

Transition Town Kingston AGM 2024 reports



TTK CHAIR'S REVIEW, 2023 – END OF MARCH 2024

Welcome and thank you for coming and for your support for TTK, which is now 16 years old. Please save any **questions or comments** until after the various project reports that will follow this overview.



As you will see from those reports, it's been another busy and productive year, with the monthly core group meetings (*one pictured on the left*) continuing regularly, and trying to coordinate and support TTK activities – we do the **essential admin** so that you don't have to, standard things such as:

- Running a TTK community bank account and accounting system, which enable us or our project groups to apply for and bank funding as and when needed;
- Keeping in touch with KVA and Connected Kingston to bring our offers of services and volunteering opportunities to a wider audience;
- Maintaining our website and social media and keeping them

updated.

We also made some improvements to our processes this year:

- We came up with a formula for project groups to make annual contributions to the TTK overheads that they benefit from, such as PL insurance, the community group bank account, and more recently storage of shared TTK items at The Circulatory.
- We reviewed our PL insurance policy to make sure it's fit for our purposes and includes all our normal activities (thanks to Peter and Paul).

Other activities, ongoing and new, of the core group (CG) and Chair:

- We welcomed 2 new members to the CG, good to have but necessitating minor changes to the Constitution (yet again!) to enable this enlarged CG to be reasonably representative and quorate at meetings.
- Green Drinks continued every month immediately after our core group meetings with occasional drop-ins – all welcome to come along to chat about local green issues and other things;.
- A pleasing innovation this year was the December get-together for our volunteers to thank them and enable them to meet each other and the core-group and find out more about TTK and its project groups.
- As Chair, I've attended various meetings and reported back to the CG: on-line Climate Coalition meetings fairly regularly, and occasionally Kingston Environment Forum, Transition Together and Capital Growth meetings; and IRL a Circular Economy & Furniture Waste Workshop in June, a Kingston Biodiversity Network meeting in September, a Food Waste meeting in November; + occasional informal drop-ins to The Circulatory and The Hive. Some of these produce a blizzard of reports and info in the hope that we all end up a bit better informed – though interesting, and sometimes useful, as they are, they may not affect our day-to-day activities very much.
- We continue to foster good relations with relevant Council officers and Councillors, respond to relevant local consultations, e.g. on the Thames scheme to mitigate flooding, and welcome the Council's initiatives on, e.g. climate, green businesses and waste.

For the future: unfortunately, we haven't had the time or capacity to sit back and do a bit of introspection or to engage more with the wider Transition networks, a pity as there is much to learn from other groups –

could we do things better? Maybe something for next year? Also for next year, may be turning our ideas about green wildlife corridors across Kingston into practical action, starting with planning and working with other green groups and the Council and in the longer term hoping to involve the wider Kingston community. That, like most interesting and practical activities, may yet again get in the way of introspection, evaluation, and other potential commitments!

I'm standing down as Chair after this AGM – I'm not as young or as fit as I was, and I find myself lacking the energy to chair effectively as well as organising or helping to organise two practical TTK projects and editing the newsletter. Time to hand over to someone else – Damon has kindly offered to be interim Chair for now - so I can spend more time cultivating my own garden!

MM, April 2024

REPAIR CAFÉ KINGSTON

Kingston Council granted the Repair Café from its Community Resilience Fund last year and requested a small video/audio update; this below is the transcript for the TTK AGM. You can access the recordings (some recorded at the March 2024 RCK and some at the Spring Grove pub during a rainstorm) at <https://www.earth.org.uk/Repair-Cafe-Kingston-report-to-council-and-TTK-AGM-2024.html>.

1: Who We Are: TTK

Transition Town Kingston (TTK) is a community group helping to raise awareness of the climate crisis and encourage the transition to a resilient and sustainable low-carbon future. To that end, we:

- foster and support a range of practical and inclusive environmental projects,
- we educate and campaign about the climate crisis,
- we encourage sustainable food production and less wasteful consumption,
- we promote energy-efficiency and alternatives to fossil-fuels,
- we share ideas, skills, information and news,
- we organise local events and workshops...

