

## ***Sustainable Thornbury Chair's report 2013***

My thanks are due to everyone who has been involved in ST this year, especially the officers, Freddie and Bob, and those who have co-ordinated activities.

### **The EcoFair**

The EcoFair was in this financial year, although it was before the last AGM. It was another great success, thanks to everyone involved. The theme was energy, and many of the stalls were about energy-related things.

### **Give n Take Website**

The Give n Take website was launched at the EcoFair and has been a great success and is steadily gathering more members, although plenty of people still don't know about it. Thanks are due to My Thornbury for setting up the website.

### **Energy Project**

We decided a while ago to run an energy project. We decided it should grow into be a big project, making a step change in Thornbury's energy use, but in small steps. There are now several threads:-

- A team has been working with the Chantry to improve its energy performance. It has made progress with clarifying what can be done, assessing priorities, (helped by CSE, the Centre for Sustainable Energy) and investigating installing solar panels. South Glos Council has provided a grant of £450 for further assessment;
- We have learnt about government energy data now available for Thornbury, and Felicity has completed a survey of solar panels in Thornbury;
- We have worked with SWEA to promote their free energy assessments, which finished a few weeks ago;
- We have started work on holding an energy efficiency 'Open Doors' on the weekend of 12-13 October. We are hoping there will be between ten and twenty properties, and an exhibition hub at The Swan in Thornbury. South Gloucestershire Council are supporting us, and Bristol Green Doors will help us.

### **Grow Your Own Food and Community Orchard**

The Grow Your Own Food Group has quietly continued with what it does, promoting the skills needed for food growing. There have been monthly meetings and there is a significant active membership. A report by Marian is below.

In addition, the Community Orchard group has been pruning, planting and generally caring for the site, and trying to persuade the Council to provide a new gate and signage. A report by Barbara is below.

## **Thornbury Environment Committee**

Felicity represents us on the Thornbury Town Council Environment Committee. This is an important role, keeping contact with what they are doing and telling them what we are doing.

## **Meetings, bulletins and the website**

Meetings, bulletins and the website are important elements of what we do, supporting each other, co-ordinating and sharing information and ideas. We have had monthly meetings and a workshop on the energy project. The website and the three bulletins this year keep our wider membership in touch.

## **The coming year**

We are in a strong position, with money in the bank, a group of about fifteen committed people and significant skills and experience. The Open Doors project will be a new venture, and could expand in future in lots of different ways, as similar projects in Bristol, Bath and Monmouthshire have shown how it could promote the energy efficiency message.

## **Grow Your Own Food – Marian Stephens**

The Grow Your Own Food Group has continued meeting monthly, with a wide range of talks and visits. The November talk by Chris Sunderland on Community Growing was well attended and gave plenty of food for thought.

We really enjoyed the December Quiz evening and the visit to Windmill City farm seed day in January. Only a small regular group meet although there are others on the yahoo list. We are not experts and would like others to join us.

## **Community Orchard – Barbara Day**

The Community Orchard is going from strength to strength, with ST sub-group, among other tasks taking an active part in tree pruning, new planting and general care of the site. We took part in a Bristol Open Day last year, when visitors from Bristol toured the Orchard and told us about their attempts to maintain Community Orchards in the Bristol area.

We try to work closely with South Glos Council, but we have, at times, felt as if our ideas were not getting across, especially concerning a new gate and signage. Weed control and the encouragement of wild flowers and wild life are also issues, along with trees being planted, of which we have no knowledge!

Hopefully, this is about to change with new management at Street Care. A visit has been arranged to introduce ourselves and agree what is needed at the Orchard. The present restrictions on budgets may have an effect here as volunteer help is relied on to keep the Orchard and other communal areas in Thornbury open and accessible to local people.

## **Thornbury Council Environment Committee – Felicity Harrison**

I have attended all the meetings and reported on our energy project. The committee are grateful for our attendance and appear favourably disposed towards us.