

Recently, some very exciting things have been happening in the little village of Bishops Frome in Herefordshire. As oil prices rise, petrol prices have too, and questions remain over the sustainability of what has become our normal way of life. The heavy snow that has fallen in early 2010 served as a reminder of just how reliant we have become on everyday goods transported over great distances. Schools, healthcare, workplaces and other services situated in surrounding settlements became difficult to reach by the road system that we have come to take for granted. So what can be done to ensure that we and future generations have the necessary tools to smoothly overcome obstacles in our way?

Taking control of the essential factors in our lives can give increased resilience when there are shocks to the system. Education and re-skilling is of paramount importance in this situation as the young grow into a world that cannot satisfactorily remain dependent on global markets, and the adult world struggles against a tide of economic downturn and unemployment. How can we move easily around in adverse conditions to the sources of our food, our water, and our fuel supply? Though we may as a nation be addicted to the foreign imports of cocoa, sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee and cotton, is there anything we can do to provide for ourselves?

Bishops Frome Youth Club is now building upon past sessions of practical arts, crafts and woodwork to learn more of what is involved in the food, shelter, water and fire that keep us ticking over. The programme in development incorporates the practical skills of looking after ourselves to give insight into what might come next when things get complicated. To be able to produce our own food is fun, tasty and rewarding but simultaneously empowers the individual and community in difficult times. The bikes and tools donated (thank you!) will assist the young people in attaining independent transportation, with a minimum requirement for oil and no petrol at all!

Future successes require that certain resources need to be allocated, and in Herefordshire one thing we have is the land. This can become a provider of the energy required for us to stay warm and well fed, but we must be able to spot the opportunities that lie before us. There are unused, and under- appreciated assets all around us such as abandoned properties lying dormant for us to discover! Can those empty properties be restored to alleviate the pressure to build new homes on our farmland?

I am currently in the process of securing the neglected but magical Summerpool Gardens as a food source for the fantastic Community Shop at Bishops Frome Village Centre, and intend with parents' consent to involve the Youth Club in activities there. If you feel like you have a skill to pass on, please do get in touch (email address below), so we can breathe new life into these places.

Something else that you may wish to get involved in is the up-coming Local Food Market and Meal to be held at the Village Centre on February 27th. This will showcase many of our brilliant local producers and the retailers who are dedicated to bringing us the delicious flavours of our

## **Bishops Frome Transition Village Initiative**

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