2: About the Project: RCK

Our Repair Café project, now entering its second year, aligns well with TTK's core aims and ethos. The community faces several challenges that we can help with:

- the energy, climate and cost-of-living crises,
- the need to reduce waste,
- lack of know-how,
- and social isolation...



Celebrating RCK's first birthday in February 2024

The project mobilises community capacities and resources, builds relationships, trust, and collaboration.

In our first year, we have fixed items for, or advised diverse visitors on, miscellaneous items, including:

- clothing,
- a record player,
- hairdryers,
- toasters,
- rice-cookers,
- favourite toys...

The Repair Café ethos includes skill-sharing and confidence-building (by watching and learning), contributing to users' capabilities and resilience as well as saving them money and keeping repairable items out of the waste system. Our volunteers of all ages share their experience, expertise and skills, and seem to enjoy the purposeful activity and engagement with visitors and each other. The sociable aspects of Repair Café (we offer refreshments) enhance the well-being of all participants.

3: What the Funding Achieved

The Resilience Fund has enabled us to secure our future, to improve safe working practices in our Repair Café project, and to continue encouraging and empowering the community to re-use and repair.

Funding is being spent on:

- training,
- specialist insurance cover,
- further outreach (via printed posters and fliers),

and on more equipment to replace or supplement borrowed items:

- circuit breakers,
- a Portable Appliance Tester to protect volunteers and visitors,
- a substantial extension lead,
- reusable cups to cut down on our waste,
- a second-hand Zettle to enable cashless donations towards the project's ongoing costs and self-sufficiency, and contributions towards the overheads of our parent group TTK, ensuring its resilience too.

4: How it is Going, and Plans

We think that things are going pretty well. We have recruited a skilful and versatile team of about 30 volunteer fixers. Diverse members of the local community have brought in a wide range of items for repair or advice, and go away afterwards satisfied. Amongst the repair networks we belong to, we compare quite well, and seem to be reasonably competent and successful in repairing stuff.

We can't easily expand in the space we have in Kingston Library. But we would happily advise and support others in the borough who wanted to set up something similar or complementary. We have already had several visitors from neighbouring groups or researchers or students observing how we do things. Sharing advice and information is a positive aspect of Repair Cafés generally.

Plans include:

- More fliers/posters to maintain visitor numbers.
- Succession planning to maintain enough organisers and volunteers.
- Helping the Library by paying for more power points.

5: Examples of Help from RCK

On a typical repair morning (March 2024) we repaired:

- Sewing machine
- Pyjama
- Dog toy
- Rucksack
- Backpack
- 2 Bags
- Blocked trimmer
- 2 Lamps

- Jacket cuffs
- Paddle board bag
- Radio

Advice given:

- Dehydrator
- Computer
- Umbrella
- Laptop

Not repaired/irreparable:

