steps' meeting in Penrith on 29th October 2008, to initiate sub-groups in key areas of transition:



Following the meeting, 8 Action Groups have now been formed. As expected some have got off to a quicker start than others, but all are beginning to develop ideas and practical activities to work towards the Transition Town goal of an **Energy Descent Plan**.

One of the core ideals of the Transition Town movement is to promote stronger communities, as without that very little can be done to influence local government and thus national government to make the necessary changes required to achieve a better quality of life when conventional fuel is less readily available. A vibrant community working together can be more effective than individuals in reducing energy use, producing food and goods locally, passing on relevant skills and knowledge, and encouraging local businesses and local government to become more sustainable.

PACT needs you! There are many different ways in which you can give your support:

- spreading the word and getting your friends to join so your membership fees (details are shown at the end of this newsletter) help towards hiring venues for film showings, talks, fairs, printing leaflets and promotional material; staging events to illustrate practical ways everyone can reduce their use of energy, etc
- joining one of the specific Action Groups, and giving some of your free time to work on their projects
- offering your time for general administration as PACT develops, including giving out fliers, manning stands at shows, local litter picking etc
- website development and maintenance
- and many more.....!



PACT ACTION GROUPS THAT HAVE MADE A START:

Buildings & Energy

The Buildings and Energy Groups had met and felt that there was a lot of overlap, so they had agreed to join forces on at least some issues. Concentrating on **housing** (because other agencies are looking at public buildings and businesses):

- Establish energy use in Eden: types of fuel, energy consumption
- Use a thermal imaging camera borrowed from CAFS to alert people to the heat loss from their houses, and to use as a high profile awareness-raising tool
- Collate information about grants and insulation products to advise people on their next steps
- Look into the possibility of bulk purchasing such items as insulation material
- Try to influence any new development in New Squares and the Persimmon development in Carleton



Resources & Waste

- Plastic bag ban - contact has been made with Hebden Bridge to see what methods they used to achieve their plastic bag ban
- To make the Freecycle™ concept (an internet-based swap shop) available to those not on the internet, perhaps a 'freeboard' in the CO-OP where people could post items wanted or items being offered



Food and Agriculture & Forestry

These two groups overlapped in some areas, so have decided to work together where possible:

Food

- Food mapping: devise a form which could be circulated to PACT members and through them to work colleagues, gym members, other clubs they belong to, e.g. as wider a range of people with different outlooks as possible which would detail the types of food people buy, type of shop where it's available, country of manufacture etc.

Agriculture & Forestry

- Identify areas of unused land which might be available for carbon sequestration, fuel, fruit and nut trees, vegetables, manure growth, etc.
- Approach landowners for unused land
- Grow green manure, e.g. comfrey, nettles and sell resulting liquid fertiliser to raise money for PACT activities
- Look at availability of allotments
- Identify people who might want to grow: for themselves, for including in veg-boxes, to help working in a communal veg growing scheme, to raise money for PACT
- Run courses on growing your own, permaculture, French biodynamic method, organic
- Encourage sustainable growing methods as above
- Plant verges with heather, gorse, shrubs
- Contact Highways Agency about making use of old bypassed roads for growing fruit trees, nut trees, berries, etc

Economy

The group agreed to do further research on the various systems of local trading, e.g. LETS, time banks, local currency, credit unions. Also:

- To encourage and facilitate production of local materials for manufacture
- To create a loyalty scheme among local shops
- Make contact with the 'Vitality of Penrith' group
- Generate money to support PACT's transition activities



Culture & Arts

- Contact local artists (e.g. Cumbria Network, run from Penrith) to promote the need and possibilities for artists to move towards energy reduction in practice and content of work (e.g. awareness raising)
- The University of Cumbria's Faculty of the Arts is seeking funding to develop residencies across Cumbria for artists and ecologists to collaborate (in association with Arts Council England, the Royal Society of Arts and others)
- There is an Arts, Ecology & Heritage Strategy for Cumbria - copies available from Nick Jones, commissioned by Arts Council England and English Heritage
- English Heritage are interested in encouraging sustainable renovation and new uses for older buildings, and are currently piloting a programme in Barrow
- Cumbria's 'Cultural Olympiad' legacy project entitled 'Adventures in the Landscape' is being run by Julie Tait of Kendal Arts International (KAI); the project has an ambitious and exciting programme of outdoor events across Cumbria over the next three years, involving local communities and recognising environmental issues; they are currently talking with the 'Vitality of Penrith' group but looking for new partners (e.g. PACT?)



Transport

- To support and lobby political parties (e.g. Liberal Democrats or Greens) which wants to amalgamate the myriad private UK rail companies
- To ask CCC whether they have negotiated with Virgin/SRA about next year's timetables, and about including Penrith in the list of West Coast stations!
- A Park & Ride system for Penrith; David Robinson as Penrith Parking Tsar was lobbied in the past and a site at Kemplay Roundabout proposed, however nothing was then done



Meanwhile PACT members also continue to regularly litter pick in Penrith, in an effort to improve the image of the town and as one small step on the road to local community transition – all volunteers very welcome!



Want to get involved with any aspect of PACT? – a membership form follows, and why not also visit our website to find out more details of PACT's latest activities:

Contact PACT on-line at www.penrithact.org.uk



Membership Details

Name:

Address:

Phone: Email:

Signed: Date:

This membership will run until end of March 2010

Please give the names of any organisation/s you are involved in with similar aims to PACT

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If you have specific skills or interests, please let us know

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I would like to help in general

Please enclose your membership fee: anything between £3 and £20 per person.
(Please see below for details)

Paid by cheque (payable to: PACT)

or cash:

Amount:

Please send to: PACT, 1 Howard Street, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 9DL

The membership fee is £3.00. This entitles you to:

- Voting rights at the AGM and associated meetings
- Copies of newsletters and other correspondence
- Opportunity to be elected to the Steering Group

If you would like to give more than that, up to £20.00, to support our events: e.g. mailings, publicity, room hire, etc., (all our man hours are given free of charge) it would of course be very welcome.

This initial membership fee will carry through to the end of March 2010. You are entitled to vary your level of fee between £3.00 and £20.00 from year to year if you so wish.