

# Transition Town Kingston – 2026 AGM

Date: Tuesday **2026-04-28** 18:30 to 19:00

Venue: Spring Grove

## Programme

1. Chair intro and thanks
2. Finances
3. Group reports
4. AOB
5. Food and drink provided, to share with our volunteers!

## Chair Intro and Thanks

Thank you to all joining us here today; core group members and volunteers! Especial thanks on the CG side to Hilary for taking on the Secretary role and to Marilyn for continuing with comms. Thanks to everyone for keeping on keeping on: an underrated skill!

We will shortly come to reports from each group, and it is pleasing to see that TTK continues to do useful practical things in the real world from saving apples (Abundance) to saving toasters and teddies (Repair Café).

I will try to keep this part of the meeting relatively short so that we can give the food and our friends some attention also. The most formal thing that we need to pay attention to are the finances, and to note that we have a decent closing balance that we should be doing useful things with. Thank you to Paul for keeping us in order on that front: he is up next.

Let's look forward to another productive and supportive TTK year!

*Damon is a latecomer to TTK, though has cared about climate change for a while! His last start-up developed a home heating control of which there are a million or so at large. He is now researching a part-time PhD on improving UK home heating decarbonisation at Surrey.*



# Finances

It's been a positive year for TTK finances. We were very lucky to be selected as a local charitable group and awarded a grant of £1,895 from Tiffin School. One thousand of this has been put into an initial seed fund for the Green Chains project.

In addition, we raised approximately £1,100 in donations from the monthly Repair Cafe. Given the funds raised over three years of operating the Repair Café, we invested £1,000 to support the Library in installing a number of new power points throughout the Reading Room. This money was still outstanding at the end of the financial year but has been noted on the summary.

We finally transferred any remaining funds we had on behalf of Kew The Transition over to their account, which they opened last year, thereby ending our support as a fiscal host for their financial transactions.

Including the thousand we owe to the Council and excluding the money transferred to Kew, we ended the year with a profit of £629.

*Paul has been involved in Transition Town since 2010, starting in Transition Belsize, where he led an abundance fruit picking group for several years. He has been a member of Transition Town Kingston since 2020 and treasurer since 2022. He has also been active in helping to initiate and support the Kingston Hive Climate Emergency Centre and is currently exploring data economics and green maps for Kingston.*



(See emailed spreadsheet.)

Opening balance:	<b>£4,447.46</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cash donations	£1,132.52
Specific projects	£65.19 Abundance
Fundraising activity	-
Grants	£1,895.30 Tiffin School grant
Petty cash	-
Kew TT	-
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£3,093.01</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>
Space rental	£150.00
Equipment hire	-
Printing	-
Memberships / subscriptions	£30.00
Insurance	£272.39
Food and drink	£807.65
RCK expenses	£203.41 £1000 owed to Kingston Council for electrical work
Other	-
Kew TT	£635.69
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>£2,099.14</b>
<b>Net for year (income – expenses)</b>	<b>£993.87</b>
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>£5,441.33</b>
Net for year (inc 1000 expense and excluding KTT)	£629.56

# Group Reports

## Abundance

(This is the report from the end of the previous season.)

Abundance season started on 02.08.25 which is normal but ended in September rather than the usual October. No standout reason for this.

We picked or were delivered 931 kilos of apples, roughly equal quantities of cookers and eaters — 10% were delivered.

Overall we took 132k of apples to the Community Fridge who were delighted to pass them on, but unfortunately they were only able to take about 30k at a time. We gave mainly cooking apples as they are generally more perfect and keep better, leaving abundance with more sweet apples which are more desirable for the juicing.

Allowing for about 5% rot, the rest were juiced at 3 Farmers markets — twice in Surbiton and once in New Malden.

We sold juice and took £511.50 overall and paid out £227.62 on equipment, ULEZ, Surbiton Farmers market charity. This leaves £283.88 profit of which £28.39 has been paid to TTK as a tithe, leaving £255.49.

