

...focusing on sustainability in the South West

Sightings

Summer 2006

IN FOCUS THIS ISSUE:
**SUSTAINABILITY
AND THE MEDIA**

'REGIONAL' EXCLUSIVE

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SCANDAL!

SUSTAINABILITY SEDUCES MEDIA...

The last year or so has seen a surge in national coverage of the big sustainability stories – from climate change and trade justice

to the UK's obesity epidemic and our mounting rubbish problem. So are the national media cosying up to sustainable development? If

so, what prompted the change... and is the South West's media lagging behind?

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Juicy details revealed inside!

Inside: page 3 lovely Gareth Allen; interview with Gloucestershire Echo editor Anita Syvret (p. 4); 'Sustainability Stars' on page 11; Skye Tech cartoon... and don't miss our special holiday extra!





Andy Baker
investigates



SUSTAINABILITY: WHAT'S THE STORY?

...continued from front page

Sustainability is about the action we take now to ensure the survival of people and planet into the future – so there's no denying it's a big issue. Too big perhaps, as the media seemed reluctant to get to grips with it for a long time. But the tide seems to be turning...

It's difficult to determine what has been responsible for the shift – is it growing public interest, a better understanding amongst media professionals or the increasing profile of sustainable development within the Government's agenda? The truth is probably a combination of factors, but the tipping point looks finally to have arrived.

Unfortunately, sustainable development (SD) is a large and complex issue – and yet it impacts on every area of our lives. Sure, a lot of SD issues are 'news', but the trick is in seeing the relationships between the headlines. For example let's say a newspaper, radio show or news bulletin carries two articles, one on affordable housing and the other on renewable energy – both potential SD issues. That's great – but will the editors make the link between the stories by, for example, highlighting opportunities for microgeneration and energy efficiency within new housing developments to reduce energy costs for the householder and combat climate change? Probably not. And yet it's precisely these kinds of cross cutting themes that typify the difficulty of getting across the 'holistic' nature of sustainability.

It could be suggested that the media, owing to its uniquely influential nature, has a moral obligation to promote engagement with sustainable development. This may be rebuffed by some media professionals who say that their only obligation is to provide impartial reporting of the facts. Broadcasters with public service obligations, of course, are part driven by their responsibility to inform and empower the public whilst commercial broadcasters are more concerned with what sells. Whatever the answer there can be no doubt that a better understanding of SD issues amongst the media community is going to benefit everyone.

For example, garnering greater awareness within the media community of how tackling traffic congestion associated with the 'school run' – through 'walk to school' schemes say –

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SUSTAINABILITY THEMED PUBLICATIONS

- Green Futures
- Resurgence
- Sustain
- The Ecologist

A quick sweep of recent national coverage of climate change and related environmental issues picked up on the following:

MAKING WAVES:

BBC Radio 4 – a range of programming on sustainability issues including showcasing community solutions, 'Changing Places', and hosting an interactive phone-in 'Home Planet' (see www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/environment.shtml)

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY:

The Independent – regularly devotes major column inches to top sustainability issues

Guardian – 'Heat', a special report on climate change (30 June 2005, see www.guardian.co.uk/climatechange)

The Observer – regular 'Ethical living' column in magazine (and 'Ethical living' special, 18 June 2006), special 'Energy' report (11 June 2006)

New Statesman – 'Heat & Light' supplement on energy & climate policy (15 May 2006, see www.newstatesman.co.uk/nssupplements.htm)

Times Higher Education – 'Sustainability' supplement (14 April 2006)

The Times, *The Mirror*, *the Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* have all carried a significant amount of climate change coverage over 2005-6:

- www.timesonline.co.uk
- www.mirror.co.uk
- www.telegraph.co.uk
- www.dailymail.co.uk

ON THE BOX:

ITV – '3°C from Disaster' series (current, see www.itv.com/news/climate.html)

BBC – 'Stop Climate Chaos' season (began 24 May 2006, see www.bbc.co.uk/climatechange)

Channel 4 – increased coverage of environmental sustainability issues including a recent look at the issue of water shortages (see interactive features at www.channel4.com/science)

SSW member **Gareth Allen** plays a key role in informing our PR and communications activity. He reflects here on the challenge of reporting sustainability without mentioning the 'S' word.

Is sustainable development media **sexy**?

One word answer, no. But it could be, and it should be. How? Well if people and organisations who're trying to deliver sustainable development (SD) messages really want to get their ideas across then the media is the place to be. Let's start with the 'S' word itself. 'Sustainability' – hardly a very engaging description of one of the planet's biggest issues. And you may find it unsurprising that research for a programme I made for ITV showed that less than half the people we asked were able to describe what sustainable development meant. The same bit of research found that 97% of people care about the environment (you may wonder who the other 3% are), and a staggering 89% of people reckon as individuals they can make a difference. So there clearly is an appetite for information about sustainable development.

So now we understand what's going on, people don't really understand SD, but if they did they'd engage more. We (the media) aren't covering it, because we wrongly assume that people don't really care about it. Most news coverage is about here and now. The media likes stories that have a sense of urgency, after all that's what 'news' is all about. We believe people care about the money in their pocket, the safety of their families, the state of the NHS etc, etc. No coverage leads to no understanding, and that leads to no engagement, which leads to no coverage – vicious circle.

