



NEWS FROM DORSET AGENDA 21

June 2006

Getting together

Our next few events are:

Saturday 8 July – 7.30 p.m. FRAMPTON

Barn dance at the Village Hall

Fri – Sun 1-3 September CAT, WEST WALES

Centre for Alternative Technology Members' Annual Conference (theme this year, People and Energy)

Sun 1 October 2 p.m. GILLINGHAM

The Threshold Centre co-housing project

Sat 14 October p.m. DORCHESTER

AGM

Weekend 24-26 November MAGDALEN CENTRE,

NR. CHARD

An event for members of our Action Groups, jointly with our partner projects in Somerset and Devon.

Please pop the dates in your diaries now, and don't forget that most of them need booking with the office : john@dorsetagenda21.org.uk or 01305 213721, or sometimes with another contact (details below).

Barn Dance at Frampton on Saturday 8th July

This is our first fund-raising event and we hope to see you all there ! We will have an excellent local band, Raggie Annie, featuring our member Mike Selley whose day job is as a HECA (energy efficiency) officer. Tickets cost £5 in advance (half price for children), or £6 on the door. **Please book with Sylvia Goff** at Fiferidge, West Street, Fontmell Magna, SHAFTESBURY, SP7 0PF Tel. 01747 811 858 jandsgoff@madasafish.com, cheques payable to Dorset Agenda 21.

CAT at Machynlleth on Fri-Sun 1-3 September

please book with DA21 office by 27 June, £112.50, special discounted rate for DA21 members (excluding travel)

The CAT members' annual conference features top-line speakers, workshops, tours of the site, a chance to hear what other members around the country are doing, and a first rate ceilidh. It's also a chance to spend two nights staying in the idyllic surroundings of the Centre for Alternative Technology and to feast on their delicious organic food. Plus three days hanging out with your favourite people from DA21 – irresistible! Just 4 of us went last year and found it hugely eye-opening.

This year's theme is People and Energy "looking at people centred solutions to energy crises... from food to housing to transport ...". CAT are holding some places open for us until **27 June** so **please book with the office before that.**

Gillingham on Sunday 1st October *please book with DA21 office, £2 members, £3 non-members*

The Threshold Centre is a new, non-profit project to create affordable housing and other facilities from old farm buildings on the edge of Gillingham. The centre will include a converted timber barn, and a demonstration co-housing area. Courses are run, related to the aims of the

Centre, and the buildings will be exemplars of sustainable design, highly insulated, and served by a biomass and solar heating system. More information can be found at www.thresholdcentre.org.uk and see the report on page 3.

We will meet up for a pub lunch (optional) before touring the centre from 2 p.m.

AGM on Saturday 14th October, pm in Dorchester

Details will be circulated nearer the time.

Magdalen Centre on weekend of 24-26 November

This will be a weekend for active members of DA21 including our Action Groups, linking up with other people who are trying to live sustainably in Dorset, Somerset or Devon. It is a joint event with our partners in the Community Choices for Sustainable Living project in the neighbouring counties. We will also see at first hand an exemplary education centre with solar PV panels, a straw bale roundhouse, composting loos and a riverside trail. If you are interested please contact the office on 01305 213 721 or office@dorsetagenda21.org.uk .

DA21 out and about

We are taking our display and literature to a number of summer festivals and shows again this year, and would welcome help staffing our stall. It's good fun and we always meet a lot of interesting people. This year John has improved and extended our displays with a banner, wind turbine, solar PV and solar thermal panels. If you want to know more, or to offer help, please contact John at the office or Rosemary Agg, tel 01300 348 835 or email rea_poppy.bank@yahoo.com. We'll be at

Sat 8 July Gillingham Festival 10 am – 4 pm.

Sat & Sun 15 July & 16 July Tolpuddle Martyrs Rally. Time 10 am – 4 pm .

Sat 5 August: Crossways village fete, 12 noon – 5 pm.

Wed 16 August: Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show, 9 am – 5 pm.

Thurs 24 August: Melplash (Bridport) show, 8 am – 4 pm.

Sat 26 Aug: Stock Gaylard Oak Fair, near Sturminster Newton, 8 am – 4 pm.

Sat & Sun 16 and 17 Sept: Stapehill Abbey Food Festival, near Wimborne.

Community Choices project

Our project on Community Choices for Sustainable Living (CCSL) is now in full swing, and most of the events listed here are being run by our CCSL Project Officer, John Tomblin.

