

Welcome to *Sustainability Now* – 1st anniversary issue!

Sustainability in a recession?



It looks more and more likely that the UK (and most of the rest of the world) will have to endure some degree of economic recession, brought on by the 'credit crunch' and the rising price of oil. When things get tough though and people's primary concern is the cost of fuel, food and housing, and when business confidence and job security is falling, will we see the end of personal and corporate investment in sustainability?

Perhaps surprisingly, this is not the response advocated by business leaders and politicians. Just this month, the Conservative leader David Cameron made the case that even in a time of recession we needed to find a way to combine economic, social and environmental progress, and that "it's not that we can't afford to go green - it's that we can't afford not to go green".

Similarly, Richard Lambert (Director-General of the CBI) warned that there must be no let-up in the drive to improve the environmental performance of business - in spite of the economic slowdown. Focusing on energy, he added that the economic, environmental and political case for developing alternative sources was becoming more compelling by the day, and "an economic opportunity on a scale that has not been seen before".

That sentiment appears to be borne out in company results, as those that embrace sustainability can build a business that is more efficient, and more 'recession resistant'. Those pursuing more sustainable technologies are still seeing their business grow, for example revenue from 'alternative energy' in the US went up by 40% in 2007, to over \$77 billion (Clean Energy Trends 2008). (See Sust'Ometer below as well)

There might also be some benefits from a recession, as reduced consumption could mean less waste, fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and less pressure on resources. Evidence of changes in behaviour are already emerging in the US, with significant cuts in flights, growing use of public transport, and plummeting sales of SUVs. Let us know how (or whether) you think sustainability can increase our resilience to the effects of the latest recession.

This month's *Sustainability Now* headlines at a glance:

◆ *NHS launches carbon reduction plan & consultation* ◆ *Sustaining a Healthy Future: taking action on climate change* ◆ *Fair Shares, Fair Choice surpasses 1,000 sign-ups* ◆ *Nature loss will hurt global poor the most* ◆ *Ministers act to protect Lyme Bay sea life* ◆ *Sust'Ometer* ◆ *On your radar?* ◆ *Up & Coming* ◆ *Over to YOU*

As a network of influential individuals your feedback on *Sustainability Now* is very valuable. You can send comments to info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk and view back issues at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability_now (let us know if you've colleagues who need adding to our e-distribution list).

NHS pledges to reduce its carbon footprint by 60% – and asks for your views on its plans!

The NHS has just launched a (draft) Carbon Reduction Strategy, aiming to cut its emissions of CO₂ by 60% by 2050. The proposals in the strategy cover all areas of the NHS, including procurement, travel and energy use and set out ways that reductions could be achieved. As the NHS is currently responsible for approximately 3% of England's total CO₂ emissions this is a significant opportunity, and challenge. The draft strategy document has been developed by the NHS Sustainable Development Unit, which has also launched a consultation on the proposals. Everyone has been encouraged to contribute to the consultation whether they are doctors, nurses, patients or visitors, and has until 21 August to respond. More details at: http://www.sdu.nhs.uk/get_involved/carbon_reduction_feedback.php

Sustaining a healthy future: taking action on climate change

The Faculty of Public Health has just published a pocket guide to taking action on climate change, written by Jenny Griffiths and Lindsey Stewart. *Sustaining a Healthy Future – taking action on climate change* urges those in the health and healthcare community to take the lead in tackling climate change and promoting sustainable development. It shows how organisations such as the NHS are ideally placed to use their immense spending power to make sustainable choices in its energy, building and transport policies. And provide a powerful example to others on reducing carbon emissions and promoting a healthy, sustainable future. To access the guide and additional information visit, http://www.fph.org.uk/resources/sustainable_development/sustaining_a_healthy_future.asp

Fair Shares, Fair Choice surpasses 1,000 sign-ups on World Environment Day!

SSW was on the (sustainably travelled) road in June offering members of the public exclusive *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* carbon cards which show what a climate safe and fair carbon share is for everyone who lives in the South West region. And on World Environment Day (5 June) *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* topped 1,000 sign-ups backing the principle of a 'fair world share' of carbon for everyone.



