

Vision 21 News

COIN's Climate Change Course Returns

Funded by Gloucestershire Environmental Partnership, Vision 21 will bring the COIN course 'Climate Change Condensed' back to Gloucestershire. This excellent short course, which covers 'all you need to know' on climate change, will come to the Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Tewkesbury and Cirencester over the next 3 months. Dates to be confirmed. Contact Vision 21 to register your interest.

Climate Change Flipside Calendar

To view or buy the Flipside Climate Change Calendar go to www.vision21.org.uk or pop into the Vision 21 office, central Cheltenham, a perfect Christmas gift.

Want to organise a short talk on climate change or biofuels for your group or community?

If you would like to organise a talk on climate change or biofuels please contact the Vision 21 office where, subject to levels of interest, a speaker can be arranged.

'Get up and Grow' with Vision 21

Vision 21 is trialling a new free service to help people in Cheltenham to grow their own food.

Vision 21 will be offering home visits, with advice on how a garden or outdoor space could be used for growing food. They will then assist in preparing the ground and will offer a limited amount of on-going support to ensure success.

Some people want to reduce food miles and become more independent for their food; others want to save money, eat healthily or teach their children about where food comes from. Whatever their motivation is, we want to be able to help. Call the office for info.

More 'Get up and Grow' initiatives with Vision 21

Want to save money, worried about peak oil, climate change and food miles or just want to learn how to grow vegetables?

Vision 21 is inviting 5 individuals/families to share in their allotments and share the crops. Vision 21 will help so participants can't go wrong! It's free too!

Vision 21 is also offering free weekend and evening workshops to learn how to grow vegetables. Whatever space you have at home we can provide ideas on how to use it.

Get Green at Christmas

Check out the Vision 21 website for tips on having a green Christmas. Try www.glosgreenguide.co.uk too.

Thanks to supporters

Vision 21 would like to thank volunteers and 'Champions' for their hard work in 2008. Many thanks also to funders and members for their kind support.

It has been an exciting year for the organisation which saw the merger of Cheltenham Centre for Change and Vision 21 and saw a change of warehouse for the Furniture Reuse Project, Reclaim.

Reclaim

Reclaim had an excellent year at the new warehouse and is very grateful for all the donations of furniture/white goods and for the loyalty of their customers and volunteers!

Reclaim is open for sales Tuesday to Friday 12 until 4. To donate or volunteer, call 01242 228823 or email reclaim@vision21.org.uk www.vision21.org.uk

Local News

Sign up to Zero Waste Challenge Week

How much rubbish do you produce in a week? Well on average each household in Gloucestershire puts out the equivalent of 100 black bags of waste every year. If all of this rubbish were piled up, it would be taller than Gloucester cathedral!

Of some 316,000 tonnes of household waste produced in the county each year, over half ends up in landfill. This can't continue. Burying waste underground is both environmentally damaging and very expensive. We also have to take into account that both landfill sites are filling up fast and could be full by 2016!

So when it comes to the waste you produce- just how low can you go? The County Council's Zero Waste Challenge Week, which takes place between January 26th and February 1st, aims to encourage everyone to reduce the amount of waste they produce in the first place, as well as reuse, recycle and compost as much as possible.

We want everyone to create little or no rubbish in one week. It doesn't matter if no one reaches zero. It is the taking part that counts. To sign up to the challenge visit www.recycleforgloucestershire.com and follow the Zero Waste links.

To help you get through the week, here's 5 tips...

1. Plan meals in advance. Take a shopping list to the supermarket and only buy what you need.
2. Try and visit more local shops, such as the bakery, green grocers and butchers. These shops often have less packaged products.

3. Take your own packed lunch to work and use a container rather than cling film.
4. Reuse bottles for soft drinks.
5. Compost uncooked food waste (excluding meat and fish) and garden waste at home.

Single parent Dr Kate Edgar has already signed up to Zero Waste Challenge Week. The Clinical Psychologist, who lives in Gloucester with her 5-year-old son Harry, admits she didn't used to recycle much. Kate already makes use of the www.freecycle.org.uk to reduce her waste. "If you have something that would otherwise end up going to the tip, then this site enables other people to take it off your hands." Kate has also encouraged workplace colleagues to go green, by reusing old printer cartridges, as well as composting organic waste.

Becoming Green

New blog entries from Morgan Phillips:

- 23.11.08: If not a consumer economy then what?
- 23.11.08: Soundings in Sustainability Report on a recent University of Gloucestershire conference
- 23.11.08: Barack Obama: The new saviour of Planet Earth?

Read in full: <http://becominggreenblog.blogspot.com/>

Student Food...

