

April 2010

SustainabilityNow is the monthly bulletin from Sustainability South West (SSW), the region's independent Champion Body for sustainable development. SSW is a registered charity and its Mission is:

'To champion and assist action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: resilient, healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits.'

Decision time...on sustainability As voters run out of time to make up their minds on which ideas they feel will offer the best path ahead, Sustainability South West is promoting the new, free SustNav decision-making toolkit as a guide to help everyone. An agreed set of sustainability principles will be a sound basis for any new administration and indeed an indispensable tool should hung parliament negotiations be required.

This special edition of Sustainability Now takes a look at the three main party manifestos through the lens of the 10 SustNav Sustainability Principles. To help make your own mind up, visit www.SustNav.org.uk.



If we are to meet the big new challenges of the 21st Century, Sustainability – with its holistic goal for a healthy, productive, resilient, socially-just nation that is living within environmental limits – must surely be the central organising principle that charts the way ahead, whoever leads us there....

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Do the Main Party Manifestos Measure Up on Sustainability?

Sustainability means being healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits. Sustainability South West has used the 10 SustNav Sustainability Principles (www.SustNav.org.uk) to 'measure up' the three main Party Manifesto's:



Develop sustainability skills: Learn and share the 'why' and 'how' of sustainability. Lead the way and inspire others to follow.

This key principle seems to be a missed opportunity across the manifestos – with big changes on the way on energy & food prices and security and climate change impacts – investment in new sustainability skills – especially for those looking for more secure work must feature in future plans as money invested here will reap security and savings for the nation.



Improve health and well-being: Support healthy homes and workplaces; safe and green environments; and active, caring communities.

Other than some mention of more health checks as a preventative health measure, mainstream policies to promote healthy lifestyles for well-being – the best form of prevention – seem very thin on the ground. For example, relatively low cost measures for active travel like making it easier and safer for most people to walk and cycle to access goods, services, schools and workplaces would represent excellent value as a low carbon way of saving healthcare costs associated with obesity and low levels of physical activity.



Reduce inequalities: *Reduce inequalities at home and abroad, in access to: basic goods and services; work, learning and leisure opportunities; and a decent home.*

All of the main parties are keen to emphasise plans to increase 'fairness.' The manifestos all have some policies which aim to assist the most disadvantaged including those on the lowest incomes.

However – with financial and natural resources under enormous pressure – all the manifestos must recognise that many people are simply living beyond available means and this will create increasing inequality especially for the generations to come. 'Fair shares' must be introduced.



Cut resource use: *Use less and cut carbon (and other greenhouse gas) emissions, water use, waste, and pollution; use materials wisely including increasing the use of renewable energy.*

At last all of the main manifestos recognise the sense of acting to be more efficient with the use of our limited natural resources both to save costs, increase efficiency and help to reduce dangerous climate change impacts. This principle though must apply to all areas of policy to achieve the levels of saving now urgently required. Manifestos need to be clearer about all those environmentally inefficient activities that must now be wound down and replaced.



Support low carbon economies: *Support a low carbon approach to economic development – including jobs, innovation and enterprise, built development and renewable energy generation.*

All the manifestos now recognise the potential of the 'green' or 'low carbon' economy and that investment in this transition is crucial to secure our economic future. The common sense of creating training and jobs that will help to make our homes more energy and water efficient and cheaper to run and increase renewable energy is an undeniable 'win win' on sustainability. Again though the manifestos need to be consistent about this principle and use it to identify where high carbon growth must be reversed and support given to those working in high carbon sectors to gain the skills to transfer to the emerging new low carbon sector – where Britain's future prosperity lies.



Reduce high carbon travel: *Support low carbon access including walking, cycling, efficient public transport, ICT access and mobile/local service delivery. Fly as a last resort.*

In the last Century we all became reliant on high carbon travel and transport so applying this important principle will require some of the greatest change to our lives in the 21st Century and strong leadership. It demands a considerable switch in investment from high carbon transport including aviation and car travel to low carbon travel to reduce the need to travel and to create communities which prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in accessing, work, education and services. However, there will also be plenty of benefits in the long run – from healthier lifestyles to more resilient local economies. All the manifestos must support a new hierarchy of travel which favours investment and innovation in low carbon travel and access options.



Live local: *Use local goods and services and nurture and celebrate the distinctiveness, diversity and heritage that make a place special.*

There is recognition in the manifestos of the wider sustainability benefits of 'localism.' There is mention of support for local food networks and 'grow your own' schemes. There is recognition and support for maintaining and enhancing local rural community hubs like post offices. There is also some support for setting up locally owned energy companies. Given the increasing concerns about energy and food security – support and infrastructure for more resilient, self reliant communities ought to be a much stronger sustainability priority for all the manifestos.