Our most recent site visit was to Bridport, to see the Centre for Local Food and Bridport Primary School's thriving Green Team. Teacher Yvonne Dobson has been running the Green Team for several years, and this has

helped the school to win the prestigious Eco-Schools Silver Award (Dorset's only holder of this award, we believe). Part of the school grounds has been converted for growing food for their own use, with polytunnel, veg beds, wildlife pond and an orchard. They now have a wind turbine and solar panel, which powers a water pump to irrigate the veg patch.



Members of Bridport Primary School Green Team proudly show their veg crop to Dave Rickard, Brenda Tomblin and Sheila Dawson from DA21.

The CCSL project has four **action groups** meeting to share ideas about sustainable living initiatives, both individually and for local communities. Ideas that are developing include a local day on energy and waste in Weymouth. The groups welcome new members. If you are interested, please contact John (01305 213721 or john@dorsetagenda21.org.uk).

Action Group Dates

Wareham, Duke of Wellington pub, East Street	Wed 28 June	7.30 p.m.
Dorchester, DA21 office	Wed 19 July	5.00 p.m.
Sherborne, 117 Lenthay Road	Thurs 28 Sept.	7.00 p.m.
Weymouth, 1 Stanier Road	Thurs 22 June	7.00 p.m.

In order to make a measurable difference to sustainability in Dorset, CCSL hopes to support some **consumer clubs** which can make it easier for people to get hold of products such as solar panels, wind turbines, and DIY items like low-VOC paints, etc. Our first two initiatives are ...

... Renewable Energy Group

Following our solar seminar in March, a group met in May to hear more about solar clubs and renewable energy generally. The next meeting of the Renewable Energy Dorset group will be on Thursday 29 June in Dorchester at 7 pm, in committee room 1, County Hall. The main focus will be on wind turbines, domestic scale and upwards. Anyone who is interested is welcome. The following meeting will be on 20 July. More information from John (john@dorsetagenda21.org.uk or 01305 213721).

... Car Club

The potential is also being explored for a Car Club, based on information from Alex Laurie of Upstart Co-operative, who is helping to establish a Yeovil Car Club.

A car club provides its members with flexible access to the 'hire' of a vehicle. Vehicles are parked in reserved parking spaces, close to homes or workplaces. Charges consist typically of an annual membership fee, hourly hire rate,

and fuel costs. Car clubs can provide a cost-effective alternative to running a second / third car, or for persons who are unable or unwilling to own a car of their own. Users also often find it easier to make more realistic comparisons between modes of transport they use for their journeys.

The average reduction of mileage for a car club member is 33% - this takes into account those who join the club who did not previously own a car and those who use the car club to have access to a second car.

Car clubs can help reduce traffic volumes, reduce the amount of land set aside for car-parking, and reduce levels of congestion. It is estimated that every club car has the potential to replace 5 privately-owned cars.

We are keen to hear from people who might be interested in supporting a car club, or who would use one if it was introduced into your area. Or would you be interested in joining a steering group to explore setting up a car club in your area? If you answer yes or maybe to any of these questions, please contact Paul McIntosh at paul@dorsetagenda21.org.uk or 078 665 87 199.

Sustainability news

Climate Chaos and what to do

David Attenborough and the BBC's Climate Chaos season must have grabbed the attention of millions of people who had only a hazy idea before. From the phone calls to the office, there seem to be more people who want to do what they can, and their most frequent question is 'how?' Our main way of helping is through the CCSL project (above), but we have also compiled a list of organisations working for sustainability in Dorset – it can be viewed on our website, under 'Directory of Organisations'. The idea is to make it easy for anyone who has a question or wants to get involved in a particular aspect of sustainability in Dorset to find an organisation that can help them.

Climate Camp

A large-scale climate camp is to be held near Leeds from 26 August to 4 September. Its organisers hope that thousands of people will attend (travelling by bike, on foot, or in chip-fat-fuelled cars, obviously!). More information is on the web at www.climatecamp.org.uk, which says "There is a growing grassroots movement that fundamentally challenges the fossil fuel economy. The camp will be a place for this movement to get together." Sounds like one for the activists then...

Energy in Dorset

Over the last two years, groups in Dorset, ourselves included, have worked hard to agree a Renewable Energy Strategy for the county. There is now a Renewable Energy Officer at County Hall, Kevin Lindegaard, and several initiatives to increase Dorset's output of renewable energy. One of these, part-funded by the Government Office of the SW, is to get renewables installed in over 50 community buildings over the next 2 years. Our reps on the various energy working groups are

Jane Altounyan, Jon Rae and John Tomblin. For more information, please ring John T on 01305 213721.

