



working locally to make a difference

## Food, people and place

Sustainable Wallingford's Local Sourcing Group has been chosen to run one of three pilot projects for a new scheme run by the Countryside Agency.

'Food, People and Place' is about getting local people involved in issues which affect local landscape and local food. This fits well with the group's aims of raising awareness of the local environment and improving the supply of local produce. There is up to £4000 available for the project.

Our project will be centred on Crowmarsh parish but is likely to also take in the wider Wallingford area. Our theme is 'grow your own', and we want to encourage people to grow food who may not have thought about it before or who may not have access to land.

We are looking at ideas such as school or nursery gardens, community allotments – or even people lending out their own garden space! We are already working on a schools garden project with Fir Tree School.

The first phase of the scheme, which goes up to March, is to do a land use survey of the area and find out what resources are available. These findings will then decide our choice of projects to take forward. We hope to put together a team of local people to join us and have been talking to a range of interested parties from parish councillors to allotment holders.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Dorothy Cussens (see 'who's who' on page 5).

## A green Christmas

You may have seen some 'Tips for a green Christmas' flyers at recent Sustainable Wallingford events, giving ideas of how to make your celebrations more sustainable.

Some of the ideas were:

**Local sourcing** – our 'Buy Local' directory lists 27 local suppliers. There is also a farmers' market just before Christmas, on Tuesday 20th December.

**Recycling** – use last year's wrapping paper or buy recycled paper from Just Trading.

**Real trees** – source a tree locally from the Northmoor Trust. Join a walking 'train' to select your own growing tree (see Diary on page 5).

You can download the flyers from our website [www.sustainablewallingford.org](http://www.sustainablewallingford.org)

## Christmas with the Schools Group

The Schools Group is running stalls at local schools' Christmas fairs throughout December:

Thurs 1st Dec: RAF Benson, 6– 8.30pm  
Fri 2nd Dec: St John's, 1.30– 3.30pm  
Fri 2nd Dec: Brightwell, 6– 9pm  
Sat 10th Dec: Crowmarsh, 2– 4.30pm

They will be doing block printing of cards and gift tags, using supplies of scrap card collected last year, and children can design and make their own printing blocks from pizza packaging.

## Open Meeting

We had a great turnout for our annual Open Meeting on 24th November at the Friends' Meeting House. Along with an update of Sustainable Wallingford activities, we heard about other good work happening locally.

**Wallingford Environmental Group** spoke about their work on biodiversity. WEG was set up in 1997 to promote awareness of wildlife and conservation issues in Wallingford, and their activities include wildlife surveys, walks leaflets and volunteering as weekend wardens at Castle Meadows. They are currently re-surveying the area and would like to hear of any unusual sightings in your gardens. You can contact WEG via Barry and Jenny Collett on 01491 837946.

Countryside Sites Warden Olivia Breffit works for the Northmoor Trust managing sites owned by South Oxfordshire District Council. One of these is **Castle Meadows** and Olivia gave an insight into the work currently taking place.

The site has a varied history: an important royal and military site for 600 years, landscaped in the 19th century and farmed in the 20th. SODC acquired the site in 1999 and are managing it for the public and wildlife. Along with their responsibility for preserving the Scheduled Ancient Monument, this is, says Olivia, something of a balancing act. For example, local people enjoy the Victorian landscaping so this is being preserved even when it means planting non-native trees – it is, after all, part of the history of the site.

The talk detailed the measures being taken to restore the land from fertilised agricultural land to a species-rich traditional hay meadow. This ranges from using cattle to graze the site to re-establishing plants by harvesting seeds from established meadows elsewhere - mimicking what used to happen when seeds were spread through being washed down the river.

Members of the public are welcome in Castle Meadows, and a leaflet is available detailing a self-guided tour of the site.

## SwapShop

The SwapShop and Collection Day goes from strength to strength, with over 200 people turning up to the most recent event on 12th November.

Plenty of people had been saving up their hard-to-recycle items for the Collection Day, and by the end of the morning we had collected:

- 4 bin bags of Tetra Paks
- 3.5 bin bags of aluminium foil
- 26 kilos of batteries
- Nearly 9 kilos of light bulbs
- Nearly 9 kilos of ink cartridges
- 30 computer monitors, screens and printers
- 8 tins of paint and 3 tools

The SwapShop part of proceedings saw over 330 kilos weighed out and saved from landfill. Among the amazing array of items brought in for swapping were two bicycles, several chairs and a sun lounger.

