

Sustainability Now

October-November 2007



Welcome to Sustainability Now

On Monday 29th Environment Secretary, Hilary Benn set out details of a 'strengthened' Climate Change Bill. Informed by consultation and parliamentary scrutiny, the amended Bill will include a mandate for the new Climate Change Committee to address whether the UK CO₂ reduction target should be increased and whether other greenhouse gases, along with emissions from aviation and shipping, should be included. The Government will have to justify to Parliament if it chooses not follow the Committee's advice or fails to meet the agreed target.

The Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) has welcomed the Bill and the creation of the Office of Climate Change but, in a new report, warns that current Government frameworks for dealing with climate change are confused and ineffective. Its key recommendation is for a powerful Minister-led interdepartmental body within the Cabinet Office, to drive forward consistent policy. The report identified a lack of clarity around responsibility for delivering on climate change within Government and a civil service skills deficit, in terms of supporting the shift to a low carbon economy – an issue that SSW continues to lobby on in SW! EAC Chairman, Tim Yeo warned that if action on climate-proofing communities doesn't live up to the rhetoric very soon, we risk creating a nation of 'climate slums'. (info on Bill at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/climatechange-bill; EAC report at www.parliament.uk/eacom).



Bill and Benn – the Environment Secretary has set out plans for a strengthened Climate Change Bill

This month's Sustainability Now headlines at a glance:

- ◆ *Planting Places – a reminder for urban greenspace champs*
- ◆ *Fair Shares, Fair Choice – a dozen more MPs join initiative in October*
- ◆ *Future Footprints comp winner – artist to artisan ice cream maker!*
- ◆ *Sustainability on a stick – available today*
- ◆ *New performance framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partners released*
- ◆ *The Sust'Ometer*
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- ◆ *Up and Coming...*

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).

Planting Places – a reminder for urban greenspace champs

A quick reminder about SSW's new greenspace initiative – *Planting Places* – which aims to promote the growing importance of integrated greenspace networks for the sustainability of our urban areas. You can now nominate your top examples of urban greenspace at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/projects/planting_places along with registering your interest in the project so we can keep you up to date. The first meeting of the *Planting Places* advisory group will be held in December – please let us know if you have any particular issues you want the 'experts' to explore.

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – a dozen more MPs join initiative in October

Thirteen MPs from around the region have signed up to the principle of a 'globally fair and safe carbon share for all' as part of SSW's growing climate change initiative *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* (FSFC). See press release at: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/news/south_west_mps_lead_the_way_in_the_battle_against_dangerous_climate_change

At this year's ENVEC 'Making Sustainability Happen' event, held at Weston-Super-Mare's Winter Gardens, FSFC supporter and climate change author and campaigner Mark Lynas, set the scene on the urgency of keeping global temperatures to within a 2°C increase. Following Mark, SSW's Sylvie Channon summarised how the FSFC project responds positively to this challenge and invited delegates to visit the FSFC stand. Presentations were also received from DEFRA, the Sustainable Development Commission and the Association of British Insurers. Later in October SSW also gave a FSFC presentation to the Youth Parliament, generating lots of interest from the young people there. We could also be found chatting to the public at the Oxfam organised 'Climate Change: a global injustice' evening event on the 18th October in Bristol. The idea of living within a fair carbon footprint is really gathering momentum...join in the low carbon movement see www.fairsharesfairchoice.com/fsfc_supporters.asp

Future Footprints comp winner – artist to artisan ice cream maker!

