

# LLES NEWSLETTER



Llanidloes Energy Solutions



## ZERO CO<sub>2</sub> PROJECT FOR LLANI

LLES is engaged in an ambitious project to make the local community a zero contributor of CO<sub>2</sub> to the environment, from its use of energy. This is to be a joint project with the Powys Energy Agency and other local and national bodies, and funding is currently being sort to further this aim.

The way this would work is to look at current energy usage of Llanidloes and surrounding area with the aim to find ways that this can be minimised, then to examine the remaining energy requirements and replace these from renewable sources. The key factor in this will be the involvement of the local community, and there would be a process of wide spread consultation and discussion locally to ensure that the project had full local support.

Using the model already well established on the continent for community developed schemes, any

renewable energy projects would be owned and controlled by the local community, with the financial rewards being kept in the community. From similar schemes already in existence it is foreseen that there would be a good return on money invested.

It is expected that the most likely renewable energy sources that would be exploited in the local area are: energy from waste, small scale hydro electric, wind power and some use of solar energy, though the later would be used mainly for domestic hot water. Llanidloes is very well placed to exploit renewable energy and it is likely that the scheme would provide a blue print that other communities could follow.

Further details of the project are available at: [www.llanidloes.net/lles](http://www.llanidloes.net/lles).

### LLANIDLOES CHOSEN FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PILOT PROJECT

Llanidloes has been chosen to take part with two other communities in Powys in a Powys Action for Community Energy (PACE) project. This pilot scheme is going ahead and is in the process of seeking funding. The project aims to eliminate fuel poverty and reduce energy consumption. The funding will provide for a part-time post of Community Energy Advisor whose task would be to involve the community in implementing energy efficiency measures and encouraging the use of renewable energy. This is an exciting project which together with the above is part of our aim to move towards a zero emissions economy. Llani is really going to be at the forefront of environmental change!

### REPORT ON PAST YEAR

LLES has not held so many public events this year, but a lot has gone on, and major projects have been started which are steps on the road to our aim of making Llanidloes an energy conscious sustainable community.

Last August we enjoyed a barbecue at Chris Lordsmith's, and we also had an evening trip to see Alan Selkirk's Heat Exchange system

In October we had a well attended and lively public meeting on 'Recycling' with Mike Membery, development officer of Cae Post, the innovative community recycling project that involves learning disabled people. Since then two new recycling initiatives have been set up, one at the High School and one at Bodlondeb, the sheltered housing project for elderly people, and Cae Post have also extended their door-to-door collection scheme in Llanidloes.

We also held a stall in Great Oak Street in October with Andy Burroughs of the Organic Energy Company, which generated a lot of interest.

Another very well attended public meeting on 'Sustainable Lifestyles' was held in January. Peter Harper, director

of research and innovation at the Centre for Alternative Technology and Laurie Michaelis, former director of the Oxford Commission on Sustainable Research were the speakers, and provoked lively discussions.

In January also Chris spoke to a meeting of Llani Ltd which represents business and community interests about the proposed renewable energy scheme and sustainable community project, and received an enthusiastic response.

We held another stall on Easter Saturday with Andy Burroughs' 'Organic Energy Company', and in May we organised a 'Stopesso Photo Protest' stall.

We are represented on Llani Link and on a Powys Energy Agency committee. Gwen has been involved with a new initiative on Climate Change aimed at the churches. LLES members have also been very involved with the setting up and running of the new organic fruit and vegetable shop (see article).

LLES has been given a donation of £200 from Quaker Green Action

Our LLES website was set up this year and can be accessed for information.

## LLES ON THE NET

Llanidloes Energy Solutions has its own web site at [www.llanidloes.net/lles](http://www.llanidloes.net/lles). This is still under development but includes details on our aims, the work we have done so far and much else besides.

The website will be developed further and intends to offer advice on many topics from energy conservation at home to advice on solar water heating, how to access grants for installing renewable energy schemes at home and lots more.

There are also details of the library, which is free to members and has some wonderful books to borrow.

If anybody has any suggestions on ways to improve the site or would like to contribute to it then please phone Chris on 412552 or email [chris@llanidloes.net](mailto:chris@llanidloes.net).

## ORGANIC SHOP CUTS FOOD MILES

Great Oak Foods at 11 Great Oak Street was set up in December 2002. It aims to provide fresh organic and organically grown fruit, vegetables and other local produce. Food miles are a central issue and all produce is locally sourced as far as possible. Produce is clearly labelled according to food miles status.

