



What Happens When Every Action Counts

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Inspirational examples of good practice from the Third Sector

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For more information on the Every Action Counts programme contact:
Every Action Counts, bassac, 33 Corsham Street, London N1 6DR
Tel: 0845 241 0957 Fax: 0845 241 0958

To submit an example of good practice contact:
Capacity Global, The Menier Gallery, 51 Southwark Street, London SE1 1RU
Tel: 020 3 117 0102/0845 034 3355 Fax: 020 7 378 8849
Email: info@capacity.org.uk www.capacity.org.uk

We would welcome your feedback on this publication.

Visit: <http://improvements.everyactioncounts.biz>
or email: improvements@everyactioncounts.org.uk



Foreword

Mark Walton,
Head of Every Action Counts Programme



Every Action Counts is an innovative programme aimed at engaging national and local voluntary and community sector organisations across England in work to protect and improve our environment and to deliver sustainable development. Over the next few years our actions will help tackle global climate change and move us towards 'one planet living' with over 14,000 community groups involved in the programme.

Every Action Counts focuses on five sustainable development 'themes' with tips and ideas for action that community organisations, clubs and societies can take:

1. **Save energy** - reduce your energy bills and have a positive impact on climate change at the same time.
2. **Travel wisely** - travel in ways which save fuel, help members get to know each other and which reduce carbon dioxide pollution from cars and mini-buses.
3. **Shop ethically** - use your shopping choices to buy local food which cuts transport pollution, supports local businesses and buy fairly traded goods to help producers overseas.
4. **Save our resources** - by saving waste and water you can save money for your organisation as well as help protect the environment.
5. **Care for your area** - take an interest in your local environment, help protect local wildlife and have your say on local plans affecting your area.

The case studies in this publication illustrate each of these themes and demonstrate that imagination, commitment and energy can make a difference. We hope they inspire you as much as they inspire us. We are committed to protecting and improving our environment, to taking action that will help tackle global climate change and move us towards 'one planet living'.

Further ideas, information, resources and help is available on the Every Action Counts website – www.everyactioncounts.org.uk take a look, sign up and take action.



capacity global
being the clean and healthy environment is everyone's right



Introduction

Maria Adebowale, Director, Capacity Global,
Strand Leader for Every Action Counts
on Good Practice



Through our work at Capacity Global to support environmental and social justice, we know neither can be created or sustained without everyone taking positive actions to ensure it happens – individuals, communities groups, charities and social enterprises.

What we've learned whilst gathering the case studies and inspirational stories for this report is how people from all over England, from diverse backgrounds, communities and organisations, are doing truly inspirational things. The case studies illustrate just how much is happening, from using the story of a bumble bee to work with young children on ethical food to turning derelict land or unused buildings to parks, city farms or community shops.

There are now hundreds of people signing up to Every Action Counts – inspiring each other and acting as champions within their homes, workplaces and communities. We want to hear more stories of how you, your group or organisation are trying to make a difference. It doesn't matter how small you think that difference might be. The point is to take positive action and help others to do the same.

Feedback to us shows that these 'real life' case studies can really help to empower and encourage positive action to tackle issues like climate change and regeneration. We'd like to hear your stories and use them to engage others. So tell us what you're doing to make every action count on: saving energy, caring for your area, travelling wisely, saving resources and shopping ethically.

We can help put the case study together or maybe even create a video clip or podcast. All you need to do is contact us at eac@capacity.org.uk.

Be inspired, be inspirational, make every action count.



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Why Every Action Counts



“Social justice can and must go hand in hand with environmental sustainability. I am sure many third sector organisations and communities will be inspired by this collection of excellent case studies. They show in a very practical way the real difference which can be made through engaging and enabling people – helping them to make choices which improve quality of life at the same time as tackling dangerous climate change and protecting the natural environment which sustains us.”

David Miliband

Secretary of State for Environment



“Third sector organisations are marked out by their ability to find innovative solutions to problems. Nowhere is this needed more than in tackling climate change, where their determination mobilises individuals, businesses and government to take action. This booklet shows the myriad ways in which volunteers, social entrepreneurs and community groups are bringing people together to protect and improve our environment.”

Ed Miliband

Minister for the Third Sector

Save Energy



Healing in Heeley

Heeley City Farm produces local organic food, breeds rare breed animals, generates its own electricity and has around 100,000 visitors per year. David Gray explains its evolution.

What's even more remarkable about the farm is that it's not in some rural idyll but in urban Sheffield, run by the local community, and has provided the local area with economic, social and environmental revival.

Sheffield is more known for its steel than for its farms. What made you decide to set up a farm here?

The farm's founders were motivated by a number of factors – making constructive use of a derelict area of land, the desire for a city farm and the wish to contribute to employment, education and the local environment.

A group of local people, led by

the Heeley Residents and Tenants Association, successfully campaigned against a major new bypass. The farm was set up in the early 1980's on land earmarked for the bypass. The aim was to promote community regeneration and environmentally friendly self-help in what was one of the most deprived areas of the town.

For everyone at the farm, caring for or improving your area is not only about making something look pretty, that's important, but it's also about creating economic, environmental and social benefits to a diverse community with different needs and backgrounds.

So they won the campaign and wanted to create a city farm?

They chose a city farm because one of the members already had an outline proposal, they had an area of derelict land, and the idea fitted with their priorities of employment, environment and education. In 1981 the local authority granted a license for the land, and the farm soon won funding to employ workers to deliver a government training programme. It started running youth work in the area, building links with local schools and working with truanting



Source: Heeley City Farm

Inside a polytunnel

young people. As time progressed the main focus shifted to training and job creation.

Has the farm got any examples of how they improved the local areas?

For a start, they've turned wasteland into an environmental oasis. Through coming to the farm, local people are becoming more aware and increasingly engaged with environmental issues. It takes on over twenty volunteers and provides them with training and has provided 34 jobs to people who initially worked for the farm as volunteers.

Caring for or improving your area is not only about making something look pretty, it's also about creating economic, environmental and social benefits to a diverse community.

David Gray

The farm's new building is environmentally friendly and generates all of the farm's electricity needs with a new wind turbine.

What have been the high and low points for the farm?

Highs:

- A local appeal fund raised £60,000 to rebuild the farm and buy new animals as well as further funds to develop a major new 'eco-friendly' building on the site.
- The farm has helped to form a significant local economy employing approximately 60 people.

Lows:

- An arson attack destroyed the farm's



A bench made from old tyres

Source: Heeley City Farm

stable block and killed a number of the animals.

- Not being sure that the community would win the campaign against the bypass.

What are the future plans for the farm?

The farm plans to help set up a South Yorkshire food partnership and increase its local food production. It aims to sell off the extra energy produced from its wind turbine to the national grid.

Further Resources

- If you want to know more about setting up a city farm or a community garden, contact the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG). They exist to support, represent and promote community managed farms and gardens. In addition, they provide information, advice and publications. Visit their website at www.farmgarden.org.uk.
- Find out more about using environmentally friendly energy in your home, office, community centre or school, Community Action for Energy (CAFE) Tel: 08701 261444 or: www.est.org.uk/cafe/welcome/. For community recycling, contact the Community Recycling Network – www.crn.org or 0117 9420 142.

Fry Away,

Drive Away

LILI - Low Impact Living Initiative encourages people to use recycled vegetable oil to make environmentally friendly power for their car.

Why was LILI set up?

Its whole mission is to help people reduce the impact of their driving on the environment, gain new skills, live more healthily while having fun and saving money. The biodiesel course has been running since 2001 and it was started by LILI co-founder Phil Hunt. The idea was to raise public awareness about the damage that we are inflicting upon our planet, from climate change, soil erosion and habitat destruction to pollution of our air and water, damage to the ozone layer and the ongoing extinctions of species. Each of these has serious implications for human

health, global ecology and the economy, and unless things change, they could even threaten the continued survival of the human race itself. So LILI was set up to give practical solutions to tackle some of these issues.

So how is the biodiesel fuel project a practical solution?

People use cars, that is an obvious fact. Some people could reduce the use of cars or not use them at all. But sometimes people need to use them. So if that's the case, the fuel they use should be as environmentally friendly as possible. Cue carbon neutral biodiesel fuel. And what's more practical than making your own with no need for alterations to your engine?

How exactly does LILI help people make biodiesel fuel?

LILI has a free fact sheet, it runs residential courses and has now published a book as well. Courses run throughout the year and enable you to make your own cheap, carbon-neutral diesel. The courses cover everything from the chemistry involved in biodiesel production, vehicle considerations, the supply of used cooking



Source: LILI

oil and other chemicals, Environment Agency and VAT law; even plant design and construction using readily-available materials. LILI's book on making biodiesel fuel is proving to be really popular and it's selling really well.

We're only interested in making biodiesel from used vegetable oil. Otherwise we'll end up using vast amounts of land for producing more vegetable oil.

Dave Darby, Director, LILI

And what are LILI's plans for the future?

The Centre at LILI will continue to run training and provide information on biodiesel fuel production. But it will also run a wide range of other courses on issues such as renewable energy, food production, water conservation, composting and publish books and manuals on all of these.

Facts and Information

- Most scientists agree that climate change is mostly due to the way we live and our use of fossil fuels. Climate change may not sound too bad if it was just about warmer weather, but it's actually more serious than that and it's a local, national and global problem. It means less rain, water shortages, forest fires, flooding, damage to crops and wildlife. It could also lead to more diseases caused by pest infestations.
- Using environmentally friendly forms of energy in our cars, homes, and offices as well as reducing our use of energy is the only way to tackle climate change. The good news is saving energy can save

you money and the measures you need to take can be simple.

- It certainly makes good environmental and economic sense to ensure your car is running as efficiently as possible. Appropriate measures can mean significant savings. Vehicle manufacturers can provide you with the information you need to check a vehicle's energy and environmental credentials, including things like recyclable content of their products.
- If your household, community group or workplace use cars or vans, try and use alternative fuels, such as biodiesel, biogas, fuel cells and hydrogen. This can significantly reduce the impact of climate change.

Further Resources

- Find out more about biodiesel fuel production by visiting the LILI website (www.lowimpact.org) where you'll find a free fact sheet, training courses and a book. You can also find out more about alternative fuels for cars from the Energy Saving Trust (www.est.org.uk). Both provide information on where you can buy alternative fuel for your vehicle.
- Community Action for Energy (CAFE) can provide community groups with information, advice, support and training on running a community-based sustainable energy project. The programme provides free information on setting up a project, expert support, training and downloadable resources and examples of other successful projects. More information visit www.est.org.uk/cafe or call 08701 261444. Also contact your local energy efficiency advice centre on 0800 512 012 for impartial advice about saving energy in your home.

Home *Green* Home

With so much emphasis on the need to be more environmentally friendly, wouldn't it be good if our homes did some of the hard work for us?

Gallions Ecopark in Thamesmead London, consists of 39 two, three and four bedroom affordable homes for rent and is designed to show how the latest ideas about sustainable, low-energy living can be put into practice. The scheme, completed in 2003, was inspired by the Dutch Green Financing Model (DGFM) used successfully by the Dutch Government to provide financial incentives for housing developers to use more environmentally-friendly methods. The

development achieved an 'Excellent' rating when assessed against BRE's Ecohomes Assessment Rating (one of the most respected measures).

The houses at Gallions Ecopark have timber frames, high levels of insulation, double-glazed windows filled with argon gas, sunspaces (to heat air coming into the homes), gas condensing boilers, solar water heating, energy-efficient lighting, onsite recycling and underfloor heating. Water-saving features include water-efficient showers, spray taps, flow regulators and dual-flush toilets. Gallion has included greywater recycling – a term for water that can be reused, for example, in toilets and on gardens – in one of the homes to demonstrate potential additional water-saving features.

Rebecca Miller, Sustainability Manager at Gallions Ecopark, says that, "Low-energy sustainable housing makes sense for our tenants. Lower energy consumption means that the Ecopark houses cost a lot less to run than conventional houses of the same size."

The results so far at Ecopark are impressive when compared with the UK averages for domestic energy and water consumption (as at end of 2003). Houses at Ecopark use 45% less gas, 40% less electricity and 30% less water. The carbon (CO₂) emissions of the houses are 40% less, and



source: Gallions Eco Park

Ecopark houses also have lower internal pollution levels because of the 'green' (Low Volatile Organic Compound) paint used throughout the scheme.

Annette, a mother of three, lives in a three-bedroom property with a sun space. She says, "Before we moved here we didn't really think about the environment too much; we didn't really recycle or anything. Since moving in, it's much easier to be environmentally friendly because of the way the houses are built. One of my favourite things about these houses is that they're cheaper to run. Nearly every time the gas prices go up I get asked to be interviewed by journalists because living here means that these price hikes affect us less than everyone else."

Another tenant, Mrs Patel, was already aware about environmental issues so she was very pleased to move to the Ecopark. "We were thrilled when we found out that the house we were getting had been designed specifically to be environmentally friendly."

Since moving in, it's much easier to be environmentally friendly because of the way the houses are built.

Annette, Resident

Gallions Ecopark is continually looking for more ways of saving energy and helping the environment. One house from each of the four housing blocks has been installed with telemetric monitoring systems to measure the effects of the weather, energy use and conservation of water. The on-site display home (known as the 'Naked House') and visitors' centre are valuable sources of information for organisations involved in the development, design and construction of buildings. The showcasing of how to

make environmentally-friendly building a reality will also help to educate and inform the wider community about sustainable living and sustainable development.