People with items too large to bring pinned up pictures of them instead. Among the items being offered in this way were a hand-made record player cabinet and a 1950s speaker cupboard made by the Radio Gramophone Company. Someone else brought along a photo of a sofa, complete with a baby sitting on one of the cushions. As far as we know, the baby wasn't part of the package, but on the other hand, the publicity does say that you can bring just about anything to a Swap Shop...

- The next SwapShop is on 4th March 2006. This will be part of a county-wide series of simultaneous SwapShops organised by the Community Action Group network (the Sustainable Wallingford Waste Group are members of this network).

### Swap Shop Continued ...

Paul and Julie Jones came to the Swap Shop hoping to find a sofa bed. If you have a double sofa bed in good condition that you want to pass on, please contact them on 01865 343689.

### BedZed visit

On 12th October Kevin Harrison and Mark Palmer from the Waste Group visited BedZed – which stands for Beddington Zero Energy Development – a sustainable housing development at Beddington in South London. The visit was arranged and sponsored by the Oxfordshire Community Action Group project; thank you to Caroline Lowery of the CAG project for arranging it.

BedZed was brought into being by an independent environmental charity called BioRegional, a firm of architects and the Peabody Trust. It contains 82 houses, flats and maisonettes, designed to minimise use of energy and other resources.

The south-facing walls consist largely of conservatories to maximise natural light and heat, and the other walls and the roofs are very well insulated. Between them these features reduce heating requirements to about 10% of those of a typical house of the same size (for total energy requirements the figure is 40%). Large well-insulated windows ensure artificial lighting requirements are minimised. Fossil fuel use is avoided entirely by the use of a woodchip-fuelled plant to supply electricity and hot water to the whole development.

Roofs are planted with *Sedum* (a well-known low-growing fleshy-leaved plant) and rainwater runoff is collected and used to flush toilets thus reducing drainage and water requirements. Each property has a natural non-powered ventilation system in which incoming air is heated by the outgoing (stale) air. Most properties have roof gardens to reduce land usage.

Building materials were chosen to minimise environmental impact and as far as possible were recycled and locally-sourced. The building cost was 30-40% more than that for a normal development of the same size, but the inclusion of office space in the north sides of the terraces made it possible to sell properties for the market rate for the area.

It is expected that if 5000 such dwellings could be built each year the economies of scale would make the cost comparable to that of normal developments. Properties that have changed hands since the completion of the development have sold for more than the average prices for the area.

The development is also designed to encourage environmentally-friendly travel; for example, car parking spaces are located at the edges so people have to walk a little way to their cars and are less likely to use them for short journeys. A car club reduces the need for car ownership and electric cars can be charged from photovoltaic panels.

It was very informative to see what can be done to make housing more environmentally friendly and sustainable (many of the 'green features' can be applied in isolation in developments where doing everything is not considered feasible).

Opinions varied on the aesthetic qualities of the architecture, but we had a chance to meet one of the architects who said that a zero-energy development could be made to look much less remarkable (although as an architect he clearly wanted his buildings to be noticed!). Given the plans for many new houses in Oxfordshire and elsewhere, it is to be hoped that many of the features of BedZed can be applied more widely.

Further information about BedZed can be found at <http://www.bioregional.com>.

*Kevin Harrison*

## Bunkfest

Sustainable Wallingford was at Bunkfest this year with a stall promoting water saving. We also saved lots of plastic – organising a collection of plastic glasses from the beer tent for recycling. Some huge posters and an ingenious glass collector (some large nails and a block of wood!) encouraged drinkers to stack their glasses and these were then collected by our team of volunteers. Over the weekend we saved 5,000 glasses from going into landfill - that's half of what was used in the entire festival. Thanks to everyone who joined in.

## Local hamper

South Oxfordshire District Council ran a prize draw this autumn to publicise their new home compost scheme, with the prize of a hamper of local produce. They asked the Local Sourcing Group – as experts in this area – to put together the hamper. While having our photos taken at the prize-giving, we were able to have a look at the new composting facility at Preston Crowmarsh, and were offered the chance to have a guided tour. We may take this up so if anyone is interested in joining us please let us know.

## Compost swap

The Waste Group has been considering the issue of compostable kitchen waste (such as fruit and vegetable peelings); unlike garden waste, this cannot be collected by the Council's contractors for recycling, but not everyone has enough of a garden to use the compost that would be produced if they composted it all. One solution would be to put people with compostable material that they do not want to waste in touch with people who would like to use it themselves.

