

**News Bulletin**

**August 2008**

The Warwickshire Climate Change Partnership has turned two! But it certainly doesn't feel like two years since the Strategy was launched by Jonathan Porritt on 3 July 2006. Good progress has been made in the two years, with over 100 partner organisations signed up to deliver 48 different projects in the Action Plan. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday kindly hosted by E.on, Dr Jacky Lawrence, current Chair of the Partnership, provided a brief overview of the successes that the group has enjoyed in its first two years, as well as outlining future challenges within the county. Representatives from the University of Warwick, E.on and Warwickshire County Council then shared case studies and examples of best practice to the assembled guests.

Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods is offering free energy audits to community groups in Nuneaton and Bedworth through its Carbon Footprint Reduction Project. Officers will work with local groups to help them identify how they can reduce fuel bills through energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation, high frequency light fittings and draft insulation. The initiative can also help facilitate the installation of renewable energy systems such as wind turbines, solar heating systems, combined heat and power plants. Groups who decide to participate in the initiative must own or have a building on long term lease and must be willing to monitor their energy consumption before and after changes. For further information email Abi Culley at: [abiculley@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:abiculley@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council is in the process of installing a 90 kW CHP (combined heat and power) unit at the Pingles Leisure Centre in Nuneaton and a 50 kW CHP unit at Bedworth Leisure Centre. Once operational the two CHP units should reduce the amount of electricity purchased across the two sites by 287,000 kWh per annum and save some 123 tonnes of carbon dioxide. In monetary terms this equates to a saving of around £30,000 at current energy prices.

The University of Warwick has just launched an Energy Monitor Loan Scheme for its staff and students. The scheme will help individuals understand their electricity usage better and work out how much their electrical appliances are costing to run. All staff and students are able to loan a plug-in energy monitor for their personal use at work and at home for a full month.

The date has been set for the first meeting of a new Energy Managers' Forum for Warwickshire. The forum is open to all organisations in the Warwickshire



Climate Change Partnership and is being kindly hosted by Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, who have also offered a study tour of their newly installed low energy multi-storey car park lighting and their soon to be installed CHP (combined heat and power) units. The forum will be held on Thursday 4th September at 10am. If you or a colleague would like to attend, please email: [climatechange@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@warwickshire.gov.uk)

The initial results of Warwickshire County Council's latest citizens' panel on climate change have been published. Most respondents (88%) agreed that it is right that climate change should be taken seriously, with 76% feeling concerned about the effects of climate change on themselves and 90% feeling concerned on the effect of their children's lives in the future. <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/6FCFF564DC27DD5580257471004E4D39>



Warwickshire County Council has achieved ISO14001, which means that every part of the authority, from education and social work through to the fire service and libraries, are all doing their bit to protect the environment. A key part of the gaining the standard is also in proving that plans are in place to continue the environmental good work. External auditors from BSi spent time in Warwickshire during June to assess the council's environmental commitment. What they saw confirmed that the whole authority is good enough to be registered to the international environmental management system standard ISO14001.

Birmingham plans to become the first Transition city in the United Kingdom. According to the organisers, Transition City Brum aims 'to be an inclusive, diverse, grass-roots way to rebuild communities in the face of energy, climate, food and other looming crises. It aims to do this by linking people, projects and ideas at grass-roots level, noting that there are many local initiatives and projects already in existence across the city. Transition City Brum aims to bring these groups and individuals into a wider network. For further information email: [transitioncitybirmingham@riseup.net](mailto:transitioncitybirmingham@riseup.net)

BERR (Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform) has just launched a Renewable Energy Strategy Consultation. This seeks views on how to drive up the use of renewable energy in the UK, as part of an overall



strategy for tackling climate change and to meet the UK's share of the EU target to source 20% of the EU's energy from renewable sources by 2020. Responses to this consultation will help shape the UK Renewable Energy Strategy, which will be published in Spring 2009, once the UK's share of the target has been agreed. Log on to <http://renewableconsultation.berr.gov.uk/> to respond directly by 26 September or feed back comments via WMSDON (West Midlands Sustainable Development Officers' Network) by emailing: [Tony.Crompton@gowm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Tony.Crompton@gowm.gsi.gov.uk)



Action 21 has now been running its Green Champions project for six months or so. Volunteers get trained up about sustainability, effective communication and local services and resources that are available, and then attend a range of public events to engage with people about sustainability and what they can do. The project is continuing, with Champions going to various events, giving talks and visiting schools. If you know of any events that it may be useful for Champions to attend, Action 21 would like to hear about them. Please contact Michelle on 01926 456076 or by emailing: [michelle@action21.co.uk](mailto:michelle@action21.co.uk).

Defra has just launched a new one-stop shop website on climate adaptation. The website provides a comprehensive collection of resources and is part of the Government's drive to ensure that Britain is ready to deal with the impacts of climate change that are already irreversible. It includes details of how the climate will alter, links to practical tools for adaptation, and examples of what is already being done around the country. Log on to: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/adaptation>

Scientists are warning that an Antarctic ice shelf the size of Northern Ireland is on the verge of disintegration, even though it is now the middle of the southern hemisphere's winter (Independent, 13 July 08). The European Space Agency says new satellite pictures show that the Wilkins shelf – the largest to be threatened so far – is "hanging by its last thread". Extending for approximately 5,600 square miles, it has been held in place by a thin ice bridge connecting it to an island, but this is now fracturing. The shelf, which lies near the base of the Antarctic Peninsula, had not been expected to collapse until the early 2020s. It provides further evidence that the planet is warming more quickly than predicted.



