



Hello! Welcome to the Winter issue of the Climate Change newsletter.

This season we will look at Green Deal, outcomes of Climate Change Strategy Workshop and how to have a Green Christmas.

We really hope you enjoy this issue.

Climate Change Strategy Workshop

The existing Climate Change Strategy is coming to an end this year so the process of revising the document has begun. The Worcestershire Partnership (WP) Climate Change Strategy Workshop was held on 21st October at County Hall and was attended by 51 representatives of various organisations such as County and District Councils, local businesses, Environment Agency, and not-for-profit organisations.

The workshop was held to identify priorities for the new Climate Change Strategy. The key speakers, Katie King (Aether Ltd), Ruth Meek (Environment Agency) and Dr Simon Slater (Sustainability West Midlands) addressed issues such as ways to reduce Worcestershire's CO₂ emissions and how we can improve our climate resilience. Katie King presented early outputs from the carbon modelling tool EcoRegion which is used to calculate a carbon baseline for Worcestershire. Later on the data will be used to model carbon emission reduction scenarios to assess which measures will achieve lower emissions.

After the presentations, participants broke into groups under headings 'Business and Public Services', 'Buildings and Infrastructure', 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Natural Environment' to discuss adaptation and carbon reduction priorities for the new strategy. As a result of the workshop a list of key priorities were identified including the resilience of key infrastructure, ensuring Worcestershire is prepared for the Green Deal and putting an economic value on the natural environment.

Green Leaders

The [Green Leaders competition](#) aims to identify outstanding individuals who are leading us towards a more sustainable future and celebrate them, their projects and organisations. As well as Diane Tilley Head from Worcestershire County Council and John Iles from Opportunity Bewdley, two of the 2011 awards winners were Katy Boom from the University of Worcester and Ceridwen John from Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils.

Katy Boom has introduced various sustainable initiatives at the University of Worcester, organised awareness-raising campaigns and established links between education about sustainable development theory and real life practice by finding students sustainability related placements. Katy has engaged students and staff members through 'Eco Reps' scheme and by inviting them to envision together the sustainable University 2020. These actions have led to the University gaining third place in the University Green League table and being the only University in the West Midlands that has been awarded platinum eco campus status.

Ceridwen John was given the award for implementing a controversial project of utilising waste heat from Redditch crematorium in heating the neighbouring Abbey Stadium Leisure Centre. Even though the project encountered strong criticism, Ceridwen gained support for the project and now the waste heat from the crematorium will cover 42% of the Leisure Centre's heating needs.

Upcoming events...

FSC Christmas card recycling, early January, Sainsbury's stores

Recycle your Christmas Cards in support of Forest Stewardship Council in early January. For exact dates, visit www.fsc-uk.org after Christmas!

Worcestershire Wild Life Trust 'The Natural History of Christmas', Worcester, 7th December, 7.30pm

A talk by Dr Michael Leach. Nunnery Wood High School, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2LT. Admission £2.00 includes refreshments.

A Green Deal to improve energy efficiency

On 18th October, the Energy Bill received Royal Assent and became the Energy Act. The Act sets out a framework for financing fixed home energy improvements under the Green Deal. The Green Deal will be launched in autumn 2012 helping people to improve the energy efficiency of their properties for no upfront cost to the resident. The cost of installing energy efficiency measures (e.g. cavity, loft and external wall insulation, energy efficient boilers, energy efficient glazing) will be re-paid over time through a charge on the property's energy bill. For the work to be undertaken, the 'golden rule' must be met which states that the charge is no higher than the expected savings. Moreover, the charge is made for the property rather than an individual meaning that if moving house there is no obligation to continue paying for the cost of the improvements.

The plans and legislation relating to the Green Deal are out for consultation until 18th January 2012. To read more and respond to the consultation document visit the [Department of Energy and Climate Change](#).

Happy Green Christmas!

Save money and reduce your carbon footprint by making this Christmas a **Green** Christmas!

To cut down your energy use during the festive period, use LED fairy lights which are 90% more energy efficient than the standard light bulbs.

