

Real Examples of Networking & Signposting Enquiries and Responses

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ADVICE GIVEN IN RESPONSE TO THESE ENQUIRIES MAY NOW BE OUT OF DATE.

1) **Email Subject:** Community Supported Agriculture or local food growing in Hope Valley.

As part of an informal Hope Valley transition group we are exploring the options for getting local sustainably produced food direct to residents in the Hope Valley. I am currently devising a questionnaire for residents to determine the level of interest, financial, time and skills support which we have. We have read the CSA advise on the Soil Association website. We are seeking farmers or land owners locally who may want their land used in this way, and would like to contact all neighbouring groups who are involved in similar projects. All suggestions about how to proceed gratefully accepted.

Our Response:

██████

many thanks for your enquiry.

Transition Matlock have set up a CSA project involving people buying shares in local lambs. ██████████, a lady involved in the project, is happy for you to contact her to discuss how they've done it and possibly to visit them. Her email address is: ██████████ and she's expecting that you might email her.

You may have seen this as you've already been on the Soil Association website, but if not then it lists other projects in the East Midlands alongside contact details:
www.soilassociation.org/Takeaction/Getinvolvedlocally/Communitysupportedagriculture/LocalCSAs/EastMidlands/tabid/219/Default.aspx. Some of them may be willing to talk to you about their experience.

Finally, Making Local Food Work, a lottery funded project, have just produced this report: www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/about/csa/index.cfm and Transition have published this book: <http://greenbooks.co.uk/store/local-food-p-299.html?osCsid=f2e57cbadad955d88619b016ea537fcb>.

Hope that helps and do let us know how you get on.

Kind Regards
Caroline

2) Email:

Dear Caroline

I co-ordinate Matlock Area Climate Action Forum, whereby we mostly lobby locally regards green energy initiatives and raise awareness about climate change....I also take a coach down to London for the December march and stuff like that, we showed An Age of Stupid and An Inconvenient Truth for example.....a colleague in the group spoke with the local vicar the other day who was very impressed with her recently installed pv. and seemed keen to pursue it as something the church could easily use and subsequently make money from. All churches are naturally perfect for pv with their south facing roofs.....Do you have any examples of churches going for it, or do I need to look further afield for advice on that front? I can feel a campaign coming on!! I will also ask Green Communities (EST) for suggestions as to how to pursue this.

Cheers, [REDACTED]

Our Response:

[REDACTED]
many thanks for your enquiry.

Attached is an example of a church in Shrewsbury which has fitted PVs. The Church is Grade II * listed and in a conservation area, but pv's were granted permission as they are below the parapet and therefore out of sight. The Vicar is the [REDACTED] and he is happy to be contacted on [REDACTED] if you want to find out more about how they went about it. You might want to mention that you got his contact details via the SECHURBA project /Marches Energy Agency (SECHURBA is one of MEA's projects in the West Midlands).

The LCBP funding programme mentioned on the example no longer exists (it closed to electricity generation (e.g.: PV and wind) applications about a year ago and it closed to heat (e.g.: solar thermal/GSHP etc) applications yesterday.

The replacement for the LCBP grants is the feed-in tariffs, which, in the long term, will make you more money than a grant. **Attached** is a factsheet explaining the feed-in tariffs. It includes links to a number of websites.

This website lists accredited installers of renewables: good if you want to make sure you get a reliable company: www.microgenerationcertification.org.

It always makes sense to address energy efficiency within a building before you install renewables: if you can reduce the amount of energy you use you increase the percentage of your usage that you can get from renewables. It would also make sense to try to engage the people using the church building in thinking about environmental issues to help get them on board with the idea of having PVs on the building. Something which might help with both of these areas is the 'Church Check-up' form produced by Eco Congregations which can be downloaded for free: <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/gettingstarted/step1>.

Hope this helps and do let us know you do manage to get PVs on the church.

Kind Regards
Caroline

3) Email Subject: 'Water Turbine in Holymoorside'

Email Content: 'We have interested people. First step is a survey. Can you help with who to contact. Thanks.'

Our Response, sent on 29th April 2010:

many thanks for your email.

These documents explain the process of installing a wind turbine. They both include a section on surveys. The second includes some local case studies:

www.british-hydro.co.uk/download.pdf

http://www.friendsofthepeak.org.uk/download/files/HYDRO/PeakPowerQuickGuide_to_Micro_Hydro.pdf

My colleague (who has more technical knowledge than I do!) sent me the following information:

'The critical thing is establishing whether there is a sufficient resource and for that you need a height drop (head) and flow (volume of water passing through per second). A basic rule of thumb for estimating the power rating of a turbine (accounting for efficiency losses) is $5 \times \text{Head Height (M)} \times \text{Flow (m}^3/\text{second)} = \text{kW}$. You then need to work out how many hours per year it will be operating at this average flow rate and multiply it by this to get kWh per annum - so if the river flow is very variable it may be less useful than one which is constant.'

