



# WRITING THE NEXT CHAPTER!

What does a resilient and sustainable future for the Mearns look like?

**The Crown (Function Room), High Street  
Laurencekirk  
6-9pm Tues 6<sup>th</sup> June**



GLOBAL  
ECOVILLAGE  
NETWORK

*Facilitating  
Collaboration for a  
Just Transition*



A Community focussed live facilitated session

All welcome!

Part of our Climate Café series. Free soft drink & snack from the bar for all participants

# The Ecovillage Design Cards & The Map of Regeneration

The tool was developed by The Global Ecovillage Network in collaboration with sustainable settlements and communities of all shapes and sizes to spark conversation and guide strategy through identifying “leverage points”.

The cards are divided into five areas - the regeneration quadrants (Culture, Economy, Ecology, and Social) arranged around a core of Integral Design.

The four quadrants of Regeneration have six cards, each one representing a single Ecovillage Principle. The Integral Design section has eight.

The main part of the session involved participants placing a total of three Stones (Strengths) and three Pinecones (Development Areas) each onto cards of their choosing; followed a facilitated discussion in groups.





# Basic Info

**The Question Asked:** “What does a resilient and a sustainable future for the Mearns look like?”

- Attendance:
  - 11 participants
- The group covered a wide geographical area with a number of settlements and rural communities
- The session was facilitated by Jake Jay-Lewin and Carolin Waldmann from GEN (Global Ecovillage Network) International
- The session was organized and supported by Ann Davidson and David McCubbin for tsiMORAY on behalf of the “Just Transition Fund” and Danielle Lisa Dale on from Sustainable Mearns
- The session was part of the “Facilitating Collaboration for a Just Transition” project, funded by the Scottish Government



<b>ECOLOGY</b>	<b>Dev. Area</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Total</b>
Clean and replenish sources and cycles of water	0	4	4
Move towards 100% renewable energies	1	3	4
Grow food and soils through organic agriculture	3	0	3
Innovate and spread green building technologies	3	0	3
Work with waste as a valuable resource	1	0	1
Increase biodiversity and regenerate ecosystems	2	0	2

<b>Development Areas:</b>	Renewable energy infrastructures, community engagement and education, electric car research, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) affordability and accessibility, engaging more farmers in CSA's
<b>Strengths</b>	Quality of water processing (Council owned), CSA schemes, Part of Scotland
<b>Leverage Points:</b>	Council's track record of environmental care, existing CSA's



# Ecology: Notes

- Water card – water companies now being taken over by councils, as the profit motive was causing pollution and lack of investment in the system. The council make water quality an absolute priority. A participant who works in construction sees good practice at his work – processing and safe waste disposal, robust monitoring – a strength now
- Energy infrastructure upgrade in the area – works need to ask the local community here for help to make acceptable to everyone – coming up with better solutions can be a constructive way forward. We need the offshore wind energy and need to find acceptable ways to bring it onshore and use. Role for education to raise awareness of issues. Electric cars roll out needs to be looked at with other solutions to avoid injustice for minerals workers and depletion of natural resources.
- Community growing schemes (CSA – community supported agriculture) strong in this area. Good, but not cheap! Need to look at a model to make it more accessible for eg. families on a low income. There is a willingness from Farmers but many barriers for them – eg contracts for sales of produce and animals.
- Listen to the feedback of the world card – At COP26 Scotland has shown what it can do and how it can lead the way.



<b>ECONOMY</b>	<b>Dev. Area</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Total</b>
Reconstruct the concepts of wealth, work and progress	0	1	1
Ensure equitable access to land and resources	2	0	2
Cultivate social entrepreneurship for local regeneration	0	1	1
Commit to responsible production, consumption, and trade	1	0	1
Use banks and currencies that strengthen communities	0	0	0
Increase economic justice through sharing and collaboration	1	0	1

<b>Development Areas:</b>	Education and application of financial systems, alternative monetary systems, and localised food production & distribution,
<b>Strengths:</b>	Local social enterprises, Knowledge about food growing, desire to use local businesses
<b>Leverage Points:</b>	Local food production and distribution,



# Economy: Notes

- Equitable land use card – community gardens are great – but bad that people in our society need free food. We should all have access to community gardens and growing space. The knowledge about growing/ sharing is out there, just need to put it into practice, rediscover local growing knowledge.
- Expansion of LETS scheme around here – bartering groups have been tried but not lasted long
- Social enterprise – strengths – lots of new initiatives starting up, keeping it small and local to divert spend from large companies based elsewhere. People do want to buy from local businesses, but are often drawn into the narrative of ‘bargains,’ pricing, not noticing associated costs of driving to Aberdeen to save 50p on an item while ignoring the cost of travel and value of their own time. The seduction of online buying ignores multi-benefits to local community effort, links and spend for the local area. A local hardware shop recently closed – not quite able to make it work. Also older people do DIY and not so many younger people.....