Support the local producers and reduce food miles by buying your Christmas dinner from a farmers market (www.farmersmarkets.net). And remember: do not throw the leftovers away but look for great ideas at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com on how to turn them into a new dish! Reduce waste by buying drinks and food items in big packs and bottles rather than in many small ones.

Try and give presents without excess packaging and if you gift wrap your presents use string so that the wrapping paper can be reused next year! Consider giving gifts made from recycled materials (www.recycledproducts.org.uk) or an 'experience present' such as theatre or movie tickets.

After the festive period remember to recycle your Christmas tree. Even better, if you have a garden, why not buy a tree with roots and replant it after Christmas! If you receive unwanted gifts, donate them to your local charity or 'freecycle' them at www.freecycle.org/group/UK.

For more ideas how to reduce waste and electricity consumption during and after Christmas, visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/green or contact the Sustainability Team sustainability@worcestershire.gov.uk to request a free 'Living for Tomorrow' information pack.

Dealing with weather-related disruptions

Winter is now upon us and it is time to start thinking about the potential impacts the weather this season could bring. Last year Worcestershire was hit by heavy snowfall from the end of November, which is thought to have resulted in ~£20million loss to the economy across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. There was also widespread disruption to the road network, which had a knock on impact on services such as waste and recycling collections. By making small changes and being prepared for the winter weather we can reduce the disruption to our services.

For example, after having problems in giving customers conclusive advice on disruptions to the refuse collection service during the period of heavy snowfall in January 2010, Bromsgrove District Council reviewed their communications plan in order to respond more effectively in similar situations in the future. The snowfall in November-December 2010 showed that even though they could not prevent disruptions in service, the review of their communications plan had a positive impact on their reputation and customer satisfaction. On weather-affected days, messages about disruptions were sent first thing in the morning using various means of communication including social media, thus keeping customers well-informed about the Council's actions and giving them high quality advice on disruptions.

Changes proposed to solar PV Feed-in-Tariffs (FITs)

The Government has proposed changes to the Feed-in-Tariff rate for new solar photovoltaic (PV) installations. The proposals are currently under consultation and therefore not final but FIT applications for solar PV installations on or after 12th December 2011 are likely to be influenced by the changes.

According to the current proposals, the FIT for solar PV installations of less than 4kW would be reduced from the current 'higher tariff' of 43.3p/kWh to 21p/kWh ('lower tariff'). The rate which will be paid for the solar PV installation depends on the eligibility date which is the date when the FIT supplier receives a valid application for an installed PV system.

- An application received by 11th December 2011 will qualify for the higher tariff for 25 years.
- An application received between 12th December 2011 and 31st March 2012 will qualify for the higher tariff until 31st March 2012 after which the lower tariff will be paid until the end of the support period of 25 years.
- An application received on or after 1st April 2012 will qualify for the lower tariff for 25 years.

Energy Saving Trust recommends that in order to qualify for the higher tariff any PV installation should have been in place by 24th November as the installers have 10 working days to give MCS certificate which needs to be sent to the FIT supplier with the application.

The current proposals will not affect the FITs for other eligible technologies but will be covered in more comprehensive review of FITs which is expected to be published shortly.

For more information visit [Department of Energy and Climate Change](#) .



The Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature study

The Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature study, which was set up to test the validity of previous climate change related research on temperature analyses following 'Climategate' (i.e. claims that climate change data had been manipulated, after hacked email correspondence from East Anglia University was published online), has identified the same warming trend identified by the UK Met Office and NASA. The study was conducted independently and its funders include organisations which have supported lobbying against action on climate change.



The land and sea surface temperature record is currently considered to be the most accurate indicator of global warming but has been criticised for not taking into account 'the urban heat island effect', the heat produced by constantly growing cities, which the critics claim has been incorrectly recorded as 'climate change'. To address the criticism, such as the choice of stations and the methods for correcting systematic errors, the Berkeley group conducted the study in a rigorous manner using new methods and over 39,000 unique stations.

The group has submitted four papers for peer review and made preliminary results available on their website (www.berkeleyearth.org) for public scrutiny.