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Localisation

We hear a lot about the need for a 'strong' economy and economic 'growth'. What this translates to is turning natural resources into manufactured goods and selling as many as possible. This, in a nutshell, is how a consumer culture produces its wealth. The trouble is that there are two massive problems with this. Firstly, If we carry on this way we will literally consume the Earth and all its resources; secondly, the wealth that is produced goes primarily to those who are already rich: the owners and investors in big companies. It's a crazy system so why should we carry on supporting it?

If you think our politicians and leaders are doing a great job, i.e. with public services, the cost of living and caring for the environment, then carry on as you are, but if you are looking for something different, something better that might serve us all more equitably as well as be more mindful of how we're affecting the natural world, then have a look at the ideas in the 'Localisation Movement'.

It's not something you have to join and it's not political, and yet it could be described as a 'quiet revolution'. Literally Countless grassroots groups, like the Transition Town group here in Wellington, are coming together to create a more hopeful future for us all, one that moves away from a destructive consumer culture towards communities grounded in strong local economies.

Community gardens, farmers markets and local business alliances are all examples. Localisation is certainly not against business or people making a profit from their efforts, but about keeping those profits within the local economy rather than have them go to further enrich distant investors.

Guy Watson, for example, who started the Riverford company, began his business by taking his organic vegetables to people in a wheelbarrow. It was lovely, fresh produce and eventually his business grew into a company worth £100 million, but rather than cash that in by selling out to a big conglomerate, he sold it to his employees for a fraction of that amount, considering the well-being of everyone to be the most valuable result of all.

Here in Wellington we have a number of independent businesses; we would do well to remember that by supporting them, rather than shop online, we can have a positive impact, not only on our community, but also on our environment and the future for us and that of the Earth itself.