



Newsleaf

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Green Awards 2010

The results of the 2010 Green Awards were unveiled at a nail biting ceremony held on 18th November at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre.

A huge array of projects were put forward for the prestigious awards this year – from conserving bees, to cutting ‘church miles’, from fitting solar photo voltaic panels, to designing state of the art composting processes.

The Judging Panel eventually chose a series of Commended, Highly Commended and Top Three Place prizes, plus four special awards, which were: ‘Aspiring for the Future’, Flash Ley Community Primary School; ‘Sustainable

Tourism’, The Shugborough Estate; Wildlife Conservation’ St Leonard’s First School, Dunston, for their incredible Bee Trail. The Public Sector and Leadership Special Award went to HMP Drakehall. The top three prizes were awarded in ascending order to: Derrington Way Ahead where residents in the village are making great strides to become a more sustainable community; Blessed William Howard School, where enthusiastic school children supported by willing and proactive staff, have been

working hard at a range of eco-projects; and lastly overall winners, Rising Brook Baptist Church who, in the last twelve months have undertaken a wide range of activities to increase the sustainability of the Church Centre and to encourage others to reduce their direct environmental impact through more sustainable living.



Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

Despite the coldest winter for decades, the Gatehouse Theatre cut its heating bills by half last winter. The 19th century building is not the easiest building to run from the point of view of energy efficiency. However, following the replacement of the old boiler and a complete energy control system upgrade, staff can now monitor and control the temperature settings in different areas within the building from a PC laptop. The new control system has brought about accurate temperature control, aiding customer comfort, a much reduced environmental impact and carbon footprint, very significant reductions in energy bills and – and that’s good news for all of us!

Carbon footprint down at SBC

Over recent years data has been collected to measure the Council’s energy consumption. This has included energy use in buildings and business miles. This data has been reported back to the Government as a National Performance Indicator. In the years 2007/8 the carbon dioxide output for carrying out the Council’s business

was calculated to be 3,548 tonnes. In 2008/9 this fell to 3,413 tonnes, an improvement of about 4%. This improvement has largely been attributed to the more efficient use of energy in the Council buildings and efficiencies in the domestic waste collection system. Please read the side panel for one of the most recent energy busting projects!

School Recycling Bins at Last!

Julie Smith, from St Michael's in Stone, celebrates the new school recycling trials:

St Michael's C.E (vc) First School in Stone has been an Eco-School for many years. Everyone here, children, staff and parents work hard to make the school as eco-friendly as possible. The school has always been very keen to recycle as much as possible and we were delighted when Stone households all received their own recycling wheelie bins - we hoped in anticipation for some to arrive in school! However because of the way waste is classified the local authorities were unable to provide school recycling facilities at that time. Yet by hook or by crook, we were determined to recycle as much as we could. The school council devised plans to recycle plastic waste by putting collection boxes around school, the contents of which were then bagged up and taken home by staff and parents to put in their home recycling bins. We already recycled our paper so the next item to collect was cardboard – even though school had to pay each month when it was emptied, not ideal! The school has really worked hard to promote the importance of school recycling, writing letters, having meetings with Councillors and Council Officers, and generally being persistent. We are thrilled therefore that SBC has now set up a trial schools recycling scheme in Stone! One of our 'normal'

Save Your Energy!

In this freezing weather it is all the more important for people to keep warm, yet keep control of their bills too. The Stafford Area Save Your Energy website, supported by the Borough Council, contains practical advice on how to become more energy efficient in your home, how to stay warm and how to reduce

ever increasing energy bills. The site also looks at options to generate your own heat and electricity using renewable energy sources. With examples of households who have already made energy-saving changes, the site also has links to local companies providing energy-saving products and services. It is definitely worth a visit www.staffordarea.saveyourenergy.org



Have a Greener Christmas!

Probably the toughest time to 'be green' is Christmas, so we thought that these half dozen festive environment-friendly tips might help!