Revive our life support systems: *Protect and support our natural 'life support systems' – air, water, land and overall biodiversity.*

This is another sustainability principle which is still undervalued as one of the big drivers for policy in the 21st century. Our well-being and very survival depends on the application of this principle! Whilst the manifestos have some attractive policies – they need to go further in mainstreaming this principle and get tough on activities which threatened to undermine our natural life support systems. A 'Cinderella' here is the provision of urban green space networks which will be increasing vital to achieving a sustainable way of life in our towns and cities.



Be inclusive: *Support wider, more informed participation in local and global challenges. Involve all affected groups in decisions and developments.*

All the manifestos feature policies on greater community involvement from the notion of a 'Big Society' to support for Community Land Trusts and Social Enterprises. There is a huge need for government together with the people to have honest & open debates about the changes we will all need to make to secure a more resilient sustainable future. More emphasis on facilitating shared decision making on the changes we need at local and national levels is needed in the manifestos.



Think long term: *Take account of changes on the horizon – including climate change – and think in a joined up way to arrive at more resilient solutions*

This principle is the essence of sustainability and above all requires strong, responsible leadership. Potential leaders can find it the most challenging principle to apply because voting cycles are relatively short term. With very big changes on the horizon including climate change impacts, food & energy security issues, the need for more preventative health measures and new ways to support the ageing population – all in a time when financial and natural resources are under huge pressure – the manifestos must ensure their domestic and foreign policies are more joined up and offer stronger plans for the transition to more genuinely sustainable ways of living and working.



SustNav Endorsement – Join the List

The SustNav Sustainability Principles have already been endorsed by a growing number of organisations including: Bordeaux Quay, Commercial Group, Devon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency SW, Equality South West, Forum for the Future, Friends of the Earth SW, National Trust, Natural England, NHS Trust South West, NIACE, South Somerset Together, South West RDA, South West TUC, South West Forum and Wessex Water – contact Freiny.Miles@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk to join the list.

Sustainability South West is now challenging political parties to endorse the SustNav sustainability principles in the interest of the common good and if they do not endorse the principles we will be asking - why not?!

Watch this space...

www.SustNav.org.uk offers 10 [Sustainability Principles](#) to help you to navigate along the best path. The full website is launching soon with advice from social, economic and environmental organisations to tease out the BIG issues and offer specialist guidance. But the workplace [Sustainability Checklist](#) and [Assessment Toolkit](#) are ready now so you can improve your plan or project! You can also watch a 10 minute introductory film, with interviews on turning sustainability principles into action.

Follow SustNav on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/sustnav>.

Main Parties Launch their 'Green Manifestos'

Green manifesto's are now available from the three main parties. Labour's green manifesto is: 'A Green Future Fair for All'; the Liberal Democrat's is: 'Policies for the Environment' and the Conservatives: 'Quality of Life Agenda'.

Top Decision Makers asked to What Extent Sustainability Influences Decision Making?

SSW, on behalf of Defra, is looking at the capacity for and influence of sustainability in the South West. Do sustainability principles influence our key decisions in the region? Through a series of questionnaires, interviews and events, SSW has gained an insight into the level of engagement with sustainability in the region. To what extent sustainability is embedded in our decision making processes? How far prepared we are for the transition to a low carbon economy? A full report will be available shortly. See below for presentations delivered at SSW's annual Local to Regional Forum event, "Under Pressure".

Under Pressure... Sustainability South West conference presentations available

Last month, SSW held an event posing the question 'With evermore limited financial and natural resources, how can leaders support more socially, environmentally and economically efficient and resilient communities?' Presentations are available at: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/projects/local_to_regional/.



Natural Economy: Unlocking the Economic Value of the Natural Environment in the South West Region, 10 May, Exeter



This second, **free**, master class, organised by Sustainability South West and Natural England, is an opportunity for all those engaged with investment for and delivery of green infrastructure (GI) across the South West to further explore and share the multi-functional benefits that GI provides. With learning from national academics and experts, delegates will explore issues and apply knowledge to their places, helping to ensure more effective delivery of GI in new or regenerated places and communities across the South West. The class is suitable for specialists, strategists and managers in business, social and environmental sectors; including housing, land management, planning, community development, sustainable development, education and tourism. The Key Class Leader is: Will Williams, Director, Natural Economy Northwest. For more information and the booking form, go to:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/news/green_infrastructure_master_class_series_-_urban_food_and_natural_economy/.