Other Information:

The following links provide examples of community-owned hydropower systems in the local area:

www.tutburyecopower.co.uk/ The main contacts for this project are Gary Rowe and Steve Rhodes. An email address for the project can be found on the website.

www.torrshydro.org/. They organise regular free tours: details on their website.

Hockerton Housing Project in Nottinghamshire sometimes run this course (the latest one is running today, so no good - but worth checking their website regularly as I suspect they will run it again). It won't help you specifically with surveys, but it will help you think through other issues involved in this kind of scheme such as finance, planning permission and gaining community support:

www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk/modules/News/ViewNewsItem.asp?ID=332.

Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales run the following courses:

http://www2.cat.org.uk/shortcourses/index.php?cPath=1_9_22&osCsid=3699d7064927c7bae160135d7db7ecdc. It's also worth putting 'Hydro' into the search engine of their online shop as they publish and sell a number of books on the subject.

Finally, this page of weblinks may be useful: <http://www.lowimpact.org/linksmicrohydro.html>

Hope this helps and do let us know if you are successful in setting up a project.

Kind Regards
Caroline

4) Email:

Hi there

I'm Chairman of [REDACTED] Parish Council in Derbyshire and we're keen to rebuild our dilapidated public toilet block as a modern, clean and above all environmentally friendly facility. Rainwater harvesting, low flushing and solar panels are obvious things that immediately come to mind. Do you know of any examples of new 'green' toilets that we could look at or anyone else that's taken the lead in this respect? And could you suggest any sources of possible funding, since we're not a very large council and have limited reserves.

Many thanks

Our Response:

[REDACTED]

many thanks for your email.

Who would have thought that rebuilding public toilets could potentially be so exciting!

I hope the info. I've gathered below is useful - please let us know how you get on.

1) Resources:

On the subject of Compost Toilets: the Low Impact Living Initiative publish a very good (free) factsheet and some books you can buy: www.lowimpact.org/topics_compost_toilets.htm. The factsheet includes a list of different manufacturers of compost toilets that might be suitable for your block. The course mentioned would probably only be suitable if you wanted to build you own instead of buying a manufactured compost toilet.

CAT publish these books:

http://store.cat.org.uk/product_info.php?cPath=104_253&products_id=774

http://store.cat.org.uk/product_info.php?products_id=668

I would suggest ringing them before buying them to check they are a suitable read: they might focus solely on domestic systems.

2) Examples to visit:

Hockerton Housing Project in Nottinghamshire offer excellent tours - I've done the introductory one which lasts three hours - and have toilets in their houses which use rainwater harvesting as well as composting toilets in their office blocks (their rainwater harvesting system actually supplies their drinking water too but I'm not sure if the general public would go for rainwater in a water fountain in a public toilet!) If you ask when booking they might be able to focus on the toilets in a tour: 01636 816902.

www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk/SEFS/ID.1005/SEFE/ViewItem.asp.

The **EcoHouse** in Leicester has:

- **A compost toilet** (quite an old model - it proves however, that they look very similar to normal toilets. More modern versions often have a chute for the waste to fall down making it less visible!) in the showhome.
- **A rainwater harvesting system** for its visitor toilets. Involves a tank under the ground which collects rainwater and then it is pumped up to the toilets. This system automatically

switches to using mains water in the event that the tank full of rainwater runs out, which would probably happen during a dry summer like the one we're having at the moment.

- **Dry urinals** in their gents. I used to work at the EcoHouse and I can confirm that if they're properly cleaned according to the manufacturers instructions they don't smell!
- **Various types of low flow taps.**

You can visit during opening hours and take an audio guided tour, but if you want to ask in-depth questions about the toilet I would recommend ringing first and checking that there will be someone available who can answer them. Some of what is on display at the EcoHouse is a little old and there are more modern models available of a lot of what they show, but it's the only place in the area that I can think of that has a working dry urinal. www.gwill.org.uk or 0116 222 0222.

This home in Nottingham has a rainwater harvesting system and hosts occasional open days through the SuperHomes network: www.sustainable-energyacademy.org.uk/superhomes/patrick-road-nottingham and www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/360/where_to_go/ecohome/. There's another in Birmingham: www.sustainable-energyacademy.org.uk/superhomes/tindal-street-balsall-heath-birmingham. I haven't been to either of these properties.

Most of the above places also have solar pv panels and/or solar thermal if you want to look at these as options too.