The shop aims to provide two main benefits to the local community: access to local organically grown produce and an outlet for local producers.

In addition to the shop we will be launching a community supported agriculture (CSA) and box scheme in the very near future. CSA schemes are centred around re-connecting the local community with local agriculture through participation in food production. Our CSA scheme is already up and running

and we have cultivated ½ acre of root crops. We have just purchased a commercial size polytunnel and the intention is to grow seasonal produce to supply the shop in conjunction with other local growers. Involvement in the CSA scheme can range from simply purchasing from us, or can extend to actually working on the land. The CSA scheme is supported by Glasu, Leader+, Powys, WDA & Welsh Assembly.

By supporting the shop and the CSA scheme you are supporting the regeneration of local agriculture and food production. We need your comments about what the shop offers and what it could do in the future. Please e-mail us your comments or if you want further information about the CSA scheme to:

[siop-organig@greatoakfoods.co.uk](mailto:siop-organig@greatoakfoods.co.uk)

## The LLES Library

The LLES Library is still running at *Llanidloes Resource Centre* and has a large range of current, up to date books on a variety of 'sustainable' issues. Devoted to environmental subjects, there is something of interest to all, from Schumacher's "Small is beautiful" to the Permaculture Design Manual.

The library offers the chance to answer and form an opinion upon the following questions:

- What is the global energy and sustainability problem? (Knowledge)
- Why should we be concerned about it? (Wisdom)
- What can we do about it collectively and individually? (Action)

It is organised into two parts: 'The Nature of The Problem' and 'Potential Solutions'.

To borrow a book or to get a catalogue is very simple: either visit the Resource Centre at 14 Great Oak Street or e-mail [lles@perpetualearth.com](mailto:lles@perpetualearth.com)

## STOPE\$\$O PHOTO PROTEST

LLES held a stall in Great Oak street publicising Esso (Exxonmobil)'s role in blocking action and spreading disinformation on Global Warming in May. People were encouraged to have their photo taken with a placard saying 'I don't buy Esso' to send to Exxonmobil's headquarters in Texas as part of a worldwide campaign. We also had a display on The Politics of Oil and gave out leaflets about this, together with ideas on how to reduce our dependence on oil and invited people to take part in an Oil Quiz. Nearly 70 photos were taken, and it was a very successful event. View the photos on our website!

## SWITCH TO GREEN ENERGY— AND CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Operation Noah is a Climate Change campaign aimed at the churches. It aims to publicise the issue of climate change and get people to take individual action as well as pressurising the government. Faith communities can play an important part in social justice campaigns, as the Jubilee 2000 campaign showed, and many are now developing an environmental concern. Operation Noah asks people to create a climate of justice for the poor and for future generations by taking three steps

- 1 **Sign a Climate Covenant** to be sent to the government calling for world leaders to act to avert dangerous climate change. It promotes 'Contraction and Convergence' as an equitable global solution (see Sir John Houghton's recent article reprinted from *The Guardian*)
- 2 **Take action personally** by switching to green electricity. Two companies, Unit(e) and Green Energy UK will donate £7 per year to the campaign for each new customer who switches citing Operation Noah. People are also given ideas on how to reduce their energy use.
- 3 **Tell other people** and encourage them to join the campaign. A presenters pack for churches can be downloaded from
- 4 [www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/noah)

Operation Noah is a project of Christian Ecology Link and is currently being piloted prior to being launched nationally in 2004. For more details and for covenant cards contact Gwen on 01686 411128, [princut@fish.co.uk](mailto:princut@fish.co.uk).

**Subscription Renewal** Membership is still only £1 but funds are low and donations are most welcome!  
Renew your subscription at the Llanidloes Resource Centre, 14 Great Oak Street, Llanidloes  
or send your cheque (made out to LLES) to Barbara Anderson, Lower White House, Highgate Street, SY18 6AG.

# LLANIDLOES AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ACTION FORUM

As part of the strategy for regional regeneration Powys County Council is engaged with producing a Community Strategy for Powys. This involves widespread consultation with local communities to reflect the views and aspirations of those communities.

The Llanidloes and District Local Community Forum has set up a steering group to ensure that local views are known and in November the Strategy will be finalised. There are several areas that the Forum are looking at, including Economic, Health, Education and Environmental issues.

LLES believes that any future development of the area should be sustainable and that energy usage and production should also be sustainable. To this end LLES Chair Chris Lord-Smith has become a member of the steering group and will make representations to this effect. It is important that the forum, which is open to all, knows the views of the local community and we urge you to make your views known.

