



working locally to make a difference

### Latest from SW

#### Don't bin it – bring it along!

This was the slogan for SW's first Collection Morning, held on Saturday 22nd May at the Regal Centre and our way of offering to help people get rid of hard-to-dispose-of items without harming the environment.

We publicised the event around town and asked people to bring in specific used items that may be lying around the house or the garage: from ink cartridges to old tools and paint. We made sure these were recycled, re-used, sold for charity or safely disposed of – the important thing was that nothing would go to landfill.

Despite it being our first Collection Day, it was very successful and we were delighted to see so many people participate. Here's what was saved from landfill:

100s of batteries; 80 tins of paint; 37 pairs of glasses; 30 light bulbs; 17 ink cartridges; 11 computer monitors; 11 printers; 11 mobile phones; 10 computer base units; 5 sacks of aluminium foil; 5 spades and a rake; 5 saws; 4 pairs of hedge trimmers; 2 scanners.

#### Composting float at Wallingford Carnival

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> of June was a fun day for those who participated or cheered on the Carnival floats in Wallingford. SW was very keen to participate but found this year's theme – nursery rhymes - a bit of a poser at first. In the end, 'Wiggly Worm at the Bottom of the Garden' came to our rescue. We thought that it could help us to promote composting – an undoubtedly original link between nursery rhymes and sustainability!



#### Did you know that...

At least 1/3rd of all our household waste can be composted? You can put in cuttings from the garden, tea bags, eggshells, shredded paper and cardboard as well as many other things.

#### Plastic Bags? No thanks!

Plastic bags are not just an eyesore, they are a serious environmental hazard; estimates say that they take between 50 and 1000 years to decompose.

There are many alternatives to using these bags. And it's also a matter of changing our behaviour. Getting into the habit of taking a bag *with you* to the supermarket, for example, is a great way to start.

Sarah Webb from SW is very keen to get this message across, and thanks to her hard work over 700 local residents have so received a re-usable cotton carrier bag. Made from organic cotton and bearing the Sustainable Wallingford logo, the bags can easily be folded up ready for groceries or any other kind of shopping. The bags were handed out at nine local businesses: Waitrose, Champions, Petitts, KP Stationers, Rags in Bags, Shoes in Twos, From Here to Maternity, Pennifex & Boots. Many thanks to them, and also to the County Council, who provided us with the bags.

#### Sustainable design

On 7<sup>th</sup> June 2004 David Rowley an architect and director at Nightingale Associates (the largest healthcare design practice in Europe) gave a talk on sustainable design in public and commercial buildings in Wallingford.

David's talk included a number of excellent examples of 'sustainable' buildings including the Wessex Water's operational centre in Bath and the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Building in Watford.

David proposed that Sustainable Wallingford and SODC aim to have a sustainability checklist produced for Wallingford and surrounding areas, similar to one produced for developments in the South East ([www.sustainability-checklist.co.uk](http://www.sustainability-checklist.co.uk)). This shows where this region is now on all the main issues, from transport to ecology, and where improvements have been made.

## Action groups update

### Waste

#### Nappy Trials

Sarah and Sally are by now well known by many of Wallingford's new and soon-to-be parents. They have been 'touring' the town's ante-natal and toddler groups to explain the environmental and health benefits of 'real' (ie, washable cotton nappies) versus the disposable kind. The results are that 11 households have converted to cotton nappies, which means that, at a very conservative estimate, 5.5 tonnes of disposable nappies have been saved from landfill.

If you are interested in having a free 7 day trial of washable nappies please contact Sarah Webb at 01491 838618 or Sally Eccleston at 01491 834780 - or please pass on our details to anyone you think might be interested.

#### The case for cotton nappies:

- Washables are easy to use (no pins), easy to wash (60 degrees C in the washing machine) and don't need soaking.
- With washables, solid waste is simply flushed away with a bio-degradable liner
- Disposables consume at least 10 times the raw materials use by 'real' nappies
- Most disposables will take at least 200 years to decompose!

### Energy

#### Can you make your home more energy efficient?

Almost certainly, according to Annie Batten, from the Thames Valley Energy Centre. Her talk in Wallingford attracted over 30 people keen to learn about energy efficiency.