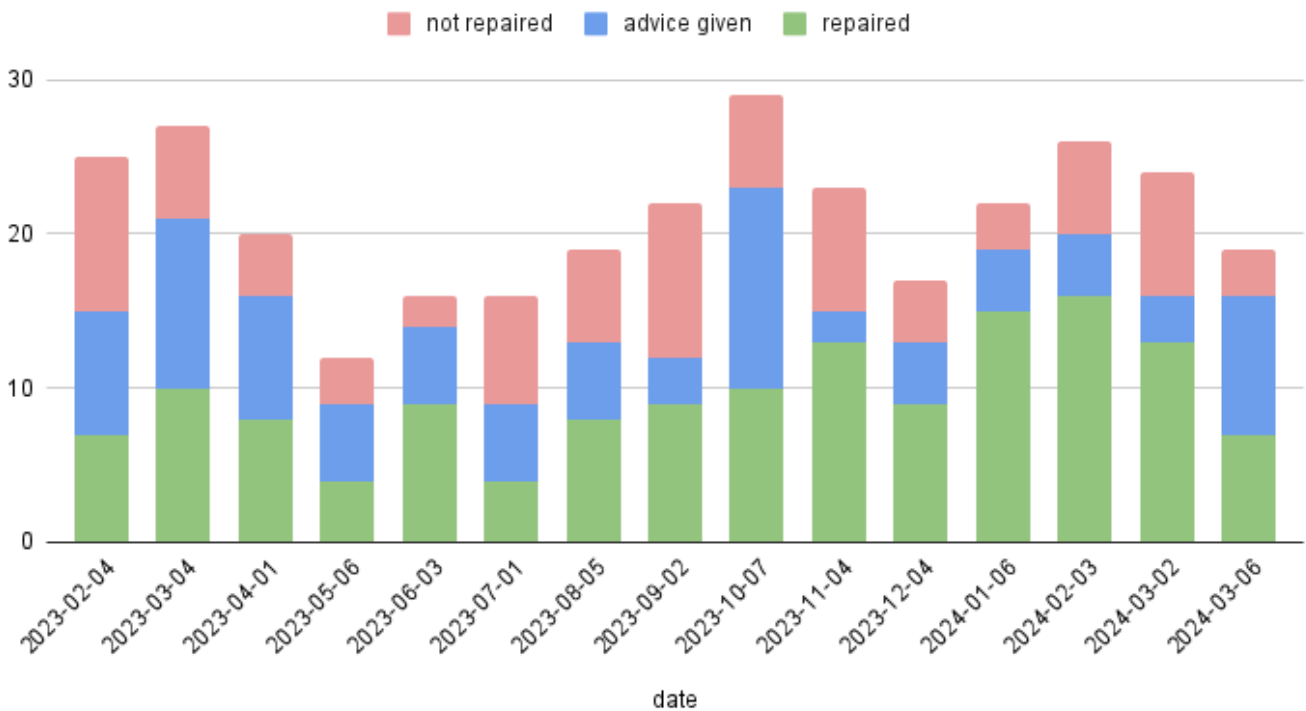
- Clock
- Lamp toggle switch
- 2 Vacuum cleaners
- Food mixer
- Leather jacket

We typically see around 25 items each session, with about a third of the outcomes in each of the categories above (repaired, partial repair or advice, not repaired).

In part we (organisers, volunteers, visitors) are there for the social element and the company too!

One of our volunteers: “I enjoy the fixing, the community aspect, the social aspect. I'm learning from the others and I'm helping people fix their own things.”

repaired, advice given and not repaired



ENERGY GROUP, 2023-24

- Held monthly meetings in The Town House, Kingston University – these are usually quite technical discussions around the difficult problem of retrofitting homes to reduce energy consumption for space heating.
- Visited Reading Hydro on fact-finding mission – this was with an eye to getting involved in a future energy generation project on the Thames, such as the one near Molesey weir.
- Responded to consultations on the EA's Thames Project – we proposed that the EA put micro-generation in the weirs they are doing construction work on
- Responded to consultations on Thames Water's Teddington DRA project – Marcus has found why the project is not actually needed.
- Attended Parliamentary meeting in Portcullis House on "Empowering Community Energy" - joined a huge audience to support an all-part committee which is trying to get the government to act.
- Participated in RBK's Bitesize Retrofit Event.
- Participated in RBK's Efficient Homes Event.
- Our thermal camera has been in use on home surveys and at The Corner House theatre.
- Gave advice to homeowners looking to add insulation and/or install heat pumps – helped with the system design on one to be installed in July.
- Gave talks on experience of operating a heat pump for many years – trying to counter the misinformation and disinformation about heat pumps.
- Gave a talk on "Keep Cool and Carry on" – how to keep a home cool in a heat-wave by logical but, for some counterintuitive, measures without resorting to air conditioning.
- Resurrected Kingston Community Energy – a second go at putting solar PV on schools, etc.
- Contributed to RBK's Kingston Development Plan – pushed for more micro-generation and upping energy efficiency requirements in planning consents.

