

June 2009

Sustainability Now is a monthly bulletin from Sustainability South West (SSW), the region's independent Champion Body for sustainable development. SSW is a charity and its Mission is: 'To champion and assist action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits.'



Mum's the word

It's hard to avoid the sustainability implications of having kids – the planet is already over-burdened by its population and, despite some areas of hope, 'modern' lifestyle trends are taking us in a very unsustainable direction. Surely bringing a sprog into the world is just adding to the problem?

Yet, notwithstanding questions about whether to 'stop at two' (and, somewhat hypocritically as a new mum, I feel a debate on population curbing measures is long overdue...), is having babies really so at odds with sustainability? On closer inspection 'Don't have kids' just doesn't make sense as a sustainability mantra. For, whilst many greenies are looking to save the planet as a wonderful thing in its own right, at least as many people are motivated by leaving a half-decent legacy. Indeed SSW's own definition of sustainability – 'healthy societies living on a healthy planet for many generations into the future' – includes a clear nod to procreation.

As a planet-conscious parent I'm trying to do my bit – using washable nappies (well...most of the time), begging and borrowing baby goods, living car-free (10 months of pushing a baby-laden buggy around Bristol has done wonders for my biceps), making my own locally-sourced baby food (errr...some of the time) etc. – but I'm only just considering what on earth to tell our boy about *what on earth* is going on. Child experts are divided about how (and when) best to broach the subject of sustainability issues like climate change (see www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/may/22/climate-change-children-education-books). The general consensus seems to be 'honesty is the best policy' but don't scare the hell out of them. This is very similar advice to that which our health visitor offered about preparing our lad for his next round of vaccinations...then again she also suggested a treat afterwards. Somehow that seems a bit inadequate as a 'sustainability sweetener' – "yes darling, we've trashed the planet – there's a chance we can turn things around but no guarantees...now how about that ice-cream?" I, for one, am hoping like hell that by the time we're ready for that chat, trends will be moving in a more sustainable direction. In a period where 'business as usual' is being questioned from all directions, perhaps now is the time for mums and dads to think about how they best contribute to a positive global inheritance.

By Lucy Goldring, SSW Project Manager.

This month's other SustainabilityNow headlines at a glance:

- ◆ **Final report now available: Embedding sustainable development post Sub National Review**
- ◆ **New Training Opportunity: An introduction to sustainability**
- ◆ **Doctors warn of risks of climate change**
- ◆ **Return of the natives!**
- ◆ **Sust'Ometer** ◆ **On your radar** ◆ **Up & Coming** ◆ **Over to YOU!**

Embedding sustainable development principles into future regional arrangements: Shaping a sustainable future post SNR

- Final report now available

During 2008 and Spring 2009, Sustainability South West (SSW) led a project funded by Defra and the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and supported by the SW Regional Assembly and Government Office for the South West under the 'Sustainable Development Transition and Transformation Fund' to consider how to embed sustainable development principles into future regional arrangements. This work looked:

- *The South West (SW) 'Single Regional Strategy' process*
- *SW Local Authority capacity / expertise on Sustainable Development (SD)*
- *SW Regional Challenge and Scrutiny - independent SD expertise*
- *The SW Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) criteria*
- *The RDA Tasking Framework & monitoring for the SW*

SSW engaged with stakeholders from different sectors right across the region (through individual workshops and a widely available consultation form), to feed in to a consultation looking at the above themes. A set of draft recommendations came out of this work (available for comment until 17 April). The final report, containing 17 recommendations, is now available - For the final recommendations and report visit:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/projects/sustainable_development_transition_and_transformation_-_embedding_sustainable_development_principles_into_future_regional_arrangements/.

New Training Opportunity: An introduction to sustainability

Sustainability South West is now offering accredited 'Introduction to Sustainability' courses for members of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and local government officers. The new, one-day course introduces the basics of sustainability and the sustainability appraisal process. The course aims to demystify sustainability and provide practical experience and training for undertaking a sustainability appraisal in a real life strategy, plan or work programme. The training is suitable for anyone who works in local government and with LSPs, and is CPD accredited. Free follow up support and advice is also included. This is the first in a catalogue of accredited courses and workshops that SSW will offer to local authorities and other public and private sector organisations. For more information or to discuss your sustainability training needs contact clare.mitchell@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk or phone 0117 900 1751.