3) Compost toilets:

- One issue here is that you usually you have to throw sawdust or shredded cardboard into the toilet after you use it to help facilitate the breakdown of the waste – so there might be an education issue with the users of the toilet!
- At the EcoHouse we didn't use the resulting compost on veg. patches – although I think there are different opinions on this. Instead we used it on the flower beds. If your council is also responsible for any parks/flower bed displays etc then you could get a free source of compost for your flower beds!

4) Urinals: If you don't want to have waterless urinals, then as a minimum you should install automatic flush controls – newer version of this sense movement using an infra-red detector and use this as a trigger to flush, thus saving water on the old ones which constantly run.

5) Greywater Systems: toilets using greywater are using water that has gone down the plug hole of a sink, shower or bath and water that has been through the washing machine. So I'm not sure if this would work in a public toilet block: I don't know if the water from people washing their hands would be enough to then flush the toilets. You would need to ask someone with more technical expertise.

6) Rainwater Harvesting: <http://www.ukrha.org>. The members page includes a list of companies.

7) Low flush

As a minimum you should opt for toilets which use a low amount of water to flush (the oldest toilets use 9 or 13 litres to flush, a modern toilet uses 6) and have dual flush controls: one button to flush liquids, another to flush solids, so that less water is expended to flush liquids. These types of toilet are readily available.

8) Paper towels vs hand drying machines:

This answer to this question is undecided as these articles show:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2006/mar/14/ethicalmoney.ethicalliving> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2006/mar/14/ethicalmoney.ethicalliving>. I'll let you make up your own mind!

9) Lighting

A public toilet block is probably perfect for sensor lights which turn themselves on and off as required.

10) Taps: The Green Building Bible (www.greenbuildingpress.co.uk) recommends spray head taps which pass water through a fine mesh nozzle to restrict flow. It would also make sense to have sensor taps to save even more water.

11) Funding:

If you want to look into either solar thermal panels to heat the water coming into the sinks or photovoltaics to provide electricity for the building then bear in mind the money you will save on subsequent energy bills and the income you could generate from Feed in Tariffs (for photovoltaics) and the forthcoming Renewable Heat Incentive (for solar thermal). Factsheets can be found here: <http://www.mea.org.uk/fact-sheets>.

At the moment various companies are offering to install solar pv panels for free in return for them taking the feed-in tariffs (and you get the cheaper electricity bills). See: <http://www.isis-solar.com/> or <http://www.ashadegreener.co.uk/>. However, also see this article: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/aug/09/solar-photovoltaic-panels-homes>. If the council can find the upfront cost of the pv then it may well benefit the council financially in the long term to buy them instead of getting free ones.

You will also save money on water bills if you install a rainwater harvesting system.

It would be worth trying to cost all the savings you will make by choosing different options before you decide what to get. You may find that what you want to buy will pay for itself through savings on bills within an acceptable time period.

If you did decide to apply for funding then a way to sell it to funders is that many local people will be using the facilities and you could include display boards on the walls (and the backs of the toilet doors!) to explain what you have done and how people can do similar things in their own homes. The whole building would be a quirky way of showcasing eco friendly options to local people.

Finally, I've taken some of the info I've given you here from pages 258-267 of the Green Building Bible vol 2 (4th Edn) and pages 185-186 of the Green Building Bible Vol 1 (4th Edn). Both are available here: www.greenbuildingpress.co.uk.

Hope that helps and please let us know how you get on.

Kind Regards
Caroline

5) Email Subject: **Lesson Plans on Peak Oil**

I am a volunteer for Transition [REDACTED] and am trying to scope out an idea for a competition for secondary (possibly junior) school children in [REDACTED] based on a report of actions the student has taken to reduce reliance on oil (e.g. growing own food, cutting energy use, reducing reliance on car, not using as much plastic packaging etc) and how other students can replicate what they did (i.e. a 'how to' guide including what they did, how they did it, how it reduces reliance on oil, how it made them feel, what problems they encountered etc). The 'report' could be an essay, a poster, or any other format which conveys the idea and action clearly. The action has to be replicable by other children. A prize or prizes would be given both to the winning student and their school.

However the people in schools I've spoken to about this say it has to fit in with the curriculum to be attractive to teachers and best to prepare lesson plans that fit in with the National Curriculum to make it as easy as possible for teachers. With 3 or 4 possible age groups, and many relevant parts of the curriculum - science, geography, PHSE etc this is a tall order. Do you know of any off the shelf lesson plans relevant to reducing oil, energy reduction, etc that we could adapt? Or any groups that might be able to advise or help?

I havent yet sent out a message to our mailing group for volunteers as I wanted to make sure the idea was feasible before enlisting any help.

