



Green Networks

The Environmental Network of North Somerset

Issue 1

Spring 2008

COMMENT

Welcome to TENON's first newsletter.

We have for the last year been contacting our members by email and putting important news into the Mercury 'Clubs & Societies' page. Now we want to take our communication to another level and provide all our members with information on meetings and projects via a newsletter. We want this to be a place where you can read about what other environmental groups in North Somerset are doing or aspiring to do; a means of contacting each other to swap ideas or meet up together to be more effective with what you want to achieve.

We want to support and inspire you so that North Somerset becomes one of the foremost environmentally aware counties

AGM 2007

At our AGM in December 2007 the committee was voted back for a further year of service, as follows:

Rosemary Dowie, Chairman
Richard Greenland, Treasurer
Rose Hughes, Secretary
Committee Members: Leonard Dowie; Fred Parsons; Andy Darvill; Gareth Price; Walters Munde

Two proposals were passed. The first to look at membership fees and the second to bring the constitution up-to-date.

By chance the AGM date was the day that the Bali Conference announced that, following a U turn by the USA, agreement had been reached to a two-year process of negotiations designed to agree a new set of emissions targets to replace those in the Kyoto Protocol. We were thankful that agreement had been reached but

disappointed that it will take another two years to implement.

During 2007 your committee, who represent Tenons at the groups or organisations they belong to, also represent us at various committees, seminars or business events. These ranged from representing environmental views at the planning of the new build at Locking Parklands to attending the NERC Day when the North Somerset Biodiversity Plan was launched.

THE COMMITTEE

On 10th January TENONS was featured in the local paper and the photograph is reproduced here with kind permission of the Weston and Somerset Mercury. Unfortunately Walters Munde and Fred Parsons were unavailable when it was taken



We are sorry to have to report that Walters will be leaving us in March. He and his family will be moving to Canada to start a new life there but he has promised to keep in contact and update us with environmental events - in effect 'Our Man in Canada'.

Joining us is Muluh Nkem representing the Association of Cameroonians in North Somerset. Muluh has worked as an engineer in the palm oil industry.

Also joining us is Sonia Russe who was a Personnel and Training Executive with a major public corporation

THE SINGLE USE PLASTIC BAG!

'To move great mountains start with moving small stones' - a Chinese proverb that, for me, has always motivated me to start a job that seems daunting. Take Climate Change and not only how to tackle it but how to convince folk to change they way they live. By starting with a small thing such as buying a shopping bag and refusing those plastic bags, a step along the road is achieved. Another big reason for getting rid of plastic bags is the fact that, along with other plastic items, a great many of them get into the environment and cause destruction and death to wildlife.

A number of years ago Capt. Charles Moore found that six times more plastic than plankton existed in the middle of the Pacific. He found more than one 'garbage patch' the size of Texas and was prompted to create the Algalita Marine Research Foundation in an effort to do something about it. See www.algalita.org.

Plastic bags did not exist 50 years ago and if you went shopping you just picked up your shopping bag and off you went. If you went to the supermarket, more often than not you were able to grab a cardboard box. Now provision of plastic bags is something which, up to now, most of us have taken for granted will always be provided, but, apart from being made from oil - a finite commodity - on average a bag is only used for about 12 minutes and then discarded or used to line the bin. However, if you can compost all green waste; have a worm-farm and feed leftovers to the birds, the waste in your bin is just "dry" waste and you won't need a bin liner.

We think showing the documentary 'Message in the Waves', which prompted Modbury to go plastic bag free, will be one way of convincing people. If you wish to promote the idea of plastic bag free shopping in your area, please get in touch.

Rose Hughes, Secretary, TENONS

WINSCOMBE PLASTIC COLLECTIONS

Winscombe Plastic Collections, a project of the Winscombe Community Association, ran from 14th October 2006 until 11th August 2007, and took place every two months. All types of

domestic plastic waste were collected, from plastic bags to water butts, the only exceptions being engine oil containers, expanded polystyrene and netting. The plastic was sorted into four categories: bottles; small hard plastics such as food packaging; large hard articles; soft plastics such as bags. This proved to be very labour intensive task on collection days, as some people had brought plastic that was not sorted. A small proportion was also unwashed, which created a health hazard for the volunteers! Towns of Weston provided the skips at a reduced price, and baled the plastic prior to transporting it, in its separate categories, to recycling plants. John Gibbins of International Environmental Solutions Ltd handled all the recycling arrangements.

The collections were discontinued because Towns could not continue to take staff off their trade sort line in order to bale our plastic, and did not have the space to store the bales until sufficiently large loads of the different categories of plastic had accumulated. Also because domestic plastics are very light for their volume, transportation was extremely expensive.

The skips were funded by our Parish Council, local groups and businesses, and latterly by donations from people who brought plastic to the collections. Recycling Credit from North Somerset Council covered a quarter of the costs.

Running the collections was a valuable exercise. We gained first hand knowledge and data which will enable us to campaign more effectively. From this data it has been deduced that our 1,800 parish households must be generating about 3,600 cubic yards or 100 tonnes of domestic plastic waste per year! The need to reduce our use of plastic, as well as recycling our plastic waste, is obvious! We need to campaign for increased implementation of the 'polluter pays' policy, reduction and standardisation of the plastics used in domestic packaging, and funding for the mechanisms required for an efficient method of recycling.

In Winscombe there is a feeling of great disappointment that most of our waste plastic will be going into landfill again, whereas

during the collections many of us had reduced our non recyclable waste to very small quantities. However this exercise and its demise has stimulated the Zero Waste Project Steering Group into some very fruitful discussions and meetings with professionals and politicians (including our own MP and local Councillors who are united in these concerns and are seeking viable solutions). The problems are national and international and a lot of effort is being put into finding answers.

