

Transition Streets Three Rivers: Dove Park Group Case Study



Who Are They?

Nestled in the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, just 20 miles from central London, lies the village of Chorleywood - a place once voted the happiest in the country¹, and still brimming with community spirit. It is here that the Dove Park Transition Streets group emerged; eight neighbours (six households), who were united not only by their address but by a shared interest in living more sustainably.

When they came together for their first session in October 2024, the group were already sustainability-minded but were eager to deepen community connections and pool their knowledge, ideas, and resources.

Since then, the Dove Park group has been energised by the possibilities of neighbourhood action. The group plan to host home tours showcasing energy-efficient retrofits aiming to inspire others on the street to take similar steps. One member has stepped up as a volunteer for local environmental group [Sustainable Three Rivers](#), while others are exploring ideas like a community repair café, litter picks, a clothes swap, a bat listening walk, and even planting edible trees and shrubs on shared green spaces.

Together, they're proving that sustainability isn't just about shrinking carbon footprints, it's about building stronger, more connected and resilient communities.

¹ [Herts town happiest in England | UK news | The Guardian](#)

What Did They Achieve?

Energy:

- ✓ The group received free thermal imaging camera surveys to help discern the areas of highest heat loss in their homes.
- ✓ Monitored and reduced energy use, installed room thermostats and radiator foil, and reduced central heating.
- ✓ One participant installed highly efficient infrared heating panels to their home office and noted positive results and energy bill savings. They also switched energy provider to one that guarantees renewable energy sources.
- ✓ Another participant deeply retrofitted their home, installing room thermostats, draughtproofing windows and doors, switching from a gas boiler to low-carbon heating with an air-source heat pump, insulating their walls and loft, and installing solar panels and a battery. These interventions will have reduced the household's carbon footprint by approximately 5 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year², and will likely have improved the property's Energy Performance Certificate rating from an EPC E to at least an EPC C.
- ✓ Three out of six of the group members also confirmed that they planned to implement further energy efficiency measures such as installing cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, LED light bulbs, draught-proofing doors, and lagging hot water tanks.



Water:

- ✓ Two group members installed cistern displacement devices to save approximately 1 litre of water with every toilet flush, and another three members said they planned to install these devices in the future.
- ✓ One group member installed two new water butts to collect rainwater and reduce mains water usage, and another participant said they planned to install a water butt.



Food:

- ✓ The Dove Park group already shared produce with neighbours before starting Transition Streets, but decided to try collectively buying a 4kg box of sustainably grown avocados from Spain through the Crowd Farming initiative to make buying organic food more affordable, reduce their food miles, and shorten the supply chain by purchasing direct from the farmer.
- ✓ Three out of six group members planned to buy more locally produced food or grow some of their own food.
- ✓ One member said they would be reducing their meat consumption.



² <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>

Picture credit to Chorleywood Magazine.

Resource Use:

- ✓ Two households started to borrow rather than buy new and another began recycling plastic bags.
- ✓ One participant started to buy packaging-free products, and another participant said they planned to do this in the future.
- ✓ Most of the participants already composted organic waste prior to Transition Streets, but as a result of the programme, the group also started collecting vegetable scraps to feed to their neighbour's chickens.
- ✓ Hosted a meetup after the Transition Streets programme ended for a session on sustainable finance with a neighbourhood expert sharing tips and insights on this topic.



Travel:

- ✓ Four out of six members said they had started walking and taking public transport more often instead of driving.
- ✓ One group member had purchased an electric vehicle since starting the programme.
- ✓ One participant travelled to Spain by train instead of aeroplane which can save up to 151 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre of avoided air travel³, or over 300 kilograms of CO₂ per return journey from London to Spain⁴. Another participant said they planned to reduce the number of flights they take by holidaying in the UK more.
- ✓ One household tried fuel efficient driving, and another household said they would be trying this going forward.



Biodiversity:

- ✓ Encouraged another neighbour to showcase their wildflower garden to inspire others in the street to enhance their gardens for nature.
- ✓ Toured a group member's garden discussing all the ways they encourage wildlife and showcased their bat detection device.



How Did They Feel About Transition Streets?

The Dove Park group completed a detailed survey before their first session and then at the final session to help evaluate the impact of the programme.