Let's look at what little coverage there is. How does a report on climate change, for example, connect with people? It's hardly Day after Tomorrow stuff so, what does make a good SD headline? Try these out for size.

Which do you think tell the story with the most impact?:

- By 2100 global temperatures will rise by about 2%
- At least 25,000 square km of Amazonian rainforest will be destroyed this year
- Between 1990 and 2003 sulphur dioxide emissions in the UK fell by 74%
- Number of deaths worldwide attributed to climate change, 160,000

I think you'd probably pick out the same two headlines as me, because we all know deep down what makes a story. Climate change issues are quite difficult to fit into the here and now, money in your pocket picture I'm illustrating. And once you've said the end of the world is nigh you haven't really got much further to go, have you? So here's the challenge to NGOs and other groups who have a SD message to sell, you have to appeal to the ordinary folk in the street. How does what I'm telling people affect them here and now and the money in their pocket? And it's your job to excite the media – to get their airtime or column inches.

It is of course a gradual process; here's an example, we all know David Cameron gets to work on his bike – we've seen the pictures on the telly, lots of times. But do we know he has a Lexus car following him with all his papers and clothes for the day? Maybe not, but did we really imagine for one moment that a senior politician is able to just to show up for work, on his bike without the relevant documents for the day ahead. But by digging



a bit deeper
into stories like
this we begin to

uncover the true meaning of what sustainable development involves.

Interestingly a recent survey showed that 47% of people trust the media, compared with 51% who trust the government, so what role does the government have in sending out the right message? The Department of Culture Media and Sport is very keen, of course, for the media to engage in SD issues. While it accepts that it can't try and direct broadcasters in terms of programme content, it is very aware of the potential influence the media holds on public awareness. And media organisations have corporate social responsibility to deliver such messages, but that responsibility right now is not enough, and it's time for the media to wake up and take more of a role, work with government and NGOs and really make a difference...

My final thought is how does this all fit with Coronation Street and Eastenders? – well that's the next challenge. By the way the headlines I would choose are the ones about the rainforest and the number of deaths.

'S' WORD COUNT IN THIS ARTICLE:
10 TIMES (SORRY)



Anita Syvret was recently named among the 100 most powerful people in the regional newspaper media. She has been editor of the *Gloucestershire Echo*, the daily newspaper for Cheltenham and the Cotswolds, since 1990. *Sightings* got in touch to find out her take on sustainability and the regional media.

An echo of public opinion?

Does sustainable development sell papers?

No subject sells papers by itself – only stories sell papers. For example, politics is essentially worthy but dull. However, if Tony Blair resigns, our papers will sell like hotcakes. The same can be said of sustainability: it can be worthy but dull. But when it comes to hosepipe bans at home and natural disasters abroad caused by climate change, it's big news.

We think there has been a significant shift over the last 18 months or so in the amount of coverage at a national level of sustainable development issues – would you agree?

Media coverage about sustainability issues has been growing steadily for the last 10 years. Whilst the public has always been interested in subjects such as recycling and climate change and the media has reflected that interest, governments have been slow to put the subject on their political agenda. That is now changing nationally and internationally. And locally – councils have been forced to face up to issues such as recycling targets. The positioning on the political agenda has therefore led to more debate, more controversy, and wider media coverage.

It's debatable whether the media's unique influence gives it a moral obligation to raise awareness of sustainable development beyond impartial reporting of 'the facts'. But do you think that reporting on local SD issues is always balanced?

If you start telling the media they have a moral obligation to raise awareness of sustainable development, you're on a hiding to

nothing. That betrays a failure to understand how the media works – ie on the basis of news, not propaganda nor a worthy dissertation on climate change. If you want to get the sustainability message across to readers, viewers and listeners in a balanced way, you have to use the media: come up with interesting stories, or react intelligently to articles that crop up and include information about the 'bigger picture'. Of course the media covers stories about protests and disputes – no one tells us if everything's going swimmingly because no one is worried. That doesn't mean we're not interested. It means we are doing our job by raising matters of public concern. Worthy pieces about the bigger picture, they might look good in your scrap book, but what's the point if no one read them when they appeared in the paper? Debate is what raises public awareness, not a PhD on renewable energy.

Do you think that local newspapers are in a position to help people to engage in sustainable issues at the local level?

Yes. We have a far greater penetration in our local area than any other medium, and than any single national newspaper. Our potential to influence at grass roots level is enormous. There are dozens of local issues that touch on the bigger picture, eg recycling, transport, housing. And there is no better way of reaching the heart of Jo Public than the regional press.

Do you think that local newspapers still have relevance and will continue to be relevant in the face of 'new media' developments such as internet blogging, podcasting etc?

Are you kidding? The internet is certainly

important. But its readership in terms of news is a drop in the ocean in comparison with the reach of local newspapers. Blogs and podcasts allow everyone access to anything and everything they want. But it's a great big ocean out there. If you want to get the sustainability message across to the public you can't wait for millions of surfers to find it by accident. You need to shove it under their nose. That's the beauty of the newspaper: it contains everything you didn't know you needed to know in about 40 pages. It takes 26 minutes to read. And it only costs 32p. If you rely solely on the internet to spread your message, you'll be preaching to the converted. And the rate of conversion won't grow very fast at all.

A recent survey by BBC Magazines suggested a growing group of socially and environmentally conscious people are impacting on politics, culture and consumption trends. Do you think that the local media is catering for this new audience?