Did you know for example, that 25% of household heat is lost through the roof, making loft insulation one of the most cost-effective energy efficiency measures you can carry out. Schemes such as the Big Green Insulation Scheme ([www.green-insulation.co.uk](http://www.green-insulation.co.uk)) offer up to 50% discount.



And did you know that if every UK household installed 3 low-energy bulbs, enough energy would be saved in a year to supply all street lighting in the UK...!

But Annie also explained that energy efficiency is not just about measures that require money, it's also a matter of changing habits. And that requires no financial investment at all. Switching off the lights that aren't needed, fitting low-energy bulbs, using full-loads and low temperatures on your washing machine all go a long way.

Every household in UK creates around 6 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year, which is more than the average car. Whether we invest in energy-saving measures, or change our little habits, we can all do our bit to help the environment.

### Local sourcing

#### Fir Tree School menus become healthier

Pupils who take school lunches at the Fir Tree School were pleased to find that their meals now taste much better than before. In January, the staff and board at Fir Tree were unanimous in their resolution to make school meals more nutritious and use more fresh local ingredients, hence embarking on a brave adventure.

An independent caterer was appointed and new menus were devised. Lorna Simpson, the new caterer, works closely with SW's Dorothy Cussens to ensure that high nutritional values are achieved, more fresh produce is used and that some of it is sourced locally. She commented that the students are really noticing and enjoying the difference, and that they didn't even complain when she served them cabbage!

Although the school can not yet afford the percentage of locally sourced and organic food that it was aiming for (many parents are waiting for the final report before deciding whether to convert their children to school meals), feedback has been extremely positive: not only has the meals' nutritional quality visibly increased, but so has the degree of satisfaction of those who try them. We hope that this example inspires other schools or large institutions to follow in Fir Tree's footsteps. So, SW's support and Dorothy's expertise will definitely be available!!

### Schools

#### Greener children

Throughout March, SW and the Northmoor Trust, with the help of SODC and Wallingford School sixth formers visited 4 local schools (St Nicholas Infant School, Fir Tree Junior School, St Johns Primary School and Crowmarsh

Primary) to run 'Green Assemblies' and 'Green Fairs', with the aim of getting young people to think about the environment from an early age. Year 4 pupils from St. John's Primary School wrote this article about the fair they had:

"In the Green Assembly 2 Wallingford School students came in to talk to us about rubbish, recycling and how to become Eco-friendly. They played a game with us about recycling and also told us that ten normal light bulbs use the same energy as one energy-saving one.

During March on a Friday after school, a Green Fair took place in St. John's Primary School's hall. The Green Fair people gave away free recycling boxes and toilet hippos so you don't waste water in your house. They also brought energy saving bulbs so we don't waste energy. Stickers and posters about helping the environment were also there to take away. Also, the Soxon Man came to our school and some pupils had pictures taken with him. We learnt a lot and had a great time!"



## Transport

John Griffin has represented SW on the Town Council's Integrated Transport Strategy Working Party since it was set up last year, on County Councillor Bill Bradshaw's recommendation. The group also includes town councillors, Better Ways to School, Wallingford Environment Group and local transport representatives.

The group plans to have a transport survey of the town as a first step. Meanwhile, work is being undertaken on safer routes to school and getting more safe crossings and improved cycle lanes. The group's views are fed into the county council's transport strategy, which aims, amongst other things, to expand public transport. However, recently the group had to work hard to preserve local bus services in the face of cuts in council subsidy. Fortunately, most services have been saved. The focus now must be on encouraging more people to use the bus and train network rather than driving.

## Biodiversity

Please contact us and we'll put you in touch with the Wallingford Environment Group.

## Upcoming events

### SW events

**4<sup>th</sup> September – Big Green Day** (coinciding with Wallingford Bunkfest) - Green activities at the Kinecroft.

**September – Open Meeting** - Friend's Meeting Place, 14 Castle Street – date to be confirmed. We will be discussing SW's projects and other local issues and we would really like to have some feedback from you: what are the most pressing sustainability issues in Wallingford? Would you like to help us tackle them? Do you have any suggestions regarding any of our projects?

The work we do is for the community and we like to do it *with* the community. Whether you have an active interest in sustainability issues or are merely curious about what we do it would be great if you could come along. The exact date is yet to be fixed, we will publicise the event soon.

