

21 TODAY

.....The Newsletter of Vision 21 in Gloucestershire.....

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INSIDE - Part 4 of the UNA (United Nations Association) report conducted by Vision 21's Chairman.

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Part 3 of 'Improving the Environment', a guide for town & parish councils - produced by the RAE & the Centre for Local Policy Studies; dates for your diary, + much, much more. more.....

This is a BIG Issue for Everyone!!

In March, Vision 21 became the first Agenda 21 in the UK to link up with 'The Big Issue' 500 copies of Vision 21's quarterly magazine 'The Edge', were available as a free insert in the Big Issues ethical special in Gloucester.

TBISW editor Tim Lezard said: "We are delighted to join forces with Vision 21 because, whether it's providing a legitimate income for homeless people or encouraging people to think how they affect the environment they live in, our two organisations are working towards the same goal - a better quality of life for all. Let's hope we both succeed!"

A donation of £3 will be given to 'TBISW' for every annual subscription made to 'The Edge' magazine.

This Issue of 'The Edge', which concentrated on waste management and recycling was sponsored by Gloucestershire Waste Action Trust. The next issue will be themed around the subject of Transport. Vision 21, also work with Meridian, an Action 4 Employment project who assist in the production of the magazine and Cheltenham Adult Opportunity Centre help with distribution. **Leslev Davies**

GREEN TRANSPORT WEEK 7TH - 15TH JUNE 2003

Would you like to take part in Green Transport week? Vision 21 is looking for volunteers to take part in activities planned for the Stroud area.

If you would like to help out or find out more, please contact the Vision 21 office.

Contact Nadine or Lesley on
01242 224321

Natures Cocoons
'Helping the parent....to help the child....to help the Earth'

The Natural Parent Exhibition
Saturday 10th May & Sunday 11th May
Pitville Pump Rooms Cheltenham

The event has several aims:
to promote green & ethical products to the parenting market
to provide a relaxed & fun weekend for the family & provide stimulating talks to
parents.

There will be a large exhibition of natural products for parents and children – from organic clothing and washable nappies to wooden toys and beautiful books. A free creche will be provided for young children, leaving their parents free to find out what is available to help raise children in a conscious way.

For the older children there is a wide range of activities throughout the weekend – singing, craft, storytelling, string games and a puppet show.

The event is being organised by Maria Palmer of Natures Cocoons and is sponsored by Lollipop. For more information, please ring Maria on 0845 458 9550 or visit www.naturalparentexhibition.co.uk.

Econergy,

in partnership with Worcestershire County Hall, Marches Wood Energy Network, The Forestry Commission and with the kind support of Advantage West Midlands, is pleased to announce: **Wood for Heat - making it happen Friday 9th May 2003, Worcestershire County Hall**

KEYNOTE SPEECH - Lord Whitty – Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Farming, Food and Sustainable Energy) MORNING SEMINAR - All you need to know about renewable wood heat systems; how they work, where the fuel comes from, procurement routes for your business or organisation, and what is being done to make wood heat happen in the West Midlands

The official launch of the West Midlands Wood Energy Strategy.

GUIDED TOURS OF THE STATE-OF-THE-ART 700 KW WOOD HEAT SYSTEM AT WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY HALL. **For more information visit www.econergy.ltd.uk or Tel: 0870 0545554**

Trendy Trees!!

Q How can you soak up the CO₂ produced by your CD collection & be trendy at the same time??

A By Joining the likes of Sting, Coldplay & The Foo Fighters & going Carbon Neutral!! CarbonNeutral is a term coined by Future Forests - a company which aims to offset the harmful effects of CO₂ gas by planting trees. Visit their website & see what a difference you can make!! www.futureforests.com

Part 4 of the UNA Report FAIR TRADE & FOOD

Has the council taken part in 'Fair Trade Fortnight' in recent years?

The District councils haven't, but many of the county's shops – and a few supermarkets – have. Two of the county's town councils (Stroud and Nailsworth) are also attempting to gain 'Fair Trade Town' accreditation. Does the council specify Fair Trade marked goods (e.g. Coffee and tea) for catering or other internal use or for external use (e.g. Residential homes)?

