

MINUTES OF THE ECO-SCHOOLS MEETING
25th November 2010 AT 4.15pm at Stafford Sports College, Stafford

1 Present:

Vicky Rees - St John's
Lynda Cooper - St John's
Karen Davies, Stafford Borough Council
Gordon Taylor - Stafford Sports College
Julia Barraclough - Groundwork
Julie Smith, St Michael's First School
Richard Trout, Staffs Waste Management Partnership
Jo Perry, Staffs Wildlife Trust

Apologies: Judy Smythe, St Leonard's, Dunston; Kate Russell, SCC;
Claire Knight, St Paul's; Chris Jones and Emma Ray, County Waste
Management, Kate Harrold, SBC Healthy Strategy Officer.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting and Actions Arising

At the last meeting we discussed opportunities for schools for installing solar Photo Voltaics. There are various initiatives helping schools to fund and install PV:

My Solar School! www.generationgreen.co.uk/solarpanels

Solar 4 Schools www.solar4schools.co.uk

Our Green School www.growyourownenergy.co.uk

Karen had offered to contact Doxey Primary School who have recently installed solar PV and to find out more: The school had been approached by a parent who was keen to help get a PV system installed. The parent worked for the Co-op Group who were able to provide half the funding. A grant from the government covered the remaining costs. 22 panels have been installed at a cost of approx £20,000. The school has just registered to enable it to claim income from the Feed in Tarrif. In the summer the system feeds electricity into the National Grid.

Cooper Perry have also recently had a consultant look at their school building and hope to make progress on PV over the next few weeks.

The group agreed there were many obstacles, partly because of the complex arrangements around building management. **KD agreed** to contact SCC to discuss opportunities to bring about more renewables in our local schools.

3 Healthy and Green

Unfortunately Kate Harrold was unable to attend. However she had sent a set of packs for schools, that included details of how Environmental and Health Services at Stafford Borough Council can support health and well-being initiatives in schools eg After School Cooking Clubs; Healthy Eating Courses; Food Safety and Hygiene Courses; physical activity programmes etc. A series of booklets and posters were also in the pack. If you were unable to attend the meeting please contact Kate Harrold for a pack, kharrold@staffordbc.gov.uk tel 01785 619318.

4 Eco-Schools Update

a) there is a new **Eco-Schools Green Flag Ambassador Award** for flagship Eco-Schools – contact info@ecoschoolsengland for further information – some of Stafford Borough's Eco-Schools are definitely eligible!

b) **Eco-Schools Conference** – no-one at the meeting had been able to attend. However the Conference was fully booked and I will keep an eye on the website for

any follow up information (**KD**).

c) There are some more courses coming up entitled '**Becoming and Eco-School**', the nearest are 11th Jan (Birmingham) and 8th Feb (Manchester). If there are any schools that are new to the programme and feel that this course would benefit them, please contact Karen who may be able to help with the course cost/travel.

5 There is No Planet B!

Everyone present feels this is a great idea. We have established Half Term (21st – 25th Feb) as the date to have an exhibition/series of displays at St Mary's in Stafford, comprising:

Individual School Displays

Display of Green Awards entries

Displays from organisations that support our Network ie Staffs Wildlife Trust, SCC Waste Management, SCC School Improvement Division, Groundwork, SBC health and recycling teams, all other agencies who help!

Issues to address: Risk Assessment required; Will displays be safe/secure/supervised; When displays can be put up/taken down – access to church; Display Panels – do schools have access to them, will we need spare ones? Who else can help eg agencies; Need to liaise with St Mary's and also Sustainability Matters who are keen to help. The Group asked that **Karen** sends out frequent REMINDERS to encourage and remind them to prepare a display!

6 Feedback and News from Eco-Schools

St John's

Have started a gardening club. Have got some really keen children. Have been doing some planting, posters, recycling. Meet on a Friday lunchtime, with a mixture of volunteer boys and girls. There will be a Make a Scarecrow Competition using recycled materials. Karen suggested that **Vicky or Linda** contact her to see if she can help with a prize or a voucher for the winner/s.

St Michael's, Stone

Work in the garden is quiet at the moment due to shortage of daylight! There are plans to work on the pond area, with help from the Wildlife Trust. Also, proposals to do some sensory work in the wood. Recycling is going really well. There is one bin for all dry recycleables (co-mingled) which is collected each week. The caretaking staff have been very supportive. Around 150 milk cartons are now collected for recycling every day, which were previously binned. The system is part of an SBC trial which will be evaluated in the new year and hopefully rolled out. Schools are keen to be part of this system!!! **Julie to liaise with Karen** and compile an article on the trial for the next edition of Newsleaf (hope to work on this shortly!). Mark is busy building an eco-golf course with plans for a Spring launch!

Stafford Sports College

An Eco-Club has recently formed (and the two girls that hosted the meeting were really keen and very helpful – thank you!). The school has just received its Bronze Award – well done! Gordon gave a presentation to staff at a recent training session. Staff and pupils are frustrated that recycling is so tricky!! Some items are collected which staff take home on a rota basis to recycle. The school collects batteries for recycling, also paper at units away from the buildings. Around 5-60 trees will be

planted next Spring. Gordon is doing a lot of curriculum work using energy consumption data eg how much does it cost to run different light bulbs, along with promoting switch off and energy awareness campaigns.