If any members would like their feelings on the future of the local community taken into account then please contact Chris on 412552 or email [chris@llanidloes.net](mailto:chris@llanidloes.net)

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## A Visit to BedZED

BedZED is the Beddington (in South London) Zero (fossil) Energy Development, where a whole range of innovative solutions combine to provide living and working space which is carbon neutral, affordable and pleasant. "The scheme enables people to live sustainably, within their share of the earth's renewable resources, without sacrificing a modern, urban and mobile lifestyle. It aims to achieve this within the cost restraints of a social housing budget" (from the BedZED construction materials report).

Built by the Peabody Trust (half the households were from the local waiting list), BioRegional Development Group and the architect Bill Dunster, its 82 homes and 3,000 square metres of working space are laid out in terraces on a reclaimed landfill site. There's plenty of space around - a stream, trees and even a football pitch. Each house has a small roof garden, and is light and spacious. Yet the population density is nearly that of a crowded inner city.

The design is a mixture of traditional (oak cladding and brick), modern (sedum roofing, large triple glazed windows for solar gain) and playful (the multicoloured factory-like cowls on the roof which are the first thing to catch the visitor's eye as you walk from the nearby station).

The need for heat, electricity and water are kept to a minimum. A combined heat and power unit is fuelled with local urban tree waste; solar gain and thermal mass

(the walls are so thick they had to design special wall ties) with the help of the hot water supply mean that no extra heating is needed! This seems to be the thing that most impresses visitors - it was January when I went and the show house was pleasantly warm and not at all stuffy, because of the clever heat exchange system in the roof ventilator.

Water for gardens and lavatory flushing comes from rainwater collected on the sedum roofs and from greywater recycling in reed tanks. These are in a greenhouse like building which also provides exotic flowers for the offices! The sedum roofs are already home to a wide variety of spiders, the subject of a PhD thesis.

Photovoltaic cells in the conservatory roofs charge shared electric cars, but integrated workspace means that travel to work can be avoided. And of course there's a local food scheme and recycling facilities.

Recycled materials including steel and timber were used wherever possible, and bricks, timber and so on came from local suppliers. If anyone wants more technical details, I have a copy of their Building Materials report, and there's a copy of the book on this and other BioRegional projects in the Lles library. In this, you can find out about other BioRegional activities like charcoal production, recycled paper making and growing lavender. And there's a website, [www.bioregional.com](http://www.bioregional.com).

*Beck Woodrow*

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## Recharge your batteries from the sun

Rechargeable batteries are a good idea, right? One rechargeable battery can replace between 50-300 throwaway ones, but it isn't quite that simple. As far as the author is aware, the manufacturers of rechargeables do not use renewable energy sources in their production processes. If a rechargeable lasts 300 times longer, then you need to put it in a charger and plug that charger into the grid for 8 hours, 300 times over, before sending the battery with its deadly load of cadmium, lead and lithium to the landfill - suddenly it doesn't sound so good.

The one part of the process we can easily control ourselves is recharging the battery (as well as saving up batteries at the end of their life and creating magnificent

sculptures with them instead of popping them in the swingbin). So sign on with a green energy supplier... but then you still have to pay the electricity bill and perhaps you have economic reasons not to make the switch if your non-renewable supplier does you a dual-fuel deal.

The Llanidloes Resource Centre has recently acquired 3 solar panels with a combined output of 12A at 12VDC and the IT Manager is in the process of building a solar charge controller for them. These will be permanently installed in one window of the Centre from October and you are encouraged to bring your batteries to be charged by the sun, for free. The service is for any kind of battery, from your mobile phone, to your laptop to your car. We hope that even on cloudy winter days the service will be available. Watch this space!

# Global warming is now a weapon of mass destruction

It kills more people than terrorism, yet Blair and Bush do nothing

John Houghton

The Guardian — Monday July 28, 2003

If political leaders have one duty above all others, it is to protect the security of their people. Thus it was, according to the prime minister, to protect Britain's security against Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction that this country went to war in Iraq. And yet our long-term security is threatened by a problem at least as dangerous as chemical, nuclear or biological weapons, or indeed international terrorism: human-induced climate change.

As a climate scientist who has worked on this issue for several decades, first as head of the Met Office, and then as co-chair of scientific assessment for the UN intergovernmental panel on climate change, the impacts of global warming are such that I have no hesitation in describing it as a "weapon of mass destruction".

Like terrorism, this weapon knows no boundaries. It can strike anywhere, in any form - a heatwave in one place, a drought or a flood or a storm surge in another. Nor is this just a problem for the future. The 1990s were probably the warmest decade in the last 1,000 years, and 1998 the warmest year. Global warming is already upon us.

