

Transition Sheffield is part of the national network of Transition Towns or Transition Initiatives.

The aim is to raise awareness and provoke community responses to the triple crisis: climate change, the energy crisis and economic crisis.

The convergence of these crises mean that we will have to make a rapid transition from the way we live now to a lower energy way of life and under a different economic paradigm. It has been said we will see more changes in the next 20 years than we have seen in the whole of the last century.

The first major problem is peak oil: the time when the world's oil production changes from an ever increasing supply to a continuous, irreversible decline. Many believe that time is already upon us. For the past 4 years the global oil production has been on an unprecedented plateau. This has caused continuous price rises as increasing demand has outstripped the now static supply. The resulting record high price spike in July triggered the global recession. Every big oil price spike over the past 50 years has caused global recessions and 4 out of the 5 past recessions were caused by oil price spikes. The oil price has now fallen sharply due to demand destruction from high prices and the consequent recession. This is fairly typical and is why the phenomenon of high oil prices are

referred to as 'spikes'. Petroleum geologists like Colin Campbell have been saying for a long time that peak oil would trigger an economic crisis similar to the Great depression.

Oil is a vital resource for our society as it's currently set up. Ninety five percent of transport runs on oil. It is also used in agriculture, road building, and plastics. So peak oil will send severe shocks through the system. The first is the economic shock: our economic system depends on continuous growth in production. 'Energy' is defined as the capacity to do work so reduced energy means less work and a breakdown of the economic growth system.

Oil is also vital for food production. Oil is used for pesticides, farm machinery and for irrigation pumps plus the modern elongated and complex distribution system. Today it takes about 10 calories of energy to produce one calorie's worth of food. With declining fuel supplies and a growing population this system is cannot be sustained.

In the future we will have to get more of our food from local sources, not only to reduce our impact from climate change. It has been said that the biggest

difference a person can make to the CO2 footprint is to change where they get their food from.

Transition Initiatives attempt to create community responses to these massive problems. The first stage is to raise awareness in our communities and in the new year will be hosting a second series of film nights about these issues. Simply raising awareness can help people prepare mentally for the difficult times ahead.

One of the main focuses of Transition groups is what is called an 'energy decent plan'.

The idea is to work with the community to work out a path into the new reality that is already beginning to unfold before us. Almost every aspect of our lives will change from energy supplies and food production to transport, economics and education (what skills will our children need to learn?).

Transition Sheffield is currently working in 3 areas: Nether Edge, Meersbrook and Burngreave and there is already an active Meersbrook group.

If you'd like to get involved come to our film shows next year (look out for publicity or join our email list), get in touch or chat about these issues via our web forum.

from

recession

to

transition

www.transitionsheffield.org.uk