The winner of the *Future Footprints* 'Draw your best day out in the SW' postcard competition, 'almost 7' year old Abigail Garratt, was treated to a special trip to Roskilly's in Cornwall on Monday, 29 October. Abigail's drawing of her family day out cycling the Camel Trail was chosen from 500+ entries from children across the SW and beyond. Abigail and her mother Beverly enjoyed a day out at the farm, meeting the team behind Roskilly's ice cream, including the cows. And with the help of ice cream maker Jane, Abigail got stuck in and created and mixed her own special flavour – 'strawberry swirl surprise'. Both TV and regional press covered Abigail's winning day out. Three tubs of the ice cream are currently 'freezing up' at Roskilly's before being sent to Abigail, who said the day was "even better" than expected. She plans to share the ice cream with her class at Withycombe Raleigh Primary along with her family (including scoop for big brother Charlie). See www.futurefootprints.org.uk for more information about the region's sustainable tourism visitor campaign.

Sustainability on a stick – available today

SSW's famous purple rulers, which include key questions based on the SW's sustainability principles (housed by the regional sustainable development framework at www.shapersw.net), are now available to order again. The rulers have already been used in a variety of public, private, voluntary and community sector contexts as a handy reference or workshop tool (case studies available soon on www.shapersw.net). Please contact SSW for prices.

New performance framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partners released

Following the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, a new local authority performance framework has been released. This sees a big reduction in the number of performance indicators on which councils must report to Government – from around 1,200 to 198. As part of the 'devolution' agenda up to 35 indicator-based targets will be negotiated between councils and Government via Local Area Agreements (LAAs). SSW is supporting a number of local authorities in this process and is pressing for 'environmental sustainability' indicators – including those measuring climate change mitigation – to be embedded. Current negotiations represent a big opportunity to unlock the cross-cutting benefits of a sustainability, including the shift to a low carbon economy and healthier lifestyles.

Sussed!



Teenager triumphs Hats off to the young man in Chipping Sodbury who has successfully persuaded his local council, S Glos, to install a safe cycle path on his route from home to school in Yate.



Bristol gets fruity 'Transition Bristol' the first city-wide transition town (see www.transitionbristol.org), is launching a Virtual Orchard. Local variety fruit trees will be offered at discounted rates to residents for their gardens, boosting local produce and providing habitats for pollinating insects. Transition Bristol will also be offering tree care workshops.



Renewables coup for Devon Following a 4 week public enquiry, Devon Wind Power has been given the go-ahead for a major project in Fullbrook Down. The 22 turbine scheme will generate enough clean electricity to for 30% of total energy electricity consumption in North Devon.



Skills swap Bristol activist Mark Boyle has launched a skill-sharing website called 'Freeconomy Community' aiming to help people share their skills and knowledge for the 'love of the collective' rather than for personal financial gain. Log on to www.justfortheloveofit.org



It's good to (walk the) talk BT are to spend £250 million on building wind farms around the country in the UK's biggest single renewables investment outside of the energy sector. The company is one of Britain's largest electricity consumers and plans to meet 25% of its needs from its own turbines. By 2016 BT hopes to source more than half of its electricity from non-fossil sources.



Give an unwanted present a home this Christmas The 'Efreeko' website, where people post their unwanted stuff for rehoming, now includes a 'Christmas gifts' section – fantastic news ahead of the season of rampant consumerism and for those on a tight budget! 'Freecycle' is considering a similar initiative.



Organic is best: it's official Results from the biggest study yet into organic food ends years of debate about its relative nutritional value and should prompt a review of the Food Standard Agency's line on organic food as just 'a lifestyle choice'. Organic fruit and vegetables were found to contain up to 40% more cancer and heart-disease cutting antioxidants and higher levels of beneficial minerals.



Royal support for rainforests Prince Charles has launched the Rainforest Project to bring together environmentalists, scientists and leaders from the developing world in order to halt mass deforestation, a huge factor in global warming.



Birds of a feather Britain is to lead an effort to protect migratory birds of prey in Europe, Africa, and Asia whose behavioural patterns are excellent indicators of the state of the environment. A list of measures will help each nation to support the survival of eagles, falcons, kites, buzzards and osprey.

So last century...