Meanwhile on energy saving, Dorset Energy Advice Centre (DEAC) is promoting 'The Little Pledge', a regional initiative. Emily Bullock, who is running the campaign at DEAC, says: "You too can help to stop climate change! Over 500 householders in Dorset have pledged to save a little energy at home in order to make a big difference in reducing CO₂ emissions, the major cause of climate change. They agreed to do things like turn the TV off stand-by, not overfill the kettle, and turn the thermostat down by 1°C. The resulting actions will save nearly 200 tonnes of carbon dioxide, that's the total emissions for over 35 houses. The average financial saving per household will be £58 each year and a saving to the county of £27,000." If you would like to help stop climate change contact the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512012 or pledge online at www.thelittlepledge.co.uk. To use DEAC's advice service, ring the same number or email info@padeac.org.uk.

Numbers game

Don't you just hate it when you hear conflicting figures about CO₂ and climate change – almost makes you sympathise with George Bush (only joking). I find it hard to believe the figures in, for example, Mayer Hillman's book 'How we can save the planet', where he says that travelling by rail or bus, outside London, produces more CO₂ than driving a diesel car. Even on the Attenborough programmes I heard two conflicting figures (45 tonnes and 25 tonnes) for the CO₂ output of a household. If there is anyone who can help get to the bottom of these figures, and would perhaps like to write a briefing note or an article for the newsletter, please contact Sally (01305 213721 or sally@dorsetagenda21.org.uk).

Getting Dorset's sustainability sector together

Following on from our initiative to create a directory of sustainability organisations in Dorset, DA21 has been commissioned by the Dorset Change Up Consortium (which exists to help the voluntary sector) to investigate ways of helping the voluntary and community-based sustainability organisations to work more closely together, and giving them a stronger voice. Paul McIntosh is preparing some recommendations on this, for consideration by Change Up at the end of June. For more information contact Paul at paul@dorsetagenda21.org.uk or 078 665 87 199.

Dorset Eco-Village

Plans are progressing to create a £30 million ecovillage in North Dorset as a major demonstration and teaching centre for all aspects of sustainable living. A new social enterprise, the Rural Renewal Company, is leading the project, which will be funded mainly by ethical investors and banks, plus some grant input. The plans include 110 eco-housing units, a green enterprise park, an eco-hotel, community market garden and sustainable transport.

The project team hopes to agree a site purchase option soon, and undertake public consultations leading to a planning application in 2008/9. The prime mover in the

project is Alan Heeks, who has already created three sustainable education centres in the South West.

The Rural Renewal Company is expanding its professional team, and is seeking a Project Director, communications manager and lead architect. The core group of prospective residents for the ecovillage is open to new members who can offer time and relevant skills. For more information, see www.ruralrenewal.co.uk or contact Alan Heeks, email data@workingvision.com, tel. 01747 835835.

Dorset Eco-Homes Development seeks Project Manager

The Threshold Centre, near Gillingham, which DA21 will visit in October (see p. 1), is a sister project to the Eco-village described above. It plans to convert two large barns to provide dwellings to Eco-homes Excellent rating, guest rooms and teaching space. The scheme includes a biomass heating system. A Project Manager is wanted to manage the building programme. For more details contact Jane Stott, 01747 821906 or janestott@dial.pipex.com, or see www.thresholdcentre.org.uk.

Freecycle

Freecycle™ is an email list where people give away things that they no longer need, for free. There are 3 thriving Freecycle groups in Dorset, in Poole, Shaftesbury and Weymouth / Portland / Dorchester. Freecycle groups are open to all who want to "recycle" that special something rather than throw it away. Whether it's a chair, a fax machine, piano or an old door, feel free to post it. Or maybe you're looking to acquire something yourself. Nonprofit groups are also welcome to participate too! One main rule: everything posted must be **free**.

They are part of The Freecycle Network, a nonprofit organization and a worldwide movement of people interested in keeping good stuff out of landfills. Go to <http://www.freecycle.org> for further information about movement. You can join any of the Dorset groups from the UK page there.

Low Carbon Buildings

Low carbon buildings are climbing up the agenda in Dorset (and not before time). Around 70 construction professionals – builders, developers, property managers, architects, surveyors – were at a 'Constructing Excellence' event in Dorchester in May to hear Rob Buckley of DCRS and Ian Moore of Taunton's Genesis Centre speak about sustainable design – and not a single jibe about straw houses and little pigs...