Facts and Information

- In the UK, we emit an average of nine tonnes of CO₂ per year per person. This compares to the global average of four tonnes and the Indian average of one tonne of CO₂ per year per person.
- On average, 58% of domestic energy use is used for space heating. (Source: *City and Guilds – Energy in the Home*)
- In an uninsulated house, an average of 35% of heat loss is through the walls, 25% through the roof and 15% through the floor. (Source: *City and Guilds – Energy in the Home*)
- A correctly-sized solar water heating system on a south-facing, unshaded roof will produce between 30-50% of a domestic property's hot water needs. (Source: *Energy Saving Trust*)

Further Resources

- The Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED) is the UK's largest carbon-neutral eco-community. Visit them online at www.peabody.org.uk/bedZED.
- The Hockerton Housing Project is the UK's first earth sheltered, self-sufficient ecological housing development. Find out more at www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk.
- Find out more about energy projects for your community, contact the Community Action for Energy Team (CAfE) on 08701 261 444 or email CAfE@est.org.uk or visit www.est.org.uk/cafe.
- www.galliomsecopark.co.uk

Flour Power

Restoring the windmill is a labour of love for the Quainton Windmill Society, but can they involve the local community, utilise green energy to mill flour and break even as well?

The Quainton Windmill Society in Buckinghamshire was formed in 1974 with the object of restoring the local windmill to its former glory. Construction of the original windmill began in 1830 and was a model example of using local materials: the bricks for the windmill's tower were fired in a kiln set up near the mill, with the clay coming from a nearby area. The mill, which was used to grind grain into flour, only operated for about 50 years before it was left to become derelict. By 1914, the engine and boiler were sold for scrap along with the pair of milling stones.

The building today is undergoing major restoration work by the society. Previous remedial work has been undertaken on the sails (the wings of the windmill that actually turn around in the wind), the cap, shaft and headframe. In February 1997, for the first time in over 100 years, the mill once again ground grain into flour. Although there is electric light and power for tools, the actual milling process totally depends on windpower, which is generated by the large sails, which weigh about one ton each, on the front of the windmill. As part of the restoration the sails had to be rebuilt (twice, as the second-hand timber rotted the first time) and then hoisted into place.

A GrantScape Services team, which supports community environmental projects, identified the problems for the Grade 1 listed building. The Society then contracted consultants and other experts to help restore the windmill and make it a more accessible and inviting visitor experience. The first stage of restoration started in spring 2005 and the windmill has been fully operational since autumn 2006.

The windmill is still very much a local family affair – the present millowner and Society Life President, Mr Colin Dancer, is a descendent of Mr James Anstiss who started building the windmill in 1830. Patrick says that the “community response



Source: <http://www.aylesburyvale.net/visit/tourism/south/info/mills/quainton/index.htm>



has been one of amazement and often support....though the perception by some is that its all a bit strange!"

The society has won grants from various sources to help restore the mill, but hopes to make it self-supporting with income from visitors and from people buying flour. Currently, while work on the mill proceeds, the building is open to the public on Sundays between 10am and 1pm.

"To secure the Mills future," says Patrick Tooms - Secretary of the Quainton Windmill Society, "we'll need to continue finding people who are interested enough to keep the mill going."

The hardest part has been learning as we went along because all of us were ignorant of what was involved when we started in 1973.

Patrick Tooms

Facts and Information

- English Heritage and Government research illustrates that restoring or conserving local heritage sites or buildings can improve a local environment and neighbourhood.
- The first windmills were developed to

automate the tasks of grain-grinding and water-pumping and the earliest-known design was developed in Persia about 500-900 A.D.

- Wind power is a clean, renewable source of energy which produces no greenhouse gas emissions or waste products. (Source: BWEA, *Embrace the Revolution*)
- The average wind farm will pay back the energy used in its manufacture within 3-5 months of operation. A modern wind turbine is designed to operate for more than 20 years and at the end of its working life, the area can be restored at low financial and environmental costs. (Source: BWEA, *Embrace the Revolution*)
- A modern 2MW wind turbine will supply enough electricity for 1200 to 1500 homes and save over 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually. (Source: CSE)

Further Resources

- Check out GrantScape www.grantscapes.org.uk, English Heritage www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.8490 or contact the Federation for Community Farms and City Gardens www.farmgarden.org.uk
- To find out more about energy projects for your community contact the Community Action for Energy Team (CAfE). Call them at 08701 261 444 or email CAfE@est.org.uk or visit www.est.org.uk/cafe.
- To find out about the wind resource in your postcode area use the model estimates produced by the British Wind Energy Association through their website: www.bwea.com/noabl/
- For facts and myths associated with wind power then visit the British Wind Energy Association 'Embrace the Revolution' site: www.embracewind.com/myths.html.

Inspiring Change

with People and

Communities

The National Communities Resource Centre run training courses from Trafford Hall, their home in the Cheshire countryside, which has been constructed specifically with the environment in mind.

What does “sustainable development” mean to you?

Although the full answer could be extremely long, I would say that sustainable development means maintaining and improving the quality of life for all without damaging the environment through polluting it, or mortgaging the future through reliance on finite natural resources.

The reconstructed stable block incorporates many recycled materials, and it is now carbon-neutral in its energy usage. Why did you decide to rebuild the stable block?

NCRC has always had a strong commitment to the environment and moreover, wants to demonstrate its ethos by acting as a model for sustainable development. Since we began to re-build Trafford Hall in the early 1990s, we have tried to demonstrate that growth can be achieved with minimal resources. In re-building the hall itself, we reused and recycled as much of the fabric of the building as possible.

We elected to use the Walter Segal

self-build method which uses repeating patterns of wooden frames and can be constructed using unskilled labour. We were therefore able to build the bedrooms using almost entirely volunteer and trainee labour. The building process itself served as a training and development tool for young unemployed people from Cheshire.

When we came to build the stable we wanted to go one step further and build a completely carbon neutral building, modelling as many renewable technologies as we could on a budget. Space heating and domestic hot water are provided by combining south facing solar water



Source: Trafford Hall

collectors on the roof with a wood pellet boiler. We use low water systems in toilets and showers and heating is carried through underfloor pipes. We minimise heat loss by using heat exchange ventilation. All Trafford Hall's electricity is supplied by Good Energy, which is guaranteed to be from 100% renewable sources. We used only environmental paints and stains throughout and recycled as much of the original brick and stone as possible for either 'facings' or in landscaping.

The buildings have turf roofs, which not only replaced the grass we had to strip to build them but also helps them 'sink' into the rural landscape

Mark Ward

Was the planning and building process more expensive or difficult than a normal building? What lessons did you learn along the way?

YES! Planning was complicated by a number of factors. Trafford Hall is a Grade 2* listed building, which meant that Listed Buildings consent and consent from English Heritage were required in addition to planning permission. As we learned more about sustainable building, we modified the plans to make the building more efficient.

Despite all the problems, our heating bills are far below what we would expect using gas, or oil and whilst it will take a long time to re-coup the cost from savings, we knew this at the outset and did it as an example, rather than a money saving exercise. We received a Clear Skies grant from BRE and DTI, which covered 50% of



Source: Trafford Hall

the cost of renewable technologies.

There has been an associated benefit to the stable's build. The extra capacity has enabled us to take on more conferencing work, from which we derive income. Since opening in April 2005, we have taken over £200,000 of income, which we could not otherwise have taken, and 6% of all our commercial income in the past year came from customers that chose Trafford Hall specifically because of its environmental credentials. Lastly, we have won four awards in the past year connected with the stable and its eco-credentials.

Why is it important for Trafford Hall to be an eco-friendly building? How does it fit into your community-based work?

I believe that real impact on climate change will only come through governments and nations taking action. However, governments are driven by public opinion and a groundswell of people demanding action on climate change is needed to move policy in that direction.

Trafford Hall works with people that live and work in the most deprived communities in the UK. It is widely acknowledged that deprived communities do and will suffer most from the effects of climate change. We believe that we should act as a model

to those communities, in which we work, to show what can be achieved and to complement our models with training and small grants to promote and support small-scale practical action that real people can take at a local level.

Does NCRC have other environmental policies?

Yes, lots. We recycle paper, cardboard, glass, printer cartridges, manage our grounds (15 acres) organically, compost waste food and in turn, produce crops in our gardens to serve to customers in our restaurant, have water butts to collect rain water for our gardens, we have lighting on timer switches and controlled by Passive Infra Red detectors to minimise use, we use window shutters to reduce heat loss at night as well as energy saving light bulbs wherever possible, all our computers are set up to switch off in the evenings, we re-use water cooler bottles as cloches in our gardens, we replaced all the building's baths with showers, we use recycled paper, envelopes and provide customers with pencils made from recycled CD cases, we plant trees to offset carbon and allow customers to purchase trees for that purpose, we maintain habitat piles in our woodland to encourage and protect wildlife, we use fair trade goods where possible and try to source local produce and local suppliers, we use paper that has been printed on one side in our fax machines, we promote car sharing and public transport to our staff and users and offer interest-free loans to staff that want to buy bicycles to travel to and from work.

What's next for NCRC?

We have recently commissioned a pre-feasibility study to consider the potential for making the whole Trafford Hall centre carbon neutral. We are specifically considering a number of potential technologies: ground source heat pumps;

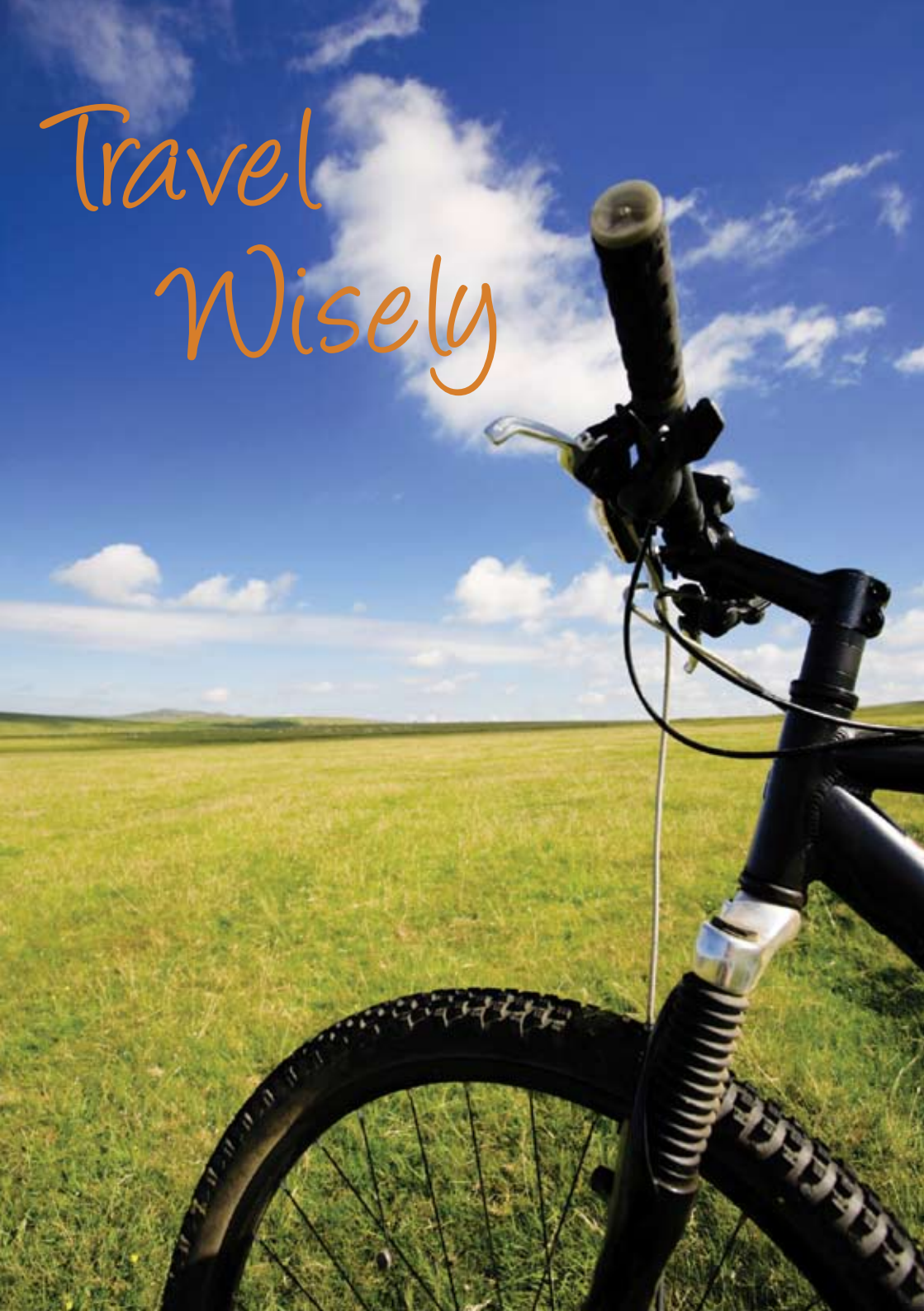
wind turbines; and bio-fuelled micro combined heat and power plants.