One of the first of its kind in the country, the University of Gloucestershire's Students' Union Allotment Society is going from strength to strength. Using council, rather than university land, the site is flourishing despite plummeting winter temperatures, and new members continue to sign up. As well as growing vegetables, the society is keen to encourage wildlife; a pond and woodpiles are just some of the initiatives planned for next year. To find out more about the society, visit

<http://www.yourstudentsunion.com/allotment>

...and student recycling

Students at the University of Gloucestershire are being encouraged to recycle in the run up to Christmas.

The University of Gloucestershire Students' Union have been working with Cheltenham Borough Council to make recycling as easy as possible for students living in the St Paul's area.

The council have provided clear plastic recycling bags which students will pick up from the Students' Union offices and there will be special collections on the 6th and 13th December. Any student who has placed a recycling bag outside their door on either of these 2 dates will be entered in to a draw for one of 10 prizes of £50.

Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer, Lizzie Harkness said: "Anything we can do to help students to recycle more is a good thing. The Students Union and University are committed to all aspects of sustainability and we hope the scheme will be well received."

Rob Bell from Cheltenham Borough Council added: "We recognise that students make up a large part of the community and so it is important that we work with the Students' Union to try and work towards our target of reducing the amount of waste which is sent to landfill in the borough." For further information contact: Lystra Maisey, Communications Officer, 01242 714523 Email: lmaisey@glos.ac.uk

Give your compost bin a present this Christmas!

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is encouraging people to compost as much as possible this Christmas. All those vegetable peelings for a start –sprouts, parsnips, carrots and potato peelings can all be composted at home. To balance out the vegetable peelings don't forget to add wrapping paper, along with cardboard packaging, and how about those shredded receipts from all that Christmas shopping. Other festive items that can head to the compost are cardboard tubes from the kitchen foil, cracker jokes ("How do worms send their Christmas cards? Through the com-post!"), party hats, streamers, pine needles and envelopes. Just scrunch them all up and add them to the mix. By the time summer comes around you will be using your Christmas waste as valuable compost on the garden, and helping wildlife in the process.

After Christmas why not continue the good work and sign up for Gloucestershire's Zero Waste Challenge and help Gloucestershire reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfill. Zero waste week will be held from 26th January to 1st February 2009.

To get a free Composting Information pack please call Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on 01452 313761 or email compost@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk

National News

Shop Less. Live More. Save the Earth.

Operation Noah - The Reclaim Christmas story..

Because we have already reached the point when the earth's resources for the year are used up and because we reject the idea that happiness at Christmas lies at the bottom of Santa's stocking, Operation Noah is launching its Reclaim Christmas campaign.

Advent was traditionally a period of penitence and quiet anticipation. But now it seems no more than four weeks of frenzied consumption in which stress, needless debt and damage to God's creation have become its defining hallmarks. Did you know:

- 125,000 tonnes of plastic packaging will be thrown away this Christmas?
- 333,333 trees will be used for Christmas cards?

Countless unwanted "gifts" will end up, at best in the charity shops and at worst, in the landfill.

For more details go to
<http://www.operationnoah.org/take-action/campaignactions/reclaimchristmas>

National Events

A Talk by Peter Bunyard

4th December 2008, 7 pm
Roland Levinsky Building, Jill Craigie Cinema,
University of Plymouth

Peter Bunyard is a freelance author and environmentalist, and was the founding science editor of the Ecologist magazine. He has worked as consultant editor for the United Nations Environment Programme review on Industry and the Environment, and was secretary and editor of the Committee for the Study of Nuclear Economics. A fellow of the Linnean Society, he has conducted field work in the Colombian Amazon on the role of rainforests in global warming. He has recently released his book "Extreme Weather" published by Floris Books of Edinburgh and is currently lecturing in Colombia and the United States on the significance of the Amazon Rainforest for our climate.

Tea and coffee will be available in the RLB Cross-Point from 6:30pm.

Climate Change March Report

Within the central streets of London on Saturday 6th, Campaign Against Climate Change hosted the National Climate Change March, to which has now become a key annual event in acting as a statement of unity against the detrimental effects of fossil fuel consumption, upon the environment and that of developing countries and their economy.

Although numbers had noticeably dwindled in comparison to last year's rally, thousands of people proceeded to march from Grosvenor Square with an array of banners and pickets protesting their cause marking a need for political change!

The key focuses of the rally were that of unified opinion against new coal-fired power stations (in particular Kingsnorth, Kent); the use of biofuels as an alternative resource, which effectively accelerates the process of enhanced greenhouse effect through deforestation, landuse change and emissions associated with fertilizers; the third runway expansion of Heathrow and the fourth theme was to show support for the large scale investment in renewables.