The World Meteorological Organisation warned this month that extreme weather events already seem to be becoming more frequent as a result. The US mainland was struck by 562 tornados in May (which incidentally saw the highest land temperatures globally since records began in 1880), killing 41 people. The developing world is the hardest hit: extremes of climate tend to be more intense at low latitudes and poorer countries are less able to cope with disasters. Pre-monsoon temperatures this year in India reached a blistering 49C (120F) - 5C (9F) above normal.

Once this killer heatwave began to abate, 1,500 people lay dead - half the number killed outright in the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. While no one can ascribe a single weather event to climate change with any degree of scientific certainty, higher maximum temperatures are one of the most predictable impacts of accelerated global warming, and the parallels - between global climate change and global terrorism - are becoming increasingly obvious.

To his credit, Tony Blair has - rhetorically, at least - begun to face up to this. In a recent speech he stated clearly that "there can be no genuine security if the planet is ravaged by climate change". But words are not enough. They have to be matched with adequate action. The recent announcement of a large-scale offshore wind generating programme was welcome, but the UK still lags far behind other European countries in developing renewables capacity.

The latest report on energy and climate change by the royal commission on environmental pollution addressed the much more demanding global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that will be required over the next 50 years (in addition to the Kyoto agreement) and how these could be achieved. Given that the UK needs to take its share of the global burden the commission recommended that we should aim for a cut in these emissions of 60% by 2050.

It also pointed out the urgent need for an adequate mechanism for negotiating each country's emission target and advocated a globally implemented plan known as "contraction and convergence". The energy white paper published earlier this year accepted the royal commission's 60% reduction target, but it is disturbing that it provided no clarity on UK policy regarding the framework for international negotiation.

Any successful international negotiation for reducing emissions must be based on four principles: the precautionary principle, the principle of sustainable development, the polluter pays principle and the principle of equity. The strength of

"contraction and convergence" is that it satisfies all these principles. But it also means facing up to some difficult questions.

First, world leaders have to agree on a target for the stabilisation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a sufficiently low level to stave off dangerous climate change. Second, this target, and the global greenhouse gas budget it implies, has to form the framework for an equitable global distribution of emissions permits, assigned to different countries on a per-capita basis. Countries with the largest populations will therefore get the most permits, but for the sake of efficiency and to achieve economic convergence these permits will need to be internationally tradable.

This is the only solution likely to be acceptable to most of the developing world, which unlike us has not had the benefit of over a century of fossil fuel-driven economic prosperity. And it also meets one of the key demands of the United States, that developing countries should not be excluded from emissions targets, as they currently are under the Kyoto protocol.

Nowadays everyone knows that the US is the world's biggest polluter, and that with only one 20th of the world's population it produces a quarter of its greenhouse gas emissions. But the US government, in an abdication of leadership of epic proportions, is refusing to take the problem seriously - and Britain, presumably because Blair wishes not to offend George Bush - is beginning to fall behind too. Emissions from the US are up 14% on those in 1990 and are projected to rise by a further 12% over the next decade.

It is vital that Russia now ratifies the Kyoto protocol so that it can at last come into force. But while the US refuses to cooperate, it is difficult to see how the rest of the world can make much progress on the much tougher longer-term agreements that will be necessary after Kyoto's mandate runs out in 2012.

Nor does the latest science provide any comfort. The inter-governmental panel on climate change has warned of 1.4C to 5.8C (2.5F to 10.4F) temperature rises by 2100. This already implies massive changes in climate, and yet the current worst-case scenarios emerging from the Met Office's Hadley centre envisage even greater rises than this - a degree and speed of global warming the consequences of which are hard to quantify or even imagine.

So Blair has a challenge. The world needs leadership, and the British prime minister is well placed to stand at the head of a new "coalition of the willing" to tackle this urgent problem. He is also uniquely placed to persuade Bush to join in this effort, given their joint commitment to making the world safe from "weapons of mass destruction".

But even if he fails to persuade him, there are other allies who would still respond to his leadership - even if this means opposing the US until such time as it no longer has an oilman for president. If Blair were to assume this mantle, history might not only forgive him, but will also endorse Britain's contribution to long-term global security.

*Sir John Houghton was formerly chief executive of the Meteorological Office and co-chair of the scientific assessment working group of the intergovernmental panel on climate change. He is the author of Global Warming: the Complete Briefing.*

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Sir John Houghton is patron of LLES