We intend to commission a full feasibility study shortly and our aim is ultimately to achieve zero carbon status for the premises and then consider carbon offsets for the journeys people make to get here.

Facts & Information

- Energy efficiency should always be the first step in any project – reducing demand before thinking about producing energy is by far the most cost effective way to save money and the environment.
- A correctly-sized solar water heating system situated on a south-facing, unshaded roof will produce between 30-50% of a domestic property's hot water needs. (*Source: Energy Saving Trust*)
- Wood fuel is a great renewable source of energy and a boiler works in a very similar way to a conventional gas or oil boiler. The pellets are a uniform size so they are very easy to use and work well in automated systems. (*Source: Forestry Commission*)
- Purchasing timber grown in the UK reduces the energy used in transportation from other countries and in the total energy consumed in the associated processes, and stimulates demand for 'home-grown' timber.
- Lighting accounts for around 580kWh of electricity a year. Energy saving light bulbs generally use 1/5 of the energy of standard light bulbs and thus could reduce your electricity bill by 464kWh a year. This amounts to a potential saving of around £60 a year! (*Source: Energy Saving Trust*).

Travel
Wisely



Making the Switch

Miriam took the radical step of cycling everywhere and giving up the daily use of her car. In fact, she decided to share it with another family! Here, Miriam tells us how she did it:

Why did you decide to share your car?

Three years ago, our new year's resolution was to use the car less as I wanted to improve my health. If we car-shared, it wouldn't be there to use, so we started car-sharing with another family whose car had recently died on them.

But why car-share? Why not just leave your car alone?

It was mostly to reduce costs, as my illness meant working part-time, but our friends also wanted to reduce their car use for environmental reasons and to dissuade their teenager from being car-dependent and use her bike more.

So how was the transition to cycling everyday?

For the first two months it felt like we'd lost a member of the family! There was a horrible empty space outside the house and more than once I wanted to call the police to report a car theft.

Sometimes it was cold and wet. Cycling in the cold winter nights was horrible and only the commitment we'd made to our car-share family kept us to the plan. We literally gritted our teeth and toughed it out through those first difficult winter weeks. Before we car-shared, we thought

we used our bicycles a lot, but we realised that was an illusion. Whenever it was dark, rainy, uphill, or we were tired, we couldn't just jump into the car.

What were the benefits of switching to your bike?

The first benefit we felt was an immediate 2/3 reduction in car costs. We found out how expensive it is to own and run a car: £2000 plus petrol per year. After six months, we needed the car less than the half-share we had, and due to a new job, our car-share family needed it more. We now have the car one weekend per fortnight. We have an easygoing arrangement so if plans change, we negotiate extra use.

Cycling and walking from A to B means we've discovered some attractive routes through Bristol's back ways and parks, which is a lot more relaxing than sitting in congested traffic. Other benefits include five people now getting daily exercise and we all know our area better because we are walking and cycling and using public transport and meeting people we didn't know before.

You must feel healthier now, but didn't you feel more tired after a day's work at first?

I definitely felt more tired for the first three

or four months until the routine kicked in, but being without the car toughened us up. Now we are definitely fitter, if not thinner, and think nothing of cycling across town in all types of weather, and it really does take a lot less time to get about on Bristol's roads.

What were the keys to your success?

We had a clear written agreement we made to fit our own needs, but a flexible approach to the car-share. We have very reliable car-sharers and we keep the car well maintained. We also have a joint separate car-share bank account which we pay into, and all car costs except petrol are paid out of this.

Did you encounter any problems?

Just one – we had a misunderstanding about depreciation after the first year because we didn't discuss it enough at the beginning. If you decide to include depreciation in the car-share contributions, this amount will be taken out by the owner of the car to cover the cost of replacing the vehicle. It's not a shared amount unless you all co-own the vehicle. Our car-sharers could have paid us half the value of the car as we had just bought it, but they decided not to as it was cheaper for them. That's alright as long as everyone understands how the depreciation amount works.

What about joining a car club or hiring a car when you need one?

There's a car club in Stroud and Nailsworth, but that's too far from us and we found them a very expensive option. It's cheaper to own a shared car. For example, we all went on holiday for a long weekend to Wales. It cost us 1.5 tanks of petrol (about £50) plus £5.70 car-share rent for that week. The quote from the Bristol car club worked out to £170, so we made a massive saving with our own car-share.

What are some other considerations for people who are interested?

Our friends lived 2-1/2 miles away in north Bristol – that's about as far away as we would consider. We had looked for a neighbour in our street but everyone we approached was unwilling to have that intimate a relationship with a neighbour.

*It's a great idea and it works!
It's a lot cheaper than hiring
or city car clubs, and there's
a lot of flexibility.*

Miriam Yagud

I have found this the main obstacle to sharing resources in my neighbourhood. I know this isn't a personal thing – we're very friendly! It's a cultural thing.

When we started, we lived in inner city Bristol. All local amenities were within 10 minutes cycling distance, including a local rail station. We now live in a rural town and are involved in a group to develop a cycle route that will link five schools, a railway station, three villages and two towns. We would like to car-share with another local household but haven't found anyone yet. The car sits outside most days and nights as we walk or cycle or car-share to events. We think it could have even greater benefits in a rural area.

So the bottom line is...?

It's a great idea and it works! It's a lot cheaper than hiring or city car clubs, and there's a lot of flexibility. The financial savings alone give you enough for an extra holiday per year, but more importantly, we all found that not having easy access to a car meant we crammed fewer things into the week and the pace of our lives felt much more relaxed and less stressed.

Bike Cycle

Bikes 4 All is a project where unwanted bikes are recycled and distributed to children and young people in the most deprived areas of Leicester.

What was your thinking behind setting up Bikes 4 All?

We started out about two years ago as a project recycling bikes and giving them away to people who couldn't afford them, such as refugees and unemployed people across Leicester. We donated over 400 bikes in our first year. Anyone who receives a bike through the project also has training from a professional instructor to ensure that they are safe on the road.

We worked with the Youth Inclusion

Project and did a 10-week training course in cycle maintenance and safety for people excluded from school. As part of a City and Guilds qualification in Cycle Maintenance and Repair we did a project training refugees how to repair bikes. We've just started a project with Connexions for socially excluded 16–19 year olds.

The free bikes come from Biffa Leicester Community Recycling centres and also from public donations. The project saves these bikes from landfill and refurbishes them to a high standard. Recently we had a bike 'amnesty' where we arranged to collect people's unwanted bikes. We now offer this service on a permanent basis.

What have been some of your successes?

There's been a whole host of things. We had one single parent with four children aged 7, 11, 12 and 14. They all had bikes on their Christmas list but four bikes was beyond their mum's budget. She called us and we were able to give her the bikes. Knowing that we made four children very happy and stopped the bikes going to waste is a great feeling, especially at Christmas.

Another milestone was a Bike Recycling Conference we held in early 2006 for all the cycle projects in the UK and those who



Source: Bikes 4 All

are thinking of setting up projects. Karen Overton from New York Recycling Bikes came over and spoke and that was a real high point.

And the challenges?

Because we're a voluntary organisation we have to look at delivering targets at the same time as we keep the project running. We also need to look for money for future projects which means thinking ahead.

We had one single parent with four children aged 7, 11, 12 and 14....knowing that we made four children very happy is a great feeling, especially at Christmas.

Tim Hudson

What does the future hold for Bikes 4 All?

We're looking to purchase a building so that we can set up a cycle academy. We've already worked with five schools supported by the local council's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. We taught the students about recycling and repairing bikes, and at the end of the project they got to keep a



Source: Bikes 4 All

bike. The project aims to encourage more children to travel to school by bike instead of car. Fewer cars on the roads means less pollution in the atmosphere. So we'd like to take that to more schools across the city.

What message would you give to people thinking of taking up cycling or setting up a similar project?

It's amazing how many issues you can address with cycling and recycling bike projects – recycling, reuse, sustainable development, community cohesion, children, health and involving excluded groups.

Facts and Information

- 88% of school children own a bicycle. 45% would prefer to cycle to school. Only 4% do.
- Driving the average car for one hour uses the same amount of energy needed to manufacture the average bicycle.
- 56% of all car (driver) trips are less than five miles. 23% are less than two miles.

Further Resources

- For help setting up cycle groups, visit www.cyclenetwork.org.uk.
- For safe cycle routes near you, visit www.sustrans.org.uk. The National Cycle Network is now 10,000 miles long and 75% of all people in the UK live within two miles of its routes.
- Free information sheets on things such as "The right bike for you", "Cycling with children", and many more are available at www.sustrans.org.uk (click 'info and resources', then 'publications' then 'info sheets').
- Further assistance on cycling to school, you can get school travel plans at www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk.

Going my Way

But what about if your other car is owned by the person who lives three streets away who wants to travel to the same place as you? Welcome to the world of Liftshare.

Like the stories behind so many innovative transport schemes, this one starts in Europe. When travelling through Germany Ali Clabburn noticed that using the network of car sharing bureaux was cheaper to get around than by train or bus. When he returned to the UK he decided that it would be a good idea to find out about the same service here so that he could travel more cheaply for his frequent visits between Bristol, where he was studying, and his home town of Norwich. When he discovered that no such scheme existed, an idea was

born: "I knew somebody must be making that same journey and that they would be happy to share the costs. The question was how to link up with them. It was a market that nobody was tapping into."

Ali set up Liftshare to begin to service this market. The core idea is a simple one: to use the internet to link up drivers with other people who make the same journey as they do. The passengers usually make a contribution towards fuel costs, which means that taking part in a scheme saves money for the individuals involved, and makes wider use of the convenience of cars without adding further to congestion and pollution. Nationally, 134,000 people have registered to use the service.

Liftshare estimates that it is currently saving more than 10,000 tonnes of carbon (CO₂) emissions every year, which is equivalent to planting almost 3.5 million trees. And there are social benefits too, as Ali explains: "People in rural areas, where public transport is poor or doesn't exist at all, use Liftshare for everyday journeys like going to the doctor or for shopping. It is a way of bringing people into contact with one another."

Liftshare has worked with almost 600 businesses, charities, hospitals, universities and local authorities to help them increase the number of people who share cars



Source: Liftshare

either in their organisations or local area. For example, Liftshare has developed a bespoke website for the west of England in the region around Bristol (www.2carshare.com). One of the councils involved in this project, South Gloucestershire, has also introduced dedicated lanes on some roads for the use of cars (or other vehicles) with more than one person traveling in the car. '2+ Lanes' are available only to buses, coaches and other vehicles carrying two or more people, motorcycles and pedal cycles. The idea is that 2+ Lanes

I knew somebody must be making that same journey and that they would be happy to share the costs. The question was how to link up with them. It was a market nobody was tapping into.

Ali Clabburn

reallocate road space to more sustainable forms of transport. Restricting use of the carriageway to vehicles with two or more people in them provides a real incentive to car sharing – not least because it beats the queues!

The council has been monitoring the implementation of the lane and found that the proportion of driver-only vehicles has decreased from 80% to 74% during the morning peak. The 2+ Lane only carries one third of all vehicles on this stretch of road, yet carries half of all people who are using it.

Cllr Pat Hockey, Executive Member for Planning, Transportation and Strategic Environment at South Gloucestershire

Council, says that, "It is encouraging that so many residents of South Gloucestershire have signed up to the website www.2CarShare.com. Thanks to this initiative, there are currently 1,000 fewer cars on the A4174 Ring Road per day and if more people sign up to car sharing this will continue to help reduce congestion in the area."

Facts and Information

- Since 1997 average car occupancy has fallen, creating 129 million new car journeys (one additional car journey for every 127 previously).
- A 50% increase in car occupancy (from 1.58 per car to 2.37 per car) would result in a 33% reduction in traffic (from 450 billion km to 300 billion km).
- With almost 140,000 registered car shares around the UK, Liftshare, operators of the UK's largest car share network, now estimate that more than 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ are being saved each year by people sharing their empty car seats and travelling together.
- Dr. Keith Tovey, Energy Science Director for CRed and Reader of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia has calculated that if the average car occupancy could be increased from where it currently stands at 1.7 occupants per car to two people per car then the UK could save over 9.9 million tonnes of CO₂ each year. (Source: <http://www.liftshare.org/news.asp?ns=17&tb=g>)

Further Resources

For more information, visit this various organisations websites:

- www.liftshare.com
- www.2carshare.com
- www.bikebudi.com
- www.susrans.org.uk

East End

Wheelies

When Jagonari created their new bicycle training course for local Bengali women to give real choices to the women they worked with - an easy form of transport.

Jagonari was already a successful not for profit and charitable organisation. What made it decide to do a cycling project?

The centre is well known for providing training and skills to local women, anything from IT, English or Yoga. But what can be a better skill than learning how to get around on an environmentally friendly mode of transport that also keeps you healthy.

So how did you get women in Whitechapel interested?

The project was launched in March 2005 at the Jagonari Centre. It is a well known organisation for local women, specifically women of Bengali descent. Jagonari always ask the women they work with what their needs and interests are, that way we know a project or service is going to be used before we develop it further. For example, we knew from talking to the local women

that they wanted female cycle trainers rather than men so we made sure we offered this as part of the project.

Jagonari had the local support.... What then?