* Christmas produces a mountain of waste so make sure you recycle everything you can, especially those extra bottles and all that cardboard! Why not keep your Christmas cards and cut them out to use as next year's gift tags!

* If you have a real Christmas Tree, look out for the adverts in local newspapers explaining where you can take them to be shredded for use as mulch and compost.

school bins on the car park has been converted into a recycling bin and we can put all our cardboard, plastic, drinks cartons, cans and foil into it now; this is called 'co-mingled' waste! Big bins like the one in the picture are found all round school making it easy for staff and children to recycle all these items. We now have a new yellow lidded wheelie bin outside too, for children to put all their milk cartons into. Around 150 milk cartons are now collected for recycling every day, which were previously binned! The care-taking staff have been very supportive and the scheme is working really well. We are thrilled to finally have this support and hopefully other schools across the Borough will also be able to benefit from it soon!



For further information on the Council's sustainable development, climate change or environmental work, contact Karen Davies, 01785 619408, sd@staffordbc.gov.uk or visit www.staffordbc.gov.uk/sd

* At Christmas we use more energy in our homes than at any other time of the year, and as well as our bank balance taking a hit, so does the planet! Switch off or turn down whenever you can!

* Need an idea for a present? Low cost home compost bins show how much you care! Further info available at WRAP tel 0845 714444.

* Or maybe your Mum/Dad/Partner/Friend already have everything they need? Then buy them the perfect present - a gift to help fight poverty, improve the environment or help someone or something else in need. Brilliant! Oxfam Unwrapped is just one organisation offering presents – in the form of school supplies, safe water, chickens and even goats!

* Finally - if you have a present you don't need or like - don't throw it away - take it to a local charity shop, give it to a friend or post it on Stafford Freecycle - a great way to recycle and re-use unwanted items via the Internet!

Have a very happy green Festive Season!

Mapping England's Orchards...

Traditional orchards have formed a part of our landscape for many centuries. They are a link to the practices of the past and are still a valued part of our heritage today. They are hotspots for biodiversity in the countryside, supporting a wide range of wildlife. However, over recent decades traditional fruit orchards have been vanishing from England's landscape. The National Trust estimates 60% have disappeared since the 1950s - with serious consequences for wildlife and putting local varieties of apples, cherries, pears, plums and damsons under threat.

In 2007 traditional orchards became recognised as a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and a national action plan has been developed which aims to protect this important and much-loved habitat. The first priority has been to produce an inventory of existing traditional orchards which will then act as a baseline from which to focus future conservation action. Two-thirds of the inventory for England has now been completed, covering 8.5 million hectares and locating over 25,000 traditional orchards to date. The initial map of Staffordshire is now complete and the Orchard Mapping Office is now seeking people with local knowledge to help check the accuracy of the inventory in our local area. If you want to find out more or get involved, please contact Christine at COines@ptes.org or tel 020 7498 4533 or visit www.orchardnetwork.org.uk

Planting England's Orchards ...

We are keen to promote orchard and fruit tree schemes for all kinds of reasons: to encourage interest in local food growing among all age groups; to promote healthy eating and cooking skills; to enhance the environment (in the current chill weather any fruit remaining on the trees has been keenly sought by our wild birds); to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and to provide free fruit for many years to come! The young orchard at Cooper Perry Primary School in Seighford planted in December last year (above right), will help do all these things!



Enjoying England's Orchards ...

Stafford Action Organic Group enjoying apple juice pressed from home grown apples (Christmas Supper, December 2010), delicious!



Low carbon living, come rain or shine (or deep freeze!)

Derrington, Stafford Borough's first pilot low carbon community now boasts a warm and cosy, super efficient, solar powered Village Hall! The building has had 3 flat roofs replaced and now benefits from zoned heating. The solar photo-voltaic panels generate electricity even on the coldest days, once any blankets of snow have slipped off! The project has benefited from grant funding from Staffordshire Environmental Fund, SBC, SCC's Local Community Fund, the Rural Development Programme for England and Derrington Village Hall Committee. We hope it is the first of many community buildings to benefit from renewable, clean, sustainable energy sources.