The new socially and environmentally conscious classes are the 'Save the Whale' generation of the 1960s, 70s and 80s who have grown up and brought their beliefs along with them, and passed them on to their children. They include people like Tony Blair and Jonathon Porritt (and many newspaper editors), who may have been dismissed as sandal-wearing, anti-establishment, lentil-loving hippies 30 years ago, but who are now the movers and shakers of the 21st century. Not only does the media cater for that audience, its editors and journalists are part and parcel of that philosophical and political revolution. If we weren't, we'd have gone out of business long ago. And we're certainly not doing that.

Sustainability South West recently attended the launch of Purbeck Environment Week at Wareham in Dorset. Where better for us to dip our toes into the tide of public opinion? We interviewed some local residents about sustainability and the local media...

...and the word on the street?



What does 'sustainability' mean to you? Doing things in an environmentally friendly way.

Does your local media give you balanced information about sustainability issues? I think it's been getting better recently. It's clearer and people are getting messages about what they can do.

Does the media help us to connect the way we live with things like climate change? I don't think so, no.

Does balanced reporting on sustainability influence your lifestyle? Any examples? I think simple information is helpful.



What does 'sustainability' mean to you? No idea.

Does your local media give you balanced information about sustainability issues? No, I don't think so. TV and radio doesn't, definitely. I don't know about papers.

Does the media help us to connect the way we live with things like climate change? In some ways it does...you hear what the consequences are...but nah, I don't think so.

Does balanced reporting on sustainability influence your lifestyle? Any examples? I'd probably start turning off lights, not using so much water.



What does 'sustainability' mean to you? The future of the country and planet.

Does your local media give you balanced information about sustainability issues? Very rarely. Having seen the recent BBC programmes, I think the local papers are quite sensationalist about it.

Does the media help us to connect the way we live with things like climate change? I don't know if they can really hammer home the effect it's going to make.

Does balanced reporting on sustainability influence your lifestyle? Any examples? Yes. Recent BBC coverage has made me think a lot. It's more balanced than some of the stuff in the local papers. I don't always believe them... I try not to leave things on standby in the house, which I think could make a big difference.



What does 'sustainability' mean to you? Well, for example, new development should make use of solar energy, combined heat & power etc. They're going to build 1,000 new homes near us and they could build them all with solar panels. Surely it's easier to put them in now rather than later? It might cost more initially but there are long term benefits. I suppose that's what it means.

Does your local media give you balanced information about sustainability issues? The BBC's Climate Chaos series is starting to make more people aware and that's good. I think some of the local media is biased to development.

Does the media help us to connect the way we live with things like climate change? It's starting to. But it's slow going. We've known about climate change for years and the media is just waking up to it and catching up. It'll probably be too late by the time everyone's aware of it. And there's no clear leadership from Government – it all seems geared up to big business and that's not very good for climate change.

Does balanced reporting on sustainability influence your lifestyle? Any examples? Yes, we've already started and I think a lot of people are starting to take the initiative. We've recently bought a water butt.

Tomorrow's world: today's news

By Lucy Goldring

Hands up who thought the internet would never take off or vowed never to get a mobile only to sheepishly join the ranks of the "hello – I'm on the train!" brigade? Over the last decade a host of new 'media developments' have weaved their way into the fabric of modern life. Mobiles are no longer just phones – the latest models are music players, web browsers and personal organisers too. For the internet accessing majority, the web is a gateway to a mind-boggling amount of information, products and experiences. Chatrooms and 'online communities' are growing phenomena, attracting millions and catering for an array of personal and professional interests. Whilst the internet is an established means of 'keeping in touch', increasingly it's also about interacting with complete strangers in mutually-beneficial ways.

The web, of course, is not the only big media development. Whilst the form and content of the newspaper has remained fairly consistent (excepting the trend towards glossy lifestyle supplements) television and radio are undergoing big changes. 70% of UK households now enjoy the expanded choice of digital TV: 'lean forward' rather than 'sit back' broadcasting which encourages us to get involved with "press the x button now" extras. Broadcasters vie for our attention with ever more specialist programming (so-called 'narrowcasting') and even 'Freeview'

packages allow us to cherry pick from a selection of lifestyle, documentary, news, arts, music, sports and comedy channels.

What does this all mean for shaping sustainable lifestyles? The implications are not easy to pin down. From a natural resource point of view, mass-produced, inexpensive multi-media gadgetry has all the associated problems of throwaway consumer culture. Whilst 'recycle your mobile' schemes help, they don't address wider issues around cheap labour and manufacturing processes. But new innovations (eg micro 'nano technology') and the 'downloading' trend may yet have some green potential.

