

New Thinking on Clean Growth: Transforming Sidmouth  
Talk by Prof Evan Parker at the Café Scientifique on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

[Opening comment: the VGS have been incredibly active...]

This talk follows on from Prof Brian Golding's consideration of what individuals can do – in considering what Sidmouth can do collectively.

The problem being that people don't engage: eg Transition Town Totnes.

A way forward might be to offer people 'early rewards', by enhancing the quality of life now and not in ten years' time.

A focus on transport and food (which make up 50% of CO2 emissions) and quality of life represented in the high street.

**TRANSPORT:**

The answers are not Elon Musk (embedded carbon in new electric cars) or diesel (nano-particles which bring on heart attacks); by a hybrid if you must and drive intelligently. Congestion (pollution) and speed (noise and anxiety) in Sidmouth needs to be reduced – but needs the County Council; pedestrianisation of much of the town centre would work with changes in retail.

Sidmouth families will still need to get to the town centre, free of traffic.

The solution: a fleet of 5-6 minibuses running to a schedule, available via a phone app.

**FARMING:**

Some facts: most food is not 'fresh', is contaminated with pesticides and costs food miles; the UK is the leading nation eating processed food; red meat is a very inefficient way to use land; the agro-chemical industry has lost touch with the soil, increasing flooding and reducing biodiversity.

The challenge is to get people to give a damn about skylarks, through the offer of local/seasonal/organic/fresh food – eg, Totnes' local brewery.

The solution: 80% of our food (veg, drink, bread) produced sustainably on small farms and delivered via hubs in town.

**HIGH STREETS:**

Additional facilities for the town centre to keep it vibrant.

**INVITE BIDS:**

For a clean transport infrastructure, free at point of use (Luxembourg's free public transport; Shenzhen's fully electric bus fleet)

For a local food production and supply system.

For town centre enhancement (fishing, shops, restos, support for children)

**CAPITAL INVESTMENT:**

£2.5m to buy buses and software interface; £2.5m to buy land and create infrastructure;

£2.5m to enhance the town centre: total min = £7.5m

Plus £1m p/a recurrent investment for a CEO to monitor bids/grants/insurance

**FINANCING:**

Town Council: 3% on Council Tax; extra from Precept

Plus: crowd funding; legacies; levy on house purchases (Land Value Tax); residents

Central government grants

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Citizens' assemblies; the promise of rewards now (free transport, a clean and safe town, an improved local economy, food delivery, local employment).

Notes by Jeremy Woodward