Funding was applied for from the local London Cycling Campaign group, Tower Hamlets Wheelers. In addition a pool of bright orange Dutch-style bikes were provided by the 'good going' travel awareness campaign to offer free cycle training to women in the local community.

A local bike shop will be ensuring that the bikes are in top condition and ready for the women to ride. The cycle training is through the London School of Cycling and Youth Action UK. However, it's not only younger women that are taking part but also older women who are actually encouraging the younger ones.

What were the highs? And what were the lows?

Yasmin Hussain, Project Administrator, says,

“The high point has to be the overwhelming take-up of the course, for Level One (Beginners) and Level Two (Intermediate - Advanced). It’s been incredibly successful and it really builds women’s confidence. In addition, within three months of setting up, Jagonari won the best ‘good going’ project at Transport for London’s Sustainable Transport Awards.”

“I guess the lows,” says Yasmin, “is the fact that we are in some ways a victim of our own success, it’s so popular with a high demand, we have waiting lists, so a lot of women have to wait. We really need more funds.”

I was really inspired by an older friend who’s a teacher. She wears full Muslim dress but still manages to cycle everywhere. By learning to ride bikes we’re bringing down social stereotypes and encouraging other women to take part.

Nurjahan Khatun

Popular and successful... What’s next?

Well, we’ll keep delivering an excellent project, and of course, look for more funding to help with the increased demand.

Facts and Information

● The pros and cons of cycling – cycling is easy (once you know how) and it offers complete freedom. There are lots of benefits – if you’re physically able to use a bike. A

bike can be used for getting to work, school, the shops and for meeting friends or family. The cons are that bikes can be expensive unless you can borrow one or buy a second hand one. There are also safety risks from other vehicles and potential pollution, but that goes for most forms of transport even walking.

- How to get started – all you need is a bike in good working order (lights and a lock). Try and get some cycling training or get a ‘cycle buddy’ and before you start have a practice run. Make sure you’re confident and safe.
- What else? – make sure your bike is insured, that it’s locked when you leave it, you know the Highway Code and that your cycle is well maintained.

Further Resources

- To set up a cycling campaign or group, visit the Cycle Network at www.cyclenetwork.org.uk.
- Use the popular National Cycle Network. It offers 10,000 miles of walking and cycling routes (75% of all people in the UK live within two miles of the route). Visit www.sustrans.org.uk.
- If you want to save energy and get financial assistance as an employee or employer by cycling to work (or other forms of energy efficient transport), find out more from the Energy Saving Trust by visiting www.est.org.uk or phone their transport help line on 0845 602 1425.

No Cost

Fitness Centre

Sue Rowe reckons that you can get fit for free, and she set up a project to show people how. Here she explains how she did it.

What is your project?

It's called 'Get Fit For Free!' I started work on it in July 2005 with three years of funding from Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund.

My brief was very open – to devise an innovative project to encourage people living in deprived areas of Luton to become

more active. These areas have multiple social, health and economic problems, and it can be difficult for people to find the motivation to get fit.

How did you get started?

The project began in Marsh Farm, a housing estate to the north of Luton. I managed to negotiate the use of an office in the local community centre which proved an invaluable way to get to know people.

I wanted to start a walking group and a cycling group, each meeting weekly. But rather than go for printing lots of leaflets and posters, which often get ignored, I erected a gazebo on the local green space and brewed up tea on a camping stove to try and attract people and get them chatting. This was a far better way of advertising the walking and cycling groups.

Who else did you involve?

For the cycling club I had invaluable help from a local Sustrans (the UK sustainable transport charity) volunteer – he brought along a workshop stand and tools and



fixed minor problems on people's bikes. For the walking club I had help from another community worker – he had far more experience than me and I learned a lot through watching him. I think it helped having both a man and a woman there at the beginning. We managed to attract one woman to the walking club who then got all her friends to come – champions like that are a godsend to a club looking for members.

What do the clubs do?

The walking group uses a good off-road network of paths in Marsh Farm. There is lots of communication between people in this group – I have found that quite often people confide in me while we are walking along. Mostly it is older women who are attracted to the walking group, many with health problems, and some with older relatives to care for.

The cycling club started by using the same paths but over the first winter the numbers started dropping off until, in the end, I decided not to continue with the group.

So that was it for getting people to cycle?

No, there is more to the story. At the gazebo I would sometimes meet people from the estate who said they would love to ride a bike but hadn't since they were a kid and, anyway, they couldn't afford one. I decided to try and encourage them to 'have a go' by lending them a bike.

From such small beginnings has grown probably the most successful part of the project. I have developed a loan scheme using old bikes that are repaired by a local mechanic which we literally 'recycle'. The bikes are often donated to us by people who no longer use them. The police also donate bikes they cannot sell at auction, and we often find good ones at local tips.

So far at Marsh Farm the project has

loaned 80 bikes to individuals. I often get good feedback about how they are being used. People say things to me like, "I can go and see my dad really easily now", "It makes me feel 10 years younger!", or "I go everywhere on my bike – I love it!"

I erected a gazebo on the local green space and brewed up tea on a camping stove to try and attract people and get them chatting. This was a far better way of advertising the groups.

Sue Rowe

The bike loan scheme has been an unexpected outcome of your project – how have you incorporated that change?

The long-term bike loan is a better way to get people active than the fixed group. It gives people more flexibility so they can cycle when they want, and with whom they want. It also makes better use of my own resources.

What else are you doing?

In the past few months I have extended the bike loan idea to other areas of Luton: Dallow, High Town and Bury Park. Bike ownership is fairly low in these areas too, even among children. Instead of donating single bikes to individuals I am concentrating on loaning several bikes at a time to community centres, schools, and youth centres.

I am also working closely with Luton Borough Council's cycle training team who hold cycle training sessions at the

community centres and schools where I have organised a bike loan scheme. People who take part in the training session, and who can provide their own helmet and bike lock, are then eligible for their own loan bike. The idea is that this shows that a person who wants a bike is committed. Nineteen young people turned up for the first session of this new scheme and they were all very keen to do the training and get their own bike. One barrier I am already finding is that some people are struggling to find the funds for a helmet and lock.

At Beech Hill primary school in Dallow I donated 27 bikes so the whole of their Year six (53 children) were able to take part in cycle training. Out of these 53 children, only five owned their own bike, and 22 had not been able to ride a bike before training.

The project has also donated bikes to health workers to encourage them to cycle around on their home visits instead of using a car, and we've just started a scheme with Luton and Dunstable Hospital employees so they can cycle to work – it's better for their health, and it relieves pressure on the hospital car park.

Facts and Information

- "The annual costs of physical inactivity in England are estimated at £8.2 billion - including the rising costs of treating chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease and diabetes. This does not include the contribution of inactivity to obesity - an estimated further £2.5 billion cost to the economy each year" (Source: Department of Health, 2004, *At least five a week. Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer (page iii)*).
- "The recommendation for adults of at least 30 minutes of activity a day is for general health. However, it is likely that, for many people, 45-60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a

day will be needed to prevent obesity." (Source: Department of Health, 2004, *At least five a week. Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health. A report from the Chief Medical Officer. 2004*).

Further Resources

- For help setting up cycle groups: www.cyclenetwork.org.uk
- For help with cycle training or finding funds to become a cycle instructor, visit: Adults: www.cyclingengland.co.uk/training.php Children: www.Bikeability.org.uk All ages: www.lifecycleuk.org.uk
- For safe cycle routes near you, visit www.sustrans.org.uk. The National Cycle Network is now 10,000 miles long and 75% of all people in the UK live within two miles of its routes.
- If you want to save energy and get financial assistance as an employee or employer by cycling to work (or other forms of energy efficient transport) find out more from the Energy Saving Trust (EST) at www.est.org.uk or phone their transport help line on 0845 602 1425.
- Bike buddies: www.bikebudi.com
- School travel plans: www.teachernet.gov.uk or www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk
- Local cycle maps: www.cyclemaps.org.uk
- Online maps of National Cycle Network: www.sustrans.org
- Hard copy maps and guides of NCN: www.sustransshop.co.uk
- General: www.bikeforall.net



Shop
Ethically

Follow the Bumblebee

Whilst getting children to eat healthy food and gain an understanding on ethical shopping seems like a mammoth task, Julie and Mo are doing just that.

When did you realise you wanted to do something?

As a teacher, I've worked with children before. I know they can be keen to learn about some of the big issues that adults find difficult. Jamie Oliver was trailblazing the need for healthy dinners in schools, and we thought that we could work with children about healthy food, where it comes from and how what they eat might effect them and other people living locally and in the rest of the world.

So what was your 'Eureka!' moment?

We were just chatting about the need for a holistic approach that helps children understand things like mass-produced foods or the impact of growing grain for cattle on rain forests. Having worked with children before, we knew that they already had some understanding of the 'five a day' (portions of fruit/vegetables a day) campaign. So we started from there.

You'd got the idea - but how did you turn that into a project?

We simply decided to go back to school. We gathered information that could help

explain to children the relationship between the food they eat and the planet. Then we simply wrote to local schools, explaining who we were and how we would present the information to their children.

How did you keep the children interested?

Well, it was really important that the information we used was accessible for children - fun, interesting and thought-provoking. We gave talks, provided written information and used videos on compassionate farming, fair trade, food miles and organic food. There's loads of ways to keep children interested, including listening to them and answering their questions. The video we use is always popular.

Are there any setbacks that other people might be concerned about if they wanted to start a similar project?

For Bee Concerned, there were a couple of things that set us back at first. The first thing was getting time in a school's busy diary to come and talk about the project. Schools at the moment are so inundated with tests, new education policy and league tables

that it's often difficult for them to find space to talk to you or invite you to talk to the children. The second problem was that we needed resources and advice to help us get information and plan the project.

So you had a project for schools but no children or resources – how did you get around that?

We tried to get around this by explaining to schools how the things we do in Bee Concerned helped children in subjects like geography, citizenship, history, home economics and even IT! This way they understood that we were helping them to meet their objectives in teaching the school curriculum and educating children. As for resources, we get support and advice from the Guildford Environment Forum, which is really useful. But we are presently looking for funding.

It was important that the information used was accessible for children – fun, and thought-provoking.

Julie Roxburgh & Mo Burden

So you've got Bee Concerned up and running – what's next for the project?

In the future, we hope to get into all the schools in the area and we're also looking for funding.

What were your best decisions?

- Deciding to have a go. We wanted to make a difference.
- Being patient, starting small, not being put off.
- We weren't afraid to tackle 'complex' issues.
- Getting help from friends, organisations



CONCERNED

and local groups

- To practice what we preached by trying to buy ethical and organic goods where possible and supporting local food schemes.

Facts and Information

- The distance food travels from the field to the plate accounts for 30% of goods transported by roads.
- Local, independent stores and farmers markets often support local communities and if the shop or market is local you can use your bike, or walk to it.
- Fairtrade-marked products guarantee workers have been fairly rewarded for their labour. Amongst others, these schemes include Traidcraft, Oxfam, the Fair Trade Foundation and the International Fair Trade Association.

Further Resources

- Check your local library or the internet for information on ethical shopping, organic food and food miles.
- For more information about the energy used on bringing food to our table visit Energy Savings Trust www.est.org.uk.
- Organisations such as Sustain (www.sustainweb.org), the Ethical Consumer (www.ethicalconsumer.org) and the International Fair Trade Association (www.ifat.org) provide articles and information.
- For issues on setting up a project or getting funding, contact your local CVS (Community Voluntary Service). Find their contact details in your local telephone directory or library.

Ethnic and Ethical

London Food Link aims to increase the amount of local, organic and fairtrade food consumed by London's diverse ethnic communities. Zeenat Anjari explains.

Why was London Food Link set up?

More than 80 per cent of sales at the New Spitalfields Market in London are to ethnic food businesses, and it provides the largest choice of exotic fruit and vegetables of any market in Europe. So ethnic communities here no longer want for specific ingredients.

At the same time the UK market for food and drink from sustainable sources is expanding rapidly. In 2004/05, sales of organic food and drink grew by 30% on the previous year to approximately £1.6 billion and, in 2005, the Fairtrade market grew by 40%, with over 1500 different products now available.

We set up London Food Link to look at how these two different food markets – ethnic and sustainable – could intersect.

What are some of the obstacles to wider participation in sustainable lifestyles of ethnic communities?

We found that small businesses faced a lot of regulations. Many have invested capital in getting British Retail Consortium (BRC) accreditation already. Further accreditations may conflict with the existing supermarket criteria.

One thing we'll be looking at is for ethnic lifestyles not to be seen as at odds with a sustainable lifestyle. Some people feel that the green movement doesn't address faith

issues, and that it needs to acknowledge that faith is a fundamental guide to life for many ethnic communities.

What other issues have you come across?

Most food sold in ethnic shops is shipped. Foods that are air-freighted here sell at a premium and for us the main issue in this instance is the quality of the food – especially its nutritional value – when it's been in transit for so long.

Ethnic businesses are very involved in community issues and buying food should be an extension of this community concern.

How do you hope to change this?

We are not asking people to stop what they are eating or doing, but to look at where their food is coming from. Last year we



Source: London Food Link



released the 'Greener Curry' report. The title reflects our desire to make sustainability mainstream in the same way that curry has become mainstream.