Again, it's a rather patchy response. None of the district councils has a 'Fair Trade' policy, and much of their catering is sub-contracted out. Contracts are awarded on a commercial basis, and the councils do not impose 'Fair Trade' contractual conditions, so it's left to the individual contractors. Nevertheless, some of the individual catering firms and Residential-home managers *do* use 'Fair Trade' products. Many joint events with other organisations (e.g. Vision 21 conferences, 'Sustainable Round Table' seminars) use 'Fair Trade' / organic/ locally-sourced food and drinks as a matter of course.

Has the council made any moves to assess the ethical and environmental impacts of the investments made by its pension fund? If so, have any moves been made to improve performance? If yes, please briefly summarise.

Not really: pension fund assessments tend to concentrate on growth, rather than ethical considerations. However, some of the councils are now drawing up 'ethical investment' strategies; but these haven't yet translated into any real changes in their portfolios.

Has the council looked to source any locally-produced materials for its own purchasing (other than food – see question 6)? If yes, please briefly summarise.

For each of the councils, there is some evidence of a 'buy locally' approach, on a rather 'ad hoc' departmental basis; but it's not part of an overall strategy. In most cases, purchasing policies are guided by 'best value' criteria, which tend to work against the 'buy locally' philosophy: there's no wider 'sustainability' view.

Food

Does the council run any form of 'Local Food Links' programme? If yes, how many local organisations and producers are involved?

None of the councils actually runs a 'Local Food Links' programme; but some do support locally-organised schemes. For example: the Forest of Dean District Council supports the 'Forest Food Links' project, which produces a Directory of locally-produced food products.

Is there a council-supported farmers' market in the area?

Farmers' markets now operate in all six districts; most of these operate monthly, and most of them receive some council support. Stroud market is the most successful; it runs fortnightly and for the first 3 years was fully funded by Stroud town and district councils – but is now self-financing. Cheltenham Borough was recently awarded 'Beacon Council' status, partly due to their support of the farmers' market, and its promotion to local households.

Does the council support any healthy eating or food poverty projects in the area? If yes, please briefly summarise their target audiences.

Not specifically 'healthy eating' projects – although some of the councils (notably Gloucester City) supported a 'healthy eating' conference in 2000, and Cheltenham Borough Council's 'Hester Way' project encouraged healthy eating as one of its themes, while Gloucester City's neighbourhood projects focus on several aspects of healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating. In addition, some youth work is being done through the county's schools and at 'The Wilderness' environmental centre, Mitcheldean

Graham Stanley

* Please note that in the Autumn of 2002 both, Stroud and Nailsworth received Fairtrade Status.

Cheltenham UNA Tuesday April 29th 7.15 pm

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

We are fortunate to have Mr Peter Brannen, Director of the I.L.O. (UK) to talk to us. The I.L.O. is the oldest UN specialised agency. It sets international labour standards in such areas as wages, hours and conditions, trade unions etc. It engages in training and education and helps governments to bring about effective policies and legislation.

The area of greatest concern is in child labour.

(Please note that all events take place in St Luke's Hall,
Cheltenham)

GREAT LAKES FAMILY DAY, 11 am - 4 pm, Keynes Country Park Bank Holiday Monday, May 5th

Craft fair & demonstrations, farmers market, Silver Stars: parachute display team, GWR road show, 'have a go' water sports & demonstrations, chainsaw wood sculptures, quarry safaris, static air balloon rides, environment displays, wildlife displays inc otters & owls, children's entertainment,

**FOR FUTHER DETAILS PLEASE CALL PARK ENQUIREY LINE
01285 861459**

Thinking Globally Acting Locally - A Guide for Parish & Town Councils

How important is your local environment ? What can you do to show you care? What can the community do and how should the local council be involved?