PJM, April 2024

KINGSTON ENVIRONMENT NEWS, shared nominally with Kingston Environment Centre, continues to go out monthly, though it was slimmed down a bit this year in recognition of the fact that all local groups have their own members and newsletters for internal matters, and that what really needs to be shared beyond their members are campaigns and local green events, as well as the wider news that keeps us all informed and motivated. Of course, if they have news or information that fits into one of the many sections within the newsletter, e.g. waste or climate updates, that would be welcome too.

MM April 2024

CANBURY COMMUNITY GARDEN (CCG) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/canburycommunitygarden>

The CCG year is January to December, and our end of 2023 totals were as inaccurate as usual but looking better than last year, and interesting in that they give the 3 lead gardeners and planners some idea of which crops are worth the space they take up:

- Canbury Community Chicken Collective, an estimated 350 hours for an estimated 700 eggs
- CCG volunteer hours - 222 recorded
- CCG crops - c36 kilos recorded + herbs + hops

Normally the produce is shared with whoever is volunteering when crops are ready to harvest, with some surplus crops donated last year to lunches on the Cambridge Road Estate; new this year was a hop harvest that went to Park Brewery to add to their Wanderings brew. We continue our environment-friendly ethos of upcycling, re-use, and wild-life-friendly food-growing (no chemicals, just crop rotation, composting and hard work); and the principle of sharing the work and the produce. All are welcome to visit or help during our weekend opening times - the 3 lead gardeners brief visitors on our practices and principles + health and safety (including checking on allergies and how visitors feel about chickens!); we also now have

3 WhatsApp groups as well as our Facebook group for updates and discussions. No one could live on our produce, but CCG is a useful source of encouragement and information- and skill-sharing, everyone involved learns something useful, and some visitors may well feel encouraged and empowered to grow edibles at home, ideally in a wild-life-friendly way.

The Community Garden continues to host Canbury Community Chicken Collective and the ever-changing organisers and members of the Muddy Toddlers group, now meeting just once a month. Other volunteers and visitors continued too, including the always helpful and hard working GoodGym members, local primary school Educare, families enjoying visits to the chickens, visitors who want to chat about food-growing or learn about chicken-keeping. We also ran a couple of open gardens during Good to Grow week and Great Big Green Week, though typically with no more visitors or potential volunteers than usual!

New last year was a monthly Turkish family gathering in CCG, run by Tuba of the Muddy Toddlers group (so a sub-group of a sub-group!) and an occasional refugee group; also new last year were visits from Kingston University architecture lecturers and students using the empty building in CCG for a hypothetical re-use project, somewhere to practise surveying and ideas for retrofitting and landscaping. In May 2023 a group from [Transition Together](#), including Rob Hopkins, visited TTK's Canbury Community Garden (*photo below*).



Coordinating CCG's activities and its relationships with other local groups and the local community takes a fair amount of time – time I enjoy whether I'm there on my own or chatting to visitors or volunteers (though less when defending the community garden from locals who don't understand the concept); I'm there twice a week usually, sometimes more often, and there are other related meetings too, such as Kingston's Good Food Group and the Canbury Gardens Working Group, though I do often pass on the latter to the other lead gardeners.

MM, end of March 2024

ABUNDANCE REPORT, 2023 – 2024

Our harvest started on the 12th August and continued for over 2 months. In that time we harvested more than 500 kilos of apples and collected a further 100k which had been picked for us, so a total over 600 kilos. Interestingly they divided equally between cookers and eaters.

Of that:

We used just over half the apples at juicing sessions at Surbiton Farmers Market and The King's Soup event. We would have loved to do more but did not have sufficient fruit.

Over 100K were delivered to the Community Fridge in Surbiton. This was a new contact and enabled us to get the best and most delicious, freshly picked apples rapidly out into the community for the community to enjoy. They certainly went quickly and were much appreciated. It was also very helpful to me to have an opportunity for such a quick turnover of fruit as well. I look forward to working with them again next harvest.