Doctors warn of risks of climate change

"Even the most conservative estimates are profoundly disturbing and demand action" writes the team of health, climate change and environmental scientists, together with lawyers, political scientists and economists. The study 'Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change', recently published following a two-year commission between The Lancet and University College London, is decisive in its report that climate change is now the 'biggest global health threat of the 21st Century'. The paper also stressed the need for urgent action, "It is going to affect you and it will certainly affect your children. While there is the injustice that the poorest will be worst affected, you will be affected too," said Prof Hugh Montgomery of UCL, one of the paper's authors. The medical profession had not previously taken a position on climate change, considering issues such as world poverty, HIV and bird flu to be more pressing threats to human health. For the study visit www.thelancet.com/climate-change.

Return of the natives!

The British countryside is being reinvigorated by the reintroduction of native species. The first British great bustards to be born in the wild since 1832 hatched last week, and two of Britain's best-loved mammals are back from the brink of extinction. The great bustard was wiped out by the spread of intensive farming and bird-egg collectors in the early 19th century, but its reintroduction is thanks to the efforts of David Walters, a former Wiltshire policeman, who reintroduced the birds on Salisbury Plain. The Hazel dormouse population dropped to approx 10,000, primarily due the loss of 50% of its habitat in England over the last 100 years. Loss of habitat and polluted rivers were also blamed for local extinctions of water voles, with the overall population decreasing by 90% in 10 years, to just 200,000 in 2000. But improvements in habitats and the removal of invasive predator species have lead to both mammals making a comeback, and water vole numbers back up to 500,000.



Sussed!

👍 **Hemp homes** A prototype three-bedroom house has gone on show as part of a government drive to build more housing with a smaller carbon footprint. The "renewable house" features walls made from Hemcrete - a mix of hemp and lime -and building it was cheaper and used half the energy than that of a traditional brick home. The National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC), which built the home, claims energy bills would be as low as £150 a year and that thousands of homes could be built this way, "If just 1% of the UK's agricultural land was used to grow hemp, it would be enough to build 180,000 homes per year." Hemp absorbs CO2 when it is growing, removing an estimated 110kg of CO2 from the atmosphere (the equivalent of a return Plymouth to Manchester flight) for every square metre of wall.

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/5419032/Hemp-homes-to-be-built-in-government-drive.html

So Last Century...

👎 **A fifth of reptiles and almost a quarter of amphibians in Europe are threatened with extinction** according to the European Commission. Most of the pressure the species in danger face comes from human destruction of their habitat, climate change, pollution and the presence of invasive species. To help amphibians in the UK, members of the public are being asked to register ponds, wetlands and even boggy areas in their backyard.

Sussed!

👍 Pioneering scheme to cut carbon in West of England University of the West of England and Bristol Zoo are among the first to sign up to the West of England Carbon Challenge, pledging to cut their emissions by a minimum of 10% by 2012. The Challenge targets businesses and public sector bodies across all sectors in a single region, asks them to commit to a fixed target for cutting carbon emissions and supports them with the practical guidance and resources they need to achieve those reductions.

www.forumforthefuture.org/west-of-england-carbon-challenge

👍 Bristol bus runs on chip fat FirstGroup has been running a six-month trial of a bus, branded 'The Chipper,' powered by bio-diesel from waste cooking oil provided by local chip shops & restaurants. If, as First expects, bio-diesel produces less smoke than conventional diesel, they will consider switching more vehicles to 100% bio-diesel.

www.imsplc.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=155&Itemid=125

👍 Social Enterprise Mark in the Arts The Watershed, a Bristol-based media centre, is the first arts organisation to be awarded a Social Enterprise Mark. The Mark offers social enterprises a simple way to inform customers about the wider social or environmental impacts they provide, reminding customers that by supporting a social enterprise they are helping people and the planet to benefit. Other regional recipients of the Mark include the Bristol Wood Recycling Project, Bosence Farm Community Cornwall, Devon Doctors and the Wolseley Trust. See

www.socialenterprisemark.co.uk

👍 Universities and Businesses Partner on Sustainability As part of the Expert South West service promoting collaborative work, two of the region's top universities have linked with local businesses. The University of the West of England partnered with Two Rivers Housing on the 'Action Through Innovation Project', allowing the housing provider to investigate methods of incorporating environmental technologies to improve the long-term sustainability of its housing stock. The University of Exeter worked with organic vegetable producer Riverford on a project to reduce Riverford's carbon footprint through innovative technologies. For these and more projects visit

www.expertsouthwest.com/successstories.aspx

So Last Century...

👎 Park and Ride to ruin meadow? Bath and North East Somerset council wants to build a park and ride for 1,400 cars on a historical meadow to the east of the city, though it lies within the green belt and is bordered by an area of natural beauty and a nature reserve. More than 500 people have written objecting to the £6m plan saying the scheme will ruin the meadows and become an eyesore visible from miles away. They are calling for the council to come up with more radical and more sustainable solutions. Natural England, the independent public body dedicated to protecting the urban and rural environment, has also raised concerns.