Government Micro-Renewables Feed in Tariff

As of 1 April, individuals and organisations can cash-in on low carbon electricity they produce using green technologies such as wind turbines or solar panels. The average household uses about 4,500 kilowatt hours of electricity per year. If 50% were to be generated through micro-renewables, the producer could receive a payment of up to £800 per year tax-free, depending on the type of technology. A similar scheme for renewable sources of heat, the Renewable Heat Incentive, is planned for 2011.

Agenda for Action on Climate Change

Over the past few months the Green Alliance has convened a panel of experts to draw up an agenda for action on climate change in the new Parliament. The agenda will show priorities and highlight where progress is needed. To view the report, go to: www.greenalliance.org.uk/lastparliament/.

Threats of Air Pollution on Our Health

According to a report by the UK House of Commons Environmental Audit Commission, 50 000 people maybe dying prematurely every year from the inhalation of tiny particles of sulphate, carbon and dust from the burning of diesel and other fuels. People living in pollution hot spots are at most risk and could stand to have their lives shortened as much as 9 years. The UK could face fines of up to £300 million for being in breach of the European regulations on particle emissions. To read more visit:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmenvaud.htm.

The Sust'ometer

Sussed!

Fruit and wildlife saved by restoration of orchards Ancient orchards have been in decline since the 1950's. In an effort to increase traditional fruit production and the wildlife habitats they support, the National Trust and Natural England are restoring many of England's ancient orchards.

Green Gown Awards 2010 The Green Gown Awards recognise sustainable initiatives being undertaken by UK universities and colleges. Categories include Social Responsibility, Procurement and Research & Development. Sixty-six projects have been shortlisted from institutions across the UK, including from the University of Exeter, University of Gloucestershire, University of the West of England, University of Plymouth, City College Plymouth and The Arts University College at Bournemouth, in the South West. For more information visit:

www.eauc.org.uk/green_gown_awards_2010.

Hotel model of sustainability The Crown Plaza Copenhagen Towers Hotel already boasts the largest solar panel park in Northern Europe and a ground water based cooling and heating system, they are now piloting a new scheme to generate electricity through the use of their exercise bikes. If guests produce 10 watt hours of electricity they are awarded a free meal.

Congratulations to SSW Board Member Dr Stephen Sterling for his new appointment as Chair in Sustainability Education at the University of Plymouth.

So Last Century...

'Green' politics? Despite 'green' credentials being claimed from all the main political parties you may have spotted that some campaigning activity is being delivered via jet transport and policies that include airport expansion...

Human impact upon wildlife Sir Richard Attenborough has recently spoken out about humanity's impacts on the UK's wildlife. In new book 'Silent Summer' he warns that the destruction of our wildlife could be the next great environmental disaster as pesticides, population growth and intensive farming all take their toll.

SW Consultations

Consultations open for responses which could impact on sustainability in the region & wider

Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment

CLG, Open: Now, Close: 01/06/10

This consultation sets out planning policies on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, green infrastructure, open space and land and related facilities for sport, recreation and play. To respond, see:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/naturalenvironmentconsultation

Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate

CLG, Open: Now, Close: 01/06/10

This consultation seeks views on the proposal to combine and update planning policy on climate change and renewable energy. It considers the role of planning - in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change and the challenges in planning for low carbon communities. To respond, see:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/ppsclimateconsultation

On Your Radar?

State of the South West 2010 and State of the Environment 2010

The new edition of the State of the South West, comprising contributions from around the South West Observatory network, has just been published online and in hard copy. To access the online version, please click visit: <http://swo-portal.limehouse.co.uk/portal/sotsw/>. The State of the Environment 2010 report is also now available on its own web portal: <http://swo-portal.limehouse.co.uk/portal/sote/soe2010>.

Prospects for the South West Economy report

A new South West Select Committee report states that the South West economy has shown some resilience to the recession but that some small businesses are finding it difficult to compete. The report also looks at opportunities for green industries, the importance of small and micro businesses and the need for greater broadband coverage throughout the region. Read more at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmswest/355/355.pdf.

Reducing CO2 Emissions: Best Practice Video Interview online

The BNE TV and the University of the West of England have come together again to produce an interview video between Lex Cumber from MI Space and John Savage, a senior lecturer from UWE. They discuss the opportunities and challenges of reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions in the social housing sector. See: www.bne.uwe.ac.uk/cpe/bnetv/mispace/default.asp.

