

April 2004

## getting together

In **May, on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>**, we visit Halstock in West Dorset to see two members of the 'Direct from Dorset' scheme which promotes local produce. It's a morning visit, starting at 11, with BBQ lunch to follow. Families are very welcome.

Our hosts Catherine and Rick are transforming a previous battery egg farm into an eco-centered small-holding, below Birt Hill, near Yeovil. Within the grounds is a strip of ancient woodland alive with bluebells at this time of year. The woods are being coppiced again providing charcoal, and wood for workshop projects in the old chicken sheds.

Catherine and Rick grow organic vegetables and herbs which they sell locally, and keep free-range chickens and pigs. The visit will comprise a guided tour of their project followed by a BBQ lunch made from local and on-site produce. The cost is £6 members, £7 non-members (take off £5 if you don't want the BBQ, but we recommend it!). Vegetarians and vegans will be catered for (but please remember to say when you book).

We very much look forward to seeing you. If you're interested, please contact **Ben Bailey** on (01202) 301604 or email [benbailey@talk21.com](mailto:benbailey@talk21.com). We realise the site is bit remote, and will do our best to help you car-share if you can.

Ben would like **bookings before 26<sup>th</sup> April** please as numbers are limited and we need to confirm with Catherine and Rick in advance.

In **June, on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup>** we're visiting North Dorset, with a trip to the Springhead Trust and the nearby Dorset Centre for Rural Skills.

Springhead is an educational charity promoting the environment, arts, music and personal development, located on a stunning site just below Fontmell Down Nature Reserve. It has a fascinating history, from its original founding by Rolf Gardiner, one of the early leaders of the organic movement. Springhead is returning to its sustainable roots, with a new reedbed sewage system, and an interest in harnessing its lake and stream for low-flow hydro power.

The Dorset Centre for Rural Skills is fast becoming Dorset's centre of excellence for sustainable building skills. The site itself is a model example, with a newly finished straw bale reception building, and lime-

rendered straw bale walls in the barn. As the barn contains the teaching rooms as well as workshops for the resident blacksmith and potter, the sound-absorbing qualities of straw are highly prized!

Combining the two sites will mean a day visit (it's OK to come for just part of it), from around 11.30 until around 3.30, with a BYO picnic lunch by the Springhead lake and ending with a cup of tea at Springhead. There'll be plenty of time afterwards for a wander over Fontmell Down for those who'd like to extend the day. Families are very welcome, as usual.

There will be a small charge, and again, we need to know numbers; please contact **Simon Jacobson** on 01258 458803 or email [simonj@onetel.net.uk](mailto:simonj@onetel.net.uk) with inquiries and bookings. Please car-share if you can (mention to Simon).

We are due for a **business meeting** in June, not least to invite feedback about our new pattern of activities (visits plus working groups in place of bi-monthly evening meetings). We plan to hold this at the Dorset Centre for Rural Skills, from 9.45 on Saturday 5 June, before we start the visit. You're welcome to come just for the meeting, or just for the visits, or for both.

Thanks to everyone who made suggestions for **future events**. Three ideas have come so far. First, a day-trip by train to the Eden Project – Susan Greene has very kindly researched the rail timetable and it is possible – leaving Axminster at 07.10 and getting back around 21.00, fare £34-42, depending on numbers; ring **Susan** on 01935 813 467 if you're interested. The second idea involves visiting a City Farm and sustainable building project in Bristol. The third is a speaker meeting with an expert on climate change (a personal contact) from the Met Office. Please let **Maria Grimes** have your thoughts about these ideas, or any further recommendations, tel. 01258 880682 or email [admin@dorsetagenda21.org.uk](mailto:admin@dorsetagenda21.org.uk). We can discuss them further at the business meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> June (or celebrate if they're already under way...).

**Our last two events** went well. Ten of us enjoyed a vegetarian feast at Wessex Tales in Boscombe on a snowy February evening; consensus was 'why aren't there more vege restaurants like this in Dorset?'. The March trip to Woodlands Dairy was oversubscribed. Luckily the tolerant owners managed to squeeze in the extra. More details of that visit will appear in the next issue of 'Footprint'. Thanks to Maria G and Pamela for setting these up.

