

# OCTOBER 2023

## **Cars and sustainability**

I recently tuned into a radio 4 debate on 'are we ready to ditch our cars?' Understandably, many people said 'no', but I found it interesting that the question was being asked and publicly debated. The issues of electric cars and the availability of charging points also came up, and the requirements of lithium and cobalt to sustain the batteries so, unfortunately, there will still be damaging mines being dug with dangers to local workers and pollution to the environment. Looking at the issue of 'sustainability', perhaps we need to look at what it is we are 'sustaining'. Can we really expect to maintain the same kind of consumer life-styles in the face of environmental damage and the global weather disturbances that we've seen occurring?

Here in the UK we live in a relatively safe part of the world, (and long may it last), and I don't wish to launch into a doom-laden set of predictions, but even in Wellington, it's clear that weather patterns are changing and our environment and precious wildlife are suffering badly. This is the time when we have a chance to improve matters and begin to change a few of our habits to create a new perspective of future living. It's something to consider when speaking to and voting for candidates in the coming election. Sometimes it just takes a few 'nudges' to get us into better habits.

With car use, thinking twice about whether we could use public transport, or car share can make a difference. The bus fare

from Wellie to Taunton has been reduced, so not only can we save on fuel but also on the price of car-parking.

Food costs are a big issue for many of us, and in recent years the Transition Town group in Wellington have spent time planting fruit and nut trees around town and especially in Fox's Field, Linden Meadow and Long Acre. (There are free 'foraging maps' in the library and in various shops around town). As they grow these will provide an increasing amount of free food. There is also the Community Farm which has been getting established this year and by supporting this we can all ensure that good quality, fresh vegetables will be available to local people no matter what problems may arise with world food supplies in the future. An additional benefit to these growing areas is that they are also wonderful for our insects, pollinators and other wildlife that is facing dangerously low numbers. The relatively slight inconveniences of using public rather than personal transport and of seeking out local sources of fresh food rather than driving to a supermarket and buying food that may have travelled from other countries, is a direction that we all need to take. There is also the point that spending locally is helpful for all of us, in that it means our money stays in this area among traders who can recirculate their hard-earned cash. If we always go online to buy things, our money will go into the pockets of distant investors instead of local people. These suggestions are ideas, that in the long run, will not only help the long term health and welfare of our immediate communities, but play their part in nudging all of us into slightly different ways of thinking about our human agency in the world and in the future of the planet.