All sectors are showing their support for the principle of 'a globally fair and safe carbon share for all.' Supporters include local councils; South West MPs; local and big businesses; schools; universities; national parks, AONB's and wildlife trusts; charities; community groups; hundreds of local residents; celebrities and most recently nearly 200 local councillors from all the major political parties! Sign up at: www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Nature loss will hurt global poor the most

A recently released report has found that damage to the natural world, including forests, rivers and marine life, could halve the living standards of the world's poor and reduce global GDP by about 7% over the next 40 years. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) review was released at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) meeting in Bonn, where 60 leaders have pledged to halt deforestation by 2020. It is modelled on the Stern Review in hope that it will 'talk to governments' about biodiversity in a way that other reports could not, because it was written by and for economists. However, putting a monetary value on natural systems and biodiversity is probably much more difficult than putting a cost on climate change. This is compounded by the fact that the 7% figure is largely based on loss of forests, and the costs of losing some other ecosystems have barely been quantified. The project's leader, Pavan Sukhdev, pointed out that the major beneficiaries of nature and natural systems are the world's poor, so any loss or disruption of natural systems would impact them the hardest. For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/index_en.htm

Ministers act to protect Lyme Bay sea life

One of the UK's finest marine wildlife sites is set to be protected from damaging scallop-dredging, thanks to the introduction of a 60sq mile exclusion zone in Lyme Bay - the first of its kind on this scale in the UK.

Ministers banned damaging types of fishing in 60 square nautical miles of sea off the South West coast to protect threatened sea life. About 10% of Lyme Bay will be permanently closed to scallop dredgers and bottom trawlers to safeguard the area's rich marine life and habitats. Lyme Bay is home to world-renowned reefs as well as important species including pink sea fans, sunset cup corals and several rare sponges.

The recovery of species and habitats in the closed area, as well as social and economic impacts, will be monitored closely. Paul Gompertz, Devon Wildlife Trust's director, said: "This is one small step for marine but one giant leap for marine-kind. It finally acknowledges that our seas need vital life-support systems like Lyme Bay reefs. The Government is to be congratulated on a bold step. Now we need to see the exclusions enforced." Simon Cripps, chief executive for Dorset Wildlife Trust, said: "This decision represents a landmark for both wildlife protection and sustainable fishing, showing that there is potential for conservation and fishing interests to work together in the future." www.devonwildlifetrust.org/index.php?section=news&id=2429



Sussed!

Positive choices triumph over cost. The economic downturn has failed to deter consumers from buying eco-friendly products, new research claims. Despite credit concerns and rising commodities prices, 80% of 'green' shoppers remain committed to ethical purchases, even though it could mean adding an estimated £12 to the monthly food bill. The Virgin Money study found under-25s and retirees were the most likely to eco-shop. Spokesman Scott Mowbray said: "The research shows that concern for the environment is not a passing fad and consumers are prepared to make other sacrifices in order to stay green."

Stirling aims to be first carbon-neutral city. Stirling in Scotland is aiming to become the UK's first carbon neutral city. It has just received funding of £1.25m from the Scottish Government and the Lottery for the community-led project, Going Carbon Neutral Stirling (GCNS). The target is to bring down average annual carbon dioxide levels from 12 tonnes, (the Scottish average), to one tonne per person per year. Locals will be encouraged to turn down washing machines, switch off lights and change shopping habits to buy local and seasonal produce.

Green Gown Awards in the SW. The University of Gloucestershire and Somerset College of Arts and Technology are both winners of the national awards which celebrate 'best practice in energy and environmental management'. Gloucestershire University clinched the award in the 'continuous improvement category.' The Genesis Centre at Somerset College was rewarded for its sustainable construction courses. For more info visit: <http://www.heepi.org.uk>

Combating sweatshops! In early June, Primark (the cut-price fashion chain) axed three of its south Indian suppliers for subcontracting embroidery work to groups using child labour, after a BBC documentary unearthed the problem. Campaigners demonstrating outside Primark's flagship London branch, accused the fashion chain of behaving irresponsibly in response to allegations of child labour in its overseas suppliers.

Please contact SSW for more info on the source of any story

So last century...

Majority doubt cause of climate change. The British public is still not convinced that climate change is caused by humans - and many believe scientists are exaggerating the problem, according to an exclusive poll for The Observer. The results shocked campaigners who hoped that doubts would have been silenced by the 'definitive' report last year by UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which found a 90 per cent chance that humans were the main cause of climate change and warned that drastic action was needed to cut greenhouse gases. Many of those surveyed did not want to restrict their lifestyles and only a small minority believe they needed to make radical changes such as driving and flying less. It's disappointing and the government will be really worried,' said Jonathon Porritt, chair of the Sustainable Development Commission. The Observer (22 June, front page, p.7)

Disappearing Farming. UK farming could soon be a thing of the past unless training is overhauled to attract new recruits. Lantra, the sector skills council for environmental and land-based trades, put forward this doomsday scenario, pointing out that 15,900 farming jobs are being lost every year and that 38% of the agricultural workforce is expected to retire within the next 10 years.