<b>CULTURE</b>	<b>Dev. Areas</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Total</b>
Clarify vision and higher purpose	1	1	2
Nurture mindfulness and self-reflection	1	1	2
Honour indigenous wisdom and welcome positive innovation	2	0	2
Engage actively to protect communities and nature	1	1	2
Enrich life with art and celebration	2	2	4
Reconnect to nature and embrace low-impact lifestyles	4	2	6

<b>Development Areas:</b>	Community building through creative projects/shared experiences (Community Glue)
<b>Strengths:</b>	Growing respect for nature, nature itself, willingness to adapt and open-mindedness, local craft shops
<b>Leverage Points:</b>	Potential for collective/community arts projects





# Culture: Notes

- Some stones – there have been great changes in attitudes – the growth in Forest Schools for example. Cutting of the verges has stopped – noticed insects on the windscreen again! In this area, farmers’ set aside areas now joining up with the uncut verges and creating better habitat = more insects & wildlife. Aberdeenshire council still spraying street areas – in Holland town weeds removed with flamethrowers – could be a fun job alternative here!
- Reconnect with nature card – lots of advances in education – forest bathing, sea bathing/ wild swimming. Covid made us get out and value our local green spaces much more highly – ‘oh, look! Where we live is beautiful!’ However – foreign holidays are back for many people....
- In Mearns, how can we stop going back to business as usual? Some answers in the map here tonight – working from home, walking outside 1 hour per day..
- Enriching life with art – even split cones and stones. Lots of crafts and a local shop has opened up - covid gave her client base a boost that has remained. Art is a part of us all as humans and we need to allocate time to this aspect of ourselves – loved that during covid and beyond. Friends started knitting, crafting etc. Creative Carbon Scotland a great link – creative people, projects and activities might help people get involved in climate activity – good way of communication. Art is a powerful tool – Jake mentioned community ‘glue’ ([interesting link](#)).
- Community activity, art, action, growing, food – all make connection more meaningful and fun. Often climate change messages aren’t fun but scary – we need to remember to keep a balance to support each other. Getting together – congregating – is missing since covid (and before). Let’s do more of that.



<b>SOCIAL</b>	<b>Dev. Areas</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Total</b>
Nurture diversity and cohesion for thriving communities	1	0	1
Promote health healing and wellbeing for all	1	1	2
Empower collaborative leadership and participatory decision-making	1	0	1
Ensure equal and lifelong access to education for sustainability	1	2	3
Practice conflict facilitation, communication and peacebuilding skills	2	0	2
Develop fair, effective and accountable institutions	0	1	1

<b>Development Areas:</b>	<b>Practical climate emergency education, empowerment and support for young people, mitigating impacts of social media use, transitioning out of COVID, division in young people</b>
<b>Strengths:</b>	<b>Youth interest and care for climate emergency and its impact</b>
<b>Leverage Points</b>	<b>Youth seeking further engagement and education</b>



# Social: Notes

- Education card – One person wondered why there was a stone there, as her child recently said they'd gone through the whole education system without a mention of climate change/ climate crisis! Young people can be great but are often put down a lot. This is so unfair as they've been left with older people's 'mess'. A broad brush statement about young people (or other groups) isn't fair – loads of talent, innovation, actions. In schools there is unfortunately some bullying and meanness against those showing an interest in climate action and engaged young people.
- Misuse of social media and too much screen time...we need to get young people outside to that reconnection with nature we all need. Isolation and increase in anti-social behaviour a recognized effect of covid – negative press reports blow up the negative side. Communication around climate change needs to involve practical things – not – 'let's sit down and talk about this' but 'would you like to learn to build a wind turbine/ garden/ walk outside etc'. Also tackles isolation. Linking up to the 'reconnect with nature' card and 'peacebuilding' card for some solutions and re-channelling energy around conflict.
- There is a possible connection between anti social behaviour and disconnection from community being observed post covid