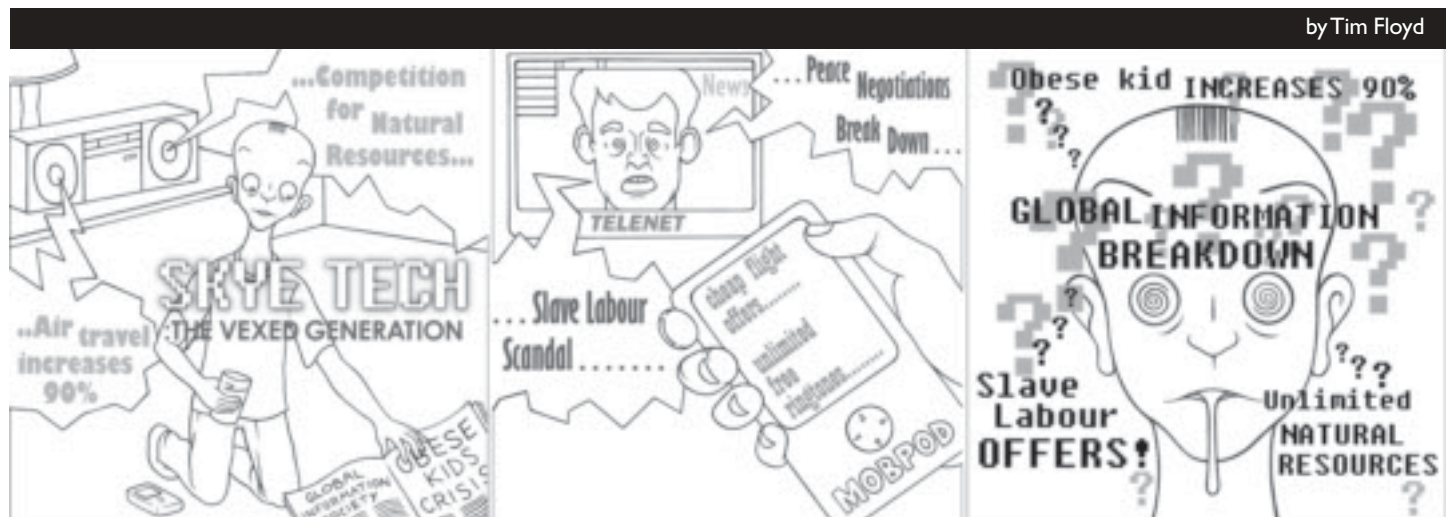
In terms of the sustainability message we should understand that marketeers are dividing us up into ever smaller niches ("educated male, late 30s, likes cricket and Philip Pullman books, shops at Sainsburys"). As programming becomes more tightly defined and targeted, so audiences become more dispersed, disconnected and ingrained in their tastes. Aside from in the case of the odd hit, the days of discussing 'last night's telly' may be numbered. The Attenborough climate change programmes attracted over 5 million viewers... still less than 10% of the population. With on average more TV and PC terminals in the home, families are less likely to sit down together to 'watch the box'. Consumption of the media is becoming a more private affair; limiting the potential for shared cultural experiences. Young people in

particular consume the media on their own terms and at their own convenience, seeing newspapers as largely irrelevant and making use of new media like web-logging (teenage girls being the biggest 'bloggers').

For those already interested in sustainability, narrowcasting could provide an avenue for further exploration – an 'ethical living' or 'smart and sustainable' channel could help viewers future-proof their lifestyle. But we don't want sustainable living to be marginalised, particularly as social inclusion is a key principle of sustainability. New media is linking previously isolated groups and extending opportunity but a significant proportion of the population still has no access to the internet or digital media and by moving certain cultural products to these spheres we may actually increase social exclusion.

In the modern media world the consumer is most definitely king and this could be a sustainability 'in'. With new technologies helping to block unwanted marketing and skip advertising, companies are having to get increasingly inventive. Sustainable or ethical branding could supply the competitive edge and promoters are beginning to cotton on, but they had better beware that their walk matches their talk. One upshot of the current blogging trend is that disgruntled consumers can readily share their gripes – companies have seen their shares plummet overnight following a wave of unfavourable postings.

Sustainability thinking, in the face of an unstable public service broadcasting model, needs to piggy-back on every opportunity. To be heard over the clamour of competing information the message must make itself relevant to the new 'pick and mix' audience. How about an energy efficiency task for Big Brother housemates, more Jamie Oliveresque sustainability champions or some sophisticated sustainability blogging tactics??



(continued from page 2)

can also impact on climate change, child obesity and safety would surely give audiences a more balanced message about the reality of the issue. The problem is that the issues cease to be 'black and white' and instead become full of grey areas, making a story difficult to pitch. But it is simple – in general terms something either moves us, as a society, towards or away from sustainability – and as SD is now accepted as being of benefit to the general public, then surely it's this kind of 'either or' question that journalists should be asking?

Part of the problem is around the definition of news itself. For example, various surveys have suggested that that majority of people in the UK support increasing the use of renewables including wind power. However, if a local development is proposed and a

minority of local people form a protest, it is that which constitutes 'news' – therefore 'local demonstrators oppose wind farm' is a more common headline than 'silent majority support new wind farm'. But surely journalists should report wind farm opposition in the context of prevailing public opinion – just as any minority political viewpoint would be.

The South West is already playing a leading role in many key areas of SD and so the region's media is bound to play an important role in the SD revolution. For years we've heard the slogan 'think global, act local' and no one is better placed than the regional media to help raise awareness of local issues upon which people can act.

In this edition we'll be getting an insight from the headline makers, as well as the media consumer, to find out exactly how hot a topic sustainability is for the South West's media.

“The ‘Big Green Debate’ has entered a very interesting stage. Once there was endless scientific controversy; now there is near unanimity. Once there was universal political indifference; now the bandwagon is abrim with politicians in catch-up mode. Once the media were semi-detached; now they're really getting stuck in. And they need to be! Many people are confused and disempowered, and the role of the media in getting them informed and engaged is critical.”

Jonathon Porritt, Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission and President of Sustainability South West

POST EVENT REPORT

Who will lead us in a one planet economy?