As an experiment, we would like to start with Sustainable Wallingford members (including newsletter readers). Could any who are interested please contact Mark Palmer (01491 839230;

m.palmer@cabi.org), indicating where they live (or have an allotment) and whether they would like to provide or receive compostable material (not meat or cooked food).

## Local news

### Garden waste

South Oxfordshire District Council's new Garden Waste Service for Composting pilot scheme, which started in July, has just got better. The new 'eco-sacks' for green waste are now half price. Call Public Amenities for more information 01491 823416 or look at the website [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk).

### Fair Trade Shop

A new Fair Trade shop has just opened in Wallingford. Just Trading of Wallingford is on High Street - opposite Waitrose! Just Trading is going to be open till 8pm on Thursdays in December, with tastings of fair-trade cake and coffee on 1st December (the night that would have been the Victorian evening). Sustainable Wallingford member John Griffin is one of the team behind the new shop and says: 'We'd like to invite newsletter readers to call in on the 1st or any time for fairly traded products (food, cards, crafts, clothes, gifts), organic wholefoods, environmentally-friendly household products and recycled products (not just paper).' Volunteer help is also welcome.

- Other Fair Trade outlets in Wallingford include Step Off the World (fair trade tea and hot chocolate) and Wallingford Methodist Church. However, the Lamb Arcade coffee shop, now under new management, has stopped using Fair Trade supplies.

### Biodiesel

Benson-based Oakwood Builders & Joinery Ltd have started production of biodiesel from old cooking oil, firstly to supply their fleet of vans and secondly to

sell excesses. Managing Director Tim Fenn says: 'We hope to produce 70,000 litres per year. Currently we used approximately 25,000 litres of diesel per year and this production unit will dramatically cut our company's CO2 emissions in the future and maybe save us a little in our fuel costs. We will start to sell excesses to some of our sub-contractors and later to interested local people.'

### Neptune Wood

Volunteers have been busy over the last few weeks planting Neptune Wood as part of the commemorations for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. By Christmas over 8,000 oak trees will have been planted, mainly by local school children and members of the public.

The Northmoor Trust is running a tree dedication scheme to commemorate the occasion. For £10 you receive a personalised certificate with your own Trafalgar dedication (to receive the dedication by Christmas you will need to send it by 10th December). To receive a form call the Northmoor Trust on 01865 407792 or e-mail [ben.earl@northmoortrust.co.uk](mailto:ben.earl@northmoortrust.co.uk).

### Help wanted

#### Your chance to get involved

#### Storage space in central Wallingford

Can you help? Sustainable Wallingford needs somewhere in central Wallingford to store its display stands, banners and the other materials we use for our events. If you have a garage or a shed you could make available, please phone John Griffin on 01491 838523 or send an email to [johngriff9@fish.co.uk](mailto:johngriff9@fish.co.uk)

### Who's who

Sustainable Wallingford is a group of volunteers who share a passion for making a difference locally. Membership of Sustainable Wallingford is free. You can commit as much or as little time as you are able to. You can help us to

promote sustainability in Wallingford by receiving our newsletter, helping us organise events or working with a specific action group on initiatives that motivate you.

#### Contacts:

**Waste:** Mark Palmer 01491 839 230

**Local Sourcing:** Dorothy Cussens  
01865 891 197

**Schools:** Louise Robinson 01491 835 420

**Transport:** John Griffin 01491 838523

**Communications group/Media**

**contact:** Rachel Viney, 07980 803969

### Dates for your diary

#### DECEMBER 2005

Saturday/Sunday 10th-11th: Northmoor Trust Christmas tree train at Paradise Wood (10am to 4pm).

Tuesday 20th: Wallingford Farmers' Market.

#### JANUARY 2006

Monday 16th: Sustainable Wallingford Network meeting, 31 Station Road.

#### MARCH 2006

Saturday 4th: SwapShop and Collection Day (Regal Centre, 10am-12).

### From the editor

We aim to produce this newsletter three times a year to keep members and supporters in touch with what's going on. Don't forget that in between newsletters you can keep up to date via our website at [www.sustainablewallingford.org](http://www.sustainablewallingford.org). We will post details of meetings and other events so please do check for updates.

If you have any items for inclusion in the next newsletter, please contact Penny Kiley.