Thanks for any help you can give

best, [REDACTED]

Our Resonse:

We were able to direct this enquirer to a number of online lesson plans about peak oil. We also gave them contact details for a locally-based trainer who can provide this kind of service either directly to the schools, or can train some members of the group so that they can provide sessions themselves. This trainer is familiar with the National Curriculum and will be able to help the group meet the requirements school's have.

6) Email Subject: **Funds for gaining planning permission**

We are a community energy company (IPS) hoping to install a wind turbine for our village. First we have to get planning permission but we have no funds to speak of. Do you know of any grants we could apply for?

Our Response:

Many thanks for your email.

This project looks really exciting! I see from your website that you've been planning it for a while, so some of the sources of advice I've come up with below you might already be aware of or have already made use of - hopefully some of them are new (and useful!) to you.

1) **Energy 4 All** (www.energy4all.co.uk) is an organisation which is owned by seven co-operative organisations which all run community-owned wind turbines. Its 'Energy Steps' website (www.energysteps.coop/) might be of use to you. One of their staff, Jon Halle, would be happy to hear from you as your enquiry is the kind of thing he can help with. His contact details are: [REDACTED] and he's expecting that you might contact him.

Energy 4 All run this site with forums for people involved in projects like yours to share ideas: <http://shareenergy.coop/network/>. The wind section includes a link to this website, with all the documents one project needed to submit a planning application, : <http://glyndebourne.com/content/wind-turbine-planning-application>.

In a minute I'll forward you Energy 4 All's latest e-newsletter which Jon can subscribe you to.

2) **Planning Aid** offers free advice on the planning systems to individuals and community organisations that would not otherwise be able to pay for this advice. Anyone can ring their helpline and receive 15 minutes of free advice. If you meet certain criteria you will get more help. Their criteria for community organisations states that they can help: 'Local charities, social enterprises and voluntary and community groups that have less than six months free reserves (or undesignated funds) or an annual income of less than £10,000'. Back in March Planning Aid provided a workshop at a conference in Derbyshire attended by community groups working to tackle climate change. In the summary they provided for the post conference report they stated that: 'Planning Aid can provide support by commenting on planning applications, participating in preparing plans and to develop understanding and use of the planning system.' One thing to bear in mind is that they don't specialise in renewables - they offer advice on all kinds of planning issues, so this might limit how helpful they can be.

3) I've also spoken to a contact in the Sustainability Team at Nottinghamshire County Council about your enquiry and he has given me this advice:

'It would be well worth the group approaching their county councillor with such a question - it happens to be the Leader's ward. I think Councillors have some small budget to spend in their areas. They may feel she would not be supportive, however, I think if they can demonstrate community

support and benefit for what they are trying to do, it would be good that she is made aware of such.

http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/your_council/councillorsandtheirrole/councillors/whoisyourcllr.htm

'They could also consider our Local Improvement Scheme

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/lis.htm>

'The idea of supporting the cost of a planning application may not be deemed appropriate for this scheme - but perhaps they could ask for money for something else that helps their project and frees up money from elsewhere to pay for the application? I don't know how Hockerton met this cost - presumably they have asked? And early discussions with Rushcliffe BC planners and involvement of borough and parish councillors would be highly recommended. A trip to Hockerton for them perhaps?'

4) Finally - I see from your website that you are planning a trip to Hockerton. I've been on a standard tour myself and it was fantastic - really informative and plenty of chance to ask questions. Hockerton also run this one-day Masterclass which might be of use to you: www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk/SEFS/ID.3015/SEFE/ViewItem.asp.

I hope all of this is useful to you. Please let us know if you get planning permission.

Kind Regards
Caroline

A second response:



further to my last email, I've just come across these two items in an e-newsletter my colleague produces.

Hope they're of help.

Kind Regards
Caroline

Community Energy guide – first spark in energy revolution

A new guide outlines a straightforward step-by-step approach to the challenge of creating a successful and efficient community energy scheme. 'Community Energy - planning, development and delivery', has been jointly produced by the Combined Heat & Power Association (CHPA) and the Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA). The guide focuses on the stages of development and is aimed at a wide audience including sustainability and energy officers, planners, community groups, property developers and housing associations.

Download the guide at: www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/community-energy-urban-planning-for-a-low-carbon-future-.html

Community Energy Online

Climate Change Minister Greg Barker launched a new community energy website on 25th November, and urged communities to grab the new opportunities to become more energy self sufficient and join the green energy revolution. In a keynote speech to the Combined Heat and Power Association annual conference, Greg Barker described communities installing their own low carbon energy, like combined heat and power plants, wind and water turbines or district heating networks, as epitomising the vision of the Big Society.

The press release is at: www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn10_120/pn10_120.aspx

The community energy website is at: <http://ceo.decc.gov.uk/>. The site contains guidance for local authorities who are initiating schemes or supporting their communities to do so, and guidance for communities themselves.