On 16th January Sustainability South West, with Environment Agency sponsorship and the support of the Regional Development Agency, hosted an exclusive seminar in Bristol. Heads of public agencies were joined by business executives and representatives of voluntary bodies to explore what leadership qualities are needed for the region to develop a prosperous economy within environmental limits.

The natural resources associated with current economic trends are 'unsustainable', with finite resources such as oil predicted to run out within a generation and many renewable resources being used at a rate faster than they can recover. Added to this, the threat of climate change makes a radical reduction in greenhouse gas emissions an urgent priority. Here in the South West of England, recent measurement of our 'eco-footprint' has suggested that if the region's consumption patterns were replicated worldwide we would need two extra planets to sustain us... it is clear that we need to re-think the regional economy if we are to face up to the responsibilities, as well as the opportunities, of sustainability.

The South West's role within this global picture set the context for the 'Leadership for One Planet Economy' seminar in January. The event addressed a range of challenges and

included input from sustainable development NGOs, business leaders and sustainable energy agencies. But whilst no one would deny that the issues are complex, thankfully many of the solutions for a 'one planet economy' are at hand. Whether it be through supporting local business through increased local sourcing, reaping the benefits of local renewable energy generation, improving our competitiveness through 'resource efficiency' or developing sustainable tourism, the South West can 'lead the way'.

The new Regional Economic Strategy gives a new focus for collective effort to develop a one planet economy, stating that 'South West England will demonstrate that economic growth can be secured within environmental limits to bring prosperity to the region'. This will require action by all people across all sectors – however, in many cases it will be senior leaders that will make a real difference to shifting sustainability from the margins into the mainstream. So what do we need our public and business leaders to do? A number of recommendations emerged from the seminar: improve your understanding, learn from others who are already 'doing it', be brave and take a risk or two, get organisation-wide commitment through information and support, set achievable targets alongside aspirational milestones and, crucially, ensure sustainability criteria are

incorporated into all corporate decision-making and performance monitoring.

Sustainability South West is currently discussing with partners how the 'Leadership for a One Planet Economy' seminar will inform forthcoming debates in the region. For our own part we will continue to lobby organisations in the South West to develop their own sustainability action plans (potentially through a new carbon reduction charter; see p. 8) and will champion the establishment of a Regional Procurement Executive to increase sourcing of local goods and services. In coordinating the development of the new online Regional Sustainable Development Framework – a sustainability decision making tool with advice, tools and signposting – we will respond to the demand for more accessible guidance and support to deliver the now crucial one planet economy.



A full event report can be viewed at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/pubs.html

What's the **BIG IDEA?**

SSW held the region's first Sustainability Summit over the 21st and 22nd June at Dartington Hall in Devon. Influential figures joined our members in thrashing out the region's hottest sustainability issues and coming up with suggestions for its 'big idea' – the sustainability theme on which the South West will take a UK lead.

The two day programme addressed a range of interrelated 'crunch issues' including how the region can accommodate growth without eroding its distinctive cultural and environmental assets (a minimum of 150,000 new houses will be built here by 2016!) and examining the role of the region's media in supporting progress towards sustainability (see 'In Focus' box). Aubrey Meyer of the Global Commons Institute, led a special session on climate change, painting a sobering picture of the action that humanity needs to take now to avoid irreversible climate chaos and introducing the idea of equitable carbon shares. Other special guests included Jane Ashley of the Sustainable Development Commission, Bronwyn Hill, Director of Government Office South West and Phil Carrodus, News Controller at ITV Westcountry.

The South West, along with all the English regions, has been invited by Government to propose its 'big idea' – a sustainable development issue on which it will agree to take a national lead, potentially piloting a range of initiatives. Meyer's contribution – along with the 'Leadership for a One Planet Economy' event held by SSW earlier this year – helped to reinforce the views of SSW members that the only fair way to tackle climate change is for us all to learn to live within our fair share of carbon. The summit's recommendation for the South West's Big Idea (which SSW will present to DEFRA) is for a regional 'Fair Shares – Fair Choice' carbon charter. This would promote an equitable approach to the shared responsibility of avoiding dangerous climate change. Stakeholders would be encouraged to sign up to the Charter's principles and develop their own action plans. Practical tools, such as a carbon calculator, would help people to make choices about how they 'spend' their carbon allowances and to see



Aubrey Meyer talks fair 'carbon shares' with summit delegates

where they are exceeding their fair share.

The South West is in an excellent position to lead the UK in low carbon living and reap the benefits – boosting innovation and enterprise (for example exporting low carbon technologies and expertise),

developing 'exemplar' low carbon sustainable communities, generating our own local renewable energy (a potential source of income!), encouraging healthier lifestyles (eg through walking and cycling) and supporting more local sourcing of goods and services.

