

Truro Place-Shaping Project - A Transition perspective

Transition Truro (TT) is part of the U.K. Network of Transition Groups which aim to address climate change by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, conserving natural resources and by working towards a low carbon and circular economy.

We believe the Place-Shaping Project provides an opportunity to reduce CO2 emissions, address resource depletion, improve the health, well-being and resilience of the local community by focusing on a number of ideas and initiatives, recorded here under the key headings of:

Sustainable Transport

Resources and Waste

Health & Wellbeing, Clean Air, and Biodiversity

Renewable Energy

Food Security

Sustainable Transport

TT supports the proposals to improve opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians to move safely around the city. Given increasing pressures on the City Centre and environs from traffic movements - especially buses - **encouraging walking and cycling** must be a priority in place-shaping. Parking facilities for bicycles to be reviewed to improve coverage across the city.

Improved signage is also essential to encourage more cycling and walking, and make it easier to navigate the city by foot and bike.

In 2013 Transition Truro produced a consultation response to a feasibility study being carried out by Cormac on behalf of Cornwall Council to **create new cycle routes** and/or **improve existing facilities** for cyclists in and around Truro. Much of this document is still relevant and can be viewed on the Transition Truro website: <https://www.transitiontruro.org.uk/wp/2014/03/cycling-in-truro>

Truro is a key commuter destination. Serious consideration needs to be given to encouraging more people to cycle to work into and within Truro and so **reduce congestion and air pollution** and promote healthier lifestyles. One of the key travel to work routes is the A390 from Chiverton into Truro. Transition Truro supports the concept of a St Agnes to Truro cycle highway promoted by Truro cycling Campaign.

Transition Truro supports the **Truro Loops** project and its aim of linking the city centre to its river. In particular this project takes advantage of the flat and short route to the recreational facilities at Boscawen Park and beyond to the riverside village of Malpas to encourage more cycling to these key travel destinations.

With a predicted increase in the use of bus travel to and from Truro the **re-location of the bus station** to a more suitable, safer, and less-cramped site needs serious consideration. One suggestion is to move it to Garras Wharf (or the former B & M site) thus **freeing up the Green as a relaxing green space by the river** - with tea rooms/plantings/lawn. Public toilets to be moved and improved.

The not-for-profit Car Hire by the hour social enterprise **Co-Cars** to be promoted in a bid to reduce the number of private cars in and around the city. This can help reduce congestion generally and free up space in our residential streets for more communal use e.g planting, children's play and local events. It will also help to reduce emissions through carbon efficient car club cars (extending to electric vehicles in the future) and car club users tending to walk, cycle or use public transport more than the average person.

The relevant authorities to look at improving pedestrian safety by introducing a **20 mph pedestrian priority zone** in key city centre areas, e.g. the one-way system along Edward and Castle streets, and the junction of Fairmantle and Lemon streets as well as in residential streets, e.g. Richmond Hill, St George's Road. Transition Truro recommends a survey to identify those roads/streets in Truro where a 20mph speed limit would be desirable.

Resources and Waste

Following the adoption by Cornwall Council of the new Resources & Waste Strategy for Cornwall, the emphasis on the top three elements of the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse and recycle), and support for the **circular economy**, TT would like to see the following initiatives considered:

- the introduction of **recycling deposit/collection units** for single-use metal cans, plastic and glass bottles in and around the city (sponsored by local businesses) to encourage recycling and reduce litter.
- the siting of a **specialist recycling container** (on Lemon Quay) where single-use, disposable coffee cups can be deposited, then collected by a company like Simply Cups to contribute to the production of the "world's first reusable coffee cup from used paper cups" (the rCUP) designed by a company based in Perranporth. Example of a collection point... <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-coffee-cup-recycling-bin-oxford-street-manchester-city-centre-england-126404923.html>

- support (in the form of rent-free space and/or financial) for **start-up businesses and voluntary groups** working in the circular economy e.g. furniture and clothing upcycling, and a Repair Cafe where household items can be repaired rather than going for scrap or to incineration.
 - support for a **Plastic-Free Truro** through the promotion of a range of initiatives to reduce single-use plastic waste and litter including the ReFILL and Final Straw campaigns.
 - to introduce one or more **drinking fountains** in Truro to reduce usage of single-use plastic bottles and encourage refilling of containers - possibly funded by partnerships of the City Council with Biffa and South West Water.
 - to support the **new household waste kerbside recycling service** proposed for new waste contract in 2020, and to aim for much higher participation across the city, and to encourage much greater resource efficiency among the business community through the BID network.
 - explore the feasibility of creating a collection point for redundant garden hand tools at the planned **Truro Household Waste & Recycling Centre**, for the Tools Shed Project run by the Conservation Foundation <http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk/tools/?page=tools>
- ...and to consider opportunities for collecting other types of tools, and also bicycles, for refurbishment by other charitable organisations for use overseas.
- to support and deliver an effective local network to enable more **surplus edible food** to be collected from producers and retailers for distribution to those in **food poverty** in the Truro area rather than going to waste/incineration.