The Genesis Centre (www.genesisproject.com) is running an event on 6 July on the Design and Construction of Low Carbon Buildings, cost £99 +VAT. It will cover Part L of the Building Regulations (2006) calculating carbon, energy in construction and use of buildings, examples of reduced carbon developments, and why carbon footprinting – the code for sustainable homes Funding may be available from your local Business Link. (0845 744 8844). Book on 01823 252 934 or lmw@somerset.ac.uk.

In September Weymouth College is also offering a foundation degree in construction which aims "to equip

students with both the practical and theoretical skills underpinning sustainable construction". For information on how to apply, ring Roz Osborne on 01305 764 733, or roz_osborne@weymouth.ac.uk .

In-house news

DA21 chosen for national research project

Many small voluntary organisations tend to live hand to mouth, and few know that pitfall better than DA21. There is always more to do than seems possible with limited time and energy, and this can lead to mistakes and doing things in a rush. Some of you will know that we have sometimes had to apologise for glitches over mailing lists and the like. But we are conscious of how important it is to plan ahead and think strategically (it would be ironic if a sustainability organisation did not value this!)

Help is at hand! DA21 has been selected from over 200 applicants nationwide to take part in a research project on how to improve planning in small organisations. John Tomblin, Paul McIntosh and Sally Cooke attended the first project meeting in Birmingham on 12 June and met our consultant, Mark Bitel of Partners in Evaluation. Mark will be providing several days of free consultancy between June and October to help us develop our strategy. Other organisations involved in the research project are from Ormskirk, London, Worcestershire and Bradford.



Participants in the research project, gathered at Birmingham (DA21's John and Paul, 2nd and 4th from left)

Strategies are all very well but they mean nothing unless they are acted upon, and action is heavily (although not totally) dependent on money. The key role of a new strategy for DA21 will be to help us focus our activities and target our search for funds, so that there is a clear match between what our trustees, members and partners want us to do, and what we are funded to do.

The office saga

It doesn't need a new strategy to tell us that our activity is being seriously hampered by trying to work from a tiny space. Those volunteers who have braved the obstacle course that is our current office will know that it is not easy to offer help here. We are still trying to expand our work space, and will keep you posted on progress.

Trustees and how we are working

The Board of Trustees elected in February has met three times and has also set up sub-groups looking at Resources,

Policy and Communications. To offer skills in any of these areas, please contact Sally.

The trustees are Jane Altounyan, Dave Bloomfield, Sally Cooke, Henry Lovegrove (Company Secretary), John Gaylard, Federica Macchi, Paul McIntosh, Pamela Sylvester, and Catherine Simmonds. Jon Rae has stepped down as a trustee due to the pressure of other commitments, and we thank him for all his help and wish him well.

John Tomblin is still our only member of staff, and so we continue to rely very much on our volunteers to keep things running. At the moment Sally Cooke is still helping out in the office and keeping an overall managing eye on things, but she is reducing her time commitment from July. The trustees are currently working up some more funding bids to help keep DA21 running effectively.

Help needed

Until we get a larger office, with some desk space where more volunteers can (hopefully) come and help out on a regular basis, we are keen to get help in the short term from a few people who can do computer-based things at home. (If you'd like to make it long-term, so much the better! – but at the moment we'd like to ask for about 6 months commitment.) If you are interested in any of the roles mentioned below, please contact Sally at 01305 213721 or sally@dorsetagenda21.org.uk .

Membership Secretary

We would love to find someone who can work with a MS Access database, and who would be willing to keep our membership and mailing lists up to date. It would take about an hour every 2 weeks or so.

Image skills

Is there anyone who can sort our library of pictures into some order and perhaps enhance some of them? Do you have a scanner, live near Dorchester, and are willing to scan pictures for us from time to time? Do you like doing picture research on the web? - we can always use good images connected with sustainability. If you can help in any of these ways, please get in touch.

Newsletter help

As you can see, our newsletter could be much improved, for example with more pictures, interviews and features about some of the good sustainability work that's happening in Dorset - but we need some help with that. If any of you have experience of editorial work, writing, layout, or photography, we'd love to hear from you.

Trustees for the next year

Our AGM will be in October this year, to try to bring it nearer to our financial year-end, which is March. We would like to recruit some new trustees and we plan to hold an information event again for anyone who is interested – please get in touch for more details.

For further information about Dorset Agenda 21 or this news bulletin please contact Sally Cooke, P O Box 5789, Dorchester DT2 8ZR., sally@dorsetagenda21.org.uk, 01305 213721.