The media and sustainability: what we learnt at the summit

IN FOCUS

Messages for sustainable development practitioners

- Most journalists 'sort of get' sustainability but don't understand the 'big picture' or the scale of the challenge
- The message of sustainability needs to be communicated in bite-sized chunks – awareness is raised gradually, in small steps
- The media feels no moral obligation to champion sustainability but Public Broadcasting Service remits mean informing audiences about the things likely to be of interest/impact
- The media is made up of very different animals – eg tabloids, local TV, regional papers, broadsheets – target selectively!
- To engage the media be nimble, quick, opportunistic and ready with 'a line'
- In becoming less radical the SD sector has become less newsworthy

Shared Messages – media & SD professionals

- The general public doesn't recognise the terms 'sustainability' or 'sustainable development' but do care about the 'big issues'
- There is an opportunity for journalists to work more collaboratively with the SD sector to create more meaningful stories
- Communicating to the general public involves being 'one step ahead' in understanding...but sometimes the media underestimates its audience
- The local media thinks it's already engaging with sustainability issues in a balanced way – this perception isn't shared by SD professionals
- Media and SD professionals both view audience fragmentation as a potential problem for communicating complex 'big issues' to the public

SSW's challenge to the media:

Sustainability South West welcomes the increased coverage of 'sustainability issues' in the local media. But we challenge the region's media professionals to improve their understanding of the big sustainability picture – awareness of the scale of the global challenge and the likely local impacts for media audiences (whose choices will have a significant effect on our future!) will support more balanced reporting. We also challenge the media not to underestimate the capacity of their audiences to understand and find personal meaning in the big issues.



special
holiday
extra!

Enjoy an extra special South West this summer...



Last time we reported that Future Footprints – the campaign to encourage the region’s visitors to ‘help keep the South West special’ – had stepped up a gear, with a new full time manager and website (now live at www.futurefootprints.org.uk).

With peak holiday season around the corner Future Footprints is in full swing, working with partners to promote a positive sustainable tourism message. But you might be surprised to learn that 25% of ‘staying trips’ taken in the region are ‘intra-regional’ with many residents deciding to take breaks within their native South West (great news for air miles!).

Are you planning a summer break in the region? Whether you’re a South West connoisseur or exploring this summer we’d like to involve you in supporting Future Footprints. We know that many of our readers are already walking the talk of sustainability at home and at work but just how easy is it to be a ‘sustainable tourist’ and have fun at the same time? Try our hints below and let us know how you get on.

The South West is famed for its natural beauty and cultural heritage. Whether your visit’s for business or pleasure, the South West has a wealth on offer. Here are some tips to help you have a great time and help us to keep the South West special, forever.

Try Local, Buy Local

The landscape and environment that draw visitors to our region are directly linked to how the land is used. Where and what you choose to buy during your trip really counts, so choose local food and drink and gifts made in the region. The South West is renowned for its excellent local produce and quality products. Buying local gives a true taste of the South West, and visiting local markets, shops, pubs and restaurants is a great way to really get to know the area. When you shop local not only will you contribute to the local economy, but you’ll help reduce food miles and traffic, which is better for the air, your lungs and pretty much everything. And don’t

forget to take something home to spoil your friends and relatives!

What’s on Your Doorstep

In the South West there’s something exciting around almost every corner...amazing attractions, natural wonders, interesting events. And things that are ‘off the beaten path’ tend to be less crowded, but just as fun. Tighten those laces and explore what is within walking distance of where you are staying, or to cover a bit more distance take to two wheels. The South West has some of the country’s best walking and cycling for all ages and abilities; check out local footpaths and if you’re feeling energetic there are cycle paths too (and lots of lovely people who will hire you bicycles if you haven’t brought your own). Walking and cycling are ‘feel good’ ways to see the area and to explore places where cars can’t. But if do you feel like going a bit further afield, leave the car behind and have a look at the public transportation

Spoil yourself! (not the environment...)

The best bit of going on holiday is treating yourself for all the hard work you do the rest of the year. There are other little things you can do to keep the South West special and make yourself feel special at the same time. So...

Have that bottle of wine – just please recycle the glass (your hosts will point you in the direction of local recycling points). Stay up late watching your favourite film – just remember to turn the telly off properly when you leave the room. Enjoy a romantic summer evening... and turn off the lights so everyone can get a better view of the starry night sky.

options available. Take to the road, rail or water and try local buses, trains and ferries... it’s a great way to sit back and let the scenery go by (without adding to the traffic). So remember: give the car a rest, stretch those legs and explore what’s local. And if you need to cover some distance, let someone else do the driving.

Green Tourism Business Scheme

Many tourism businesses in the South West have joined the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS). This national scheme covers issues such as business efficiency, environmental management, waste, transport, as well as topics like social responsibility and biodiversity. By agreeing to the GTBS code of conduct and through independent assessment of their activities, businesses have made a commitment towards reducing the impact of their business on the environment. Look out for the logo!



stop press...stop press... stop press...

EVENT REPORT

Local to Regional Sustainability Forum

15 March 2006

Delivering Sustainable Development in the South West

On 15th March 2006 SSW, in association with the Local Sustainability Group South West, hosted the first meeting of the Local to Regional Sustainability Forum. The event was an opportunity for local and regional practitioners across sectors to share their perspectives on the reality of delivering sustainable development.

SSW works with both regional and local partners and is aware of an appetite in both camps to know more about how the 'other half' work. The sustainability forum, sponsored by DEFRA and Government Office South West, was about promoting understanding of the roles of local delivery organisations and regional strategic bodies to explore how they can work better together – an important opportunity to raise issues and put forward solutions to adopting truly integrated and sustainable approaches.

An opening presentation from DEFRA set the national context for the programme. The platform was then taken by regional bodies – the Regional Assembly, Regional Development Agency, Government Office South West (and SSW) – who each outlined their strategic remit and activities. Delegates then welcomed the chance to directly ask questions of regional partners about the delivery of sustainable development.