One result of our efforts is that our District Council has now located collection points for 'Tetrapak' cartons and domestic plastic bottles in our village. With support from TENONS we have also started a campaign to reduce the use of plastic bags in our parish. Another outcome from the plastic project has been an increasingly close relationship with neighbouring communities and national and international organisations with regard to environmental concerns. This has great potential.

The plastic issue is only one among many problems which can be tackled as our society becomes increasingly aware of their magnitude. As we seek to discover ways to avoid environmental disaster, many are beginning to realise just how radical we need to be in responding to this challenge, but we can only respond effectively if there is joined-up thinking and reliable information. As a community we need to share imaginative ideas about what we can do to address these and other pressing environmental and social issues. Scientists warn, business presses and politicians deliberate. Meanwhile, it is we at the local community level who can (indeed must) get started and do something worthwhile.

By consultation and research, Winscombe Zero Waste Steering Group is seeking effective actions that can be taken by our community. Things are beginning to move quite fast. Over the next few months opportunities will be announced, here and elsewhere, for many more of us to become involved in such initiatives. Many of these centre on the two interrelated issues of 'climate change' and 'peak oil'. Each day, more of us are coming to realise that these are going to affect us, and increasingly

will have an impact on our lives. We need to work towards being part of the solution and not of the problem.

Winscombe Zero Waste Project Steering Group

TASTE OF NORTH SOMERSET

Local Food and Farmers Markets

This year is going to be a great year for farmers markets in North Somerset. Weston-super-Mare farmers market is due to be rejuvenated in the summer with a possible move of venue. The market will continue with its traditional day of the second Saturday of the month. Meanwhile the Taste of North Somerset is launching two new farmers markets in Nailsea (3rd Saturday of the month) and Portishead (2nd Saturday of the month). Also being developed is a new organisation that will look after the management and development of the farmers markets, so it is a busy and exciting time!

There are four good reasons to support your local Farmers Market.

1. **The environment** - produce travels less distance (food miles), it has less packaging and is less intensively produced.
2. **Local economy** - money is recycled within the local community, they support the start up of new business as well as increasing the spending in other shops on market days.
3. **Consumers** - gain access to local healthy produce, have an increase in choice and bring the community together.
4. **Local producers** - a different source of revenue, cuts out the middle man, diversifies skills and brings producers together

Make sure you support Weston-super-Mares farmers market on the second Saturday of every month.

GAME FOR AN ACTION PLAN

Every Action Counts have created 'Community Champions' who are trained and supported to make contact with community groups, clubs and societies where they live. The idea is to

talk to their members to inspire them, through putting together an action plan, to take some simple actions on saving energy, travelling wisely, shopping ethically, saving our resources and caring for their area. If you would like to make use of our Champion, please contact us. Also, if you have internet access, look at www.everyactioncounts.org.uk.

NEXT ISSUE will be the Summer issue in June. Please send any items, outings or meeting dates for inclusion to us by May 20th.

CONTACT:

Rose: 01934 623000 or memb@tenons.org.uk
Richard: 01934 414606 or treas@tenons.org.uk
Rosemary: 01934 620006 or admin@tenons.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

PROGRAMME FOR 2008

Venue: The Victoria Methodist Hall, Station Road, Weston-super-Mare (unless otherwise stipulated) Time: 7.30 p.m.

12th March: Narish Giangrande of Transition Totnes: The Transition Town Vision 'Why should I bother about ecology'. Narish is a Focaliser of the Energy Group and one of the founders of the Transition Town Totnes project, Naresh has been involved in designing, running and evolving many of the events and groups that have been at the heart of the enormously successful Transition Town Totnes initiative. He has lived and worked in an eco community and was Managing Director of his own company.

9th April: John Carrott: Bees and Honey: John has had a lifetime interest in bees and for 30 years was a member of the Avon Beekeepers Assn of which he has held various posts including President. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management.

7th May: Vinah Bell: Management of Walborough Nature Reserve which is situated just south of Uphill village. It has salt marsh and limestone grassland with rare plants and insects. The limestone grassland is an SSSI with an exceptionally rich flora including a number of nationally rare species. These include Somerset hair-grass and honewort.

Also there are green-winged and early purple orchid, autumn lady's tresses and abundant cowslips.

14th June: Visit to Hinkley Point Power Station

12th July: Yeo Valley Farm

16th August: An Evening with Bats in Failand
For outings contact Gareth on 01934 811694

10th September: James Field 'Conservation work on the North Somerset Levels'. James is a member of Avon Wildlife and is the Project Officer for the North Somerset Levels and Moors Project. He also has an interest in otters, water voles and bats of this area.

8th October: Dr Lawrence Matthews 'Why should I do my bit unless everyone else does too?'

Dr Matthews has worked in universities and in industry; recently gave evidence to the House of Commons Environment Select Committee on the psychology of tackling climate change. Why should I do my bit, unless everyone else does too? And what about China? Realistic answers to these questions can be surprisingly up-beat and inspiring

5th November: Mike Birkin is South West Regional Campaigner for Friends of the Earth and will talk on the organisation's direction and networking power.

26th November: AGM followed by a presentation on Bats in recognition that this is the International Year of the Bat.

Local Dates:

1st March: Green Fair at Shapwick School Sports Hall 10.30 to 3.30

29th March: Uphill Village Society Environmental Day at The Victory Hall in Uphill 12.00 – 4.00 p.m.

5th May: North Somerset Show at Wraxall

8th-11th May: Malvern Spring Show

10th May: Winscombe May Fayre

28th-31st: May Bath & West Show

International Dates:

22nd April: Earth Day

2nd May: World Fair Trade Day

5th June: World Environment Day

E&OE

Website: to make use of your organic food box
<http://www.vegbox-recipes.com/>