



lancashireenvironment forum

essence

essence news from lancashire environment forum
protecting and enhancing the environment of Lancashire

Autumn 2007

Updates from the last Lancashire Environment Forum Meeting

Michael Jack (MP) attends LEF Meeting

The Lancashire Environment Forum was pleased to welcome Michael Jack – MP for Fylde to the September meeting.

Michael gave an inspiring talk on the work that has been taking place to improve energy efficiency and sustainability in Fylde.

Michael is responsible for developing the FLoWE (Fylde Low Waste and Energy) project. The objective of the scheme is to make Fylde the most energy efficient borough in the country by using energy reduction programmes incorporating sustainability.

As a key element to achieving this aim, an advice service for businesses, households, schools and organisations has been established.

FLoWE aims to act as a hub, to gather information and best practice on energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste, recycling, transport, and climate change.

Michael's talk has given members of the Forum ideas on how to begin a similar scheme in their district.

The Forum wishes to thank Michael for taking the time to come to the meeting to discuss the FLoWE project.



Michael Jack (MP)

Next Steps for the Environment Forum

The Forum will draft a Business Plan to set out the targets and milestones for the year. This will enable the Forum to monitor its progress, and to ensure the delivery of targets.

The role of the new Waste and Recycling sub-group will also be addressed during the development of the business plan.

Another important area of work is the Water Framework Directive. A task group has been set up to look at developing a response to the next consultation phase.

Welcome... to the Autumn edition of 'essence', the newsletter for the Lancashire Environment Forum.

In this issue of Essence, in addition to the usual national, regional and local news updates, we take a look at how schools in Chorley are creating energy savings, how good environmental practice makes good business sense, and also look at the progress of the Green Infrastructure work in Lancashire.

I would like to thank everyone who has offered to contribute articles to 'Essence', and would like to ask people to continue to let us know of any up and coming events or success stories from your organisation.

Anne Selby, Chair of the Lancashire Environment Forum

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National Updates

Online Database Rates Green Cars

Car buyers will be able to check out the green credentials of 1000's cars at the click of a mouse following the launch of a new website.

The WhatGreenCar? site has a database of more than 16,000 cars available in the UK, and will identify the top ten green cars in each class – based on the impacts of 8 emissions produced during the vehicles use and manufacture.

Vehicles are rated between zero and 100 (lowest scores = most eco-friendly).

Drivers can take advantage of a search facility covering all UK cars registered since 2001. The site rates the car, and gives greener alternatives.

www.whatgreencar.com



Priority species and habitats identified for conservation

The new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has identified 1149 species and 65 habitats in the UK as being in need of conservation and greater protection.

The list has increased in numbers since the original Biodiversity Action Plan list was compiled ten years ago (this listed 577 species) because the review involved a more rigorous analysis of a wider range of species and habitats. The review also took better account of less well-known species.

www.gnn.gov.uk/content/detail.asp?releaseID=310161&newsareaid=2

Regional News

Make a Splash with Mersey Basin Week

This years Mersey Basin week celebrations are taking place between Friday 28th September and Sunday 7th October. The event is co-ordinated by the Mersey Basin Trust, and celebrates the region's rivers, canals and waterside environments. As part of the event, there are hundreds of water-themed events taking place throughout the North West

To view the events guide see:

www.merseybasin.org.uk

New Sampling Techniques for inland and coastal waters

The Monitoring and Data Team at the Environment Agency have worked in partnership with Spartan Rescue and Sefton and Fylde Council to trial a new method in collecting bathing water samples using a hovercraft.

It is the EA's statutory duty to collect 20 samples from all the designated beaches in the Central area – which stretches from Formby on the Sefton Coast to Morecambe North on Morecambe Bay.

The trial involved taking 8 samples from area beaches from Formby to Bipsham. A hovercraft was used to get to each sample point along the coast. By using this new technique, 300 miles were saved, and 8.5 man-hours compared to the normal sampling routine.

This was the first trial of its kind in the region, and possibly the first nationally.



Lancashire Updates

Otter numbers expanding

The Otter is an important biological indicator of the health of our rivers, and the Environment Agency began its latest Otter Survey on 22nd May 2007 in the Lune and Wyre catchments.

Previous surveys in Cumbria have seen the return of the otter to all Cumbrian catchment areas, and the survey has now moved south to Lancashire.