We also did one picking and pressing session with 40 kilos of grapes.

We would like to get more juice out of the pulp and are looking into getting either a hydraulic press or converting an existing press to press compress layers of thin, square 'cheeses' to supersede the current barrel arrangement.

We leant out presses 5 times for free including to the Environment Centre, Au Law organic farm and Save The World Club. This enabled approximately 250k more fruit to be juiced and not wasted.

*Toni is passionate about living sustainably and is a founder member of TTK, serving on the core group until recently. She has run TTK Abundance project for many years, harvesting people's gluts of apples and repurposing them within the local community and was also involved in From The Ground Up, an organic veg box scheme.*



## Canbury Community Garden

### Introduction and ethos

The Canbury Community Garden (CCG) sits within Canbury Gardens, adjacent to the Canbury Secret Café. It was established in 2016 by a group of volunteers led by Marilyn Mason. In 2024, Marilyn handed over the lead responsibility for the CCG to two of the founding members — Susan and John Roscoe — who have sought to run it in accordance with its founding principles.

Since its establishment, the CCG has existed to provide a space where food can be grown in a wildlife-friendly and sustainable way, where people aged from 1-101 can get their hands dirty, meet new people, learn from each other and share in the benefits of 'cottage garden food production.'

### People and partnerships

We are very sad to have lost Mary, a wonderful person who contributed so much to the CCG over very many years. With support from the council, we have placed a small memorial plaque in the CCG, to remember her friendship and contribution.

The new, regular open garden session (held every Saturday morning between 10 and 12) has really helped to boost the numbers of regular volunteers. The last 12 months have seen a steady increase in volunteer numbers, with an average session now attracting between 4 and 6 regular volunteers plus 2/3 ad hoc drop-in volunteers (often families with small children who are passing by), meaning that we have easily achieved our target in last year's report to increase regular numbers by 2 or 3.

It is great to see the diversity of volunteers, including age and level of gardening experience. As was the case last year, we have continued to benefit from a small number of teenagers completing the volunteering aspect of the Duke of Edinburgh award. It is particularly pleasing to be welcoming back one pupil who completed her Bronze award and has now decided to return to complete her Silver (bringing a friend as well!). We also continue to benefit from the wonderful and energetic volunteers from GoodGym, who undertake regular “missions” for the benefit of the CCG (often involving heavy lifting). We have also benefited from a visiting volunteer from another local community garden.

Regular visitors to the CCG include Educare Small School and the Muddy Toddlers playgroup, who use the garden for outdoor messy play and sometimes a bit of gardening. We have also hosted vulnerable groups and individuals looking to gain work experience to assist in obtaining employment in an environmental field.

We have maintained strong links with the wider Canbury Gardens community, attending regular formal meetings, providing updates and sharing ideas and knowledge between councillors and volunteer groups/interested parties.

### **Planting**

A key focus has been to develop, in discussion with volunteers, a planting scheme to maximise the productivity of the garden and cater for preferences of those involved. As a result, we have planted a broad range of crops, including some additional fruit bushes, and have been exploring “moon planting” and green manure. We have also built/upcycled 5 new beds (3 of which are unwanted planters that the council would otherwise have thrown away) and have embarked upon a project to remove the tyres and replace them with more environmentally friendly planters/hedges over time.

We continue to use rainwater harvesting, upcycling, chemical-free gardening, companion planting, crop rotation, and composting.



### **Chickens**

The CCG is also home to the “chicken collective” and its coop, which has historically been a big draw for visitors, especially families with small children. Unfortunately, the coop is currently empty due to an incident with a fox, but we hope to acquire some new hens in the coming months.

It has been a successful year for the CCG — great engagement from new volunteers with fresh enthusiasm and ideas.

