

The Lancashire Environment Forum

The Lancashire Environment Forum is now up and running. It is chaired by Anne Selby (Chief Executive of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust), and deputised by John Wells. The Terms of Reference, ways of working, and membership have all been agreed.

The Forum will meet approximately 4 times per year, with the service and administration duties being divided between the Environment Agency and Lancashire County Council on a 6 monthly rotating basis.

The Lancashire Environment Forum will aim to ensure improved environmental working in the region. It will seek to act as a unified voice for the environment in Lancashire and beyond.

Additionally, the Forum will be supported by a network of people – The wider Lancashire Environment Partnership. This is an important group for further contact, information and networking on environmental issues.

A new dedicated website is being developed for the Lancashire Environment Forum. This will be online shortly. The website will publish all communications and meeting details to keep members up to date with the Forum's activities and wider environmental issues. More details to follow in the next edition of 'essence'.

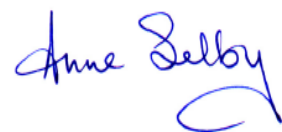
Our email address is staying the same, so you can still contact us on:
environmentalpolicy@env.lancsc.gov.uk

Welcome... to the Spring edition of 'essence', the newsletter for the newly formed Lancashire Environment Forum.

The creation of the Lancashire Environment Forum marks the beginning of new and improved environmental working in Lancashire, and work is already starting on a number of projects.

This newsletter aims to keep members of the Lancashire Environment Forum and the wider Partnership informed of relevant issues and developments.

Please let us know about any projects that are happening in Lancashire, and feel free to contact us if you would like to contribute to future editions of 'essence'.



Anne Selby, Chair of the Lancashire Environment Forum

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National Updates

Government consults on Green Fuels Obligation

A consultation has been launched on the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO). This runs until 17 May.

The obligation means that by 2010, 5% of all fuel sold in the UK will come from renewable sources. This is predicted to save 1 million tonnes of carbon a year – equivalent to taking 1 million cars off the road by 2010.

Transport Minister Stephen Ladyman said: *"The Obligation will play a key role in making road transport fuels greener. The supply of biofuels from sustainable sources will be encouraged"*.

www.gnn.gov.uk

'Binding' Carbon Targets Proposed



The government has unveiled plans to set a 'legally binding' target to cut carbon emissions by 60% by 2050.

The draft Climate Change Bill calls for carbon budgets to be set every 5 years, and for ministers to give annual progress reports on cutting emissions.

Environment Secretary David Milliband said the Bill was *"The first of its kind in any country"* and Britain was *"Leading by example"*.

A full climate change bill is set to be published in the autumn.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/6444145.stm

Regional News

Defra announces renewal of grants to support sustainable living

Two North West schemes are amongst 34 projects promoting sustainable development that will receive more than £2 million of funding from Defra's Environmental Action Fund (EAF).

The Manchester based project 'Action for Sustainable Living' will receive a grant of £42,000. It gives people practical advice on how to live more sustainably. The Cumbria 'DEVICE' programme, a scheme based in Penrith that encourages domestic and commercial sustainability, will receive £49,234.

www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/070131b.htm

World's first wind and gas offshore energy project given go-ahead

A unique dual energy scheme that will provide enough clean energy for around 70,000 homes has been given the go-ahead.

The Ormonde project will be sited off the Cumbrian coast, 10km from Walney Island, near Barrow-in-Furness.

The innovative hybrid development has the potential to generate up to 200mw of electricity, with almost half coming from the wind farm. When there isn't enough wind, power will still come via conventional gas sources. The Ormonde project is scheduled for completion in 2010.



Lancashire Updates

Lancashire leads jumbo recycling effort



New figures show that Lancashire is recycling more than any other county council in the North of England, with 35% of rubbish being recycled last year. The government's target for the county was 30%.

In the last year, an additional 132,000 tonnes of rubbish were recycled, (compared to 5 years ago) – the same weight as 800 jumbo jets! If this waste had been sent to landfill, the disposal costs would have been £5.67m.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for sustainable development said: *'This impressive figure reflects the efforts of the Lancashire people. There has also been significant investment in recycling across the county'*.

www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/news/press_releases

LEF's £1 million 10th Anniversary Challenge Fund

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, in July 08, the Lancashire Environment Fund is making available an additional £1 million. This is in the form of a challenge competition for non-for-profit environmental and community groups in the county. The money is to fund projects, which will significantly improve the local community and the environment. To find out more, visit the Fund's website:

www.lancsenvfund.org.uk

Focus – Scratching the surface of the international trade in Waste

In this article, Richard McIlwain, Environment Crime Team Leader, explains the Environment Agency's role in preventing illegal exports of waste.