A selection of short presentations from local representatives followed – from councils to community based NGOs – covering a breadth of inspiring examples of sustainability practice (as well as highlighting barriers to achieving even more).

What were the key learning points from the day?:

- Procurement structures often steer organisations towards purchasing based on price only. But organisations can develop procurement systems to integrate SD principles like local sourcing.
- The adoption of the 'living within environmental limits' principle in the national SD strategy was a positive development, but a consistent and successful approach to interpretation and delivery was now required.
- Leadership – all organisations need to be engaged in the now urgent SD agenda and set a positive example to their staff and customers. Raising the sustainability awareness of senior management was critical.
- Complex and drawn out funding procedures are a barrier to progress with success indicators often focused on narrow economic outputs rather than sustainable development outcomes.
- Support was expressed for the new Regional Sustainable Development Framework (RSDF) – a web-based tool

that will provide key stakeholders with access to customised SD information and resources.

- The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, which includes four overarching SD policies, was a significant new development.

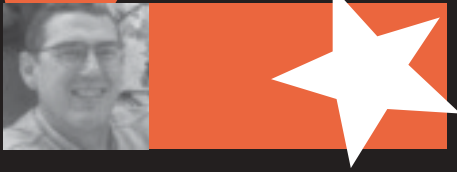
What next?

We hope that delegates took away some useful thinking from the event. SSW will use what we have learnt to inform our work in lobbying key regional agencies, supporting local partners and responding to national developments. The discussions will also shape the new RSDF which will support delivery of sustainable development in the region.

The 15th March was a 'pilot run' and we are now reflecting on the feedback to see what worked well and how we can refine the programme for potential future events.

A full event report of the Local to Regional Sustainability Forum can be downloaded from www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/pubs.html

SUSTAINABILITY STARS



→ **Name:** Steve Marriott

→ **Job Title:** Sustainable Communities Manager

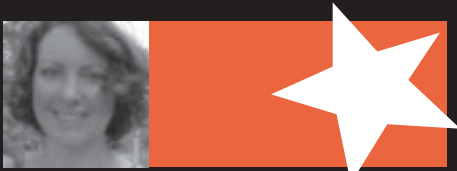
→ **Organisation:** Bristol City Council

★ **'Famous for':** Sustainable development in the round

In my time I've run young people and adult unemployment schemes, volunteer landscaping and nature conservation projects, developed recycling initiatives, been involved in home energy conservation strategies, run Local Agenda 21 programmes, developed sustainable construction and local food programmes and supported Parish Plan initiatives.

"I love the bottom up element, working with community interests keeps me sane and I think the effect it has on more tunnel-visioned professionals is wonderful. Lets fight to retain the opportunity for local people to remain at the strategic policy table."

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→ **Name:** Anna Kennedy

→ **Job Title:** Director

→ **Organisation:** Westden

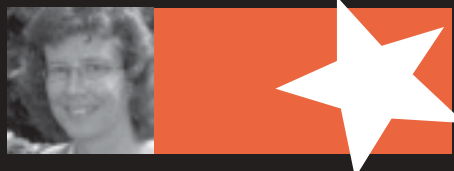
★ **'Famous for':** Development of policy, networks, grass roots Social Enterprise activity and practical initiatives and policy in sustainable consumption and production. Particularly interested in construction and in waste minimisation.

Four years working on quality assurance at Surrey County Council Highways

Engineering Laboratory; two years as a quarry and waste campaigner at Friends of the Earth Scotland (led on NGO input to the development of the National Waste Strategy for Scotland); three years at Forum for the Future advising schools, local authorities and multi-national businesses on integration of sustainable development principles in their operations and development and three years enabling social enterprise development across 12 sectors – emphasis on encouraging recognition of the value of genuine community ownership and the role of democracy in the enterprise.

"Be the change you want to see in the world"
(Mahatma Ghandi)

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→ **Name:** Kate Hall

→ **Job Title:** Sustainable Development Manager

→ **Organisation:** Dorset County Council

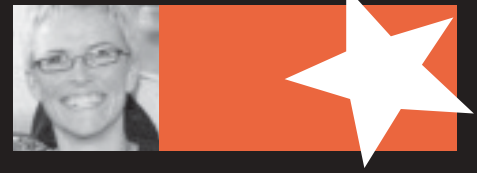
★ **'Famous for':** Sustainable development and all things related.

Since starting my career I have: run major environmental regeneration schemes; undertaken a wide range of sustainability awareness and education programmes; developed initiatives tackling local food, renewable energy, waste, gmo's and green business; helped improve the sustainability performance of local authorities.

"I am constantly inspired by both my colleagues at work and local people across Dorset who are taking steps, both large and small, to make a difference. We need to celebrate and communicate the work of these local champions and thereby encourage others to do the same."

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stop press...



→ **Name:** Manda Brookman

→ **Job Title:** Director

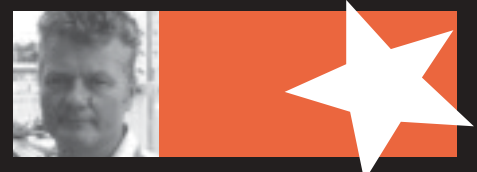
→ **Organisation:** CoaST (Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project)

★ **'Famous for':** Triple bottom line

Linking stuff up! Encouraging cross sector (private, public and community) sectors to work on the triple bottom line. Making everything count three times (socially, economically, environmentally)!