In 2004/05, sales of organic food and drink grew by 30% on the previous year to approximately 16 billion.

Zeenat Anjari

What projects will you be focusing on?

With businesses, we'll be working towards establishing a certified organic halal supply chain for Britain and looking at a sustainable certification process for all types of overseas food. London Food Link will help more restaurants and food manufacturers to source sustainable food as a fundamental of good business practice.

We want to create networks that connect business owners who profit from sustainable business practice with those who don't. We'll be publishing a directory of UK farmers who grow ethnic vegetables. We'll also be encouraging the green sustainability movement to address faith issues and religious dietary laws.

And for consumers?

All this must be done in a way that is sensitive to a first generation, immigrant community's inherent instinct for resourcefulness, but also the subsequent generations' need for a cultural connection to 'back home'.

We need to get the ethnic media to talk about these issues and how they relate to ethnic communities.

Facts and Information

- 1 in 3 Londoners is from an ethnic background
- London's BAME communities have enormous spending power, with an after-tax income of around £16 billion
- In 2004 the UK ethnic food market had a retail value of £1.29 billion – it grew by 44% between 1998 and 2002
- As ethnic populations increase at a faster rate than indigenous populations, the market for ethnic foods is expected to grow by 25% by the year 2010
- In 2006, there were an estimated 38,000 BAME owned food stores in the UK, employing nearly 200,000 people.

Further Resources

- Friends of the Earth - www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/
- Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, www.ifees.org
- London Food Link - www.londonfoodlink.org
- Soil Association - www.soilassociation.org
- UK Food Links - www.foodlinks-uk.org
- English Food and Farming Partnerships (for farmers looking to enter new markets) - www.effp.com

Not Too Young

to make a *Difference*

Whilst growing up in Cornwall, Zoe Martin-West's parents taught her the value of living an ethical lifestyle. Even as a child, she recognized the impacts of human activity on the natural environment.

Having been brought up with environmentally-friendly habits, she's keen to keep them going, especially away from home. "At university, we have the option for a recycling bin so I thought we should get one, because we throw an awful lot away as a flat. Now we have one and we make a conscious effort to recycle. It's an automatic thing – we know what to recycle and where it has to go."

In addition to recycling the waste at her flat, the 18-year-old English student also tries to avoid using the plastic carrier bags that seem to come with every purchase.

"You're given a plastic bag in every shop, instead of having one shopping bag. Why do we have so many shopping bags, why can't we have one bag? It's a bit ridiculous."

But it's not just the environment that she's concerned about. Now Zoe's interest stretches past her local surroundings and into locations overseas. Supporting development organisations like Oxfam, she's become concerned about the environment of others, particularly those she might affect herself through her purchasing decisions.

During her last year in high school, Zoe was impressed by a visit of a representative from the organisation Labour Behind The Label (LBL). After hearing the LBL representative talk about garment workers toiling away in cramped factories for wages as low as a few pence per hour, she decided to do something about it. "The representative didn't tell a group of teenage girls to stop shopping," explains Zoe. "It was more reasonable. You can shop at H&M or the Gap, but you should be aware of what you're buying and how it was made."

Whilst she still shops on the high street, she now takes the time to follow LBL's Take



Source: Zoe Martin-West

A Stand campaign for workers' rights. After bringing her purchases home, she sends her receipts with a preprinted Take A Stand postcard to the head offices of the shops she's visited. "It's very easy because you just fill in the postcard, attach the receipt, and send the postcard. It's so obvious, it's direct action."

Zoe credits her upbringing and her conscience for her ethical stance. "I think part of it came from my parents, but obviously if I hadn't wanted to be ethical with my shopping habits, I could've just stopped when I came to university. I think what your parents do is important, but now I carry it on myself."

*I've been doing the postcards
whilst at university, and
people ask me about it.
There are a lot of people who
aren't aware of the conditions
of producing the clothes
that people buy.*

Zoe Martin-West

Through discussions with friends, Zoe does her part to talk about climate change and environmental issues, and she sees that she's getting through to some of them. "Everyone knows that I'm really keen on it and they tease me, but I'm not prepared to step down over it. I think people know that they need to change the way we act and our disposable lifestyle. When the public decide that they want to change, then they pressurise the state or businesses for the change."

Next on her wishlist is better labeling and packaging for clothing and food, in order to

raise awareness about the issues of working conditions and food miles. Zoe doesn't think many people know about them. "I would make it compulsory for clothing to have labels that say something about how it was made, I'd make sure food had less packaging and say something about recycling it, so there's no excuse, they have to take responsibility for their actions."

Though Zoe hasn't planned a career in saving the world, she still feels she could be more active and involved. "In terms of writing to companies and reading up on environmental impact, I think it's important that I continue to find out more about it, but it's a matter of finding the time to act."

"It's just something you do. If you're interested in it and you can make a difference, then hopefully you will."

Facts and Information

- Low prices don't just prevent suppliers being able to pay their workers a living wage, they also have a detrimental effect on other basic rights such as sick pay or maternity leave, health and safety, reasonable working hours and the right to organise. (Source: *Labour Behind The Label*)
- In Bangladesh, garment sector wages have fallen in real terms by half in the past ten years, as low as £7 per month (Source: *Labour Behind The Label*)
- Labour costs typically represent something between 0.5 and 4% of the retail price of a garment or sports shoe. For instance, paying Indonesian sport shoe workers a living wage would raise the cost of a \$65 pair of sport shoes to \$70. (Source: *Labour Behind The Label*)

Further Resources

- For more information about Labour www.labourbehindthelabel.org

Forging Links

for a Sustainable

Food System

East Anglia Food Link (EAFL) is a not-for-profit co-operative representing all parts of the sustainable food chain. Co-ordinator Tully Wakeman tells us more:

What does 'sustainable' mean to you?

An activity is sustainable if we can keep on doing it now and in subsequent generations. There are three dimensions to consider: economic, environmental and social.

For example, oil is a limited resource. I think we've passed the peak production point for oil, the halfway point, and we're running out of it. We have to be realistic and accept that neither producers nor consumers are immediately going to adopt a food system that uses no oil, but we can at least think about building a system that can respond more quickly to an oil shortage.

In light of all that, what is a sustainable food supply chain?

That's a good question. Recently the interest from government, retailers and supermarkets has grown immensely. The spotlight has come onto the sustainability of the food system, so a lot of good questions are being asked, and we don't know all the answers. But there are some things that we can be confident about.

First, a food system has to be environmentally sustainable. Organic farming, for example, tries to build fertility in the soil so that there isn't the need for fertilisers and pesticides, which are very energy-intensive. Conventional farming is also trying to reduce its inputs by adopting better methods such as "minimum tillage". There's no way that the whole world could eat the quantity of meat that we in the western world currently do. Producing so much meat simply uses unsustainable quantities of energy and emits unsustainable quantities of greenhouse gases. So we need to think about eating much less of it.

Second, the food has to get to the retailer



Source: EAFL

without using excessive amounts of energy to transport it. We need to think about sourcing our food from within the UK. Again that means changing our own consumption patterns as much as the industry.

Third, the retailer should ideally be located close to the consumer. Partly this is because “shopping miles” account for almost half of all “food miles”.

Fourth, I think we need to be much more mindful of food security. The world’s food supply faces huge challenges from peak oil, water depletion, climate change, the switch to biofuels. If we face the reality that we could run out of food, we might conclude that we should move towards a situation where the UK produces enough food to feed itself

But there are some things you can't buy locally because it's just not grown here. For instance, how would you get a sustainable cup of tea?

No one is saying that only buy food from your region or even from the UK. We've always imported luxuries from around the world. Much more worrying is when we live on meat which can only be produced by importing millions of tonnes of feed from around the world, or where 90% of our fruit is imported and it would take us years to plant the orchards to feed ourselves.

How has East Anglia Food Link been successful at establishing a sustainable food chain?

In 2003, we helped to set up an organic wholesaler called Eostre Organics, which is a cooperative of organic growers in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. It's a true cooperative, controlled by its growers and getting the best possible price from the markets, without the wholesaler taking any more money than it needs to.

Setting up this wholesaler enabled the growers to find different markets, such as

box schemes and public markets such as Borough Market in London. They've now got a turnover of well over £1 million a year. It's a viable business, but more than that, it's created a viable market for those growers.

Another thing we're pretty proud of is our work with schools and hospitals to source suppliers for their meals. We've had to work with existing local businesses like butchers and abattoirs, to set up meat supply chains which have a clear provenance.

In all of these projects, our work is as a facilitator, broker, and champion of sustainable systems. For example a restaurateur or school caterer might want to use more local food, but not know where they can buy it. A producer might want to sell more into local or regional markets, but not know how to break into them. Our job is not just to introduce producers to customers. It might be about saying to a customer, “Nobody does that at the moment, but I know someone who might do it if we had a big enough market for it,” and then going to that producer or supplier and persuading them to give it a try.

What's in the future for EAFL?

We will continue our work on getting sustainable food into schools and hospitals. We're working on a Certificate of Provenance which would help to identify food that meets particular sustainability criteria and we're taking time to reflect, in order to make sure that the work we're doing is the most productive work we can do.

Further Resources

- For more info on the East Anglia Food Link, call them at 01508 536666 or visit www.eafl.org.uk
- For more information about Eostre Organics, visit www.eostreorganics.co.uk or call 01953 456294.

Every Local Shop Counts

Based in the Wye Valley on the border of Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, this community venture shows how exciting and diverse a local shop can be. Fred Simpson explains.

In 2000 the area's only local shop closed so the community decided to get together to build a new one. We wanted it to have a community focus and act as a base for a full range of community services.

About 500 people live here in about 250 houses. Every house has about two–three acres of land and some houses have been here since the 16th Century. We're now a commuter village, but we also have a mix of farmers and retirees. It is three miles to the next shop in the nearest village but a lot of

people felt that if they had to get in the car to go shopping they may as well just travel on to the nearest supermarket.

What services do you offer?

The community shop includes a café, general store and food outlet, post office, library kiosk, art gallery and IT training suite. The café sells tea and cakes and the shop sells a good range of household goods including some local produce. The post office was the service that local people feared losing the most.

People can also order books which the Gloucester Mobile Libraries deliver to the shop when they come to the village. We have eight computer workstations for local people to use and this has been vital in training hundreds of people through the Forest of Dean College. Local artists display and sell their work in the art gallery. Local businesses use the upstairs area for conferences because it's a nice place to meet.

How is the community shop managed and financed?

Initially, a small team did the main project work, but now the shop has been handed over to a management committee and we

Source: Brockweir and Hewelsfield Community Shop





are an Industrial and Provident Society. We have a paid manager and 40 volunteers and the land is leased from the old village hall. We started with grants and local people putting in their money, but now we survive on revenue from our services and soon we will have repaid all the money we loaned.

The shop is also environmentally friendly. How did you do this?

Being environmentally friendly wasn't an original objective but we quickly realised that social, economic and environmental sustainability was important.

The building is made of local green oak with a high insulation and low-energy design that fits beautifully into the picturesque landscape.

The roof has photovoltaic tiles which generate electricity from the sun. There is even a gauge in the shop to show visitors how much power is being produced. In addition, a ground source heat pump (which draws heat up from the ground) provides renewable underfloor heating and hot water. This has been no more expensive than ordinary heating systems.

Because of the electricity we generate from solar energy, we are saving nearly four metric tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) annually, and about £500 on our energy bills.

This is great. But why wasn't it expensive?

We got outside funding. For many funders environmentally-friendly design and energy use is important. So we knew it also made good economic sense to go green as we were very likely to get the grant.

The shop has obviously improved the local area. What are the biggest changes you have noticed?

The area has seen a change in people over the last 20 years – there are now around five times as many cars as before. And we face the same problems as any other village where house prices are very high.

Local artists display and sell their work in the art gallery. Local businesses use the upstairs area for conferences.

Fred Simpson

We could have become just another commuter satellite village, but developing the community shop has brought us loads of benefits. The main one is the social value – seeing people connecting. People build their lives around the shop.

What advice would you give to other rural (and urban) communities threatened with losing essential services?

We produced a DVD showing how the shop started as a way of encouraging others to do the same. People were reluctant to believe it was possible but we held public meetings to convince them we could do it and now the whole community is involved

in supporting the shop. Even newcomers to the area get involved straight away.

What makes us successful, apart from the local involvement, is the scale of the services we provide. For example, we have people who just come to visit on a Sunday and sit around outside and enjoy the atmosphere. It's important to design a place which will be part of or add to the local area and which will make volunteers and staff want to work there.

Facts and Information

Local Shopping

- What we buy (and where we buy it) has an impact across the world and in our communities.
- Buying local goods and services keeps money circulating in your community and helps create local jobs. It also cuts down the distances some goods travel which in turn saves energy, cuts pollution, and helps tackle climate change.
- Buying local organic food supports farmers in the UK and elsewhere who are farming without the use of pesticides that may damage the environment. It also supports many new small businesses and some evidence suggests that it has direct health benefits.

Green Energy

- In a well-installed ground source heat pump system every one unit of electrical energy put in will yield three or more units of heat energy (a coefficient of performance of 3). This electrical pumping energy can come from renewable resources if you produce renewable electricity on-site or buy green electricity.
- A heat pump is just like a fridge working in reverse; you just get the heat from the back and send the cold air outside.
- Heat pumps are more efficient (i.e. require less electrical input) when they are running at lower temperatures. It is therefore a great idea to combine them with high insulation

and, if you can, underfloor heating.