The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) is conducting a study on Adapting the UK to Climate Change and has issued an invitation to submit formal written evidence in support of that study. Submissions will be welcomed by email or post by the deadline of 10 October 2008. The link to the documents are on the Royal Commission on Environment Pollution website. The LGA are asking to be copied into all responses at [info@lga.gov.uk](mailto:info@lga.gov.uk). Contact RCEP on 020 7270 8156 or [Jon.Freeman@rcep.org.uk](mailto:Jon.Freeman@rcep.org.uk).



A report and supporting set of maps highlighting the key inland waterways suitable for freight have been published by the Department for Transport. The documents, published under the title, 'The Key Inland Waterways for Freight', highlight those areas where the UK's existing network of inland waterways has the greatest potential for freight services and can fit with the needs of modern freight businesses. The maps hope to provide operators and their customers with a better idea of how inland waterways can provide an alternative to road freight. The obvious benefits are reduced carbon emissions and congestion on the road. For further information log on to: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/freight/waterfreight/mapkeyinlandwaterways/>

A new website offering up-to-the-minute news on renewable energy in the UK has just been officially launched by the team behind letsrecycle.com. Newenergyfocus.com is devoted to the low carbon energy market and is freely available to anyone with an interest in sustainable energy issues. The website covers latest news, events and legislation. Find out more at: <http://www.newenergyfocus.com/go/pages/home.html>

Provisional estimates show UK carbon dioxide emissions during 2007 were around 543.7 million tonnes, 2 per cent lower than the 2006 figure of 554.5 million tonnes. The decrease resulted from fuel switching from coal to natural gas for electricity generation, combined with lower fossil fuel consumption by households and industry. This is one of the highlights of Defra's Annual Report to Parliament, that sets out progress of the UK's Climate Change Programme. The document provides a full summary of statistical data and Government activity in the field of climate change in the last 12 months. As such, the report emphasises the importance of both reducing emissions and



adapting to the impacts of climate change and outlines emerging policy in this area. It sets out previously published UK emissions data for carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases, along with the steps Government has taken, and proposes to take, to reduce emissions. A full copy of the report is available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/index.htm>



Environment secretary Hilary Benn has launched a new debate on UK food policy, which argues that biofuels have "undermined global food security". Mr Benn issued a discussion paper entitled, 'Ensuring the UK's Food Security in a Changing World', as the early stage of shaping more detailed government policy. The Defra green paper restates the government's view that the yearly increase in targets for using biofuels in transport fuel should be slowed. It also states that the government will be pressing for a "rigorous" rethink of Europe's target to source 10% of transport fuel from renewables by 2020. To discussion paper can be downloaded at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/foodstrategy/documents/Ensuring-UK-Food-Security-in-a-changing-world-170708.pdf>

An underwater turbine that generates electricity from tidal streams was plugged into the UK's national grid on 17 July (Guardian, 17 July 08). It marks the first time a commercial-scale underwater turbine has fed power into the network and the start of a new source of renewable energy for the UK. Tidal streams are seen by many as a plentiful and predictable supply of clean energy. The most conservative estimates suggest there is at least five gigawatts of power in tidal flows around the country, but there could be as much as 15GW. The trial at Strangford Lough, in Northern Ireland, uses a device called SeaGen and generates power at 150kW. However, engineers have plans to increase power to 300kW by the end of the summer. When it is eventually running at full power SeaGen will have an output of 1,200 kW, enough for about 1,000 homes. SeaGen was designed and built by the Bristol-based tidal energy company Marine Current Turbines (MCT), which also installed the test device at Strangford in May. To read the full story log on to:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jul/17/waveandtidalpower.renewableenergy>

If you are looking for a carbon calculator aimed at young people, log on to 'Switch'. Switch is MTV Networks International's Global Climate Change Campaign. Switch encourages people to "share best ideas and innovations



that can help to reinvent how we live in ways that are cool for us and the planet. This isn't about what we can't do, it's about what we can. It's time to Switch." Log on to Switch at: <http://www.mtvswitch.org/>



An industrial chemical being used in ever larger quantities to make flat-screen TVs may be making global warming worse (New Scientist, 2 July 08). However, because it's not covered by the Kyoto protocol, nobody knows by how much. The gas was first introduced as a measure to cut greenhouse gas emissions, but a prominent atmospheric chemist has warned it could now be having the opposite effect. The gas is nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>). As a greenhouse gas it is 17,000 times as potent as carbon dioxide, molecule-for-molecule, yet is not covered by Kyoto because it was made in tiny amounts when the protocol was agreed in 1997.

It might not be the biggest wall in China, but the Greenpix Zero Energy Media Wall in Beijing can lay claim to its own record. Comprising 20,000 square feet of computer-controlled LEDs, it is the largest of its kind ever built. Better still, it's powered entirely by the sun. Located on the Xicui entertainment complex near the site of the Olympic games, the wall features thousands of solar capture cells attached to each of the glass panels. It's the first time perforated photovoltaics laminated in glass have ever been used on a building in China, and the result is an imposing and colourful display. It works by capturing solar energy in the panels throughout the day. At night the stored energy brings the LEDs to life, displaying a series of video installations and performances by artists from around the world. For further information log on to Art Daily at: [http://www.artdaily.com/index.asp?int\\_new=24938&int\\_sec=2](http://www.artdaily.com/index.asp?int_new=24938&int_sec=2)

Architectural visualiser GMJ has launched an online exhibition to spark public debate about climate change. Using the techniques it normally employs to create images for the architectural industry, GMJ has imagined what London could look like if temperatures and sea levels rise. Images include a tornado whipping through Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus under water, and wind turbines on the Mall. To view the exhibition log on to: <http://www.gmjondonfutures.com/>