Climate Change Refugees. The UN has warned that conflicts around the world fuelled by climate change are causing a new refugee crisis. The head of the UN refugee agency claimed they are helping to drive the number of people forced out of their homes to new highs. The changing climate and environmental disasters are now displacing more people than all the world's wars combined. Desertification, water shortages, prolonged droughts, failing farmland and floods are all pushing up levels of migration and are, in extreme cases, sparking conflicts of their own. The Guardian & Edie (17 June)

On your radar?

Global business leaders call for greenhouse gas targets. A coalition of ninety-nine major global companies is asking political leaders to set targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and to establish a global carbon market. Their blueprint for tackling climate change is being handed to Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda ahead of July's G8 summit in Japan. Companies involved include Alcoa, British Airways (BA), Deutsche Bank, EDF, Petrobras, Shell and Vattenfall. They argue that cutting emissions must be made to carry economic advantages. The business leaders hope their ideas will feed through the G8 into the series of UN climate meetings that are aiming to produce a successor to the Kyoto Protocol when its current targets expire in 2012.

Government launches new consultation on how to meet renewable energy targets. This new consultation (opening 26 June) seeks views on how to drive up the use of renewable energy in the UK, as part of the UK strategy for tackling climate change and to meet our share of the EU target to source 20% of the EU's energy from renewable sources by 2020. Responses to the consultation will help shape the UK Renewable Energy Strategy which will be published in Spring 2009. The consultation is available online, at <http://renewableconsultation.berr.gov.uk/> and is open until 26 September.

EU plans to scrap uniformity laws. Misshapen and blemished fruit and veg are likely to find their way back on to supermarket shelves - although they may be labelled "for cooking" under reforms being proposed by the EU's Danish Agriculture commissioner, Mariann Fischer Boel. Ms Fischer Boel wants to abandon the eccentric rules that brought scorn on the EU and led to criticism that perfectly formed harvests had been achieved at the expense of taste. There are also concerns about the amount of perfectly edible food being thrown away.

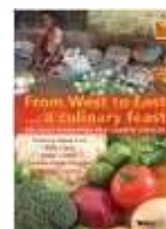
A new '**Food and Sustainability Research Forum**' is being established to help researchers working in this field to share ideas and exchange information. The forum, for those undertaking academic work in the area of food and sustainability, will be supported by a mailing list and on-line discussion forum. The premise is to provide a forum for researchers to make contact and share ideas in the hope that it will facilitate a useful dialogue between researchers working in this area. If you would be interested in joining the group, please email FASRF-request@jiscmail.ac.uk or visit the Food Climate Research Network <http://www.fcrn.org.uk/featuredOrgs/features/>

DCFS releases new SD action plan. The new Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) 2008-2010 has been prepared by the DCFS to show how it will fulfil its obligations to deliver Government policy in relation to children and their families in a way that is in harmony with sustainable development. The plan covers the whole of the DCSF's remit, from the way it operates its buildings, through to policy and DCSF's work on supporting schools and children's services. It is underpinned by detailed delivery plans covering sustainable operations, sustainable schools and children's wellbeing. DCSF invites comments and feedback. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/aboutus/sd/actionplan.shtml>

Sustainable Development in the Higher Education sector The Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) has published a consultation on an updated strategic statement and action plan on SD in the Higher Education (HE) sector. It is available at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/> The four roles identified for HEFCE in its first sustainable development strategy (HEFCE 2005/28) are engaging with stakeholders to bring about policy synergies on sustainable development; building the capacity of people to manage sustainable development; sharing good practice, or supporting the development of good practice where none exists; rewarding more sustainable behaviour. Consultation events are to be held in July in London & Manchester <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/events/2008/sustain>