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/may/25/bath-meadows-car-park

👎 Fish stocks on the brink. The European Green Paper on Common Fisheries Policy reform admits that 88% of European fish stocks are overexploited and 30% have collapsed. It points to 'five structural failings that have led to the current situation: overcapacity, imprecise objectives, short-term decision-making, lack of responsibility of the industry and overall lack of compliance'.

On your radar?

New Climate Change Information Pack from the Forestry Commission England

"Trees and Climate Change" explains how trees can help us achieve a more sustainable future by using wood as a fuel, using more wood in building and making sure that our woodlands are well managed. It takes a closer look at how we can help our forests adapt to our future climate including thinking about new species, and meeting the challenges posed by tree pests and diseases, as well as investigating the ways in which trees can help us to adapt to a different climate. The pack was created for Forestry Commission education staff and is available on the Forestry Commission website: www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-7s7fc7. A hard copy can be obtained by emailing sarah.wilkinson@forestry.gov.uk.

"The End of the Line", the first major documentary film to reveal the impact of overfishing



Filed over two years, 'The End of the Line' shares firsthand the effects of the global love affair with fish as food. As well as exploring specific topics such as the imminent extinction of bluefin tuna brought on by increasing western demand for sushi, the film examines the profound implications of a future world without fish – including mass starvation. See www.endoftheline.com for more information.

Allotments on National Trust Land Good news for growers; the National Trust has announced that they are making some of their land available for use as allotments. Over 1,000 new plots will be developed in 40 different locations around the country, including Wembury in Devon. www.realfoodfestival.co.uk/content/view/179/. If you have 'growing' space to offer or are looking for places to grow your own food check out these websites: <http://landshare.channel4.com> and www.eatseasonably.co.uk.

The 2009 Green Awards for Excellence In Communicating Sustainability is Open for Entries

Now in its 4th year, the annual Green Awards were established to reward any organisation or individual communicating their sustainability in a creative, engaging and original way. The judging panel will consider design and media along with sustainability of approach and messaging, and entrants must also be able to demonstrate the positive impact of their campaigns. The deadline for entries is 18 September. For further details on categories and submission guidelines visit www.greenawards.com.



New Resources from the South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership (SWCCIP)

A Biodiversity and Climate Change Glossary has been developed by SWCCIP's Biodiversity Sector Group to help clarify some of the terms that are commonly used in reference to helping biodiversity adapt to climate change. Visit www.oursouthwest.com/climate/tools.htm#health. A dedicated Case Study page has been created, www.oursouthwest.com/climate/casestudies.htm.

LIFE+ Call for proposals The LIFE+ 2009 call for project proposals opened on 15 May with up to €250 million available for co-financing of projects. LIFE is the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects

throughout the EU. The deadline for proposals is 15 September and up to 50% of costs may be funded. Visit www.defra.gov.uk/environment/life/life-plus.htm or www.globaltolocal.com/G2L_LIFE+.php.

Community empowerment Local authorities now have a duty to 'inform, consult and engage' local communities in everything they do. To help councils and their partners implement this duty, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) has launched a new community empowerment resource to provide an introduction to community engagement and information on developing partnerships for community empowerment and practical ways to engage with the community. See: www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=7381994. **Gloucestershire County Council in pilot for citizens to influence local decision making** Ten pilot areas, including Gloucestershire County Council in the South West, are trialing new ways of informing citizens about services. As well as seeing an improvement in access to services, residents will benefit from more opportunities to influence local decision making as councils will have to be more transparent and accountable. The Council will create 18 online community notice boards to provide information on local services and allow people to contact service providers. www.wired-gov.net/wg/wg-news-1.nsf/lfi/172725.

Up & coming...



Bike Week, 13 - 21 June Bike Week is the UK's largest mass participation cycling event and provides an annual opportunity to promote cycling as a source of fitness and fun, not to mention an alternative form of transport. This year, Bike Week 2009 is encouraging everyone to 'get more out of life'- by getting on your bikes, exploring your local community and finding out just how convenient cycling is for all those short trips we make each day. More details at www.bikeweek.org.uk/. **Bristol's Biggest Bike Ride - Sunday 21 June** is a free family event hosted by Britain's first Cycling City to celebrate the end of Bike Week. For information visit: www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Transport-Streets/Walking-Cycling/bristols-biggest-bike-ride.en.jsessionid=A8758817E40FB4DA7835BC0C789A6B42.tcwwwaplaws1.