Local councils can bring people together and strengthen communities

Through the organisation of events and projects which aim to protect or improve the environment , local councils can help develop a spirit of community and a sense of belonging. As people from different sections of the community and different age groups share in an activity they gain enjoyment and understanding. The local council can use environmental action to welcome newcomers and to encourage people to participate in the life of the community.

At Long Itchington in Warwickshire, the parish council helps to co-ordinate and fund an annual day of practical action for the environment involving many local volunteers. Over 90 took part in 1992.

Habitats

Local councils have a clear responsibility to provide open spaces for recreation but they are neither legally nor financially responsible for the protection of wildlife and their habitats. Important habitats include bat and bird nesting sites, hedgerows, marshes, river banks and flower meadows. However, local councils do help by buying valuable sites or by monitoring those owned by others. The land can be managed as open space for recreation and, as part of the effective management of the open space, experts can be employed to draw up a management plan or conduct a site survey. (Information regarding site surveys are covered in part one of this series, see issue 24 of '21 Today' January 2003) The enjoyment of the land includes the opportunity to observe wildlife and therefore facilities for making this possible (for example, observation hides and dipping platforms) can be provided by the local council.

Under the *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 Section 21*, district and county authorities designate statutory nature reserves. Local councils can ask for these designations to be made on any land in their area. Under *Section 16* a council could enter into an agreement with English Nature to manage as a nature reserve any land which it owns, leases or occupies. *Section 15* also allows English Nature to set up Sites of Special Scientific Interest while *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Section 36 and Schedule 12* enables marine nature reserves to be established in the same way.

Kenton Parish Council in Devon created 'Harmony Meadow' on land which it obtained on a permanent lease from a local landowner. It is designed, not only as a haven for wildlife and a conservation and study area for plants, but also as a haven of tranquillity for local people. Among the many other things, the council provides an information board, stiles and walkways, water plants for the pond, and seating.

Local councils can assume responsibility for closed churchyards under the *Local Government Act 1972 Section 214*. At Saddleworth in Lancashire the parish council took over a closed churchyard which it manages as a wildlife sanctuary.

Extracts taken from 'Improving the Environment' a guide for town and parish councils – produced for Rural Action for the Environment by the Centre for Local Policy Studies at Gloucestershire University (1994)

**WHO'S WHO —
The V21 Association**

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**We Are Here To Help!!
Vision 21**

Is your Local Agenda 21. Do you have a sustainable project you would like featured in this newsletter? Then why not contact the Vision 21 office Tel: 01242 224321

Next Month...

Take part in the Vision 21's pre conference survey, part 5 of the UNA report 'Biodiversity & Wildlife' conducted by Vision 21's Chairman, part 4 of 'Think Globally, Act Locally - useful information for town & parish councils.....+ much, much more!!!

What Happened in March?

March has been a busy month for the Vision 21 office!!

The Edge Magazine - Most of the 2,500 copies of the 'The Edge' magazine have been sent out. Work has already begun on the next edition, which will focus on transport and transport issues within the county .

Expect a few more changes to the next magazine when it is published in June!

New volunteers join the Vision 21 crew - Three more volunteers have joined the V21 team, Sandie, is helping out with our mail-outs and our gradual move to the top floor of Cheltenham Centre for Change. Nicola Gregg, has kindly agreed to analyse the results of the 'Sustainability Questionnaire'. Thank you, to those of you who have sent your questionnaires back, we will start publishing the results next month. Finally,

Liz Blackmore a Millennium Volunteer, will be contributing editorial to 'The Edge' magazine. Look out for her work in the Under 21 section of 'The Edge'.

Astrid, who has been volunteering for Vision 21, for the past ten months, remains a valued member of the volunteer team, helping out with any task, and doing an excellent job, she really is a star!

Meetings attended by Vision 21 Directors and staff this month have included; Cheltenham Sustainability Panel, GEBF & Energy 21 Conference, Cheltenham Climate Change Panel, CCVS Voice of the Volunteer Sector, Gloucester LSP, Local Authority Liaison Group Meeting and Stroud Car Club..