- Underfloor heating enables your heating system to run at a lower temperature whilst producing the same thermal comfort of the room. This is because the heat rises towards the people instead of skirting up the walls to the ceiling.
- The Energy Savings Trust has found that for each kW peak of installed photovoltaic system you can expect to save approximately 325kg of CO₂ per year

Further Resources

- There are a number of organisations and websites providing more information on local shopping and local markets such as www.soilassociation.org, www.netmums.com/lc/food_local.php and www.localfoodworks.org
- Find out more about energy projects for your community including funding support, training, advice and more case studies, contact the Community Action for Energy Team (CAfE) at 08701 261 444, email CAfE@est.org.uk or www.est.org.uk/cafe.
- The Low Carbon Buildings Programme is a government grants scheme designed to support renewable energy installations on domestic, community and business properties. For information regarding grants for renewable energy installations, check out www.lowcarbonbuildings.co.uk or call 0800 915 0990.
- For specific information regarding solar photovoltaic power take a look at the British Photovoltaic Association website: www.pv-uk.org.uk. They represent the photovoltaic industry and provide information to the public.



Save our
Resources

Sofa SO Good

Peter Townsend knew that it should be possible to keep furniture out of gardens, create new jobs and help those who can't afford to set up their home to do it, all at the same time.

When did you set up SOFA and why?

We set up SOFA (Shifting Old Furniture Around) in 1980, in Bristol. We wanted to create a project that would help people, provide jobs and protect the environment, which was pretty good going for a simple idea. SOFA's aim is to recycle all kinds of household furniture and electrical equipment. We also have a small range of

brand new kitchen items such as kettles, toasters, microwaves and halogen heaters.

It sounds simple, but was it really?

No it wasn't that easy. We started small: we had one van and a handful of volunteers working in the Bristol area. But we knew there was a need for SOFA. It was important to stick it out.

You had objectives to help people, provide jobs and protect the environment. Have you?

Well it's a continuous job, but we think we are making a difference. SOFA helps over 5000 households a year to furnish their homes at affordable prices. We collect over 25,000 items a year that would otherwise have gone to landfill. From a handful of volunteers, we now have 36 permanent members of staff and we deliver all over the Avon area.

What has been your best moment?

Our best moment keeps repeating itself – every time we deliver furniture to people who don't have any is the best part. Until you've seen a family living literally without anything on the floor other than maybe a bean bag you don't realise what a difference



Source: SOFA Project

projects like this can make. It keeps us wanting to do it.

And the worst?

Undoubtedly the worst thing that has happened to us has been building up part of the business on Government promises, only to watch those promises not be delivered. In anticipation of the European Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive we leased a new building and took on additional staff because of the demand that the Directive would create. But then the Government delayed implementation until July next year. We had already invested in people and buildings – we couldn't get out of the lease so we had to let good people go which was the worst thing.

It's a real pleasure seeing people appreciate the service we provide.

Paul Townsend

SOFA has done a lot since it started. What next?

SOFA works with manufacturers to pick up old washing machines. We are looking forward to next July when the WEEE Directive comes into force as it will mean that more equipment will be recycled.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of starting a project like yours?

Make sure that you have work actually agreed and income coming in before you start investing. There isn't a lot of money in this industry but there are people with

lots of social conscience and there is a lot of reward in this work.

Facts and Information

- There are approximately 400 re-use organisations working with social and environmental aims across the UK. These vary in size from small local charities to large social enterprises.
- The Furniture Re-use Network estimates that around two million items of furniture/white goods will be collected for re-use in 2007.
- The furniture re-use sector:
 - employs around 3,000 staff
 - provides training for over 5,000 trainees
 - supports and occupies over 8,000 volunteers
 - helps around ½ million low income households
 - reuses two million items including ¼ million electrical items
 - diverts 85,000 tonnes of waste from landfill

Further Resources

- What can you, your group or your organisation do? Everyone can do something about recycling - in their homes, as a member of a group or club or even in their work place.
- The Furniture Re-use Network is the national body which supports, assists and develops charitable re-use organisations across the UK through information, representation, events and other support. If you wish to donate furniture, contact the FRN on 0117 954 3571 or visit www.frn.org.uk
- For general information on the community waste sector, visit www.communitywaste.org.uk

'Green' and **Gorgeous**

Not-for-profit social enterprise Energywise Recycling was started in 2000 by three unemployed women to implement recycling and other sustainable waste management practices, and to develop new jobs and enterprise, in the local community of Toxteth, Liverpool.

Working with the City Council in Liverpool and neighbourhood residents in Toxteth, Energywise introduced 'black-box' kerbside recycling schemes in several disadvantaged communities that suffer from social exclusion, and as a result, participants developed a sense of local pride and engagement.

With the help of funding from the European Social Fund for intermediate labour (temporary contracts for long-term unemployed people to gain skills), Energywise has also enabled numerous local unemployed residents to find their way back to work whilst performing 'green deeds', including one project with Picton Pathways that resulted in helping 100% of local residents into permanent employment.

In the six years since Energywise Recycling started, the project has branched out from its original aim of collecting recyclable

household and office materials from urban kerbside locations into raising recycling awareness within local communities and schools, and providing advice on energy efficiency and waste management. Energywise Recycling views so-called 'waste' as a resource which can be used to

create new products, so they have even started manufacturing new glass products from recycled glass.

They have recently established a new enterprise, Energywise Recycled Glass, which takes window glass and bottles collected from

homes, restaurants and weddings, and reprocesses them into unique and stylish household and workplace items. Each piece is handcrafted in a kiln-formed process and made in Liverpool from 100% recycled products. As a testament to the quality of their work, their glass for artists appeared in the 'Real Rubbish Garden' at the

As a testament to the quality of their work, their glass for artists appeared in the 'Real Rubbish Garden' at the Royal Chelsea Flower Show 2005.



Royal Chelsea Flower Show in 2005.

This venture has created new jobs for local residents. Over 50 local people are employed and training placements are offered to long-term unemployed people. By providing a dynamic and innovative local recycling facility, Energywise can boast of their 'wealth from waste' whilst providing local jobs and training and offering sustainable purchasing options.

Facts and Information

- Total glass used in the UK is estimated at around 3.6 million tonnes. This means that, on average, each person in the UK uses 110 glass bottles and jars per year – only 27% of these are recycled.
- Glass is theoretically "infinitely recyclable". Taking our bottles and jars to the glass banks is a way we can ALL make a positive contribution to the environment. It also

takes less energy to recycle glass than to melt down the original raw materials.

Further Resources

- To view the range of recycled glass products from Energywise, visit www.energywiserecycledglass.co.uk
- The British Glass Manufacturers' Federation represents the UK's glass industry. www.britglass.org.uk
- Educational resources and support can be found at: www.glassforever.co.uk or www.recyclingglass.co.uk
- To find out about recycling glass in your area contact your local authority recycling officer, or to find your nearest glass recycling bank, visit www.recycle-more.co.uk

Putting Compost

into the Curriculum

At schools in Leicester and Leicestershire, Little Rotters have the answer, as Sara Smith, Education Officer at Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire, explains.

What are Little Rotters Composting clubs?

We set up the clubs as a pilot in a broad cross-section of schools in Leicester and Leicestershire. They were popular with teachers and students, and we now have 10 schools that have clubs. We are also moving from the schools to their surrounding communities to encourage them to compost. This includes holding roadshows on how to start composting, encouraging people to buy compost bins and so on.

How do the schools link up with their communities?

Each school is associated with a local parish magazine and we have been placing articles

in these magazines about composting. Students have devised their own questions about composting to ask parents, for example 'why don't you compost?' And we have distributed leaflets and questionnaires to the surrounding local areas around the schools involved to ask people about composting and their attitudes to it.

What happens at a Little Rotters Composting Club?

Each school has caddies where students put their waste that can be composted. A number of the schools have free fruit so there are lots of fruit scraps as well as paper towels, leaves and grass cuttings. Students get to wear tabards to show that they are responsible for collecting the caddies and filling the school composting bin. We supplied the caddies and the national waste campaign WRAP provided the compost bins.

We have published a handbook for teachers which helps them weave composting into the curriculum for Key Stage 2 (upper primary). We have distributed over 1000 handbooks and the feedback from teachers has been positive - we've even had a second print run.

Our education officer speaks at



Thringstone Primary School

assemblies and runs activities depending on what a school wants. We also have a Little Rotters Composting Club website (www.littlerotters.org.uk/index.html) which anyone can access.

What has been the reaction from students so far?

Students really like getting involved and having a role at school. The schools have all done really well with collecting compost – just under one ton per year per school. One school is now using its compost in raised garden beds that have been constructed by the kids and some parents.

We're running an inter-school Little Rotters Challenge Cup, 10 schools will compete to see which one can compost the most organic waste.

Sara Smith

Where to from here?

This year we are running an inter-school Little Rotters Challenge Cup where the 10 schools involved will compete against each other to see which one can compost the most organic waste.

Ultimately, we want to get as many people composting as possible. So we are encouraging anyone who wants to set up a Little Rotters Composting Club to contact us for details on how to start.

Facts and Information

- Compost and soil are not dead, they are living things. There are more micro-organisms in a teaspoonful of soil than there are humans alive on the planet.
- A school can reduce the amount of

it's waste going to landfill by 50% after recycling if it also composts, which could be a saving of between £200-£1500 year

- On average one student will produce 4.05kg of compostable waste in a school year. (Source: based on figures from Edubase, Jan 2006).
- Community composting projects have calculated that a school of 500 pupils will divert an average of four tonnes per year of compostable waste. (Source: Wiltshire Wildlife Trusts Schools Composting Technology Project).
- If all schools in the UK composted it would save nearly 30,000 tonnes of compostable waste from going to landfill. (Source: based on model used in NERI Technical Report No. 611, 2007).

Further Resources

- Community Composting Network provide support for small scale, community composting schemes. Find them at Alexandra Road, Sheffield S2 3EE. Call 0114 258 0483 or visit www.communitycompost.org
- The Composting Association, www.compost.org.uk, are the national trade association for composters.
- Practical advice on composting in schools is also available from the Garden Organic School Gardens project, Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry, Warwickshire CV8 3LG. Call 024 7630 8238 or visit www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools_organic_network
- Wastewatch run a network for people involved in waste education work. Further information about the Waste Education Support Programme (WESP) can be found at www.wastewatch.org.uk/education/

The 3 Rs -

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The Community Recycling Network (CRN) is a membership organisation promoting community-based sustainable waste management .

For the CRN and its 400 full members and associates, waste is a valuable resource. General Manager Emma Hallett tells us more:

What does “sustainable development” mean to you?

Sustainable development means ensuring that the environmental impact that our organisation has is as positive as possible, and that it contributes in an ethical way to a more socially just world.

Why do you support Every Action Counts?

It's a way to help a broader spectrum of community groups to think about their environmental impact and to make

positive changes with what they do and who they influence.

The CRN runs a Compost Doctors project. Tell us more about it.

We're helping people to do composting of catering waste in small businesses, like pubs and kitchens, on-site in a small scale way, without getting involved with any complicated regulations.

Why was it important for you to do this project?

I think we felt it was an area that is yet to be developed. There's a lot of advice and support available for people composting at home, and there's development also for large-scale composting, but there was a gap in the middle for readily available information and suitably-priced equipment to do this kind of stuff.

Who do you target for this project?

Taking compost off-site is prohibited unless the process meets certain stringent regulations, so the programme is focusing on premises that can use the compost on-site; country pubs who can use the compost in their gardens, farm shops and



Source: CRN

cafés using the compost on their fields or holiday parks using the compost on their flower beds. The average city pub doesn't have enough garden for the amount of compost produced.

We're looking for a financial model which makes it easy for businesses to buy and that makes a good financial and environmental case.

Emma Hallett

Are you looking to expand the program in any way, into other areas?

We're hoping to expand it a little bit around the country. We're looking for a financial model which makes it easy for businesses to buy and that makes a good financial and environmental case.

One of the side effects is we're looking at other types of waste, like recycling their cardboard or their glass collections. In some cases, we've reduced their waste collections from three bins to one, which has environmental benefits and also financial benefits for them, since they have to pay for collection.

Has the process of convincing people about composting been difficult?

It hasn't been difficult yet, because we've had some grant money that we used to buy some of the equipment first. As long as there's been a champion, someone who's already interested in composting... we haven't been doing the cold-calling yet, just the soft sell to people who are already interested.

What lessons have you learned along the way?

We've learned a lot of technical lessons about types of equipment, but basically it's about having simple systems that everyone can understand, and having individuals who champion the idea.

Does CRN itself have environmental policies?

We do have a clear environmental policy. Of course, recycling and composting is quite central, so we can practice what we preach, like recycling paper, and re-using furniture from the local community. We expect people to travel by train or public transport if possible. If you drive a car when you should've taken the train, then we only reimburse you up to the cost of the train fare. We also pay for cycling mileage.

What's next for CRN?

We're hoping to continue more of our work regionally, where it's easier to network, rather than on a national level.

