



Minutes of Transition Network Board of Trustees Meeting Friday 16th September 2016

Trustees present: Peter Lipman (chair), Henry Owen, Hilary Jennings, Ellen Bermann (online), Tony Greenham (treasurer), Clare Pavitt, Andrew Simms

Staff in attendance: Sarah McAdam, Rob Hopkins, Nicola Hillary, Filipa Pimentel (for Any Other Business)

Apologies: Ben Brangwyn

1. Check-in

Roles:

Keeper of the record: Nicola

Keeper of the time: Rob

Keeper of the heart: Clare

Keeper of the tech: Hilary

2. Previous minutes and actions

Minutes of 22nd July 2016 Board meeting: **Agreed.**

Actions:

Actions to carry forward:

- Sarah and Rob still to meet about whether the Transition content and activities proposed by HEC is Transition Network work or not, and the extent of Rob's time this would take.
- Henry still aiming to write a blog on what Brexit means for Transition Network and all levels of the Transition movement. Henry has had some input from Ellen and Sarah, and will be speaking to Filipa, has an idea for the format and headings. A lot of potential content and input for one blog!
 - Andrew offered to input thoughts.
 - Suggestions of contacting Justin Kenrick and Alexis Rowell for input.
 - Can we invite some non-UK perspectives too?
- Nicola and Tony to carry forward action looking at whether creating a subsidiary organisation in Belgium would help Transition Network be eligible to receive EU funds. **Action** to be changed

to: **Monitoring the needs and obstacles emerging post-Brexit for possible solutions or entities which might be needed for EU-funding.** Nicola and Tony will also ask Filipa's opinion. Note: UK Government has announced that it will step into the shoes of EU grant programmes.

All other actions either done, or not carried forward.

Conflict of interests for this meeting: No conflicts of interest to report.

3. Delivery Director's Report

Strategic Outcome 1 - Telling the Transition Story

- There is a big push now to finish and launch the new website in November 2016.
- *Demain* the film is continuing to have a significant impact across Europe. For example, in Denmark, where the Hub has a good relationship with the distributor, *Demain* is being shown in churches, to young people, to new political groups. There is considerable frustration from Hubs who can't access the film. We are trying to agree a model than can work internationally, with the distributor. If that happens, we also have ideas for showing *Demain* in the UK along with REconomy and regional networking projects.

Strategic Outcome 2 - Supporting Transition initiatives

- Naresh preparing for the Latin American Train the Trainer course in November 2016. 22 participants already signed up.
- Claire is setting up Inner Transition trainings in the UK in the autumn, plus trips to Germany, Slovenia, and possibly to Italy and Spain. She is offering a range of trainings: Inner Transition workshops; Cultural Emergence Leadership training (drawing on permaculture and indigenous traditions); From Burnout to Balance; Support workshops.
- The STIR team is focusing on support resources including the Essential Guide to Doing Transition (formerly referred to as the Primer), a simple guide that leads into the wider range of our resources. This guide and others will be in a desk-top publishing format called JooMag that looks great and is easily transferable for translation.

Strategic Outcome 3 – Supporting New Livelihoods

- The UK REconomy Project is going through a difficult time, trying to define what the learning is from the project and how to disseminate it. But there are some interesting regional REconomy events planned. We need to coalesce where the next direction is for UK REconomy, and meet in the autumn.
- Nenad is bringing energy and attention to the international REconomy group, they are communicating.

Strategic Outcome 4 – Demonstrating Impact

- Amy Burnett has worked with Sarah to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Organisational Development work, about Transition Network the charity. We will all soon be receiving a questionnaire. Part of the monitoring is about the charity team, and part is about the Transition movement. There is an idea to gain wider feedback from the movement, linked to the launch of the new website.
- Both KR Foundation bids include the concept of working with independent researchers on monitoring and evaluation.
- ECOLISE's Knowledge and Learning Group has good resource from University of Lisbon (Gil Penha-Lopes) – a good route to influence EU policy-makers.