Sustainability South West and Fair Shares, Fair Choice Learning Lunch, 16 June, The Hub, Bush House, 72 Prince St, Bristol Sustainability South West charitable campaign **Fair Shares, Fair Choice** offers the principle of fair and safe carbon shares for everyone, to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Individuals, businesses and organisations can visit www.fairsharesfairchoice.com to Sign Up to the principle of 'fair shares' and for free resources and advice on how to make low carbon lifestyle and workplace choices. For an introduction to Sustainability South West and Fair Shares, Fair Choice and what it can do for you, visit The Hub Bristol for a 'Learning Lunch' on Tuesday 16 June. Telephone The Hub on 0117 370 0404.



A Sustainable Food Strategy For Bristol, 16-17 June, Bush House, 72 Prince St, Bristol

After two years' work, an ambitious Sustainable Food Strategy for Bristol has been developed. The Strategy sets out how the Bristol food network plans to support projects, organisations, businesses and individuals to work together to transform Bristol into a hub of sustainable food. 'Surgery style' consultation sessions will be held at Bush House on 16 June, 6-8pm (3rd floor) and 17 June, 12-2pm (The Hub's office, 5th floor). All are welcome to drop in during those times to learn more about the strategy. For more information, email bristolfoodhub@googlemail.com.

Transition Farms Seminar, 17 June, The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

'Agriculture 2050', is an RAC organised seminar focusing on how we will farm without fossil fuels. The day will consider 'the options for local agricultural and food production after fossil fuels have run out and climate change is really here.' As 95% of our food is oil dependent through energy-intensive agriculture and food supply chains, food prices and availability are directly affected by oil prices and climate change brings further uncertainty to difficult trading conditions for farmers. For information and booking form contact Beverley Allen: beverley.allen@rac.ac.uk.

Becoming an Accredited Eco-Refurbisher, 24 June, The CREATE Centre, Bristol

Are you...Concerned about how your business can survive in the downturn? Realising there is potential work in the domestic refurbishment sector now that people cannot afford to move house? Wanting to meet a growing demand for eco-refurbishment advice and services but currently lack the information and know-how? The Green Register, with RIBA South West and Wessex, are running the first in a series of training courses to provide information for construction professionals to advise clients on the sustainable refurbishment of their homes. Cost: £140 (Members)/£170. To book or for more info contact mail@greenregister.org.uk / 0117 3773490.

Sustainability, Arts & Mental Wellbeing Conference, 1 July, St Mathias Campus, UWE, Bristol

This event aims to explore the arts, sustainability and mental wellbeing and to demonstrate, through case studies, how the arts can contribute to the care and inequalities agenda. It will also investigate how to embed evidence about arts, mental wellbeing and sustainability in health policy and practice. For more information please visit www.artsandhealthsouthwest.org.uk/membersmeetings.cfm?page_id=1558.

The Sustainable Business in Practice Expo, 10 July, Future Inn, Cabot Circus, Bristol

This conference is designed to help organisations develop winning green business strategies, which both improve environmental performance and meet financial and commercial goals. Visit www.sustainablebizexpo.com.

The Big Lunch, 19 July

Imagine a summer's day on which millions of us, throughout the UK, sit down to have lunch together, with our neighbours in the middle of our streets, around our tower blocks and on every patch of common ground. The food, entertainment and decorations we will have either grown, cooked, or created ourselves. Sharing and collaborating is key to the success of The Big Lunch, an event championed by the Eden Project to persuade every street and hamlet in the country to sit down and take traditional Sunday lunch together on 19 July. For events near you or to register your own Big Lunch visit www.thebiglunch.com.



Over to YOU

Remember – we're your independent sustainability champs – and as an independent charity we're here to act as a critical friend for the common good. If you're involved in action for sustainability – let us know and we can champion it! Equally if you're experiencing barriers to adopting a more sustainable approach let us know so we can feed back messages on your behalf. Also let us know about local and regional events coming up over the next month for inclusion in the next edition. **Contact us at** info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

Deadline for submissions: close of Friday 26 June 2009

Other news from SSW available from: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

Regular updates on **SSW coordinated projects** available:

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – the SW's growing low carbon movement

www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainability Shaper – the SW's sustainable development framework

www.shapersw.net

Planting Places – networks for SW urban greenspace project

www.plantingplaces.org.uk

Feedback: As a network of influential individuals your feedback on *Sustainability Now* is very valuable. Send comments to info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk (let us know if colleagues would like to be added to the e-distribution list).

Back issues: at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability_now

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Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of SSW's membership as a whole.

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