



# THE GREEN NETWORK

## The Environmental Network of North Somerset

Issue 5

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### Green Talk@The Blakehay

‘Many thanks for an interesting and informative event on Saturday’ was one of the feedback remarks we received about our pilot event ‘Green Talk’.

The day started off with the road map to transition outlined by Cara Naden from Transition Langport.

For those of you who may still be unsure what transition means it is best described by Rob Hopkins, founder of Transition Towns, as ‘a small collection of motivated



Cara Naden & Tobias Parker

individuals within a community coming together with a shared concern: ‘how can our community respond to the challenges and opportunities, of Peak Oil and Climate Change?’ Go to <http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/TransitionPrimer> where you can download the Transition Primer for free and find out more.

During the day short films were also shown and of particular interest was the Greenpeace film on alternative energy. Well worth watching and if you go to their website it should still be available to see. CHP (Combined Heat & Power) boilers are featured as part of the way forward. Goblin Combe have installed a woodchip boiler with the aim of using their woodland as the fuel source. However, as they still have to buy in their woodchip we are told there are quality control issues when items such as pallets are chipped, which leads to bits of metal and plastic in the mix causing problems with the boiler itself.

‘Saving Energy: How Energy Efficiency Becomes Sexy’ was the topic of Tobias Parker CEO of Sustain. This company was established in 1997 and they describe themselves as bringing

an innovative approach to dealing with environmental and social issues, with an eye kept firmly on the economics’.

FITs or feed in tariffs featured in question time. FITs as explained by [Miguel Mendonca](#) of the World Future Council, ‘place a legal obligation on utilities to purchase electricity from renewable energy installations. The tariff rate is guaranteed, and in the best examples, for a long period, say 20 years. The tariff rate is scientifically determined for each technology, to ensure profitable operation of the installation’. In November 2008 in the UK an amendment to the energy bill brings in FITs for renewable power generation here.



Trevor Bell of WRAP

In the afternoon session we were shocked by recent studies on levels of food waste. We know of the disturbing volumes of food disposed of by the supermarkets but the average family perpetuates this waste by throwing away one bagful of food in every three that they buy. Of this, 40% (by weight) is fresh fruit & vegetables and 20% is bread. We were advised that planning meals, writing shopping lists and the selective use of “buy one get one free” offers are simple ways of cutting waste and saving money.



Barny and Phil Haughton

The afternoon ended with Barny and Phil Haughton who spoke enthusiastically about the ethos behind their multiple enterprises in Bristol, namely: Quartier Vert,

Bordeaux Quay, Habourside and the Better Food Company

Please pass on this newsletter if you know anyone who may be interested.

## Mission of the Waves!

Message in the Waves\*, the film showing devastation to wildlife in Midway Island, Hawaii has been shown by TENONS in a number of places in the county - at meetings in Weston, Winscombe, Congresbury, Yatton and this month in Nailsea with a good turnout by the general public. So far at each showing the initial reaction is horror at the harm inflicted on wildlife and at the litter washed up on the beautiful beaches of the Hawaiian Islands. Anger can be one of the reactions at how this has happened; then perhaps a feeling of helplessness. The problem is huge, too huge, what on earth can you do the damage is done.



There is a danger to see this problem as being the other side of the world. However, according to a survey completed by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), the beaches of the UK are just as vulnerable. We have longer stretches of beach so the litter appears less. The MCS also point out that on litter picks 2% of the litter has been found to be plastic. Doesn't sound a lot but, to put it in perspective, over one weekend they collected 70,000 plastic bags – now however careful we are with disposal of our waste plastic bags, they have just got to have been blown out to sea or gone down our water courses to be washed up on beaches. A survey of seabirds around our coastline has also indicated that up to 90% of Fulmar sea birds have plastic in their gut.

The MCS suggest that 230 million tons of plastic items are manufactured each year of which 40% is packaging. It is recognised that some packaging is needed for certain items and at the February TENONS meeting we were told how the Waste Resource Action Programme (WRAP) are working with Government and Industry to minimise packaging. For instance, some wine bottles now come without the indent at the bottom and the glass is thinner as are some tin cans, thus saving valuable resources.

What can we do? Well, when LA21\*\* was formed it was with the aim to tackle the world's problem of climate change at a local level, and the slogan was to 'think global, act local'. We can use this slogan by just making a change to our lifestyle. Personally we can choose not to take a throwaway plastic bag when shopping and resolve to always carry a cotton bag which can be rolled up and kept in a handbag, pocket or in the car for those unplanned bits of shopping. We can resolve to keep away from any disposable plastic items and also very importantly resolve to buy goods made wholly or in part from recycled materials. Join a litter pick or organise one of your own or arrange a rota to take the collection of plastic down to the recycling point of households around you.

If the whole world used the world's resources as a lot of us in first world countries do, we would need three or four worlds to plunder. We don't, we live in just one and the message from the Waves film is short but true 'live life as if you were in a canoe'. Their ancestors came to Hawaii in canoes and had to live off what they could carry until they reached the islands and then learned to carry on with this ethos to ensure life on the islands was sustainable

\* The film Rebecca helped to produce was kindly given to us by the BBC Natural History unit to show as an educational tool.

\*\*LA21: Local Agenda 21 formed out of the World Rio Conference and Kyoto agreement for a 21<sup>st</sup> century agenda tool to tackle climate change at a local level

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## Making the Most of Orchards

**'63% of orchards has been lost since 1950 in the UK'** Chris Wedge of Natural England said at the meeting in Failand this February. We



Noble Chafer

suspected a fair few had gone but he then went on to say that up to 94% have been lost in Wales from 1958 to 1992

Orchards, in particular the older trees, are important for biodiversity, from

green woodpeckers and great crested newts to the distinctive iridescent green noble chafer that lives in dead wood. In particular, a number of small patches of green such as orchards within the landscape are crucial for invertebrates that don't travel very far.

