

# Chichester currency uses people's time



While many towns and cities have the pound, a Chichester group is minting a different currency entirely utilising the most valuable commodity of all - people's time.

Known as the TChi, the currency has been launched by environmental awareness group Transition Chichester, which is aiming to tap into the rich vein of community spirit and encourage people to do more for each other. The beautifully designed voucher can be used to offer or 'buy' from each other an hour's service, for example helping someone with their gardening. The Tchi (pronounced chai) was launched at Transition Chichester's annual meeting last week.

The ethos of the time backed currency is that everyone's time is equal, from a surgeon, to a school leaver. On its first print run 5,000 notes were produced. The currency has been devised after more than 18 months' hard work by Transition Chichester's economics group.

A secure website will offer a directory of services available, and a paper copy will also be available. The note, which features the proverb 'everything that lives, lives not alone, nor for itself' includes a space on the back for each transaction to be noted, dated and initialled, which will also provide a fascinating social history.

Group member Simon Mouatt, who is senior lecturer in economics at Southampton Solent University, said the scheme was similar to a

babysitting circle but was an extension of activities and services beyond just babysitting. He said the scheme would make a big difference and that the response by people within the 150-strong Transition group had been extremely positive.

"Members are putting forward the sorts of things you would do for your friends and family such as help with gardening, walking the dog or doing some computer work," he said. "It is seen a social, communal thing. Because you are giving this a nominal value of an hour the idea is it is like you are levelling it off to enhance community activities and strengthen community ties and create resilience."

The TChi note has been designed by Transition member and artist and illustrator Keith Dodman.

The vouchers feature socialist, visionary and poet William Blake who has strong connections to this area, the Halnaker Windmill, the South Downs and the Cross. The vouchers cost £700 to produce and were funded by members themselves. A one-off membership fee of £10 per person will help fund the production costs. Each person who pledges the fee will receive seven Tchis. And, if more and more people sign up to the scheme through Transition Chichester, and a profit is made, it will be added to TC funds, for promotion of community projects. Further notes will be printed if needed.

## COMMUNITY CURRENCIES

The latest statistics show there are 110 active community currencies like the Tchi in the UK, with 99 more developing and around 11,500 people actively involved in time banking.

Chichester has had its own local currencies in the past. In the late 1700s and early 1800s there was an explosion of provincial token coin systems across Britain, and Chichester had a few different coins in operation. The Chester Half Penny, which can be seen at Chichester District Museum, was payable at Dally's of Chichester. Transition Chichester is one of hundreds of thriving environmental Transition Towns across the UK and worldwide, working towards a more resilient future in the face of climate change and peak oil.

Read more at:

<http://www.chichester.co.uk/news/chichester-currency-uses-people-s-time-1-1578188>