*We have 3 daughters and a dog and have been living in Kingston for over 20 years. We decided to get involved in the CCG as we both love nature, wanted to help out and learn new skills in a welcoming environment, especially with young children.*



## **Comms and Kingston Unwritten**

**TTK website** — the website is beginning to topple over under the weight of uploads and new pages, some because of new or newish projects that entail a lot of information-sharing – so it does

need some tidying and re-ordering to make it easier to navigate. But on the plus side, it is kept up-to-date and does show visitors that we keep busy doing the things we set out to do. One unexpected happy outcome of our reasonably attractive website was that Tiffin School found us via a web search when they were looking for a local environmental group to make a very generous donation to. Our easy-to-edit e-Voice website means that any core group member with news or events to share can add to it and help to keep it fresh.

**Publicity** — a recent look at responses to a question about how people had heard of Repair Café Kingston, which media were working best for us, found a wide spread of responses: all the options (including local news outlets & magazines, websites and social media, the Council) got several ticks, but with posters/fliers and word of mouth getting most — so we should continue to use all of them, time permitting, and I definitely think the new inclusive A4 posters now in the pipeline will prove worthwhile.

**Kingston Environment News**, the newsletter of TTK and Kingston Environment Centre, has continued to go out more or less regularly this year. We trialled bi-monthly publication, but the deadlines didn't really suit local environmental groups or some campaigns and consultations, so we have gone back to publishing at the end of every month so that we can include as many as possible events and opportunities coming up in the following month. I get very little feedback from the 680+ subscribers, and I expect most read it selectively, but I treat the low number of unsubscribes a small sign of satisfaction, and also think of the newsletter as a potentially worthwhile resource and record of current climate and biodiversity news, campaigns and information – it's better to be well informed than the alternative, after all.

**Kingston Unwritten** — In 2025 Mac Downes took part in Kingston Unwritten, a community research project funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, that brought together 9 community researchers to discover hidden histories of Kingston which accumulated in an exhibition in Kingston's Market House in November 2025. As a legacy to this project Mac is now working with community groups, artists, charities, Kingston College, and authors throughout the borough and beyond to create a free exhibition in Tolworth Library that opens in May 2026. Watch this space!

(Marilyn)

## Energy

### Monthly meetings

Our monthly meetings (09.30 in Town House on the first Tuesday of every month) have been held throughout the year. These are information-sharing and networking meetings, and are well attended. Discussion topics include developing a rational approach to installation of heat-pumps, batteries, solar panels and insulation in retrofit, and to understanding and overcoming the barriers to the above in the minds of most homeowners.

### The Energy Group at RBK's Efficient Homes Shows

We have supported these events with expert speakers, Energy Group members with direct experience of all the usual retrofit measures and of exploiting energy tariffs to minimise operating costs. We might have exhausted this approach in our presentations, as the quantity and density of information is indigestible and too repetitious. Also, as the media, the Council and the Government offer more and more sensible advice, we may be able to drop some themes, for example about keeping cool in heat-waves, to focus on others and present more concisely. We need to discuss our future offerings with Ioanna, the organiser.

### Lobbying RBK

Dan Curran, a member, has intensively lobbied the council on ways of actively promoting the take-up of ASHP's in the borough by effectively diminishing the perceived problem of high up-front costs. The ideas have been planted and in time may well be taken up in some form, but for the moment the risks of unexpected consequences and liabilities have caused hesitancy.

### Open Eco-Homes

In September, four members with extensively retrofitted homes of varying types, sizes and ages

opened them to the public so that real life experiences could be explored. Surprisingly, the take-up this time was not huge; that might be down to difficulties with publicity and ticketing which need to be resolved for next time.

### **Visit to Octopus' Research Laboratory in Staines**

This was organised by Patrick Manwell in February, and was uplifting and eye-opening. Their range of research and development is impressive. It ranges from technical pieces of kit, such as super-efficient heat pumps and hot water supplies, to the development of the "zero-bill" tariff. This last is conceptually interesting and points the way towards what can be achieved, even if not a practical proposition for most homeowners. Energy Group member Damon had a detailed [report](#) of the visit on his website, [Earth Notes](#).