Decline of orchards has come about as apple growers for cider now use more intensive methods; many have been neglected and land use has changed; traditional management skills have been lost and many go under new housing developments. Just look for clues like roads called 'The Orchards'.

The UK Biodiversity Partnership published a list of priority species and habitats in 2007 and North Somerset has its own Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) with a chapter on orchards. You can see our BAP if you go into Google and search. Also look on [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk).

Chris went on to describe schemes which new orchard owners can use to either plant anew or save an old site. One scheme is the Countryside Stewardship Scheme CSS (Entry & Higher levels ELS & HLS). The aim of this grant is to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside and to enhance, restore and re-create targeted landscapes, wildlife habitats and historical features.

At the event organised by the Forest of Avon, we also heard from Les Davies and Keith Goverd who gave more detailed information for new orchard owners, with an opportunity at the end to sample the different types of juice each apple produces.

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### **'Recycle' logo is NOT eco-friendly symbol**

Have you been confused when you saw this green logo on packaging and tried to work out how to recycle it? Well it appears that the logo is only applicable in some countries in the EU but not in the UK. However, some UK companies are paying into this scheme as their products sales include EU countries and it saves them packaging costs.

The policy advocate for the National Consumer Council states it should be removed from packaging in the UK as it is misleading.



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### **Winscombe & Sandford News**

Winscombe now has a community cafe morning. Monthly Community Cafes will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month in the function room at The Woodborough, Winscombe from 10:30am - 12 noon. The June venue is yet to be announced.

A chance to drop in for a chat about any and all issues faced by Winscombe and Sandford's community as they deal with the transition to a lower carbon future - transportation, relocation, food production, energy usage... Meet others and help find positive solutions for the future.

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### **Severn Tidal Power**

It is generally agreed that the Severn Estuary is both important as a source of renewable tidal energy, which could contribute up to 5% of UK energy requirement and as a nature conservation site which is a designated RAMSAR Site. RAMSAR sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the RAMSAR Convention. The Government are now about half way through their feasibility study and consultation on the options for harnessing this energy and there is a chance for you to make your views known. The consultation closes 23 April. If you have internet access log into <http://severntidalpowerconsultation.decc.gov.uk/> where you can 'Have your say' or write to your MP.

It is our intention to hold a further Green Talk Seminar later in the year featuring the Severn Estuary. Please pencil in Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October in your diary – more details soon.

## Green Talk@The Blakehay

At Green Talk there were stalls for people to view which included Transition Winscombe and Sandford, the RSPB, Fairtrade, the Wildlife Wardens and Orchards project and North Somerset Nappy Alliance promoting real nappies which have to be seen as they are so fantastic. Riverford also had a stall. They are local to Weston and supply boxes of organic vegetables.

Thanks go not only to Riverford but also to Black & Green, Alvis Bros and Winnies' Bakery for their kind donations. Lastly to Quartet Grassroots for sponsorship of the event.

**grassroots**  
grants

Managed by the Community Development Foundation  
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector

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Before and during Earth Hour in Sydney

On Saturday night, hundreds of millions of people – from over 4,080 cities and towns across 88 countries, switched off their lights for WWF's Earth Hour.

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## North Somerset Nappy Alliance

TENONS attended the initial meeting of the alliance and were impressed by the dynamic and vibrant members on the committee. Representation included young mums, sellers, healthcare and childcare professionals and their aim is to educate the people of North Somerset on both disposable and washable nappies and encourage a change to washables. Real Nappy Week is 27<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Go to [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/realnappies](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/realnappies) to find out more about the impressive and easy to use and launder

range of nappies available or phone Lucy Elston on 01934 426011

## Future Events

What we would like to know from you is what sort of event you would be interested in. If it is a presentation, what subjects interest you? Would you want something in your area or some help with your projects? Do you want to start a transition group or a group just following one or two transition projects before going the whole way to transition? We would be very interested to hear your comments and feedback which you can send in by email to [www.memb@tenons.org.uk](mailto:www.memb@tenons.org.uk)

## Dates for your Diary

**15<sup>th</sup> April: TENONS Open Meeting, Chris Richards on Mining in Somerset. Blakehay, Wadham Street, Weston @ 7.30 p.m.**

22<sup>nd</sup> April: Earth Day

2<sup>nd</sup> May: Uphill Village Society weekend

4<sup>th</sup> May: North Somerset Show – 150 year celebration 30% off advance bookings on 01749 813899

16<sup>th</sup> May: Wedmore Green Fair

**20<sup>th</sup> May: TENONS Open Meeting. Liz Green on Reserves & Open Spaces**

**17<sup>th</sup> June: TENONS Open Meeting James Field, Otters and Water Voles in North Somerset**

21<sup>st</sup> June: Weston in Bloom on Beach Lawns

27<sup>th</sup> June: Winscombe Energy Day

6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> June: Bristol Festival of Nature on the Docks: [www.festivalofnature.org](http://www.festivalofnature.org)

14<sup>th</sup> June 2.00 pm : Rotary Club of Clevedon linked to Greener Footprints will be showing the film 'The Age of Stupid', at the Curzon Cinema, Clevedon in aid of UN World Environment Day.

26-27 June: Bristol BioBlitz, Ashton Park a 30-hour race against the clock event where people work together to find and identify all the wildlife in a certain area. <http://www.bnhc.org.uk>

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