



Green Books

# Author Information

## ROB HOPKINS

### The Transition Handbook



Rob Hopkins has spent many years teaching and experimenting with practical responses to the environmental crisis, through teaching permaculture and through trying to apply its principles to a range of settings. In 1996, having completed a degree in Environmental Quality and Resource Management, he moved with his young family to Ireland, where he began the work that led to Ireland's first eco-village development to be granted planning permission, and to the creation of the world's first two year full-time permaculture course at Kinsale Further Education College.

In 2004, the concept of peak oil landed in his life with a bang, forcing a rethink of many previously cherished assumptions. He realized that permaculture in particular and green ideas in general needed to hugely increase their reach and effectiveness, given the scale of response peak oil necessitates, likened by some to a 'wartime mobilisation'. The work he set his second year permaculture students, to apply permaculture principles to the town of Kinsale's preparation for life beyond cheap oil, produced the

'Kinsale Energy Descent Action Plan', which spread virally around the world. When, the following year, Rob returned to the UK, he set out to explore the concept in more depth in the town of Totnes in England.

The result was Transition Town Totnes, the first UK 'Transition Town'. The process that has subsequently been developed has spread virally around the UK, and there are now nearly 200 communities around the country starting to engage in this process. Rob's fundamental premise is that reducing our carbon emissions to the degree required to avoid runaway climate change, and to the degree necessitated by the impending peaking in world oil production need not necessarily spell disaster, indeed it could lead to the most extraordinary renaissance. It is essential, he argues, that we look at these two challenges together, and that solutions that fail to do this will be inadequate.

Central to *The Transition Handbook* is the concept of 'resilience', that is, the ability of a community to withstand shocks. Rob argues that just cutting carbon emissions is insufficient: we need to rebuild the ability of our settlements and communities to provide for their core needs, and doing so will create huge possibilities for local economic regeneration. The Transition Handbook is about hope and optimism, and their untapped potential as tools for engaging people in repairing their communities, their settlements, and ultimately, their planet.

Rob lives in Devon with his wife and four children. He has particular passions for cob building and walnut trees, and is staggered by the rate at which the Transition concept has spread. He publishes [www.transitionculture.org](http://www.transitionculture.org), a popular website which promotes the Transition concept which was recently voted 12th Best Green Blog. Some of his previous jobs include illustrating, cartooning, gardening and strawbale building. He lectures, teaches and writes widely on permaculture and the Transition concept. For more information see [www.transitionculture.org](http://www.transitionculture.org) and [www.transitiontowns.org/Totnes](http://www.transitiontowns.org/Totnes)

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