### **Homeowners**

Members have helped homeowners with dealing with installations and commissioning new heat pumps. And our thermal-imaging camera has been in use spotting heat losses in the cold winter months.

*I am a founder member and convener of the Energy Group and my particular interest is in retrofitting homes, my own included, to reduce the associated greenhouse gas emissions. I am an engineer which I think gives me the skills and mindset to understand the science and achieve results in this field.*



## **Recycling Minds**

The Recycling Minds meetings have brought together local volunteer recyclers, businesses and the local council and councillors. Over the last year we had several meetings, sharing updates on various events and initiatives.

We are now focusing on visits to Recycling Centres. We have taken members of Surbiton Bowling Club to the Croydon Energy Recovery Facility, and just recently (21st April) members of TTK & Recycling Minds to the ERF.

Planned visit to Veolia's MRF Southwark booked for 5th May, with interest from various groups for future visits to both.

*Janine Martin has been passionate about limiting waste and finding a "better place" for it. She has lived in Tolworth since 2012 and has worked in Kingston since 2004. She now volunteers with SunrayRecycle CIC.*

*The Recycling Minds meetings brought together local volunteer recyclers, businesses and the local council and councillors. It felt right to bring this under the umbrella of TTK.*



## **Repair Café**

Repair Café Kingston (RCK) continues to be a roaring success, providing environmental, social and community benefit. We celebrated our third anniversary of running a session every first Saturday of the month. Visitors are overwhelmingly positive to find that volunteer repairers are so knowledgeable and determined to fix as much as they can. The funds raised through voluntary donations cover fixing 'staples' such as fuses and plugs, and contribute towards periodic drinks and nibbles for our volunteers. The range of items is diverse — with lamps, toasters, soft toys and vacuums a regular presence and the tiered Christmas 'cake' stand with functioning railway being perhaps the most exotic. Our number of fixes has risen quite significantly and our percentage repaired also gone up year on year.

