

Low Carbon Communities Programme – November 2010 news

Since our first news bulletin in June, the Low Carbon Communities Programme project team has had to implement a 50% funding cut imposed by central government, and difficult decisions have been made. The biggest cuts have been made to the capital funding for renewable energy and the energy incentive grant, with proportionately smaller cuts made to each of the projects.

The reports below show how, despite reduced project budgets, which have affected individual staff, project team members have worked really hard to keep the main elements of the Low Carbon Communities Programme functioning as a whole for the rest of this year and into the first half of 2011-12.

Affordable warmth and saving energy



We have provided advice to 876 people since our project started, with interest from many groups for talks about Affordable Warmth. There's been an extremely good response from Oxfordshire's GP surgeries for the Affordable Warmth Project to attend their flu clinics. We are also attending electric blanket testing sessions.

We have now run training sessions for Cherwell District Council, Witney Citizens Advice Bureau staff and South and Vale social workers

The £99 deal launched in May has been very popular with Oxfordshire residents. The total of £75,000 allocated following the 50% cut has now been fully committed, and 595 households have already had insulation installed.

We would have liked the Oxfordshire Deal to continue for longer, but the good news is that in some areas, grants from district councils will continue to subsidise some insulation deals – to find out more contact **Cocoon: 0800 80 48 777**

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Working with local groups and parishes

Over the last few months, ClimateX and ORCC have contacted some forty parishes which have expressed an interest in environmental action through their Community Led Plans, made presentations to around a dozen parish councils and met with existing environmental groups looking to reinvigorate their activities. We've also contacted organisations working in deprived areas of Oxford City and with asylum seekers. It takes time to help get groups off the ground but solid foundations have been laid.

Big Carbon Challenge

We have been awarded £5000 sponsorship from the community chest of Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership and Cottsway Housing Association for the Big Carbon Challenge carbon reduction competition; this will help train up to eight groups in the *Carbon Conversations* method of low-carbon living. Emissions will be measured for each group entrant in November 2010 and May 2011, with a prize fund of £1500 for groups demonstrating the biggest carbon reductions and the most effective programme of community engagement.

Events

The Oxfordshire Climate Change Community Groups handbook has been going down well with groups. Download it at [http://climatex.org/media/attachments/Oxfordshire Climate Change Community Handbook v1.0 July2010.pdf](http://climatex.org/media/attachments/Oxfordshire_Climate_Change_Community_Handbook_v1.0_July2010.pdf) and www.oxonrcc.org.uk

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Renewable energy projects

Welcome to Jane Reddick, who started in September as temporary Sustainable Energy Officer to help deliver the project.

A photovoltaic array at Barley Hill School in Thames, part funded by LAA1 reward grant, is already up and running. This includes a monitoring system which enables pupils and staff to get involved in assessing performance.

We are applying for grant funding for two renewable heat projects at schools; these are likely to be biomass boilers, which we hope to install in summer 2011.

With Feed in Tariffs already in operation, and Renewable Heat Incentive expected in April 2011, many alternative funding and installation options are coming on stream. Jane is helping to assess these for individual properties and as "off-the-peg" options we can offer to organisations to help them make decisions.

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Energy Busters



Summer is always the time for the Energy Busters Project to get out and about to community events. During the past few months the staff have enjoyed attending events in Blackbird Leys, Aston Rowant, Dorchester, Tackley and Kidlington amongst others, offering Energy Education advice and helping promote the excellent financial and technical support that is available from other partners.

With the start of the new school year, the team has been promoting workshops, including some new ones, across the county. To ensure schools make best use of our support, we revisit each school several weeks after the initial workshops to see how pupils and staff are doing at reducing their energy. We have loaned energy monitoring kits to schools, and though the installation rate has not been as high as hoped, the results so far show schools are taking their energy reduction seriously.

Bookings for the coming year are coming in daily and the Bus, now one year old, continues to be a hit with pupils. If you know of schools that you think may benefit from the project do get in touch particularly if they've never had a visit before.

Contact us to find out about booking the Energy Bus for your local community event. Edd.Thomas@northmoortrust.co.uk Jenny.watson@northmoortrust.co.uk

This is the second of our quarterly bulletins about the Low Carbon Communities Programme launched in April 2010. Your comments and ideas are welcome .

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