The premises has some big challenges with reference to energy with high monthly energy bills. The science block is particularly inefficient and most classrooms have two exterior walls with associated heat loss, plus a lack of heating control across the buildings. KD wondered if there might be opportunities to tie in with the Penkside Project, part of which includes carbon reduction, energy efficiency work and other aspects of sustainable development (**KD** to follow up with **Tracy Redpath** at SBC). It might be helpful to undertake an Energy Audit – **KD** to send details/contacts.

St Paul's (in absentia)

St Paul's have recently had an eco-launch event, with talks about recycling and a theatre production (supported by Stafford BC) and are setting up a Gardening Club and a Big Dig project. Good luck and please tell us how you are getting on!

St Leonard's, Dunston (in absentia)

Were thrilled to win the "Wildlife Award" in the recent SBC Green Awards. As winner of the Youth and Education category, 2009, Judy also returned on the night to give a presentation on eco-activities, especially the Bee Trail, throughout the year. Well done!

7 News from Elliot the Eco-Bat

2009/10 has been a busy year so far for Elliot – no wonder he needed a stitch or two to re-attach his batty hat, kindly provided by Judy Smythe! This year he has:

- planted an orchard at Cooper Perry
- helped reception children at Parkside hatch butterflies and learn about life cycles
- Sampled water quality and surveyed lichens to help monitor air quality at Yarlet School and;
- Counted printer cartridges for recycling at Stafford Sports College.

He has now headed to St John's with **Vicky and Linda** to continue his eco-forays! **Karen** has his Diary and with this will update the Eco-School web pages and Elliot's Eco-Blog. Thanks to everyone who has hosted Elliot and updated his diary which is full interesting adventures and quite unique pictures!

8 Updates:

a) SBC: The **Green Awards** have recently been presented with applications from several schools (Pirehill, Flash Ley, Walton High School, Sir Graham Balfour, St Leonard's First School, and St Leonard's Primary School and Blessed William Howard Catholic High School who came second overall – well done!

We hope to have a **Fairtrade Producer** visiting next March from Ghana, who is visiting the country as part of Fairtrade Fortnight (Feb 28 – March 13). If you have any events planned or know of any she might attend please contact KD. **Jo Perry** offered to look at a possible event at Wolsley.

The **low carbon community project** at Derrington is going well – the Brownies recently had an evening focussing on trees, with a fun and messy tree potting-on activity! The Village Hall is warm and cosy with new solar PV panels, 3 newly re-roofed areas and zoned heating to enable heating control. Lots more too.

Energy efficiency work at **Penkside** has been taking place and this will continue in the new year as part of a wider 'inter agency project'.

We are also progressing with work to assess the feasibility of installing solar PV on the main council building roof – watch this space.

Eco-Schools support – we may be able to access some funding for eco-work in schools after Christmas - it may be worth getting your thinking caps on for new projects or projects already underway that need a little cash support. I'll feed back at the next meeting. For updates on other projects see the website for details!

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sd

b) Staffs Wildlife Trust Jo informed the group that the new educational programme has just been launched and programmes have recently been distributed to all schools. SWT has also just opened two new educational centres. The Energy Trail at Wolseley is now almost ready and will be a great teaching resource! Jo has been working with Perkjns who are revamping the Perkins Environmental Awards into a grant scheme. Aimed at Primary Schools in the first year, the closing date is February 28th. Application Forms will be on the SWT webpages. <http://www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk/page/home>

SWT are now able to deliver a range of activities including Forest Schools, Wild Play etc. Contact Jo for further information 01889 880100.

c) SCC Waste Update We will update on the SBC School Recycling Trial at the next meeting. The following sites focus on recycling in Staffordshire

<http://www.recycleforstaffordshire.org/>

<http://www.recycleforstaffordshire.org/show.php?contentid=71>

d) SCC School Improvement Division Kate had sent through an email about a potential new project to recycle school lost property. Schools present seemed to have their own existing methods but I have attached the email as an appendix in case any schools would like to feed back to Malinda Law.

e) Groundwork Julia reported that there are some new information materials due out and she will bring them to the next meeting. She is working with the Wedgewood Memorial College on a trail through the arboretum, which will be a super place for school visits.

f) Regional/National News Letters have been received from Nick Gibb at the Department for Education and Janice Lawson, Head of Sustainable Development at the Department for Education stating “ Although we will no longer provide central support for regional networks, schools should still regard sustainable development as critically important in preparing children and young people for the future. We are also currently considering how best to link education for sustainable development with the Big Society agenda. We recognise the value of the partnership approach of Sustainable Schools and hope that at the local level these partnerships will continue and further develop”.

9 AOB: Karen will attach some Green Xmas Tips.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 27th January at 4.15 pm to be hosted by St Michael's School, Stone (thanks Julie!) Any agenda items to Karen by 17th January