Strategic Outcome 5 – Evolving Internationally

- The onus is on the Evolution working group to look at how we use the lead up to the May 2017 Hubs Gathering, and the aftermath, as a way to move the international evolution process on. It is now a priority to convene the next meeting on this. The Hubs Gathering will be at Santorso, Italy, May 2017, where the municipality is welcoming and there are a number of local Transition initiatives.
- The process of working with international Hub participants on the KR Foundation funding bids was interesting and challenging. There was a huge variety of ideas at the start. The Transition and Municipalities group felt like a good example of co-designing a bid. We could go to other funders with these bids.
- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) have published their "Opinion" on implementing the Paris COP21 agreement. They consulted Transition Network very well while preparing this. The EESC is holding an event in October to showcase this opinion. Filipa and Francois from French Hub are helping to facilitate the event and Rob is speaking at it.

Strategic Outcome 6 - Healthy organisational culture

- Ben is having a tough time with chemotherapy. He won't be working this side of Christmas. International work has suffered from this lack of capacity for a while. The priority is to run one larger round of seed-funding to Hubs. Sarah will be working with Filipa to configure a package of temporary work to offer freelance, for example to someone from a Hub. This could be an interesting model for the future as well.
- Ainslie is continuing to recover health-wise, monitoring her capacity and commitments. She is focusing almost solely on the new website at the moment.
- Organisational Development project underway – see next item.

4. Update on Organisational Development Project

Since the May 2016 Away Days, the governance circle for the Organisational Development Project has formed: The Transition Network representatives are Naresh, Filipa and Sarah. The Universite du Nous representatives are Dmitri and Guillaume. Henry is an observer on behalf of the Board. Amy the researcher is attending meetings as an observer.

It's premature to design governance structures for the whole organisation, so the proposal is to trial new governance structures for a project, as an action-learning enquiry. This could be done with more than one project. Ideally this would be a piece of work that runs for 8-10 months, involving a range of people. (Some people will need to let go of being involved.) The October Away Days will confirm this project, set roles in this project and governance structures. Then Universite du Nous can coach the participants. Two seminars would be planned for the people involved in this project, in order to review the governance and adjust it. Then the governance circle can propose wider governance proposals for the wider organisation.

There are currently 3 candidate projects for this organisational development action-learning.

Ideas from the Board:

- Would a more collaborative, wider way of working be useful for the future of the UK REconomy project? Rachel Lawrence at new economics foundation is lively on new economics at the moment. Also good links at RSA.
- In terms of monitoring and evaluation, should we develop more quantitative monitoring, such as numbers of new Hub sign-ups and new Transition groups?
 - Web and communications statistics are looked at every month by the Communications group.
 - A list of the current Hubs is reported to a funder every six months. Note that the Organisational Co-Design working group is looking at moving from Hubs signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Transition Network; to Hubs signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hubs Group. As this gets negotiated some current Hubs may leave the circle.
 - Noting that the next phase for the website is the International Initiative Registration Service (IIRS) to get better data about where Transition initiatives are, and then encourage an annual Health Check by Transition initiatives.

Action: Staff to bring communications statistics and Hubs table to each Board meeting.

5. Team Planning Session 14th September 2016

The current Team Plan from April 2016 is here:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1A_Ldc4VvydNXFiiCN3ha9XoosFggs8nKhTv2MkSWIo/e/dit#gid=0

This year, the main priority has been to create the new website, and this will still be the priority until November.

The staff team met on 14th September 2016 for mid-year team-planning. There was a focus on thinking about converging activities to be more collaborative. The staff team identified 3 to 4 collective priorities for the medium-term future:

1. Building social infrastructure and collaborative leadership capacity: this includes the international Evolution process, the organisational development work, the Hubs group, mapping our network through the Initiative Registration Service, UK regional networks, the Cultural Emergence Training, how to work well together, connecting beyond the Transition movement.
2. The intersection between Transition and municipalities: this is a current example of a role for Transition Network in identifying a vibrant edge, illuminating it, looking for the scope to step it up and have greater impact, supporting resources into this process, helping it coalesce.
3. Narrative and evaluation: understanding and telling the Transition Story, evaluating what we have learned in 10 years, bringing more people in, creating fertile soil for community action to take place.
4. Mobilising resources to support and catalyse activity to happen around the movement: for examples dreaming for what the next Transition conference might look like; talking to funders.