**9<sup>th</sup> October – Swap Shop** - Regal Centre - 10am-12pm

### Action group meetings- new members welcome!

SW action groups meet regularly to discuss ongoing projects, upcoming events, ideas for the future, and so on. These are not closed meetings, in fact, we are always keen for new members to get involved. You can commit as much or as little time as you are able to. So, if you are interested in attending any of these meetings, please come along. If you want to talk to someone before the meeting or see the agenda, the contacts for the groups are below:

**Waste Group** (contact: Lynn 07799882062)  
4<sup>th</sup> August, 7:30pm, 6 Kinecroft

**Energy Group** (contact: Justin 07801800834)

**Local Sourcing Group:** (Dorothy: 01865 891197)  
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 8.00pm, 15 Church Lane, Wallingford

**Schools Group** (contact: Louise Robinson  
[louise.robinson@waitrose.com](mailto:louise.robinson@waitrose.com))

### Can you help?

*We need an electrician.* Is anyone qualified in PAT testing and could spare a couple of hours on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October? At the next Swap Shop we are hoping to include electrical items, but require them to be tested to ensure that they are safe. Let us know if you can help. Please contact Lynn Anderson: 07799882062.

Are you keen on *sustainability issues* in general? We are about to start producing a leaflet on living sustainably, a 'green directory' for Wallingford, and would appreciate any help you can offer, be it with providing original ideas, collecting data or finding a sponsor to print the brochure. Please contact Sam Settle [sustainablewallingford@hotmail.com](mailto:sustainablewallingford@hotmail.com)

Would you like to see less *disposable nappies* piling up in landfills? Sarah and Sally need a third person to help them with the nappy trials and with promoting cotton nappies. Please contact Sarah Webb at 01491 838618 or Sally Eccleston at 01491 834780.

### Sustainability Tips

With summer officially here, holidays are on everyone's mind, therefore we thought it timely to focus on tourism in this issue's Sustainability Tips. Whilst tourism poses a number of threats to the world's ecology, it is also an industry on which many developing countries' economies have come to depend – most conservation initiatives in developing countries could not survive without tourists' money...!



Travelling doesn't have to be all-bad, but it should be planned *thoughtfully and responsibly*. Here are some tips, sourced from 'Go MAD: 500 Daily Ways to Save the Planet':

- Think local: ensure that the money you spend stays local, eg: use local tour operators, stay in locally run hotels and buy locally produced good.

- If this proves difficult, ask your tour companies or hotel for their written policy with regard to the environment and local people. Look out for the Green Globe sign and visit [www.greenglobe21.com](http://www.greenglobe21.com) and [www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com).
- Offset your carbon – one long-haul return flight can produce more CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger than the average UK motorist produces in a year (see [www.chooseclimate.org](http://www.chooseclimate.org) to work out greenhouse warming of any flights). There are now several schemes, from restoring rain forests in Africa to providing energy efficient stoves in Bangladesh, that can help you offset your carbon, eg: [www.futureforests.com](http://www.futureforests.com) or [www.co2.org](http://www.co2.org).
- Minimise your environmental impact: Protect local wildlife by keeping to footpaths, not touching corals and not buying products made from endangered species. Make sure not to leave rubbish behind and be aware that some places have limited water or fuel resources. See [www.tourismconcern.organisation.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.organisation.uk).

### Film Review – The Day After Tomorrow



This film takes a special-effects-filled look at what the world would look like if global warming continued at such levels that it would result in extreme weather conditions worldwide, and the beginning of the next Ice Age. At the centre of the story is a climatologist (Dennis Quaid), who tries to save the world from the effects of global warming while also trying to get to his son, Sam, who is in New York City when the city is overwhelmed by the new Ice Age.

Despite some scientific exaggerations and the 'fragility' of the plot, the film represents a good cause. Yes, it should be taken with a pinch of salt but it can also be an eye-opener!

And did you know that the producers decided to invest in energy conservation and tree planting projects around the world to offset the greenhouse gas emissions released during the making of the film? Why don't you visit WWF's top 10 simple tips on how *you* can become more carbon neutral?

[www.worldwildlife.org/consumer/sqw.cfm](http://www.worldwildlife.org/consumer/sqw.cfm)