Government u-turn on renewables?? A memo leaked to the Guardian has suggested that the Government may be backtracking on its currently renewable energy target of 20% of electricity to be sourced from renewables by 2020. If you think this is as ridiculous as us – make a noise! Email your MP via www.direct.gov.uk



Ocean overload Researchers at the University of East Anglia have revealed that the ocean is now only absorbing half the CO₂ it was absorbing in 1995.



A flying shame Brits are the world's worst aviation polluters says a survey conducted by Global TGI with the growth in low-cost flying the suggested cause. The average Brit emits 603kg of flight-related CO₂ yearly.



Tesco takes over The council of Manningtree, England's smallest town of just 700 residents, is expecting a planning application for permission to construct a 30,000sq ft new store. This has prompted a furious response by locals who are concerned that the store would be the 12th Tesco within a 10 mile radius of the town!



Dodgy loo roll Boots and Somerfield are bottom of a poll to investigate the rainforest-friendliness of toilet/kitchen roll and tissues sold in the UK. M&S and Sainsburys came out top.



Children's well-being Experts have warned that anxious parents, a lack of outdoor play opportunities, computer games and tests are all factors impacting on children's mental health and development. This follows a Unicef report that found UK kids are among the unhappiest in the developed world.

On your radar?

Follow up to Stern report A Treasury report on implementing the seminal 'Stern Review' into the economics of climate change, is now available from www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A/B/pbr_csr07_stern770.pdf

Green Guide for Gloucestershire Vision 21 have launched a comprehensive guide to green businesses and services – with over 300 entries it's essential reading for any eco-conscious Gloucestershire resident! The online guide also includes services for green organisations including webpage hosting. See www.glosgreenguide.co.uk

New Gloucestershire Environmental Partnership The partnership was launched on 17 October, aiming to bring together all the environmental organisations and issues within the county.

New resources from WWF WWF have produced new Pocket Green Guides for England, Scotland and Wales to support people and their families to adopt a more planet-friendly lifestyles – including special advice on how you can 'go green in a fortnight' see www.greenguide.co.uk They have also published results of research to rank the ecological footprint of 60 UK cities – see how the SW did at www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanet/cf_0000004481.asp

New resources from Forum for the Future Forum have produced their 'sustainable city index', a report addressing the environmental impacts, quality of life and level of 'future-proofing' of our major urban areas – see www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/node/884 The charity have also developed 'Green Futures', its fantastic sustainability magazine, as an online resource including a free searchable archive – visit www.greenfutures.org.uk

Big Lottery community funding opportunities Are you up to date with the latest Big Lottery community funding streams available in the region? See www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/southwest

Up & coming...

Regen SW's 2007 conference 'Renewable Futures: new drivers for growth' will be held at the Winter Gardens in Weston-super-Mare on 14 November. Regen's annual conference aims to strengthen partnerships for renewables by bringing the public and private sector together to look at solutions. Businesses will get the lowdown on new policies and market opportunities. The event will also highlight best practice in the delivery of renewables and more than 40 companies will be exhibiting in the conference tradeshow.

Low carbon building seminar The Genesis Centre at Somerset College of Arts and Technology in Taunton is offering an interactive seminar examining options for achieving low/zero carbon buildings in both rural and urban situations, for anyone involved in the commissioning, design and delivery of buildings. To book contact Gillian Hawkey – tel 01823252934 or email gillian.hawkey@somerset.ac.uk or for further info call Tim Simmons on 01823 366528 or email tim.simmons@somerset.ac.uk

Community skills seminar series Creating Excellence will be running a series of courses across the SW, around developing generic skills for communities and regeneration. Seven different topics, including partnership working and conflict resolution, will be addressed. The sessions will be led by specialists in their field and bursaries are available. For further information and to book a place see www.creatingexcellence.org.uk

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 key regional events coming up over the next month so we can include this in our next edition of *Sustainability Now*.

Contact us at: info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk **Deadline for submissions: close of Friday 23rd November**

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

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

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