Comments from the Board:

- Is it better to hold evaluation as an aim across all areas of work? The Spice local currency project <http://www.justaddspice.org/> is an example of a charity that does well because of excellent evaluation. Evaluation results help them get funding, and motivate their staff. They interview 1,000 people a year and run 20-30 evaluation workshops per year.

Could we do a funding bid to ramp up evaluation? We are talking to a researcher called Mary Green who is applying to do a post-doc to spend 3 years working with us on evaluation. But this is not the only option we should pursue on improving our evaluation.

- The part of these priorities that might attract Transition groups like Buxton might be the piece about collaborative leadership - better ways of working as groups.
- Is there a tension between supporting exciting pioneering Transition initiatives and supporting smaller struggling groups? There is still the tension between acting internationally and the UK situation (England Transition initiatives needing a relationship with a Hub).
- Why isn't there a bigger emphasis on empowering young people? Engaging young people is part of the "Narrative" aim - how to reach diverse communities. Innovative social infrastructure is something that a lot of young people are interested in. Synergised Youth Network, an international network of millennials, came on a Transition Tour.

- A sense of frustration that we haven't made much progress on the Transition Story work - and it is still coming up as a priority. Initial work with New Citizenship Project influenced the *21 Stories for Transition* book and the website. But we haven't yet done the next step of training a wider range of people on communications.

At the staff Team Planning session, three current candidate projects for the organisational development action learning pilot were identified as:

- International Initiative Registration Service (IIRS): Mapping of initiatives internationally and encouraging them to do the health check
- Municipalities project
- Developing the next stage of the communications strategy

These were discussed with Universite du Nous. The first of these (IIRS and health-check) was preferred as it could have deliverables over 8-10 months, it involves reaching out to all Transition initiatives, and will probably involve many of the staff team.

Trustees commented that there needs to be a meaningful number of people involved - and that the learning can be generalisable and apply to other work at TN. Universite du Nous suggest that the complexity in the field will show up in whichever one we choose. Clare expressed a preference for the IIRS option for the pilot.

We also need to think about the role of trustees - anyone with capacity to be more involved in a particular project.

There is a bigger picture about Transition Network's Organisational Strategy, which currently runs to 2017. We need a focus after the October Away Days, to establish a timeline for renewing and updating our strategy.

6. Treasurers Report

For current year:

- Predicted Income £463,000
- Predicted Expenditure £424,000
- General reserve predicted to end at £54,000 at end of March 2017.
- Positive reserve figures for end March 2018, which is a good turn-around.

80% of salaries covered by grants. Partly because of the action we have taken to reduce costs.

The UK REconomy project is reaching the end of the current grants, we need to apply again.

There are two or three budget areas where we haven't yet spent much of this year's budget – for example the International budget. But plans are in place to spend it.

We still need to raise additional funding of at least £42,000 for next year's costs.

Staff sent a formal thank you to the Board for guiding us through a difficult financial time.

7. Funding Update

Waiting to hear outcomes of two applications to KR Foundation. Great that we have opened an interesting relationship with both the new Director and new Program Manager of KR Foundation.

A draft of the ECOLISE application to 100&Change (of which TN is a member of ECOLISE) will be coming out next week. An interesting collaboration to be part of.

Of other potential funders:

Partners for a New Economy are focused primarily on monetary policy. Juliette's conversation with Oak Foundation (part of P4NE) shows they aren't interested in Transition.

EDGE Europe: Engaged Donors for Global Equity - Sarah went to their recent meeting. Transition isn't quite enough about equity for immediate funding opportunities, but it was good for introductions. EDGE are meeting in Barcelona next April, we should send someone to this meeting.

Minor Foundation - would be good for a communications project.

Friends Provident Foundation - key next focus should be re-applying for UK REconomy.

Big Lunch Extras Programme - <http://www.biglunchextras.com/content/about-big-lunch-extras> have regional networks might help with the Renew Wales consortium application.

8. New Website Update

Board were shown early sight of the draft new website. The final content is being written and edited, mainly by Ainslie and Rob. The site is feeling easy to use, for example in uploading content. We are aiming for a website where it is clearer to find what you are looking for. Main menus are:

- About the Movement
- Transition Near Me
- Stories – starting with 21 Stories, rooted in reality, with photos of real people, personal stories
- Do Transition – all the support resources in one place
- News and blogs

There is scope to tag pages so that people can find everything about (say) food, inner, arts...; or they can click on a country and see relevant things to that country. Some blogs on the site will not be in English.