The march arrived at its finale within Parliament Square whereby as a sign of reform to our UK Government, crowds and established speakers of the field supporting the climate change movement stood outside the chambers expressing their demand for political and social revolution against the Western world's greedy and unjust 'need' for fossil fuel consumption.

Korsham Alab, in light of his representation of activism in Bangladesh, was a personal favourite with his stance on unnatural climatic changes upon the more vulnerable communities of his country.

He stated that said population has become victim to the effects of climate change through that of rising sea levels on coastal areas, but they do not even have adequate enough resources to consume such large volumes of fossil fuel.

A national population feeling the cumulative effects of a global fuel hunger- where is the justice in that?
Sam Hickman, Vision 21 volunteer

Keep Up to date....

View events on our online calendar, go to www.vision21.org.uk and go to events.

Check the latest vacancies at
www.vision21.org.uk/index.asp?page=vacancies

Local Events

'Save the Countryside' briefing on the proposed Cheltenham north west urban extension around Swindon Village.

15th January at 6.00pm - The Council Chamber at the Municipal Offices, Cheltenham.

There will be time for lots of questions after the meeting so that people can explore some of the issues involved in this proposal. For more details contact John Webster. Secretary, Save the Countryside. webster.j@blueyonder.co.uk

Be The Change Symposium

Saturday 7th Feb 2009 - Church House, Gratton Rd, Cheltenham.

An interactive session for anyone concerned about climate change, peak oil, financial meltdown the Symposium offers insight into the very nature of our time, and the opportunity we have to shape our changing world with our everyday choices and actions. Please Book. See www.bethechange.org.uk/symposium.cfm for further information, times etc, or contact Vanessa via email: vanessa.cheltenhamconnect@live.com

Oil Energy to Community Energy Peak Oil and Climate Change – the challenges facing rural communities

Thursday 12 February 2009 - Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, GL7 6JS. Cost: Preferential Member's rate: £30.00; Non-members rate £60.00.

Current mainstream agricultural and food retail systems depend heavily on oil. As society is forced to reduce energy consumption and oil dependence, there will be an increasing need for localised economies. Transition initiatives aim to pull the community together to explore the practicalities of rebuilding local resilience and reducing carbon emissions.

A South West Rural Update seminar in association with the Transition Network, GRCC and with support from The Royal Agricultural College.

For further information contact Sue Rabbich or Beverley Allen 01285 889872 Ext: 2236 emails: srabbich@nationalrural.org beverley.allen@rac.ac.uk

Transition Towns News

Transition: Forest of Dean Update

Transition: FoD was started by a small 'steering group' but the transition process always envisaged these individuals stepping down once there were enough action and local groups to take on that role.

At the steering group meeting on the 2nd December it was agreed that this was an appropriate time to make this change.

A group of 3 individuals from action groups is seeking nominations to represent existing groups on a new core group which will work to support existing groups and encourage the emergence of new ones. For info call Jacky Smith 01594 832517 email: transitionfod@gmail.com <http://www.transitionforest.org.uk>

Bishop's Cleeve: possible Transition Community

An October One World Week 'Warm & Well' day at the Methodist Church was the opportunity for Bishop's Cleeve to take a few faltering steps towards the development of a Transition Community. A lunch time audience of 40 heard a brief explanation on peak oil followed by a presentation on Transition Stroud by Molly Scott Cato. Present were a number of local Councillors and other guests together with members of the general public. 14 of those present signed up to take the concept forward and aim to meet early in 2009 to develop the vision and map out our journey.

Rob Hopkin's Transition Towns Handbook is proving invaluable and will guide our future thoughts and plans. For further information, or to join the project contact Jerry Barr, 01242 244785.

Transition Towns Events

Molly Scott Cato on "Transition Towns"

12 noon until 2pm. Wednesday 21 January 2009. Jubilee Room of Saint Aldate's Church, Gloucester. Organised by Gloucestershire Churches Environmental Justice Network. For more info email arkj.kcj@care4free.net

A Local Currency for Stroud?

Learn from a thriving complementary currency Christian Gelleri, Manager of the Chiemgau Currency Friday 9th January 2009 7.30pm, Talk, £5 Saturday 10th 10.00 - 4.00pm, Workshop, £20 Both at the Centre for Science and Art, Lansdown, Stroud

Come and find out more about this exciting example from Bavaria and learn how a local currency could work in Stroud.

Events organised by Transition Stroud Lifestyles and Livelihoods Group.

For more information or booking contact Neil Buick: n.mail@virgin.net or 01453 767467 or visit the Transition Stroud website: www.transitionstroud.org.

Bring lunch to share. Booking cost will increase to £25 if you leave it until after Christmas!

Vision 21 has relaunched a membership scheme. For more information on membership, to join or to donate go to www.vision21.org.uk