Bristol appointed the UK's first official Cycling City. Bristol and 11 Cycling Demonstration Towns across England have succeeded in winning a share of a record £100m investment package to pioneer innovative ways to increase cycling. Proposals include improving cycling infrastructure, increasing bike parking provision and cycle training and promoting the benefits of cycling. The funding aims to encourage 2.5 million more adults and children to take up cycling, improve their fitness and beat the traffic. Bristol wants to double the number of people cycling over the next three years, through "creating the UK's first on-street bike rental network, establishing a 're-cycling' scheme, providing free bikes to those in deprived communities; building a state-of-the-art facility for cyclists in the city centre providing showers, bike parking and lockers so commuters can have a wash and brush up before starting work; creating a dedicated cycleway to link the suburbs with the city centre; opening up new, safer options for commuters & more than doubling the number of children receiving cycling training." For more info see: <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Transport-Streets/Walking-Cycling/cycling-in-bristol/bristol---englands-first-cycling-city.en>

From West to East... a culinary feast is an exciting new charity recipe book celebrating tasty food made simply with fresh local ingredients. With recipes from some of the best celebrity chefs in the region, profits from the book will be donated to WaterAid, working to provide clean, safe water for the many millions of people who live and cook every day without this basic necessity. The recipes in the book link great West Country food with recipes from countries in Africa and Asia where WaterAid works. Eat locally - and think globally. Cost £5.99 from selected bookshops or order direct from Jessie Burgess on 01208 265166



Up & coming...

Change Your World until 5 July

Join in Sustrans' campaign to swap one car trip for a walk, cycle ride or use of public transport to reduce car traffic by 10% <http://changeyourworld.org.uk/>

ACCESS 08 Easy Ways to Win 4 July, Bristol Marriott Royal Hotel

The South West RDA, in conjunction with South West Tourism and Tourism for All, is hosting a free conference on accessibility in tourism. The conference is aimed at anyone involved in the tourism industry and will provide advice and guidance on how businesses can take simple steps to improve their offer to visitors with disabilities and their families. It will celebrate good practice, offer access to experienced experts & build the business case for preparing the industry to meet requirements in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. Speakers at this year's event include Danny Crates, T46 arm amputee 800m Paralympic Champion. Places at this event are limited. Contact Dawn James: dawn.james@southwestrda.org.uk or call on 01392 229393

Climate change: I can change the future touring exhibition 18 July

Dartmoor National Park Authority has organised a major new family exhibition, with interactive games, recycled art, activities and events. The exhibition provides detailed information on the issues and potential impacts of climate change globally, nationally, in the SW of England and on Dartmoor, and also enables children to learn about the issues through play. Children can also log on to Dartmoor National Park Authority's new interactive game - Change Your World. A Change Your World Activity Fun booklet and a large Change Your World wooden jigsaw have been developed by the National Park Authority for younger children and will also be part of the exhibition. The National Park Authority has also organised a series of special guided walks and events and an opportunity to pledge to do your bit for our planet. The exhibition will be on display at the High Moorland Visitor Centre, Princetown until 10 October 2007 and will then be on tour, visiting venues around the SW in 2008 and 2009. www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

Westcountry Energy Action training courses throughout July

The charity is running three one day training courses in Exeter in July to work to reduce the impact of climate change and fuel poverty, and to support the economic regeneration of our communities through the development and delivery of sustainable energy policy and practice.

Renewable Energy Basics 11 July looks at the use of small scale renewable energy technology in their home or local community.

Understanding Fuel Poverty & Energy Awareness 18 July provides an understanding of the causes and effects of fuel poverty and what national and local government is doing to help solve the problem. It also provides attendees with information about basic home energy efficiency and what grants and services are available for householders.

Energy Champions 25 July will provide heads of departments, team leaders and managers with the information they need to enable them to promote energy and resource savings in their departments. Using case studies from a variety of organisations the course looks at various ways in which energy and money can be saved and examines how managers can motivate staff to ensure their continued commitment to making long term savings.

Cost per workshop: £99 + VAT for professionals or £49 + VAT for registered charities. Spaces are limited to 12 per course. Contact Tony Merrick tony@wcea.org.uk or call 01752 235183

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. You can also tell us about local and regional events coming up over the next month so we can include this in the next edition *Sustainability Now*.

Contact us at: info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk **Deadline for submissions: close of Wednesday 25 June.**

Other news from Sustainability South West

More SSW news available on our new look website at:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

...regular updates on SSW coordinated projects available from:

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

www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainability Shaper – the SW's regional sustainable development framework

www.shapersw.net

Future Foundations – the SW's sustainable construction charter

www.futurefoundations.co.uk

Future Footprints – the SW's sustainable tourism visitor campaign

www.futurefootprints.org.uk

Planting Places – networks for SW urban greenspace project

www.plantingplaces.org.uk

Sustainability Now is a monthly bulletin from Sustainability South West, 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.'

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