Facts and Information

- CRN has approximately 400 full members and associates, many of which are involved in not-for-profit, community-based waste minimisation, re-use and recycling schemes.
- CRN members, working in partnership with local authorities and waste management companies, have achieved some of the highest recycling rates in the UK.

Further Resources

- For more information about CRN or the Compost Doctors programme, or to search for your nearest community recycler, visit www.crn.org.uk.

The *Worm* Turns

– and Turns, and Turns...

The idea of a box of worms on your window sill is enough for many people to squirm. But read on: Annina Salo, Home Composting Project Officer at CRISP, explains.

Where did the idea for the project come from?

The idea of wormeries is not new – CRISP (Community Recycling In Southwark Partnership) has been running projects focused on encouraging Southwark residents to compost their organic waste for over six years and we currently run a subsidised home composting scheme which has been in existence for three years and has sold over 3,500 compost bins. The wormeries project is intended to give those residents without gardens (approx 50% of households in Southwark) the opportunity to compost their waste.

How does the project work?

The project was run as a small pilot by CRISP in 03/04 based on 50 bins to test the idea,

and in 2006 CRISP and Southwark Council launched the project with 500 wormeries. The key advantage of the project is that our wormeries are less costly than those offered on the commercial market and are offered to residents at £5 each, including the worms.

How easy is it to sell to people the concept of keeping worms?

A surprising number of people are afraid of worms, and don't like the idea of touching them. It is difficult to persuade those people to start a wormery unless some rational reason outweighs the fear. People become interested in wormeries either because they would like to produce good compost for their plants (the gardeners), or they don't like the idea of their kitchen waste ending up in landfill (the recyclers).

What feedback have you had from residents who have taken on a wormery?

Some people get really excited about worms and composting and manage their wormery well with few problems, some have more problems with getting started. We try to offer help in the form of free workshops and answer questions on the helpline.



Source: CRISP

How/where are the wormeries manufactured?

The wormeries are manufactured by St Mungo's Housing Association, based on an adaptation of a design from Germany. St Mungo's wood workshop helps to develop the skills and confidence of homeless men and women by providing training and work experience.

Children are interested in keeping worms as pets and a few anglers are interested in producing more worms.

Annina Salo

Is the project self-sufficient?

The project is based on grant funding and previously received grants from the now defunct London Recycling Fund. It is currently funded in full by Southwark Council. The aim of the project is not to set up a sustainable social enterprise in itself but rather to give as many residents as possible the opportunity to participate in composting and also provide training and work experience to the homeless. The wormeries are offered at approx 20% of the actual cost.

What is the potential for using worms to compost waste?

Worms are effective and hygienic composters and do the job faster than conventional backyard composting. They reduce organic waste by around 80%, and the compost produced is especially rich in nutrients and beneficial microbes.

What do people use the compost for?

Containers on their balcony or patio, window boxes and houseplants – this reduces the

need to buy commercial composts and fertilisers. Some of our wormeries have even been put to use on the flowering houseboats near Tower Bridge!

Has the project met your expectations? What have you learned?

Wormeries have been unexpectedly popular with residents. We've learned that the design would still benefit from a few improvements.

Where to from here?

We hope to be able to continue working with Southwark Council in providing wormeries to residents, to convince even more people of the benefits of composting and to give more support to those who already have a wormery. We are currently working with the Council to get more involved with local schools.

Facts and Information

- Worms eat their own weight in organic waste, soil and minerals and excrete their own weight in castings daily, which makes compost and enriches the soil.
- Organic waste disposed of in a landfill site produces methane. Landfill sites released 20% of the UK's methane emissions in 2002. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas and contributes to climate change.

Further Resources

- For more information, go to www.crispej.org.uk or call 020 7252 7709.
- For support on composting within your community, visit the Community Composting Network's website at www.communitycompost.org
- For more information on composting with worms and wormeries, visit www.wigglywiggles.co.uk

Do the **Waste** Rap

Wendy Jenkinson, Programme Manager at Wastewatch, explains how a robot has captured the imagination of school children around the country.

Where did the idea for developing a robot to promote the message about reducing waste come from?

It was actually an idea that we have adapted from a programme in the US. Apparently robots even line dance over there. Our first robot was called Cyler and began visiting schools in 1994. Since then demand has continued to grow. In 1997 we added another two robots to the project.

Recently we've joined forces with government body WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme). The robot has been given a makeover, renamed 'Recycler' and is now part of the national Recycle Now campaign. We have also developed new support materials for pupils that link to the campaign.

What happens when Recycler visits a school?

We have three education officers and three robots who each cover different areas of England: the north, the midlands, and the south. They deliver tailor-made presentations for schools, liaising with the relevant local authorities so that local information is included. For example, we might go to an area where a local authority

is introducing a new recycling scheme and Recycler is a great way to get children to learn about how to recycle in their area.

We have three different presentations: one for Key Stage 1 which is younger children, one for Key Stage 2 which is children aged 7–11 years, and a mixed presentation to cover both age groups. Teachers particularly like

The whole atmosphere can be quite magical because the kids often believe that the robot is real.

Wendy Jenkinson

the fact that we tailor the show to relevant age groups and can link into the national curriculum. Each school performance lasts around an hour and features Recycler dancing and rapping about recycling.

It sounds like Recycler is popular with children – why?

The presentation is unique. Kids love the interaction between the presenter, Recycler and themselves.



Teachers often aren't sure whether five year olds will sit still for the whole show but as it's really lively and engaging the children become mesmerised by Recycler – the whole atmosphere can be quite magical because the kids often believe that the robot is real.

Do the children take away lessons about waste?

We do know that the message to recycle and reduce waste is going home with the children. Teachers use school newsletters and websites, homework and assemblies to promote the messages from the Recycler visit. This encourages the children to pester their parents to participate in recycling and waste minimisation. The new activity book for children also includes a quiz enabling us to monitor the impact the programme is having at home.

What about at school?

Recycler gives us an opportunity to challenge schools to recycle and reduce their waste. Before we go into a school, we ask them to think about three ways that they can reduce, reuse or recycle their rubbish.

We send out an evaluation to schools three months after we have visited them and the feedback we have had is very positive. Schools are coming up with ways to tackle their waste. They are also telling us that following our visit, waste has gone up their list of priorities. We also get lots of feedback about Recycler on the website with children emailing Recycler saying how much they enjoyed the visit, and even coming up with their own waste raps.

Take us out with a Recycler rap!

This one was submitted for the

website by Tanya, Shane and Matthew:

The world has got a problem, we throw too much away

We want to tell the people, recycling's here to stay

We have to save the planet, make it a better place

By using less packaging put a smile upon your face.

NO litter in the parks or in our schools and streets

The world would be a better place for us to go and meet

So think about recycling, reducing and reuse, and everyone will be happier and all things will be cool.

Contact Wendy at wendy.jenkinson@wastewatch.org.uk if you would like to arrange a visit by Recycler or visit www.recyclezone.org.uk.

Facts and Information

- Rubbish collection and keeping our streets clean costs council tax payers about £1.6 billion per year. (Source: CRN).
- If all the aluminium drinks cans sold in the UK were recycled, there would be 14 million fewer full dustbins per year. (Source: CRN).
- About 20% of all the household rubbish we throw away is paper and card. Around half of this is made up of newspapers and magazines, most of which can be recycled. (Source: CRN).
- Nearly 3 billion nappies are thrown away in the UK every year. 90% of these end up in landfill, where they could take hundreds of years to decompose. (Source: CRN).
- One bottle bank can hold up to 3,000 bottles before it needs to be emptied. (Source: CRN).



Source: Wastewatch

Further Resources

Other educational resources, teachers packs and fact sheets can be found on the following websites. These organisations are reprocessors of materials sent to be recycled and give more information about the processes involved.

- Information about paper recycling from Aylesford Newsprint: www.aylesfordnewsprint.co.uk/Students.asp
- Glass reprocessors British glass have developed this resource for children and their teachers: www.recyclingglass.co.uk
- Steel recyclers Corus, contains teachers packs and curriculum guides for steel recycling: www.corusgroup.com/en/responsibility/education/
- Novelis recycle aluminium foil and cans. Their learning zone can be found at: www.thinkcans.com
- Wastewatch run a network for people involved in waste education work. Information about the Waste Education Support Programme (WESP) visit: www.wastewatch.org.uk/education

Care for your
Area



Reclaiming the Street

The Dings community in Bristol have made a concerted effort to turn the streets in their area into safe places, not dangerous ones.

The Dings is a small residential area north of Temple Meads railway station in Bristol. For years, the area had been blighted by rat-running and a severe commuter parking problem, with major access problems for emergency vehicles and traffic dangers for residents.

As part of the Europe-wide transport project VIVALDI (Visionary and Vibrant Actions through Local transport Demonstration Initiatives), Sustrans and Bristol City Council worked with the local community to develop proposals for a 'home zone' in the Dings. Home zones are groups of streets designed primarily to put the interests of pedestrians and cyclists first ahead of those of motorists. Local

residents have played a key role in all decision-making.

The home zone project began in September 2004. Since then many of the planned changes have already been finished, including a new cycle and walkway linked to the National Cycle Network and the mainline rail station, and a safer cycling and walking route to the adjacent school. The new road layout has been 'designed for uncertainty' to slow down drivers by creating so-called 'shared-use areas'. These changes have been accompanied by campaigns to encourage people to get out of their cars and use other ways of getting around. One way of doing this has been to provide training on how to cycle safely.

Some residents were concerned that motorists would not drive safely in the new space. To try and help educate the residents about the new space, they devised a scheme called Safe Car. Every household was asked to sign a safe car pledge agreeing to drive slowly and safely in the new home zone and to be considerate to pedestrians and cyclists in the home zone. Those who signed the pledge were given a Safe Car sticker to put in their car. When a large number of pledges had been secured, residents arrange a balloon launch to highlight the

Source: The Dings Home Zone





scheme and the local MP joined residents to release the balloons.

Local resident Marilyn Silverthorne says that, "The Safe Car stickers have helped to remind all residents that they should drive carefully now that the street layouts have changed. The stickers in the cars are a good way to make sure that people are reminded

with a car share club for short-term rental as an alternative to owning a car, and limits on parking so that people only park in marked bays.

But not all the improvements have been directly about transport. Water, telecommunications and electricity systems have all had an upgrade.

The Safe Car stickers have helped to remind all residents that they should drive carefully now that the street layouts have changed.

Marilyn Silverthorne

that lots of their neighbours have pledged to drive slowly and carefully. If new residents see the sticker they ask what it's all about, so it's a good way to help educate them to drive carefully as well."

Bristol University, funded by the British Heart Foundation, is monitoring to what extent these changes are influencing how residents live and the travel choices they make. There are also plans to keep improving transport options in the area,

Facts and Information

- A government study by the Home Office on "perceptions and experiences of anti-social behaviour", found speeding traffic was seen as the biggest problem by far.
- According to Meyer Hillman, an expert on environmental issues, within a single generation, the distance children roam on their own – their "home habitat" – has reduced to 1/9th of the area they used to roam.

Further Resources

- More information about similar projects, contact Sustrans at National Cycle Network Centre. Call 0117 915 0323, email daniel.black@sustrans.org.uk or write to the Centre at 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5DD.

The Ringway is not

'Mine', But Ours

The SESKU Environment Group is based in South Elmsall and is working to counter social exclusion by creating job and training opportunities for local people.

Originally a regeneration programme, the Environment Group has engaged the local community to reclaim their urban and rural environment. A variety of projects have been used to get local residents to contribute to improving the green spaces in the area. These include tree and flower planting, pond management and improvement projects, and projects to involve local schools. Other services they offer include guided walks, environmental

accreditation courses, and environmental interpretation events.

One of the main focuses for the SESKU Environment Group is the Ringway project that involved the creation and maintenance of a 13 mile circular network of countryside footpaths, cycleways and other tracks and trails that link the three former colliery communities to each other. The ringway also connects them to other towns and villages in the area and there are numerous



sites of historical, cultural and ecological interest along the route.

The ringway came about from the traditional culture of 'going for a walk'. Miners would be underground all week, and walking was a free and popular leisure activity. As a result, people noticed changes in their environment through the mines creating slag heaps and decided to do something about it.

The footpaths the Environment Group has been working on are already very well used as routes to work. Much of the ringway passes along ancient bridleways which have been used by local residents for hundreds of years. People are concerned about the road safety in the town centre from traffic and the ringway offers the possibility of a quick way of cycling to work, especially in some areas with smooth and level surfaces such as around South Elmsall. Other areas, however, are best suited to experienced off-road cyclists as these trails can get very muddy.

The ringway came about from the traditional culture of 'going for a walk'. Miners would be underground all week, and walking was a free and popular leisure activity.

Through the SESKU Environment Group, people who started with an overriding interest in increasing employment and economic regeneration have also now become more environmentally motivated and concerned. The Environment Group have also produced a range of leaflets and informative CD-ROMs about the environmental heritage of the SESKU area

– including one about the dragonflies of the ringway!

The local community is also encouraged to participate in the maintenance of the Ringway. The SESKU Environment Group organises volunteers for practical work such as creating and repairing footpaths and clearing the walkways. Residents are also welcome to attend the group's regular monthly meetings.

The future of the ringway is rather unclear, despite the enthusiasm for the route. As part of the A1-M1 link road plans and the development of Frickley Country Park, it is hoped that significant route improvements can be made in the coming years.