Fancy £1000 worth of free advertising?

The Social Enterprise Mark allows social enterprises to promote their credentials to customers. Anyone who applies for the Social Enterprise Mark by 14 May stands a chance to win £1000 worth of free advertising! See: www.rise-sw.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=1090.

Innovation Exchange searching for applicants for their Green Next Practice programme

The Innovation Exchange Green Next Practice programme now includes the environment. The programme helps third sector innovation projects reduce carbon emissions. Third sector projects working to green public services can apply until 2 June. For more information, visit:

www.rise-sw.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=1087.

Journal – Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews (WIRES): Climate Change

A new journal covering all aspects of climate change, including history, science, geography, sociology, economics, policy, ethics and psychology. Online content is free for the first year, see: <http://wires.wiley.com/climatechange>.

Regional Equality Maps - put your organisation on the map

Equality South West is inviting voluntary, community and social enterprise Third Sector organisations to take advantage of regional equality maps - www.equalitysouthwest.org.uk. The maps show Third Sector organisations that work, support or provide advice, guidance and voice in the field of equality in the South West. If your organisation or group, or an organisation you know, would benefit from being on the maps (there is no cost to be added), contact Jack Horwood at: jack.horwood@equalitysouthwest.

Truly Green companies?

The New Scientist Magazine has just revealed an investigation into the green ethics of company's. Although some company's may say they're green does this really mean they are? Making green purchases could help create a green economy but without the knowledge of the true impacts company's have on the environment how do we know where to buy? To find out more visit:

www.newscientist.com/special/green-companies.

Local renewables web portal launched

The Local Governments for Sustainability have launched the Local Renewables Web Portal, a wide ranging collection of information and resources on renewable energy sources at a local level. It also presents local actions, plans and processes that provide guidance to local governments as well as tips on how to become a 'Local Renewables Model Community'. To read more visit: www.local.ren21.net/.

Up & Coming...Events around the region

Green Office Week, until 30 April

Green Office Week offers ideas to make your office greener with a different theme each day plus competitions, webinars, blogs and lots of expert advice. Go to: www.greenofficeweek.eu.

Hydrogen: Its role in a renewable world & especially in Bristol, 3-5pm, 29 April, Bush House, Bristol

The Schumacher Institute will be exploring how Hydrogen might fit into the future energy supply mix through exploring the economic and infrastructure implications. To attend, call 0117 927 3200 or email: ian@schumacherinstitute.org.uk.

Power to the Farm: Energy Independence for the Farm, 13 May, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

Organised by the South West Rural Update - introduces farm scale technologies now available for generating power and investigates costs, possible funding streams and the long term benefits. £50 for members and £100 non-members. Visit www.rac.ac.uk/?_id=4830.

Becoming an Eco-furbisher, 13 May, Create Centre, Bristol

Course provides professionals with information to advise clients on sustainable home refurbishment . See: www.greenregister.org.uk.

Coastal Planning, 21 May, RNLI, Poole

RTPI South West event on opportunities for renewable energy sources from waves, tides and offshore winds in the face of a changing climate, predicted to heighten the risk of tidal flooding and coastal erosion, and change our ecology and landscapes. Guest speakers will consider implications of the new Marine Bill Price: £75 (concessions available). To book, visit: www.rtpi.org.uk/ct/EVENT/863/11/events/863.

Bristol Eco Veggie Fayre, 29-30 May, Waterfront and Millennium Square, Bristol

Two day outdoor event with stalls, food and live music. Visit: <http://bristol.ecoveggiefayre.co.uk/>.

Entrepreneurship for Sustainability: Applying your Enterprising Spirit to Achieve Sustainable Benefit, 11 June, University of Gloucestershire

Free master class (open to staff, students and local businesses) exploring how innovative skills and behaviours can support sustainable development. Email Seek Pang, spang@glos.ac.uk, by 17 May.

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, get in touch so we can feedback messages on your behalf. And let us know about local and regional events coming up over the next month for inclusion in the next edition. **Contact Freiny Miles at freiny.miles@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk. Deadline for submissions: close of 24 May 2010.**

Other news from SSW available from:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

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

SustNav – Sustainability Principles to navigate your way to lasting solutions www.SustNav.org.uk

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – campaign for fair, safe carbon shares for all www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainable Health SW – supporting the region's NHS trusts www.sustainablehealthsw.org.uk

Planting Places – linking greenspace and sustainability in the SW www.plantingplaces.org.uk

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