The new Feed in Tarrif, which guarantees an income for 25 years for renewable installations, is really helping to kick start this industry and we are now investigating whether installing renewables systems on Council buildings could help the Borough Council reduce its energy bills, and demonstrate its commitment to low carbon, cost effective sustainable energy sources.

Cannock Chase, wood works!

Cannock Chase Visitor Centre has embraced the future by installing a brand new energy system. The 120 Kw wood burner creates heat and hot water from the Chase's own trees. Previously, a combination system (LPG gas fired and electric storage heating) was used to supply the Visitor Centre, adding to the Council's energy bills and creating carbon emissions. The new equipment, which is pioneering new technology installed at a cost of £237,000, is carbon neutral. And because the trees used in the burner come from Cannock Chase, fuel transport costs and associated emissions are minimised. With abundant wood on Cannock Chase, which is harvested as part of ongoing conservation management work, the initiative makes sense, both from a financial and environmental point of view. This new facility at

HOT OFF THE PRESS!!!!

Fairtrade Fortnight Producer Tour! Between 28th February and 13th March 2011, a shea butter producer from Ghana, Juliana Sampana, will be visiting our region. Juliana is the President of Akoma Co-operative and she will be attending local events to talk about how Fairtrade means that women in the co-operative are assured a fair wage for their hard work.

Cannock Chase Visitor Centre follows the installation of wood burning technology at Chasewater Innovation Centre in south Staffordshire some years ago. The new boiler will save 62.5 tonnes of CO2 per annum which equates to 1,560 tonnes over the life the boiler, and will contribute 2.5% of the County's CO2 emission reduction targets. Pictured with the new kit are Staffordshire County Council's John Bradbury, Maintenance Team Manager, Mike Maryon, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment and John Quigley, Field Manager. More info available from **John Quigley, 01785 223121**



Winter Birds

At this time of year it is good to help birds through the cold winter



months. Bringing birds into our gardens is a richly rewarding activity that provides hours of pleasure and allows us to get closer to wildlife. Food and water should be put out regularly, but remember, once you start a feeding routine the birds will come to rely on it! Probably the easiest way to attract some birds is to get some bird feeders. These are best located near to trees or hedges that will give the birds greater security from predators. Another feeding idea is to make a fat cake. Use 1/3 fat to 2/3 feed. The fat to use should be either lard or suet. The feed can be a mixture of seeds and fruit, even cheese. The warm mixture can be poured into coconut shells or plastic pots and hung up when cool. Providing water is also very important for the birds to drink and bathe in. If possible these should be filled daily with fresh water. Winter is a good time to install nest boxes as this will give the birds time to find them prior to the spring. It will also provide the birds with some shelter for winter roosts. Planting fruit trees also provides winter feed for years to come (see page 3). It can be fun to keep a record of the birds that visit your feeders. You should see several types, depending on where you live and the habitats nearby. Birds that visit feeders include House sparrow, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Robin, Great tit and Blue tit. Keep a look out for other birds such as Coal tits, Greenfinch or Goldfinch. If you are lucky you may even get a visit from a Great-spotted woodpecker after the peanuts!

More info available from **Bill Waller, Biodiversity Officer, 01785 616676**

Dates for the Diary!

There are lots of 'green' events over the New Year period:

Wednesday 5th Jan
Sustainability Matters Meeting

Friday 7th January
Action Organic Meeting

Sun 16th Jan
Litterpick, Astonfields LNR 10am

Thurs 27th Jan
Eco-Schools Network Meeting

Wed 16th Feb
Derrington Village Hall 'Warm, Cosy and Solar Powered' launch event

Mon 21st Feb to Fri 25th Feb

There is No Planet B! exhibition at St Mary's Church, Stafford

Mon 28th Feb to 13th March

Fairtrade Fortnight
Want more details? Visit www.staffordbcgov.uk/sd or tel 619408