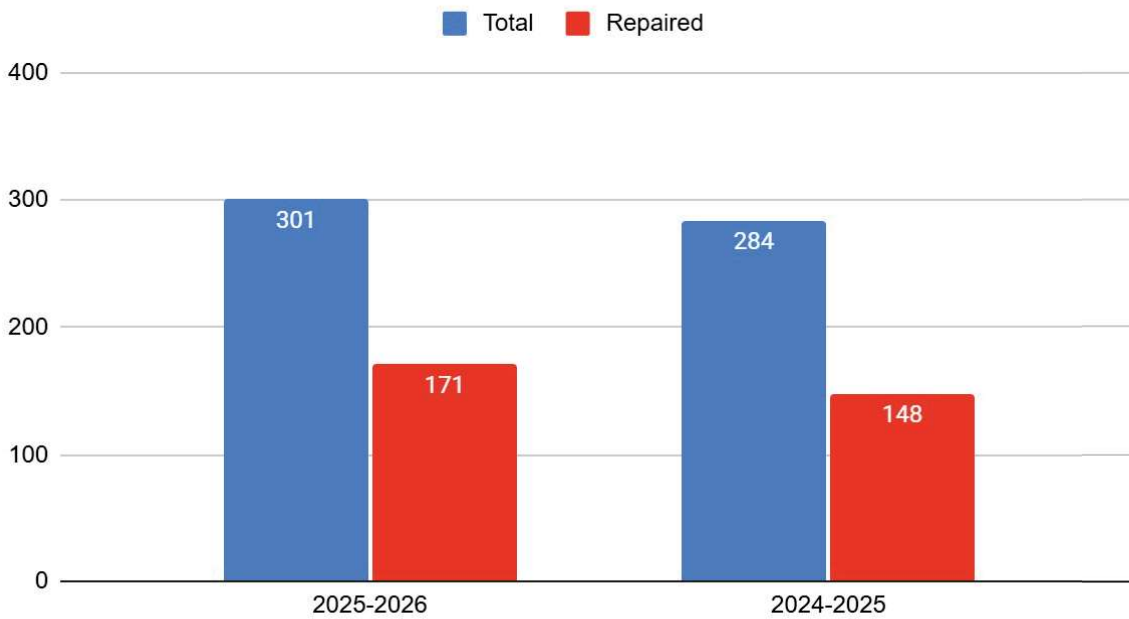
### **Our volunteer base**

We have around 30 fixers who regularly turn up for our monthly sessions and many manage to make most sessions. We welcomed Karim and Gillian to our organising team, and were sorry that the person largely responsible for RCK being born, Marilyn, stepped down. We are grateful to all our volunteers for all their hard work.

Volunteers work mainly in pairs, and take the opportunity to ask the wider group where there may be specialist knowledge. There is a constant chat which is both 'professional' and social and there's always a 'buzz'.

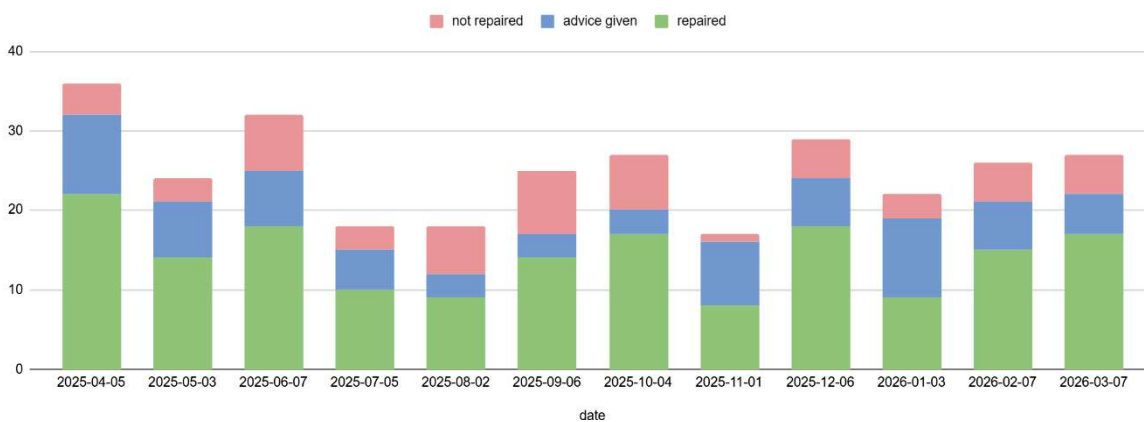
**Our fixes**

2024-5 and 2025-6 compared - Number items and Repaired



The total number of items seen in 2025-2026 (301) and fixed (171) were our highest per annum so far by some margin. 2024-2025 total and fixed numbers were 284 and 148, respectively.

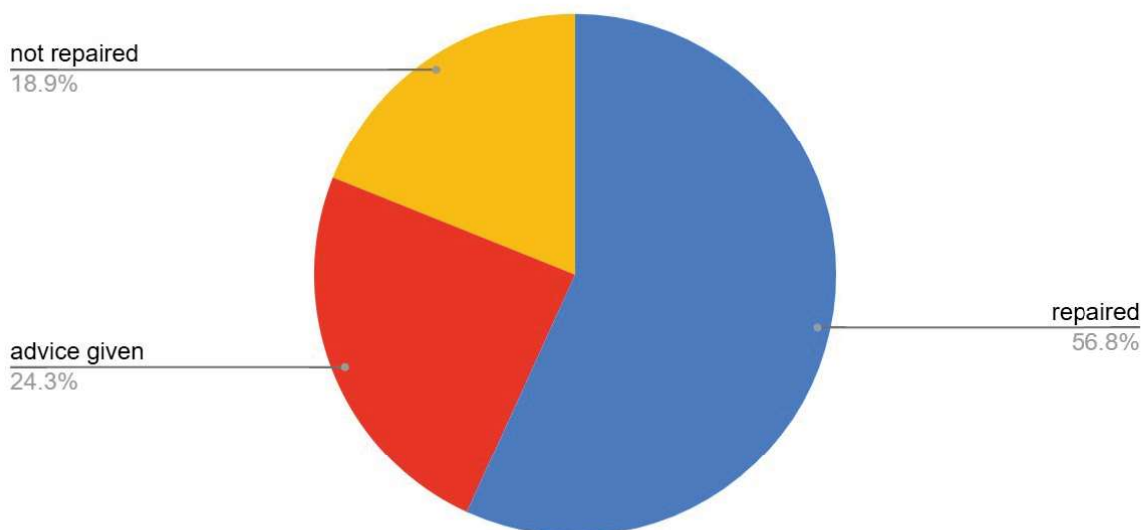
RCK repairs 2025 - 2026: distribution over the year