Facts and Information

- The economic benefits of local walking and cycling routes have a benefit to cost ratio of 20:1. This is in stark contrast to the typical ratio of just 3:1 for other transport schemes such as rail and roads. (Source: "Economic appraisal of local walking and cycling routes", Sustrans, the Institute for Transport Studies at Leeds University and the University of Bolton.)
- "Nearly three quarters of users on the National Cycle Network report that the Network has helped them to increase the amount of physical activity they take." (Source: "The National Cycle Network: Route User Monitoring Report, to the end of 2005", Sustrans.)

Further Resources

- For information on cycling in Yorkshire, visit: www.sustrans.org.uk
- For local cycle groups in West Yorkshire and more information on the Ringway: www.cycletransport-westyorks.co.uk/route_sesku.htm
- For information on how to start up your own cycle group: www.ctc.org.uk

Street Seats

The Southville Community Development Association in Bristol decided it wanted to find out what barriers older residents faced when walking around the local area.

In 2003 the community association worked with older residents to complete a survey of local streets. The survey highlighted that for many older people going for a walk – even a short one – was difficult without stopping every now and again

Since the benches have been installed they've been really well used. Not only have they provided a really useful resting place for older people, pregnant women, and people with disabilities, they also become well-used meeting places where all kinds of people stop for a chat.

Ben Barker

for a rest. The lack of places to stop and rest was a major problem. The community association identified a number

of good sites for locating benches – close to the shops, outside the bank, near the school, in the park and outside the local church. All these locations are on routes that are well-used by pedestrians.

The community association secured £2000 from the council to pay for five benches. It consulted older residents on the type of bench they would like. They chose a metal bench with a good arm rest to help them get up from the seat.

There has been strong community support for the project. The church now has a bench and they have used it to commemorate one of their members. A local bank has a bench outside, and arranged to reposition it when the building's entrance was altered.

The benefits go wider than providing a place for people to sit, rest and chat. Ben Barker, Chair of the Southville Community Development Association, explains that, "By creating these meeting places we've also helped to make the streets feel safer – when people are using the benches there are more eyes on the street. It also encourages people to walk or cycle for short journeys rather than take the car."

The community association has also installed several cycle racks. However,



it hasn't always been plain sailing. Ben recalls that, "We did have a problem with one shop – we thought we'd found the perfect site but they wouldn't have it as they thought it would attract anti-social people and 'ne'er-do-wells' to loiter. It has also taken quite a while to put the benches in because we've had to get planning permission to install them as 'street furniture'. But we carry on looking for more places to site the benches. We face a combination of bureaucracy, prejudice and congestion – sometimes where we want to site a bench the pavement just isn't wide enough."

Facts and Information

- Benches are not only particularly useful for the elderly, but also for pregnant women and people with disabilities.
- Some benches are works of art that give the community identity.

Further Resources

- Get advice from your local Council for Voluntary Service at www.navca.org.uk
- For legal advice on planning issues in relation to community buildings, contact Community Matters at 020 7837 7887 or visit www.communitymatters.org.uk.
- The Development Trusts Association can advise on linking voluntary, private and statutory groups for mutual benefit. Call DTA at 0845 458 8336 or visit www.dta.org.uk.
- For more information about making your neighbourhood streets friendlier, visit Sustrans at www.sustrans.org.uk or Living Streets at www.livingstreets.org.uk.

Ruins to Riches

The gardens provide much needed green space and bring a local community together. Mike Dewhurst, Vice-Chairman of the Gamesley Residents Association, explains how they did it.

How would you describe Gamesley as an area?

Gamesley is near Glossop on the northwest edge of the Peak District. It was originally an estate that housed people who were moved here to ease overcrowding in Manchester. The area has been described as quite isolated and it has suffered from spates of vandalism, alcohol-related problems and high unemployment. There was no open space for outdoor recreation and the houses only had neglected grass verges. A significant number of residents claim state benefits.

So why did you decide to create the gardens?

The creation of the gardens was very much linked to a wider regeneration programme for the estate, with the aim of bringing together several new amenities for the community. These included a new five-a-side football pitch adjacent to the gardens and renovation of the local community centre. We also hoped that by drawing people outdoors to enjoy the new green spaces and gardens they might be encouraged to explore the local archaeological remains of Melandra Castle (which is a Roman fort, hence the name of the gardens) and the wider countryside beyond.

The Gamesley Residents Association went into local schools on the estate to get children to help design the play areas. We held an open day where people came along and gave their views.

How did you think the gardens would make a difference to some of the estate's social issues?

The gardens can't tackle all the social issues on their own, but they can be part of the solution. I knew it would make a big difference to this estate. We are isolated

Source: Gamesley Residents Association



here, and we felt that when people had something that actually belonged to them it would change their lives. The gardens can bring communities and individuals together, create a sense of pride and ownership, help people learn new skills and generally improve mental and physical well-being.

What were the next practical steps once the residents were involved?

We contacted Doorstep Greens (a funding programme run by the Countryside Agency) for help and we involved local residents. We had to get to grips with

The gardens can't tackle all the social issues on their own, but they can be part of the solution. I knew it would make a big difference.

Mike Dewhurst

renovating the earmarked site. We also wanted to somehow incorporate the nearby remains of Melandra Castle and the Trans Pennine Trail.

We installed some drainage on the site first, which helped to alleviate the problems with mud and clay. The task of planting and maintenance was partially undertaken by a BTCV 'Green Gym' run from the estate's new Healthy Living Centre.

Meanwhile, the design of the gardens has created links with the nearby Melandra Castle, incorporating stone block paths engraved with Roman-style patterns and a children's play area within a Roman fort. Local schoolchildren have worked on simple designs depicting Roman coins and people, which have been sand-blasted on to stone block seating.

What are the plans for the gardens' future?

The residents' hope is to maximise the use of this inviting space. It's important that all of the community and others can use it, so we want an area that appeals to everyone whatever their age or background.

The neighbourhood regeneration co-ordinator, Dave Bennett, says, "We're trying to encourage more awareness of the ancient monument site. We are in discussion with High Peak Borough Council to extend the Green Gym activities to the Melandra Castle site and to improve the signage and information board at the site."

What were your best decisions?

1. Have a 'can do' attitude.
2. Get as many people as you can involved from the community, and make sure they are involved in the running of the project
3. Don't be afraid to get help.
4. Apply for funding and help, and talk to your local Council for Voluntary Service.
5. Use the local historic natural and built environment to inspire the design.

Further Resources

- Get advice from your local Council for Voluntary Service at www.navca.org.uk, and BTCV at www.btcv.org for help with volunteer labour for planting and conservation work.
- For information on historic gardens, contact the Garden History Society 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ or call 020 7608 2409. Visit www.gardenhistorysociety.org or the Historic Gardens Foundation, www.historicgardens.org.
- Information on local diversity across the UK, visit Common Ground's, www.commonground.org.uk.

Gardeners' World

The Hulme Community Garden Centre has tapped into the initiative and creativity of local people to regenerate inner-city land into a beautiful community garden and nursery.

The Hulme Community Garden Centre began in 1998 and since then it has tried to improve local people's understanding of horticulture, conservation, food production and nutrition, particularly among unemployed people looking for work. It provides a community focal point and opportunities for the residents of Hulme and neighbouring Moss Side to improve their health and well-being.

The co-ordinators of the community garden are conscious of the role the garden

can play in encouraging social inclusion. They promote the garden among groups and individuals with limited space for recreation. They also encourage people with limited social contacts to join in activities where people from across different communities and generations participate. "There is no doubt our project makes a very positive contribution to community cohesion," says staff member Bella Kennett.

Catherine Waring, one of the nursery co-ordinators, says that, "It's been a challenge but we've managed to keep going for six years. We have four permanent part-time staff – a nursery co-ordinator position shared by two people, a volunteer co-ordinator and a nursery assistant. Usually we also have about three volunteers working with us at any one time. We still get funding and will probably never be completely self-sufficient due to the size of the site and not having enough paying customers."

The centre has about 1000 regular customers a year who come to buy products. But as Catherine explains, people come to the centre for a variety of reasons. "It's hard to separate those who come to

Source: Hulme Community Garden Centre



buy plants and other items from those who use the community garden centre facilities. Carers bring their clients at lunchtime and we are next door to the Afro-Caribbean day care group."

The centre is a not-for-profit enterprise and any income from sales is used to subsidise the community services. The centre has just started running a course

We have a sensory garden which allows everyone, but in particular people who are visually impaired or have physical disabilities, to enjoy the smells, touch and feel of a garden.

Catherine Waring

in organic gardening through the local college, and there are plans to create more services. Catherine says that, "We would love to expand to have a local garden maintenance service visiting houses in the neighbourhood."

The centre has already made a big difference. "Customers and visitors have been very positive," says Catherine. "They see us as a green oasis in among the concrete of Hulme. People enjoy coming here and we give a lot of gardening advice. There are a lot of people around here who have allotments so we let them know what are easy flowers and plants to start with."

Facts and Information

- Willow is light, strong, flexible and very versatile. It can be used for weaving into baskets or for erosion control along river beds, and is an alternative for paper making.

It can even be used for green energy and medicinal purposes.

- There are 59 city farms, nearly 1000 community gardens, 66 school farms and a number of community-managed allotments in the UK. The farms and gardens significantly contribute to improving an area and the quality of life of people living there. If you want more information get advice from the Federation for City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG).

Further Resources

- More information on Hulme Community Garden Centre can be found at their website: www.hulmegardencentre.org.uk
- For a fascinating insight into the traditional willow industry you can visit The Willow and Wetlands Centre at Meare Green Court, Stoke St. Gregory, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6HY, or call them on 01823 490814. Alternatively, you can visit the website of The Basket Makers Association at www.basketassoc.org
- For more information on how gardening can change the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people, you can contact Thrive at The Geoffrey Udall Centre, Trunkwell Park, Beech Hill, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 2AT, or phone them at 0118 988 5688 or visit their website at www.thrive.org.uk. You can also check out the Sensory Trust at The Eden Project, Watering Lane Nursery, St Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6BE. Contact them on 01726 222 900 or visit www.sensorytrust.org.uk.
- For further information on community development initiatives you can contact the Development Trusts Association at www.dta.org.uk.

Growing in the City

Affectionately known as 'The Fed', the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens is a representative body for community-led farm and garden organisations in the UK.

With a diverse group of members ranging from organic community orchards to simple pockets of urban space saved from development, The Fed represents over 1300 community-managed projects.

These projects exist mainly in urban areas and are created in response to a lack of access to green space, combined with a desire to encourage strong community relationships and an awareness of gardening and farming. Assistant Director Ian Egginton-Metters tells more:

What does “sustainable development” mean to you?

We're talking about making sure future generations don't suffer for what we're doing today.

One thing we've tried to address is how

far we should go to address 'good practice', and how we can remain accessible. We made a conscious decision not to be an environmental centre because once you have that label, people expect you to have the latest technology and practices on everything. We have to be able to engage with individuals and communities where they're at in this time. We're not perfect role models, but role models going in the right direction.

Why do you support Every Action Counts?

We support EAC for a whole range of reasons. Most of what city farms and community gardens achieve is a result of hundreds of volunteers making a contribution, although what each one inputs is relatively small. The School Farms Network assists and supports school farms and facilitates the exchange of information and ideas.

Why was it important for you to start the School Farms network?

In part, the Federation's experience is in engaging communities in practical and sustainable activities.

What school farms have got is the educational expertise and less the community involvement. We took it on board that our existing members would



Source: FCFCG



benefit from the school farms, and vice versa. It's very difficult for those groups to invest their own time and resources into networking, and that's what the Federation is good at.

The other reason is that city farms and community gardens are informal learning environments and schools could make use of them and incorporate them into a more formal part of the curriculum.

*We're not perfect role models,
but role models going in the
right direction.*

Ian Egginton-Metters

What lessons have you learned along the way?

It's important to have regular contact with the network and within the network, so that when a member has a problem, everyone else knows about it.

Not everything can be done by email or phone, so it's important to have opportunities for people to meet, and that those opportunities are spread out around the country. It's important to facilitate ownership and to engage the people in the network, so they can feel that it is theirs and that the Fed is supporting them.

How does the Network fit into your community-based work?

City farms and community gardens are learning opportunities for the whole community. It's really important that we help people to learn and re-engage with hands-on activities, particularly those related with the environment and food production. City farms and community gardens are fantastic ways of doing that. And school farms are part of that learning process, and therefore we need to use that to recognize that people learn, and they can therefore change their lives, through hands-on experiences.

What's next for FCFCG?

One area is more partnership working with other organisations. Another area is to be more upfront and forceful in sharing good practice with members to push them further than before. We must ensure we stay in contact with our members through face-to-face communication. With the Fed there is a person, a real human being, making contact and recognizing they exist, and this opens up a dialogue for them to develop a relationship.

Facts and Information

- There are 59 city farms, nearly 1000 community gardens, 66 school farms and a number of community-managed allotments in the UK.
- An estimated 500,000 people volunteer on city farms and community gardens, and they attract over three million visitors each year.

Further Resources

- To find out more about FCFCG, or to look for city farm and community gardens in your area, visit their website at www.farmgarden.org.uk.



capacity global
living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right



every action counts

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