- At their final session, **all** participants **strongly agreed** with the statement *"I know what practical, effective actions I can take to reduce the potential impacts of climate change on me and others."*
- Having completed the Transition Streets programme, **100%** of participants somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement *"I believe I can make a positive change to my local environment."*, compared to 40% of participants before they started Transition Streets.
- **5 out of 6 households** reported taking actions that had reduced their household bills by up to £300 per year, as a result of their engagement with Transition Streets.

³ <https://ourworldindata.org/travel-carbon-footprint>

⁴ <https://www.easemytrip.com/flights/distance-barcelona-bcn-to-london-lon/>

- **100%** of participants agreed with the statement “*I feel connected to my local community.*” upon completion of Transition Streets. One group member had somewhat disagreed with this statement before starting the programme, but strongly agreed with the statement by the end of the programme.



What Did They Say About Transition Streets?

Talented Chorleywood resident, Sue, wrote inspiring articles on her blog [Sue Q's World](https://www.sueqworld.com) recounting her journey through the Transition Streets programme - excerpts of which have been copied with permission below:

“We delved into practical solutions for reducing energy consumption and transitioning to sustainable sources. And, honestly, I learned so much! Simple things! Little tweaks we can all make that will actually add up. And the best part was, it was just... practical.”

“Thermal images of your house can be a game-changer... You’d be amazed how much heat you’re losing through sneaky gaps and poorly insulated spots. It’s not just about being cosy, either. Think about the pennies you’ll save on heating bills and reduction in your carbon footprint if you can rectify these easy to fix issues.”⁵

“The Resource Use module has been incredibly inspiring, and we’re excited to put our new knowledge into action. We’re committed to continuing to reduce, reuse, and recycle, and to supporting each other in our efforts. We’re learning to value experiences over things, to

⁵ <https://www.sueqworld.com/2025/02/28/powering-change-how-transitions-streets-energy-module-makes-a-difference/>

appreciate the skills and resources we already have, and to build a more sustainable future together.”⁶

“After tackling just two topics – Energy and Resources – I’m impressed by the impact. What’s so impressive? The power of shared ideas. Each meeting starts with everyone sharing their experiences since the last session: what tips they’ve tried, what they’ve learned, and the results they’ve seen. It’s amazing how this diverse group, spanning ages and backgrounds, brings such a wealth of knowledge and practical advice to the table.”⁷

“Despite the overwhelming feeling that climate change isn’t being tackled effectively, our discussion revealed a multitude of people and organisations genuinely concerned and taking concrete steps towards a more sustainable future... It was a really uplifting discussion...

We came away with a shared commitment to making more conscious choices about how we travel. I believe it’s these conversations and collective efforts, however small, that build a stronger, more sustainable community.”⁸

“One of the most compelling aspects of the Transition Streets program has been the unveiling of eye-opening facts and figures that have genuinely shifted my perspective...

It’s clear that when we come together as a street, share our concerns and our ideas, we can create real, positive change. Our Transition Street Food module left us feeling empowered and motivated to take those small, but significant, steps towards a more sustainable and still delicious future.”⁹

“Ultimately, the Transition Streets Water module wasn’t just about turning off the tap. It was about understanding the far-reaching impact of our daily choices and recognising that every decision, from what we buy to how we wash, plays a role in protecting this irreplaceable resource.”¹⁰

About Transition Streets Three Rivers

Inspired by the success of Transition Streets Totnes, Three Rivers District Council, together with Grand Union Community Energy (GUCE), decided to pilot Transition Streets in the Three Rivers district, using Fast Followers funding from Innovate UK, to explore the effectiveness of a community-led approach to street-level sustainable behavioural change.

For more information, please visit: <https://guce.org.uk/get-involved/>



⁶ <https://www.sueqsworld.com/2025/03/21/resourceful-living-on-our-street/>

⁷ <https://www.sueqsworld.com/2025/02/10/small-changes-big-impact-how-transition-streets-can-help-you-live-more-sustainably/>

⁸ <https://www.sueqsworld.com/2025/04/14/finding-our-sustainable-footprints-from-local-lanes-to-distant-shores/>

⁹ <https://www.sueqsworld.com/2025/05/12/love-food-reduce-footprint-diving-into-the-transition-streets-food-module/>

¹⁰ <https://www.sueqsworld.com/2025/05/29/beyond-the-tap-your-hidden-water-footprint/>