This year saw total number of items seen in a single session twice go over 30 for the first time: 36 in April and 32 in June 2025. There continues to be no particular trend for busiest month.

## RCK April 2025-March 2026 Percentage repaired, advice given and not repaired

301 items seen



*In 2025-2026 we managed to fix 56.8% of items presented, against 52.1% last year. This is in line with other repair cafés around the country.*

*Hilary has been a climate campaigner for 25 years and was one of the founder members of TTK in 2008. As Kingston Council's portfolio holder for Environment and Sustainable Transport (2018-2021) she ensured the council declared a climate emergency, started building a climate action plan, recruited a biodiversity officer and stayed the course on construction of a network of cycle lanes. On behalf of TTK, and with others in the team, she continues to liaise with officers and councillors. She is currently TTK's secretary.*



## WildWays



In July 2025 we launched this project, working title “Kingston Green Chains”, aimed at improving the connectivity of Kingston’s green spaces for wildlife and for people, in an open letter sent to Kingston councillors and other stakeholders, then saved on [our website](#) as a start and an incentive to build up and reorganise the sections of our website already dedicated to nature and gardening for wildlife. Our main task since then has been exploring the landscape, finding out what already exists here and elsewhere (much more than we anticipated!) and what’s feasible and acceptable in Kingston, spreading the word, and reaching out to potential supporters. TTK was fortunate during this time to receive a very generous donation from Tiffin School, £1000 of which we allocated to Kingston WildWays, and for which we are very grateful.

Alongside all this we were trying to find a name for the project that was both catchy and self-explanatory: brainstorming with KBN, the Stanley Picker community group, TTK meetings, and occasional more focused chats — thank you to everyone who contributed. Almost any name suggested had been used already somewhere, but adding Kingston makes it ours — and we have been assured that the Council would have no objection to us using Wild Ways, which they already use. An interesting aspect of our naming workshops was finding unexpected connotations, positive and negative, in many of the suggestions that came up — we hope and believe that the final choice, Kingston WildWays, has avoided the negative ones!

This exploration phase had been both overwhelming and heartening — our idea, which we thought so innovative, especially the inclusion of private gardens, turns out to be in line with the zeitgeist,

with loads of groups and similar initiatives, not just Plant Life's No Mow May working on similar ideas. One meeting or conversation has led to others and then to yet more others, and I've been encouraged by the plethora of biodiversity activities, information and ideas, and by the positive responses and helpfulness that our nascent project has met with.

For the record, Damon and/or I have met or attended meetings (IRL or on-line, individually or collectively, in some cases several times) with the following:

- Habitats & Heritage, and their Kingston Biodiversity Partnership meetings (I am now a member thanks to Elliot Newton, former RBK Biodiversity officer) and their working groups on hedgerows and badgers;
- Council officers responsible for trees, parks and green spaces, biodiversity and climate communications;
- Thames Landscape Strategy (much concerned with flooding);
- Kingston Environment Forum;
- The Stanley Picker Gallery community group;
- CPRE London front gardens campaign, which led to contacts with the Lend and Tend "Wilder Gardens — Give back to nature" project;
- Seething Wells Action Group AGM, in the hope that they might be useful allies;
- Mac Downes and Emma Humphries (RBK Events and Promotions Officer) about his exhibition at Tolworth Library in May-June, which promises to highlight Kingston WildWays;
- A 2-minute pitch at RBK's Circular Economy event last November...