"It's all adding up!"

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→ **Name:** Meyrick Brentnall

→ **Job Title:** Principal Planning Officer (Sustainable Development)

→ **Organisation:** Gloucester City Council

★ **'Famous for':** Promoting sustainability through the planning system, in particular Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, loud shirts and, sadly, Seagulls.

I tend to get involved with all things green, this will cover everything from nature conservation to windmills. Although formally a policy planner I try to roll out specific projects, these range from countryside management projects on the urban fringe to getting renewable energy capacity installed. When I finally get knocked off my bike I will be remembered for Seagulls which is sad but a fact of working in a relatively small authority where you have to be a jack of all trades.

"If I were to die tomorrow I would plant a tree today." (Martin Luther King) "Things that count can't be counted and things that can be counted don't count." (Einstein)

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GLIMPSES

All the young dudes, carry the news

In May 13 year old Lucy Stansfield from Wellington, Somerset, was selected as the South West's first young Climate Change Champion. Lucy entered the 'Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge' competition (part of the Government's Climate Change Communication initiative) and was one of nine regional winners chosen from over 600 entries. Applicants used different media to communicate the threats of climate change in their regions and Lucy's DVD news report obviously impressed. The South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP) will support Lucy to undertake a range of awareness-raising activities in her year 'in office'. Lucy has her own webpage at www.oursouthwest.com/climate/champion/index.htm

Life in the fast grain!

Did you know that the original Model T Ford was designed to run on corn?? Now the UK's first bio-ethanol refinery for wheat-derived road fuel is being built in Henstridge, Somerset. 'Green Spirit Fuels' will be operating the plant which is expected to have an annual output of 100,000 tonnes of bio-ethanol (enough for a billion miles of motoring). The production of clean fuel should help us to meet new renewables obligations and support the livelihoods of struggling farmers. The refinery is just one of a number of initiatives being supported by the South West Biofuels Forum which has been set up to maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits of the biofuels market for the region.

Were you turned on?

17-25 June was 'Big SWitch' week – a campaign by the South West Wildlife

Trusts to promote climate friendly living and limit the region's contribution to the threat of climate chaos for people and wildlife. A series of events across the South West – on themes such as sustainable transport, local food and energy and waste conservation – were an opportunity for the public to learn about living active, healthy, low carbon lifestyles. Councils, businesses, community groups and schools supported the campaign and over 800 low carbon pledges were made on the Big SWitch website. See www.bigswitch.org.uk and www.stopclimatechaos.org

Painting the village green

A new pilot project being coordinated by Westden, 'Green Village', will work for a year with a typical South West village to promote sustainability. The residents of Belstone in Devon have volunteered to have their current lifestyles observed before receiving advice on how they can make green improvements. Plymouth University will support Westden in monitoring and evaluating progress. It is hoped that a local film company will record the experiment and that 'lessons learnt' can inform further projects in the UK and beyond. See www.westden.co.uk for more.

I've got a brand new energy harvester

Bristol and Swindon, along with London, are to host a radically new variety of wind turbine, specifically designed for urban areas. The 'Quiet Revolution' operates in near silence and is adapted to the variable wind speeds of built up areas. The designers XCO2 estimate that the turbines generate energy equivalent to the needs of five energy-efficient homes. Inquiries have been received from as far afield as China and Africa and permission is even being sought to fit a Quiet Revolution to the front of Buckingham Palace – the turbine would double-up as a spinning 'flagpole' by day and a glowing union jack by night!

Sustainability South West is the region's independent champion of Sustainable Development.

Our members, from the public, private and voluntary sectors, all share sustainability principles and give their time for free. Members inform and support our work which is delivered in partnership with key regional agencies and managed by a small staff team. SSW's mission is to improve understanding about sustainability in the region – to raise awareness of the benefits of living healthy, productive, responsible lives within the natural resources of our one and only planet... and of the implications if we don't. In short – we want real progress towards a sustainable South West.

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the independent champion of sustainable development in the South West

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Sustainability
South West

Sustainability South West's current membership: Gareth Allen *ITV Westcountry*; Bob Bewley *English Heritage*; Mike Birkin *Friends of the Earth*; John Blewitt *University of Exeter*; Philip Bostock *Exeter City Council*; Tim Boyes-Watson *Learning South West*; Richard Cresswell *Environment Agency*; Julian Dennis *Wessex Water*; Colin Drummond *Viridor Waste Management*; Paul Gompertz *Devon Wildlife Trust*; Mark Harold *National Trust*; Chris Hines *The Eden Project*; Simon Hooton *South West of England Regional Development Agency*; Bryony Houlden *South West Regional Assembly*; Brian Kennelly *GeoScience Ltd*; Catherine Le Grice-Mack *South West Regional Assembly*; Anita Longley *RWE npower*; Jackie Longworth *Trade Union Congress*; Phil McVey (observer) *Government Office for the South West*; Judith Reynolds *Co-Active Ltd*; Louise Thornhill *Countryside Agency*; Janette Ward *English Nature*; Brendan Yates *Department of Health*

Sustainability South West receives regular funding from the following organisations (a full list of funders, for any given financial year, is stated in our annual report): Countryside Agency; English Heritage; English Nature; Environment Agency; Government Office for the South West; National Trust; South West of England Regional Development Agency; South West Regional Assembly