100K also went to stables for the horses to enjoy. These tended to be the damaged and maggoty apples which people don't want or can't use in time.

The rest were handed out locally in small quantities and finally about 8% had to be composted as they developed rot during storage. I do not have a chilling facility, the apples have to take their chances at ambient temperature.

Many thanks to the volunteers who turned out to help harvest and enable juicing sessions, one even made a mini film of us! Thanks too for the generosity of the tree owners. People are delighted to share their harvest, knowing that it is going to be enjoyed and that they are not going to be burdened with more fruit than they know what to do with!

We are now able to get a good supply of used glass bottles, so we sterilise them and reuse that resource. This year people were even returning empty bottles to me to use again, which was wonderful.

Financially we took £277.50 in all, mainly from the sale of juice, but also some from donations and 2 people hiring the press – one of whom brought round his grape harvest and we made delicious grape juice. Outgoings were £57.50 – mainly ULEZ payments.

Abundance accounts

Date	Place	Amount In	Amount Out	Reason
30.08.23	Berrylands	5		Client Donation towards ULEZ
"	"	10		"
"	"		12.5	ULEZ charge
16.09.23	Surbiton Farmers Market	147		Making and selling apple juice
"	Volunteer Subsistence		10	Hot drinks
"	"		12.5	ULEZ charge
25.09.23	Home	15		Making grape juice
15.10.23	King's Soup Event	80.5		Making and selling apple juice
"	"		12.5	ULEZ charge
"	"		10	Donation to event cause
08.10.23	Home	20		Donation for loan of press
	Totals:	277.5	57.5	

TI, March 2024

RECYCLING MINDS, 2023 - 2024

Recycling Minds is a TTK sub-group that brings together local residents, businesses and Kingston Council with the aim of sharing ideas and collaborating to reduce waste across the borough. The group's remit is to create a bridge between the Council and residents / businesses – to encourage the Council to provide facilities and incentives and to encourage residents to use what's provided by the Council or find other means to reduce waste.

Its members include council officers, councillors, Save the World Club, SunrayRecycle, Friends of the Earth, Kingston Environment Centre and Kingston University, and we are joined from time to time by local businesses who are interested in or have an offering relating to recycling, such as IQ in IT, Paragon Green Cleaning, Genuine Solutions, the Co-op and Auxilium Consulting. Local waste contractors Veolia occasionally attends.

Last year, between April 2023 and March 2024, the following took place:

Event Recycling

A sub group created fun activities to encourage recycling at Chessington Fun Day in June. We had a 'hoopla' & a 'golf putting' with examples of waste & ideas to where items get recycled. Dave Kempton brought along his recycled electronics

The BBQ tent did a fabulous job in separating plastics from soft plastics & cardboard. SunrayRecycle did a sort of all other items - mostly food waste and serviettes. Veolia took the sorted waste back to depot with a separated soft plastics bag also. The teabags got locally composted.

More events in Kingston are seeking more sustainable options the Tamil Festival in January separated all their waste and used bamboo options for plates & cutlery, which is better for being incinerated if not commercially composted.

Recycling Hackathon

A group of residents workshopped ideas to boost recycling rates at a kind of people's assembly in September. Bob Bollen led on this, with the support of Martha Magdor, her Kingston University team and our local green groups and community partners. We highlighted the 'recycling' each group were doing from food sharing to clothes & item mending.

Throughout the year

The dialogue between Recycling Minds and RBK continued both at the meetings and inbetween meetings on such matters as comms about recycling, provision of waste containers, on-street recycling, and the recommissioning of the RBK waste contract.

SunrayRecycle continued to collect small items that are not part of the Council's doorstep recycling for recycling by specialists. Save the World Club (the Circulatory) continued to accept larger household items from residents for re-homing by other residents.

Future plans

More events. Closer liaison with Veolia / the new waste contractor.

HG & JM