The results of the 2007 survey showed that the Lune and Wyre catchments support healthy otter populations. Additionally, the survey shows that otters are colonising new areas; for example, evidence of otters was found on the Keer for the first time.

In Preston without my car

To celebrate European mobility week (16-22 September), several Preston City Centre streets were closed to traffic on Saturday 22nd September in support of the internationally recognised 'In town without my car!' day. The aim of the day was to encourage people to leave the car at home and use public transport, or to walk or cycle into the city centre. The event was in partnership with Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Preston Chamber of Trade, Lancashire Police, and local authorities.

www.transportforlancashire.com/intown/index.asp

Landfill directive and Lancashire

As part of the Landfill Directive, from the 31st October 2007, all waste must be 'pre-treated' before it is deposited in landfill. Lancashire County Council (as the waste disposal authority) has set a deadline of 1st October 2007 for pre-treatment to be in place.

Lancashire's Green Infrastructure Strategy is currently in development - Joe Martin, Strategy and Development Manager at the Lancashire Economic Partnership explains more.

The Lancashire sub-region has a long and well-recognised history of excellence in environmental practice and management. This track record means that Lancashire can boast a significant number of key environmental assets stretching from the coastline in the West to the Pennine Lancashire hills in the East.



West Pennine Moors

The Lancashire Economic Strategy (LES), which provides the strategic direction for future economic activity, recognises the importance of Lancashire's environmental assets and the real contribution they make to the economic prosperity of the sub-region.

The Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme also explicitly acknowledges the value of the contribution of green infrastructure to economic growth and prosperity.

Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP) is working with a range of partners in Lancashire and the North West to develop a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy to fully develop the potential of this key Lancashire asset

Nick Briggs, Director of Strategy and Business Development at LEP points out: *"The driver for the implementation of green infrastructure is fundamentally economic, and our emphasis will be firmly on developing strategic green infrastructure that supports and adds value to our key regeneration projects – such as the Blackpool Masterplan, Preston City Vision, and the Pennine Lancashire Transformational agenda.*

"What we are aiming to achieve is to generate the maximum environmental, social and economic benefit for Lancashire. The social and environmental benefits of green infrastructure are pretty well recognised. We are pretty sure that the economic benefits are there, and we want to build on these as an integral part of our work in developing the sub-regional economy. There is some good work being carried out at regional level on developing the evidence base, and we are pleased to be a part of that process."

The GI Strategy will identify a network of key sites – a *Green Grid*. This aims to maximise the benefit of Lancashire's GI to the key transformational projects outlined in the Lancashire Economic Strategy, and also provide the framework for a finer grained mesh at local authority and community levels.

A key feature of the GI Strategy will be the future role for Regional Parks in Lancashire, which include East Lancashire, the Ribble Coast and Wetlands, Morecambe Bay (proposed), and the Lancashire portion of the North West Coastal Trail. The Ribble Coast and Wetlands, for example, has real potential for growth in the tourism economy, both through provision of new assets (such as proposals to construct links to the National Cycleway Network),

and through the development and promotion of established visitor facilities. There is also great potential to link the redevelopment of Blackpool with the Ribble Estuary for the benefit of both areas.



Blackpool

The Strategy is being developed in conjunction with a number of partner organisations that are contributing funding, staff time, mapping and expertise. A successful stakeholder event was held in Preston in July, and further talks are planned with stakeholders in the coming months. A consultation on the first draft of the strategy will be held in the New Year, and the strategy itself will be launched before the end of March.

For further information please contact:

Joe Martin, Strategy and Development Manager, Lancashire Economic Partnership, jmartin@lancashire-ep.org.uk 01254 300490.



Donald McQueen of Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan describes some of the energy saving projects initiated at schools in Chorley



In association with Groundwork Lancashire West & Wigan, three Chorley schools have initiated projects aimed at creating energy savings, producing less waste, using less paper and water whilst also creating learning opportunities for school pupils.

These projects involve the schools measuring their resource consumption patterns, and implementing changes to reduce what they're using. From there, it is a simple matter of quantifying the savings made, and then showing how these savings impact on the environment and climate change.

For example, pupils could look at the number of trees saved through reduced paper consumption; emissions saved through less journeys to landfill from less waste production; direct CO₂ savings from energy conservation activities (such as energy behavioural changes), and water savings through water conservation campaigns.

It must be emphasized that most of these measures can easily be implemented at little or indeed zero cost to the schools. As you would expect, school management teams are also very appreciative of the extra cash savings made as a result of these combined measures.

