

Transition Streets Three Rivers: Townfield Group Case Study



Who Are They?

Meet the trailblazers of Transition Streets in Three Rivers! This dynamic, multi-generational group of seven amazing women, aged 30 to 65, are all neighbours from an urban cul-de-sac, located in Townfield, Rickmansworth. They come from a range of backgrounds—lecturers, teachers, and corporate professionals—but they share one common goal: making their street a greener, more caring place to live.

Townfield hosts a variety of homes, from terraced to detached, most of which have uninsulated roofs and walls, and could benefit from an energy efficiency boost.

Kicking off their journey in December 2023 and completing by June 2024, these neighbours gathered monthly, rotating between their homes, to learn about, discuss, and take practical action on key issues like energy, resource use, travel, food, water, and biodiversity with the help of the Transition Streets Three Rivers Handbook and a friendly facilitator.

Every single participant made impactful changes to their homes, gardens, and daily habits as a result of participating in Transition Streets, showing us all how to make a real difference, one street at a time!

The Townfield group are planning to keep the momentum going by meeting regularly and dreaming big about starting a community garden or orchard on their street. They've also organised a follow-up visit from GUCE's facilitator in January 2025 to check out their progress and catch up on all the inspiring changes they've made.

What Did They Achieve?

Energy:

- ✓ Homes received free thermal imaging camera surveys to discern areas of heat loss.
- ✓ Six members had a free home retrofit assessment survey completed which provided reports identifying the ways each property could be made as energy efficient as possible, with estimated installation costs, energy bill savings, and carbon savings.
- ✓ Installed smart thermostats, LED lighting, loft insulation, draught-proofing for windows and doors, radiator foils, and insulating window films.
- ✓ Two out of five members installed cavity wall insulation, and another two members plan to install cavity wall insulation which could save each household over £140 annually on their energy bills and reduce each property's CO₂ emissions by over 385kg per year on average¹.
- ✓ One group member installed solar panels and a battery, saving approximately 1 tonne of CO₂ per year² and intend to insulate their extension while another group member replaced a plastic uninsulated skylight with a triple-insulated Velux window, fully insulated their flat roof and soffits, with plans to install energy efficient windows in the future.



Water:

- ✓ Decided to share the rainwater collected by the houses that could accommodate water butts, with neighbours whose homes do not have downpipes for water butts.
- ✓ Started taking shorter showers or taking showers instead of baths, minimising water use by using bowls in the kitchen sink and fully loading the dishwasher, re-using water from a dehumidifier to water plants, and cutting down on hose use.



Food:

- ✓ Committed to sharing excess food with one another and the wider community (via the Olio food-sharing app) to avoid food waste.
- ✓ Four out of five group members said they had made changes to the food products they buy to reduce food packaging.



Resource Use:

- ✓ To collectively reduce their resource use, the Townfield neighbours decided to create a list of household items that they can borrow from one another, particularly for items that are expensive to buy or only used occasionally such as tile-cutters and party plates.



Biodiversity:

- ✓ Half the group started feeding birds, reducing light pollution from their homes, and creating habitats for wildlife in their gardens following completion of Transition Streets. Communal bird feeding stations have also been installed in shared areas of the street to support wildlife.



¹ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/cavity-wall-insulation/>

² [Solar panels: costs, savings and benefits explained - Energy Saving Trust](#)

- ✓ Three of the neighbours plan to create a pond in their garden to enhance local biodiversity.

Travel:

- ✓ Three out of five neighbours said they would reduce their car use by choosing active travel modes, such as walking and cycling, or public transport options, where possible.



How Did They Feel About Transition Streets?

The Townfield 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, **100%** of 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.”*, compared to just 20% before the group had started Transition Streets.
- Having completed the Transition Streets programme, **80%** of participants strongly agreed with the statement *“I feel confident that I can and will make long-lasting changes to my lifestyle which will reduce my environmental impact.”*, compared to 20% of participants at the start of the programme.
- None of the participants strongly agreed with the statement *“I feel connected to my local community.”* before they had started Transition Streets, yet by their final session, **80%** of participants strongly agreed with the statement, and 100% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed.
- **All** group members reported an increase in the number of neighbours they felt they knew following participation in the Transition Streets programme.



What Did They Say About Transition Streets?

“Really informative and enables you to take positive action and save money and resources.” – **Townfield Resident 1**

“Such a good way to connect and build a sense of community whilst thinking about our impact on the world and place.” – **Townfield Resident 2**

“A lot of the group has experienced insulation problems because of our roofs, so pooling together our experiences and sharing tips has been really useful...”

There’s no pressure to do anything you don’t want to, but it’s much more motivating to make those small changes when you’re making connections with people around you who also want to do their bit...If every road had a programme like this, it would really add up. It’s also just been really nice to get to know my neighbours.” – **Townfield Resident 3**

“Back in December, we didn’t really know any of our neighbours. We were new on the street. Transition Streets really gave us an opportunity to meet our neighbours and our broader neighbourhood and also share ideas and our experiences of our houses, and that’s been really valuable.” – **Townfield Resident 4**

“I’ve definitely made some friends through doing this group. It’s just an incredibly helpful group... and we can do all sorts of exciting things together in the future.” – **Townfield Resident 5**

Watch a video of the Townfield group’s experience here:

https://youtu.be/YJfhfDW_QZY?feature=shared

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/>