## sustainability news

### Footprinting

'Footprinting' is a handy way of summarising the impact on the planet of someone's lifestyle. We used it as the theme of our display at the Dorchester Show last year. Briefly, the average UK lifestyle generates a 'footprint' of around 6 hectares; that means each person needs 6 hectares of productive land to supply all their needs, for food, energy, building materials, etc. Unfortunately if the productive land on the planet was shared equally among all 4 billion people, there would only be about 2 hectares each. So we in the UK are using three times our share – the opposite of a sustainable way of life.

By answering some questions about how you live, it's possible to see how your own lifestyle measures up. Dorset County Council will be featuring a footprinting questionnaire in the next issue of 'Your Dorset' – a good way to see how green Dorset really is. Do look out for it and see what you think.

### GM

As predicted, in early March the government announced its conclusions on the GM crops which have been trialled since 1999. In brief, it has decided to oppose the cultivation of the GM beet and oilseed rape, but to support the GM maize, subject to conditions. Subsequently Bayer, the company which produces that particular maize, announced it will not market it in the UK, as the conditions are too onerous.

This does not mean the end of GM crops in the UK; many more are being trialled under research consents. But it does mean a pause for rethinking, during which time the government will bring forward legislation on liability and on protection for non-GM crops.

Meanwhile North Dorset District Council has resolved to ask the government for legal protection for North Dorset as a GM-free area, the first council in Dorset to do so.

### Planning, walking and sustainability

Susan Greene has highlighted a problem about how planners choose between actively requiring footpaths in new developments, to encourage walking, or rejecting them, so as not to create risky routes where people might be attacked. She writes: "Sherborne Town Council's request for a footpath through developments, to connect existing roads, has been refused because of the police stress on crime and security. That seems to us to ignore our need for safer routes for walking, away from busy highways (David Evans' 'permeability') and the increased urban walking the government wants to promote. If any other readers are concerned about this growing dichotomy between security and permeability, please let me know." You can phone her on 01935 813 467.

## organisation news

### We're a charity! (at last)

After what seems like a lifetime of correspondence and fine legal points, we are delighted that we are now registered as a charity, no. 1102528 (can there really be so many?). Special thanks to Simon Jacobson who has doggedly pursued our application through all its twists and turns. Our charitable 'objects' are "(1) *The protection and preservation of the environment for the public benefit through the promotion of sustainable development and the prudent use of natural resources; and (2) To advance the education of the public in subjects related to sustainable development and the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of the environment, and to promote study and research in such subjects provided that the results of such study are disseminated to the public at large.* Quite a mouthful, but it should provide us with plenty of scope.

### Arrivals and departures

After our jubilation about recruiting our first member of staff, we're sorry to report that Federica has had to leave after only a month as our Development Worker. She has however left a good basis for the work of her successor, and by the time you read this we hope to have appointed him or her (interviews on 8<sup>th</sup> April).

Meanwhile we've gained two new volunteers working on particular projects, Ama Chaney on local food, and Georgina Woolley who prepared our display for the Green Baby Day in Blandford, and is now drafting our web page on shopping, and assessing some possible sources of funds. They are both very welcome and much appreciated.

### Green Baby Day

We had a great day at Blandford Corn Exchange on March 13<sup>th</sup> handing out samples of environmentally friendly baby goods. The biodegradable disposable nappies went particularly well! Georgina prepared some excellent leaflets with details of where to get all manner of 'Green Baby' goods – let us know if you'd like some.

### Churches' Sustainability leaflet

Churches Together in Dorset have published their splendid 'Sustainable Dorset' leaflet – churchgoers may like to make sure your church has got its supply. If not, more can be obtained from Val Potter, email [ctdorset@clara.net](mailto:ctdorset@clara.net) or tel: 01305 264416.

### Fair Trade schools project

We've been approached to work with DEED (Development Education in Dorset) on a project promoting fair trade in 12 Dorset schools this year – more news in the next bulletin.

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**\*\*PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW DETAILS\*\***

Dorset Agenda 21

P O Box 5789, Dorchester DT2 8ZR.

01305 213721

[office@dorsetagenda21.org.uk](mailto:office@dorsetagenda21.org.uk)