A routine Environment Agency inspection at Southampton Dock's container terminal was the catalyst for a complex investigation that led from Southampton to Preston, across Ireland and ultimately to China!

On 17th May 2006 Environment Agency officers detained two containers at Southampton due to the smell of rotting refuse coming from them. The containers were described as containing mixed plastics. However, on opening they were found to contain mixed waste such as metal cans, plastics and rotting food. The containers were bound for Hong Kong.



Containers at the terminal in Southampton

The shipment of this type of waste requires the written consent of the Environment Agency, and financial guarantees to cover the costs of the safe and lawful recycling at the point of destination. Neither of these were in place.

Furthermore, the containers were incorrectly labelled as containing waste plastics.

The Environment Agency's job of investigating the offence and also repatriating the offending containers from the dock to their original place of origin then began.



On return to Preston

The company responsible for the waste shipment, Wai Sang (Europe) Recycle Ltd, were unable to confirm where the waste had come from. Intelligence suggested that the waste may have originated in Ireland, but telephone enquiries on the other side of the Irish Sea drew a blank. When the wastes were examined, they were found to have a high proportion of labels from the Gloucestershire area. But again the trail went cold.

Ultimately, the containers were returned to the last known point of loading, which was at Plastics Recovery Ltd in Grimsargh. Here the wastes were unloaded, sorted properly and placed into the UK recycling market.

Wai Sang (Europe) Recycling Ltd admitted responsibility and paid for the re-shipment of the waste back to Preston.

Last month at Preston Magistrates Court, Wai Sang (Europe) Recycling Ltd pleaded guilty to two charges of illegally shipping waste out of the UK and was fined £4000. The Environment Agency, who brought the prosecution were awarded costs of £2550.

The Environment Agency is responsible for authorising and monitoring the import and export of waste into and out of the UK. Due to the rising costs of managing waste correctly, export of wastes to non-UK countries is now big business.

Whilst the Environment Agency successfully detects some offences, it is believed that many more illegal imports and exports occur on a daily basis, sometimes involving hazardous waste. As a result, the Agency is stepping up its enforcement work in this area, particularly at the key UK ports. Key ports for the Northwest of England include Liverpool and Heysham.



Close up of the mixed waste – plastics, cans and food.



Lancashire County Council announces major plans to tackle climate change

Hazel Harding, the Leader of Lancashire County Council has launched a 3-year, £1.8 million campaign to tackle the serious threat of climate change in Lancashire



Climate change will affect everyone who lives and works in Lancashire.

Lancashire's climate is already changing, and predictions for 2020 include:

- 1°C average temperature increase
- 20% decrease in summer rainfall
- 10-30% decrease in annual snowfall

Action is needed to reduce this threat, and Lancashire County Council has launched a 3-year plan. This comes with a budget of more than £1 million of new money in 2007/08, plus capital of £400,000 in each of the next two years.

County Councillor Hazel Harding said *'Confronting climate change has to be a top priority for Lancashire County Council in everything we do. This is an urgent problem, we cannot afford to wait and see.'*

The campaign will begin in late spring, and there will be far-reaching and long-term proposals to help the Council, and the people of Lancashire tackle the challenge of climate change.

The aim is to cut emissions across Lancashire as a whole.

Initiatives will include:

- Developing a Lancashire carbon-offsetting scheme. This will enable individuals and businesses to 'offset' their CO₂ emissions by putting money back into landscape restoration and renewable energy projects.
- Businesses, neighbourhoods and local community groups will be encouraged to play their part with actions such as installing mini wind turbines and solar panels on their buildings. A slice of the money will be given in grants to help organisations with these projects.
- There are plans for a climate change summit in Lancashire, so that the best in national and international thinking from agencies at the forefront of combating climate change can be brought together.

- County councillors also expect to start 'emissions trading' by the end of the decade. This is where large organisations will be given credits for a permitted degree of carbon use. Over-use of energy will mean credits will have to be bought, while energy efficiency would allow credits to be sold in the market.



This campaign represents an important step for Lancashire in its efforts to combat climate change. Lancashire County Council as a major local authority must take the lead in finding successful ways to tackle climate change and share the findings with others.

The plans will aim to bring a strong culture of environmental awareness to Lancashire. World-class measures to combat climate change will be implemented at a local level, with the aim to make Lancashire one of Britain's cleanest and greenest counties.

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.lancscc.gov.uk

Editorial

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Essence is distributed electronically to conserve resources.