

TRANSITION CITY LANCASTER

NOTES FOR HEALTHY WORKING IN NEW WORKING GROUPS

We have written this for the Lancaster groups to support sustainable group working!

1. There are two jobs for any transition group.
 - a. working on the purpose the group was set up for e.g. find enough food for the people of Lancaster in the future.
 - b. building community cooperation and resilience through nurturing the group itself, drawing out the best from its members and dealing with any conflict etc..
2. There will probably be conflict at some stage. It is a normal part of group interaction. Everyone in a group comes from a different background, has maybe slightly different goals, different experiences of being in other groups, including their family, and different fears and expectations.
3. So we need group nurturing methods. Here are some suggestions.
 - a. Everyone to be listened to, even if they are disagreed with.
 - b. A basic assumption is made that everyone has something to give.
 - c. Ensuring everyone gets a chance to speak. Possibly there could be a rotating Chair/ Focaliser whose job it is to watch the group process and support the quieter members as well as keeping the group focussed on the issues being discussed.
 - d. Recognising and relishing the differences between people and their diverse contributions.
 - e. Decisions minuted and offers of help noted for the sake of clarity

f. Successes acknowledged and celebrated – both individual and group successes. We celebrate the little victories as well as the big ones.

g. A reminder at the beginning of each meeting of the overall purpose of the group e.g. again, feeding the citizens of Lancaster in the future.

h. Getting to know the other group members, particularly taking note of their strengths and skills

i. COMMUNICATION with each other, and with the core group and with other local transition groups in Lancaster.

j. Group decision making by listening, discussion and consensus.

Skills for group members:-

A willingness to be flexible and to learn from experience.

A willingness to give some time to the needs of the group as well as the business of the group. (e.g. A brief check-in at the beginning, a cheery story at the end, time for laughter)

Most of all, learning to avoid taking things personally – even if they are meant personally. Strong feelings are aroused when something is close to the hearts of the group members, but personal animosities fuelled by these strong feelings just get in the way of the ‘cause’ that everyone in group has joined to work on.