**What is already happening around Kingston?** There is growing public awareness of potential climate risks such as overheated homes and flooding and the links between the climate and nature crises; and the Council's Climate Action Team and other departments are well aware of the value of nature-based solutions: one RBK project is installing rain gardens in flood risk areas; the Council has attracted funding for increasing the tree canopy around the borough; there has been some reduced mowing and wildflower planting around the borough and support for Tolworth Court Farm. (See [Kingston's biodiversity projects](#) and [Kingston's Biodiversity Action Plan](#).)

Because so much is happening already, we know and welcome that this has to be a collaborative project. For example, we hope that other groups will value having Kingston WildWays signage on their wilding projects (we have a few in mind already), and that highlighting wildlife connectivity where it already exists will encourage others to participate. We are also aware that not everyone likes trees, untidy long grass and "weeds" (aka wildflowers) or badgers digging up their gardens, or birds — so there will have to be a public educational/persuasive element in our project. David Attenborough's latest BBC series, Secret Garden, focusing on wildlife in our gardens, can only help!

**What next? Phase 2:** Phase 1 was mostly research and outreach — Phase 2 will need to turn all the lovely moral support we found into practical help and action, including working parties, funding applications, collaborations and invitations to participate, and making the existing nature sections on the TTK website more orderly and navigable...

One development in its infancy is setting up working groups to meet on-line to make decisions and practical progress, share information, draft an updated Open Letter including to new councillors after local elections, decide design issues, and publicise models of good practice such as Tolworth Court Farm, the Hogsmill path, Queen's Promenade and the Thames path, and local community gardens... Opportunities for launching and/or publicising Phase 2 include The Climate Coalition's Big Green Week in June and RBK's Sustainable September, if it happens.

**There is much still to decide:**

- Should we just support the things that are going on anyway in Kingston and let biodiversity corridors develop as and when without much intervention from TTK?
- How does a small community group ensure longevity, manage a project that could and should go on for ever? Will we be able to hand it on?
- What is feasible for TTK? Can we provide an umbrella or "branding" to link and increase the visibility of all this public activity + wilder private gardens? And how (signage, info boards, competitions and prizes...)?

- How do we collaborate with, fit in with, what already exists? If we couldn't collaborate with initiatives in public spaces, we'd have to restrict our project to private gardens, and that so far largely untapped wildlife resource remains a possibility that could complement what happens in public parks and green spaces.
- What do we need funding for (printing a series of posters for community notice boards, signage, info-boards, window stickers, creating an interactive green map?) and how much? Colourful lectern style info-boards cost around £1000 each + installation, so even just one per ward would cost £20,000+ — probably beyond our means or capacity to deal with — but they could just about be worth considering if we could come up with some timeless text and illustrations. There are funding pots that a community group like ours could access and bring to the project, and we have had offers of help with finding them and applying.
- If we did get funding for signage or info-boards, how would we distribute and install them?
- A design for a logo, colour, heading... — that would work across a range of contexts: window stickers, signage in different shapes and sizes, documents, websites...

**So there remains much to decide and do over the next few years – and we hope that lots of people will join in and help!**

*Marilyn — TTK comms, Kingston Environment News editor, co-founder of Repair Café Kingston and “Green Chains” projects.*

*“From childhood I’ve loved nature and as an adult I was alerted to the unsustainable way we live by The Ecologist’s 1972 Blueprint for Survival. But local activism started much later when I retired and joined a local anti-plastic-bag campaign, which led to a bag-making workshop at the Environment Centre and then to Stitch in Time, the first TTK repair project. I also started Canbury Community Garden and brought it to TTK, and I have acted as TTK chair and secretary, and as KEF chair.”*



**AOB**

**Networking, Food and Drink...**