Feedback from Trustees:

- Trustees highlighted that our website content should express that Transition is not all easy – it works but it's difficult.

- Translation: Google translate is embedded in the website. The Transitionese project will be stimulating crowd-sourced translations, with an emphasis on website text as a priority. Can we go to FPH to create a French version of the website and Joomag Guides?
- Working with Yoke, the web agency? Yoke have given rapid deadlines/timetables that have kept up our momentum. However currently there is quite a lot of negotiation about what is included in the price and what is not.
- Is this new website part of a federated structure with Hub websites? This is the first building block of it. There is a proper section on this website about the Hubs.
- Are we upfront about the servers and how the website is powered? Can we make it easier to find the footprint of this website?

9. **Skills Audit**

Trustees had completed a [skills audit assessment](#) prepared by Clare, to inform the recruitment of trustees.

Tony had added Digital Strategy to the list of skills - how do we use digital mechanisms to deliver on all of our work. Trustees agreed this was important.

This assessment showed that we have a broad spread of skills and experience at the moment.

Areas where we have a slighter lower combined level of experience include:

- Campaigning
- Designing governance structures (with an emphasis on new paradigm governance structures)
- Human resources
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Experience of being a treasurer
- Digital strategy
- Facilitation?

In the new trustees currently being recruited, we are hoping to find willingness to experiment and being happy to push the boundaries; adaptability; being critical and being able to take risks. We are hoping to move more fundamentally towards an international structure. It takes people quite a long time to grasp the complexities of a distributed movement, need to support new trustees in this.

Idea to experiment with holding one Board meeting a year entirely online, especially if we have more international representation on the Board. This idea was warmly received.

10. Discussion about principles which support the evolution of TN's international role, governance structures and work

Currently, we haven't been explicit in documenting what we are already doing to act more internationally. If we can explicitly express principles about how we work internationally, we can test these with Hubs, get feedback and it will help Hubs to keep us to account.

One example of such principles would be: we won't assume that any role has to be done in the UK.

Ideas from the Board towards this:

- To what extent is the lack of an England/Wales Hub remaining a blockage to international parity? Do we need to take more action on this? - The process is slow due to (largely volunteer) people's time. If someone was resourced to co-ordinate progress on an England/Wales Hub it might happen more quickly.

There was a time (around 2013) when the lack of a UK Hub was seen as an important obstacle for the Hubs Circle. However, we no longer have a way of suggesting that we "pilot projects in the UK and then roll it out". We now mostly don't spend our resources in the UK, except for the UK REconomy Project and UK regional networks project. We are currently supporting an England & Wales Hub to emerge. If we try to accelerate this, it could be seen as Transition Network prioritising the UK.

- The model as it has emerged depends on healthy Transition Hubs.
- How do we achieve a balance between leadership, transparency and accountability, and be open that these are complex processes?
- We need principles about Who Speaks for Transition Network – encouraging a multiplicity of voices.
- We need principles about How we Talk – for example the style guide for the website includes not writing as if we are in the UK. We need to speak from the perspective of a movement distributed across the world.
- We need to make sure we document what is currently happening, rather than our intentions going into a co-designed approach.
- We need principles about working online, and also getting together when we can.
- We should refer back to and cross reference with the Principles of How We Work in the Organisational Strategy.
- Could all TN staff and board meet with the Hubs representatives at the Hubs Gathering? Otherwise we run on parallel paths. - This could bring imbalance as not everyone involved in the Hubs is present (usually restricted to a maximum of two representatives per country). Already there is a danger of TN being over-represented in its attendees.

However, there is a need for governance structures that bring TN and the Hubs together on a more equal basis.