Concept

A process was proposed by Groundwork whereby an elementary environmental review (based on the standard eight doorways in the Eco Schools Programme) would be completed and followed up by a report containing recommendations – a plan for action that schools could easily adopt. Groundwork would provide external support, information and guidance throughout the year. Utilities would be accurately measured and recorded (by pupils) and compared against historical data. Waste produced by the schools would also be quantified and recorded, as well as maximising opportunities for waste reduction and recycling.

Albany Science College

By way of an example of what can be achieved and what potential savings can be made, Albany Science College held a 'switch unnecessary lights off' initiative on United Nations World Environment Day (5th June 2007).



This simple, zero cost, single day of action produced the following measured savings:

Electrical energy saved: 93 kWh
CO₂ savings: 40 kg
Cost Saving Estimate: £11.16

Science teacher Mrs Babutt said: *"The day was a great success, and demonstrated to the children that they can play a part in protecting the environment from unnecessary carbon emissions".*

The whole initiative is part of an on-going scheme at Albany, which has already achieved a bronze award in the Eco-Schools programme.

Possibilities

Remember, this was only one action, in one day, in one area (lighting), in one utility (electricity). Like thousands of others, the college operates at least 205 days of the year. Even if we only take the electricity savings possible from switching off unnecessary lights, it could produce the following significant savings every year at no cost to the college:

Electrical energy saved: 19,065 kWh
CO₂ savings: 8.2 tonnes
Cost saving (estimate): £2,287

The other major resource uses in the college are fuel oil for space heating, electricity for power, virgin paper, ink cartridges, mains water and mains gas. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that the annual savings potential could well be tens of thousands of pounds per year for the college.

For further information contact Donald McQueen – Groundwork Lancashire West & Wigan 01942 821444

Environmental Legislation can be good for Business

In this article, John Wells EHS manager at InBev, and Vice Chair of the Lancashire Environment Forum explains how implementing good environmental practices can make good business sense.

Legislative compliance doesn't come cheap, and there are many in Industry who quite understandably are concerned at the increasing cost implications that legislation is having on the bottom line. Good safety, health and environmental performance is something we all aspire to, and yet it has to be affordable, because non-profitable businesses are not sustainable.

Most would agree that we have both an individual and a collective responsibility to minimise the impact of our activities upon the environment, and that by doing so we can avoid some of the inevitable consequences of simply doing nothing.

You can imagine the expression on a Chief Executive's face when he has just been told that yet another piece of Environment Legislation will cost his company a further £500,000 out of next year's profits. 'Where are we going to generate the £5,000,000 of sales to pay for it?' might be his initial response.

If you have any project news or forthcoming events you would like to publicise in *essence* then please contact us by telephone on: 01772 531257 or by email on: environmentalpolicy@env.lancsc.gov.uk

We often concentrate on the negative, such as how much is all of this going to cost, and yet if we simply stopped and considered the positive aspects of good environmental performance, then Environmental Legislation really can be good for business.

If we assume that the main purpose of modern environmental legislation is to reduce mankind's negative impact to land, water and air, then any business that is successful in doing so will improve its operational efficiency, and make a positive contribution to its overall profitability.

If the savings made by good sound environmental management systems exceed that of the cost of compliance, then this really does make good business sense.

By having energy reduction, process efficiency, quality control and waste minimisation as ongoing business objectives, not only does this improve the profitability of the company, but it also brings the added benefits of full compliance with legislative requirements with the full support of employees, shareholders, customers and suppliers.



Environmental legislation requires clearly defined, structured and auditable management systems that are fully understood and applied by our employees. Many organisations continue to struggle with Health and Safety Legislation, and Environmental Compliance is seen as yet another burden that is often not fully integrated into the business culture and ethos.

The penalties of getting it wrong are simply unacceptable, and the simple principle of not causing harm to people or the environment surely applies to everyone.



Environment is increasingly attracting more of the headlines – usually for the negative outcomes following major incidents. Environmental successes simply don't grab the headlines in the same way, and yet there are so many positives out there that we could and should celebrate.

Environmental Legislation is not just ethically correct, it can be good for business, and it's up to us to make sure that it is.

Editorial

environmentalpolicy@env.lancsc.gov.uk

Editor: Sarah Whitney

Contributors to this issue: Anne Selby, Joe Martin, Donald McQueen, John Wells

Essence is distributed electronically to conserve resources.