# INTEGRAL DESIGN

	Dev. Area	Strength	Total
Engage all stakeholders in designs for the future	2	0	2
Be aware of privilege and use it for the benefit of all	1	0	1
Spread core patterns of regeneration	0	1	1
Find assets, needs and leverage points	1	0	1
Learn from nature and practise whole systems thinking	2	0	2
Build alliances across all divides	2	0	2
Adapt solutions to scale and context	1	0	1
Listen to the feedback of the world	1	3	4

<b>Development Areas:</b>	Integrating newcomers into the community, faith in smaller actions and their ripple effects, perseverance with and deepening of existing actions
<b>Strengths:</b>	Active and engaged community members, 'stuff' is happening, wide range of community initiatives and projects
<b>Leverage Points:</b>	Sharing stories of impact of communities actions



# Integral Design: Notes Page 1

- Generally people found the stones much harder to place than the cones. There were 9 stones put in the center of the map (not on any cards). Some builders of this 'cairn' said – 'I wasn't sure enough of the community here – I didn't feel confident enough of strengths to put stones down'. One person said she'd started that because although she can see good things happening, they are all small scale and we need such a huge seismic shift to make a difference. 'I don't want to depress young people and I live in hope, but around here – it's a farming and oil/gas economy – I just don't know how you change it to a sustainable future'
- Another person said they'd put stone in the middle as a symbol of community strength. Another felt there was no 'solidity' in the community for sustainable change – they see good stuff happening which could develop, so the cones went down, but felt unable to say – this is a strength. Another felt that the stones seemed like – 'job done, problem solved' – and there isn't anything finished – it's all in progress or needing more action. Another felt they just couldn't put the stones down – trying not to be negative, but nothing feels strong enough to lead to a sustainable future.
- Another person did put all the stones down as they'd felt there was some real change going on and wanted to recognize that.



# SUMMARY OF RESULTS

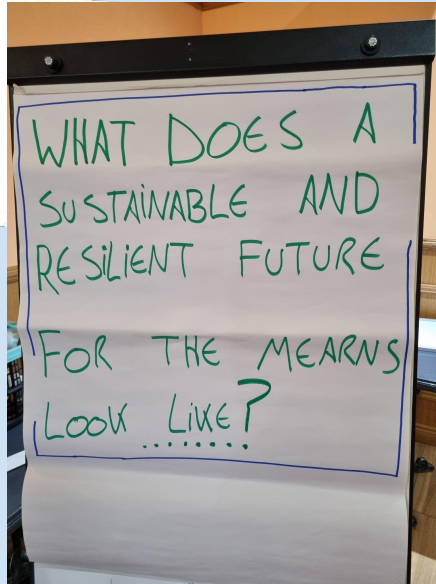
	Development Areas (Cones)	Strengths (Stones)	Total
Ecology	10	7	17
Social	5	5	10
Culture	11	7	18
Economy	4	2	6
Whole System	10	4	14
Totals	40	25	65

<b>Development Areas:</b>	Education and engagement of whole community on practical and realistic ways to build resilience.
<b>Strengths:</b>	Existing active community members, national and regional funding, and historical/existing culture of “think and buy local”
<b>Leverage Points:</b>	Community projects and initiatives focussing on food and art with an emphasis on integrating newcomers and youth.



# Extra notes

**The Question:** “What does a resilient and a sustainable future for the Mearns look like?”



- They liked the cards, the pictures and the breadth of topics
- Jake and Carolin reflected that with this highly engaged group of activists, with everyone involved and doing climate actions in the community already you'd all gone deeply into the topics, were very aware of the complexity of the issues and therefore finding it difficult to make choices. J&C seeing that as a strength that there is such an active and engaged group here – you are the strengths!
- People were offered the chance to put stones down as the discussion developed (no-one did)
- No-one kept any cones back – they were all placed on the cards



To everyone who was involved in preparing, attending or now following up on any outcomes from the session!

For any questions, please contact Ann Davidson at [ann@tsimoray.org.uk](mailto:ann@tsimoray.org.uk)

*Please find below a folder with the pictures from the session:  
<https://tinyurl.com/5n7d735z>*