- Getting a sense of three “we”s. The Transition movement; the Transition organisation (Hubs and TN); the Transition Network charity. The “Transition Organisation” is now not a legal entity but a group of Hubs and Transition Network. We are in the process of evolving towards the TN charity and the Hubs being the support organisation for the Transition movement.
- Transition Network the charity raises funds on the track record of the work of the Transition movement and the Transition organisation. We need to not be perceived as retaining all the funding.
- We are currently getting better at working collaboratively with Hubs; but we need a wider transparency to Transition initiatives.
- **Action: the International Group will have a first go at developing Principles Which Support Us to Work Internationally, drawing on Board feedback. These will be reviewed at the next Board meeting and then be tested with Hubs.**

11. Any Other Business

Change of Lead Contact with Co-operative Bank: It was **Agreed** by the Board that our lead contact with Co-operative Bank would now be Nigel Langley, instead of Jo Coish. Peter and Tony signed the bank nomination form to request this change.

One Year in Transition: This course is not running in the UK this year (from September 2016). Different forms of this approach are running in Portugal and Sweden. Isabel is reformulating the course this year and would be grateful for any input. Questions such as, is having no age-limit helpful; should the course focus on the Devon bio-region. Henry will be helping Isabel with these ideas.

Tony gave Year Here, by the Young Foundation, as an example of a structured one year programme to place graduates with social change organisations as an alternative to a masters degree. **Is Year Here something One Year in Transition can link to or learn from?**

Henry’s research: Henry is starting a Masters in Environmental Change and Management this year, with an option to do a placement with an organisation or research ideas in summer 2017. **Any ideas for research – please let Henry know.**

Rapid de-industrialisation research: Andrew is working with John Barratt at Leeds University on what rapid de-industrialisation change could achieve the targets to limit climate change. This is linked to work at Sussex University looking at historical examples of rapid transitions. They are aiming for outputs for a general readership.

Museum of Fossil Fuels: This is now online <http://happymuseumproject.org/museum-fossil-fuel/> – you can have a look or **donate an item via Hilary.**

Papers from Peter and Filipa about the links between top-down and bottom-up action on climate change:

This is a big gap – how to connect and get synergies between different initiatives working in the links between top-down and bottom-up action on climate change.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) [opinion](#) on “Building a coalition of civil society and subnational authorities to deliver commitments of the Paris Agreement” is helpful here. The EESC will defend this opinion strongly. Hubs feel it helps their credibility.

Action: Nicola to send link to EESC Opinion to trustees

Peter presented a paper with his emerging proposal about his potential future work in this area. Filipa’s paper discussed ideas for working with Energy Cities and Covenant of Mayors in Europe.

Comments from trustees:

Peter would be looking for pilot work where there is both keen local government and co-ordinated bottom-up action in place.

Trustees were keen to hear about examples to illustrate Peter’s ideas.

Filipa’s paper highlights again the need for monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of the Transition movement. Project Groundswell looks interesting, and Henry will be meeting them.

In Italy, Transition initiatives use participative democracy tools to convene people and look at priorities.

Filipa and Juan del Rio of the Spanish Hub worked with Energy Cities to create a “backcasting” resource. Energy Cities are keen to take this to the next step. There is potential for the Covenant of Mayors/ Energy Cities to resource something significant in Europe, on Transition and Municipalities.

Energy Cities is a programme of the EU Commission – it is considered to be bottom-up but they are asking for help in engaging communities. Transition Network and the Hubs have this expertise, in tools and trainings. There is a lot that is currently happening in this field, but we are not currently collecting the learnings and scaling up.

Trustees checked whether there is any potential conflict of interest around funding. Peter will always check that any funding he raises for his proposals will not disadvantage Transition Network’s funding. Peter will update Nicola and the Board about who he is talking to about his own ideas (not as Transition Network) and when he is talking about Transition Network.

The two projects work well as complementary projects – it is coherent to work with Energy Cities and good to work more broadly too. The Board will need to check back in as proposals develop.

Action: Trustees to please send any feedback on either paper about the links between top-down and bottom-up action on climate change, to Filipa or Peter.

Our anonymous Foundation funder:

Peter is looking at working with the anonymous Foundation on strategy and programme monitoring. He will set up a structure to make sure that this relationship doesn't disadvantage Transition Network's funding.

The anonymous Foundation are currently considering a funding application from ECOLISE. Again, we will enquire to confirm that this would not disadvantage future prospects for Transition Network funding.