Health & Wellbeing, Clean Air, and Biodiversity

Linking these three elements together... Following concerns over increased traffic movements in and around the city, **air quality is a key concern** for many Truro residents. “Greening Up” Truro could help ameliorate some of the effects of air pollution and also provide a more comfortable and welcoming environment for locals, city workers and visitors.

One suggestion refers to **the Green reverting to a “green space”**, while a review of other suitable locations where trees and shrubs could be planted, may be undertaken. The profile of streets/street corners and terrain could be softened by suitable plants. The suggestion of the **bus station relocation** would mean **freeing up Lemon Quay from intrusive and polluting vehicles** and provide for more greenery which will also help reduce Co2 in the atmosphere.

Opportunities for **increasing biodiversity** in and around the City need to be investigated. The new Urban-Buzz initiative from Buglife could act as a focus for this which has the support of Truro City Council..... see <https://www.buglife.org.uk/urban-buzz-cornwall> for more details.

One other suggestion is that many properties have external roof areas which would be ideal **habitat for insects** if planted up with, for example, sedum (rock plants), which would also help absorb air pollution.

There is also a case for **creating traffic-free zones in Truro on certain days of the week** and/or at certain times, thus enabling people to move around freely and safely without the pressures of looking out for traffic movements which create noise and pollution.

One aspect of community well-being and inclusivity - often overlooked in the drive to make the City a visitor-friendly area - is the need for locals to have easy access to information about events in Truro. Public events notice-boards have been recently replaced by City Centre maps. One solution is to provide an **electronic noticeboard** and also have a website dedicated to **promoting local activities and events**. An online version of Truro Community Times might help.

In addition, it is suggested that Truro could benefit from a **“village” community hall** which would act as a focal point for Truronians to meet, discuss, hold talks and hold flea markets and so on. It could also act as the base for a Repair Cafe. Part of the Moorfield Car Park has been proposed by one member.

With regard to the current interest in the future of the **former Carrick site** off Pydar street, our suggestion is that it would be ideal site for a **mixed residential and small business** space development.....providing units for the creative sector and innovative businesses (with future growth in the circular economy anticipated). It could be a location for a reuse and repair facility.

With the issue of accommodation required at an **affordable rent** in mind, we recommend that the authorities look at ways of bringing the **vacant space above many shop premises** in the city back into productive use as much-needed homes. Grants could be available to convert these spaces to flats and make them available at below market rents, perhaps leasing them to the emerging Truro Community Land Trust for letting and management.

.....and finally, TT supports the introduction of **“Building with Nature”** into Cornwall - a benchmark scheme which we feel should be applied to all new build in the Truro area. This would ensure that developers design and construct dwellings and commercial premises in harmony with as much existing nature on site as possible, which would protect and even help create important habitat for surrounding flora and fauna, for the mutual benefit of residents and businesses alike. More details : <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/>

Renewable Energy

Crucial to efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and Co2 emissions, TT recommends exploring ways of **increasing renewable energy production in Truro**. The proposal for solar panels on the top of the Moorfield Car Park is a good one. Rooftops of public and commercial buildings in the City could also be considered. Energy-saving programmes aimed particularly at the business community would also help to improve efficiency and reduce Co2 emissions.

The service provided by Resource Efficient Scotland would be an inspiring model to follow <https://www.resourceefficientscotland.com/>

There is also a case for allocating some land in the Truro area to the construction of an **anaerobic digester** to process the non-edible waste food collected from households under the forthcoming waste contract, thus creating genuinely renewable, clean energy from a resource that would otherwise be incinerated.

Consideration could also be given to utilising the **tidal power of Truro river** as a renewable energy source.

Food Security

TT calls for proactive support for **locally-based** food and drink producers and retailers - particularly small and medium-sized businesses who specialise in this sector.

This would not only help stimulate the local economy, reduce food miles and related Co2 emissions and unnecessary waste, it would also help guarantee food supply to the local population.

Recent bad weather events (probably linked to climate change) has shown that the upcountry food supply chain can be put at risk, and that local producers are key to ensuring future food security. To this end it is crucial to ensure that sufficient agricultural and horticultural land is made available to help meet the future needs of the local community.

Adequate space for **additional allotments, and support for community gardens and local orchards**, also need to be considered.

Final Comments

The above is designed to stimulate discussion around some key issues of importance to Transition Groups. We recommend applying some key questions when assessing place-shaping proposals:

- will this proposal help stabilise or reduce Co2 and other emissions?

- will it help the community conserve valuable resources, recycle more and promote the circular economy?
- will it help create an inclusive community where all residents can afford access to the majority of services and facilities on offer?
- will it enhance the built and natural environment and improve the quality of life for the local population, visitors and businesses alike?

10th June 2018