

Report of Activities, October 2007 – July 2008

In 2008 Vision 21 and Cheltenham Centre for Change merged to become Vision 21 (Gloucestershire), a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The organisation works to raise awareness of climate change and to promote sustainability. Specific activities and projects undertaken by both organisations from October 2007 to date are below (these include ongoing projects):

- Merger between Vision 21 and Cheltenham Centre for Change
- Launch of new publication - 'The Impact of Climate Change and Peak Oil on Cheltenham'
- Earth May Day Summit!
- Cheltenham Environment Forum
- Organisation of two 'Climate Change Condensed' trainings
- Tewkesbury Business Park Project
- Sustainable Schools Training
- Reclaim
- 21 Today, electronic 'sustainability' newsletter
- Repaint
- Gloucestershire Green Guide
- Cheltenham Community Recycling Champions
- Talks held on climate change and biofuels
- Attendance at various public and commercial events throughout the County to raise awareness on climate change
- Resources
- Chairing Cheltenham's Low Carbon Partnership, a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership
- Contributions to local strategic documents
- Recruitment and development of volunteers

1. Merger. After 10 years of close co-operation and collaboration two of the county's most active sustainability organisations have decided to pool their resources and merge. This move will create a new, stronger and more united organisation to tackle the daunting challenges posed by climate change that face all of us in Gloucestershire.
2. New publication from Vision 21 (Gloucestershire). 'The Impact of Climate Change and Peak Oil on Cheltenham': This report identifies Civic Leadership as being critical in coordinating the initiatives necessary to tackle the impact of climate change in Cheltenham and the need for improved Emergency Planning. To view the full report go to www.vision21.org.uk
3. Earth May Day! Summit. Friday 9th May was the day Gloucester City went into 'Ecological Debt' and started living on the resources of the rest of the world. Community Leaders from all over Cheltenham gathered together at the University of

Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall campus, to form an Action Plan to tackle global issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss and deforestation helped by representatives from the World Wildlife Fund, New Economics Foundation and the University of Bristol. The day was a great success with participants leaving feeling renewed and inspired to go out and effect change in their local communities.

4. Cheltenham Environment Forum. During late 2007 Vision 21 inspired more local groups to join the already well attended Cheltenham Environment Forum Meetings. This meeting is for community groups to come together, share good practice, catch up with events and information. Due to a loss of funding the group continues to work together but is no longer co-ordinated by Vision 21 and is purely a voluntary group.
5. Organisation of two 'Climate Change Condensed' trainings. Vision 21 brought the training course 'Climate Change Condensed' to the University of Gloucestershire in Cheltenham in March 2008 and Stroud College in May 2008. Climate Change Condensed was developed by the Climate Outreach & Information Network (COIN). COIN was set up for George Marshall, author of 'Carbon Detox' a book that, uniquely, compares reducing carbon emissions to the travails of stopping smoking. Both events were well attended and were open to individuals, Council officers/members and the business community. In just 3 hours the course covered a lot of ground considering, among other things, what the scientists are saying, why scientists have a consensus about the problem but we the public do not, potential impacts on the world and the UK and what to do about it. (the events were supported by Gloucestershire County Council, University of Gloucestershire and Stroud College).
6. Tewkesbury Business Park Project. Early in 2008 Vision 21 has completed its second telephone survey of businesses within the Tewkesbury and Ashchurch Business Parks to collect home postcode data on staff travelling to work in the GL20 area. The survey results have now been used to inform a mapping exercise of commuting into Tewkesbury. Results can also be used to identify opportunities for people working within the area to take alternative transport to driving, e.g. through identifying lift sharing opportunities across businesses. Companies were also invited to attend one of two travel planning events, both held at the Tewkesbury Business Park, to present the findings and introduce travel planning. Overall 35 different businesses attended these events.
7. Sustainable Schools Training. In February 2008 the GEEP (Gloucestershire Environmental Education Partnership) members ran a training course at the Hucclecote Centre in Gloucester for Primary school teachers and leaders on sustainable development education. The training received good feedback and this is just the first stage in working with these schools. The training day was a pilot session was funded by SW Learning for Sustainability Coalition and Gloucestershire County Council. The GEEP Partnership includes Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Severn Wye Energy Agency, Vision 21, Wilderness Centre, Westonbirt Arboretum, Gloucestershire County Council (Waste/Recycling, Healthy Schools and Transport Officers), Severn Trent Water Education Centre (Cheltenham), Over Farm and FACE Farming, Countryside Education and Stroud District Council.

8. Reclaim, our community reuse enterprise, redistributes good quality household items, including furniture and electrical items, to people on low incomes in the Cheltenham area. In January 2008 Reclaim invited members of the community to the grand opening of their new warehouse. The warehouse is open for longer hours and business is increasing all the time with sales up since the move.
9. 21 Today, our regular e-newsletter, continues to go out to our database and to other networks with news on climate change and sustainability. 21 Today also includes local events, vacancies and more.
10. Repaint, our Community RePaint scheme, collects end of line and other surplus paint to make available to community groups, community centres, voluntary groups and people on low incomes. This is one of a nationwide network of Community RePaint schemes and benefits from their support and expertise. There is no charge for the paint, but we welcome donations which help cover our handling and storage costs.
11. The Gloucestershire Green Guide is our green shopping web resource and has continued to develop. More and more businesses are joining the site and the hits are growing. The Guide contains information on greener transport, renewable energy, local farmers' markets, recycling facilities and much more besides. www.glosgreenguide.co.uk.
12. Cheltenham Community Recycling Champions are a team of volunteers promoting recycling in Cheltenham. During this period they have been involved in four schemes:-
 - ❖ Domestic Battery Collection/Recycling Initiative which has been responsible for collecting 14,000 batteries since January 08;
 - ❖ Project Yellow (Cheltenham) collecting unwanted Yellow Pages as new editions arrive. This year we were responsible for collecting 9 tonnes of Yellow Pages and ensuring they were recycled;
 - ❖ 'Slim your bin' campaign which started in June. Promoting the 3 Rs - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle;
 - ❖ Reducing Junk Mail. The latest scheme is trying to prevent the delivery of leaflets and free newspapers. Champions have "NO JUNK MAIL" "NO FREE NEWSPAPERS" stickers to put on letter boxes and are giving them out to friends and neighbours.
13. Talks held on climate change and biofuels. Vision 21 held a showing of the 'Lost in Palm Oil' film. Vision 21 screened this documentary that shows the ongoing habitat destruction occurring in Indonesia in order to plant vast oil palm monoculture plantations where once were pristine Eden-like rainforest. The islands of Borneo and Sumatra are unique ecosystems and the only place on earth where rhinos, elephants, orang-utans and tigers can be found. At the current death rate, the orang-utan has a mere decade left before it becomes extinct.
14. Attendance at various public events throughout the County to raise awareness on climate change. Vision 21 has exhibited their climate change display boards and taken leaflets to: two World Environment Day events; UCAS and Chelsea Building Society, Wychwood Festival (3000 visitors!), St. Johns Primary School fun day, Earth May Day! and will be going to many more events over the year.

15. Resources. Vision 21 has resources available which include films/documentaries such as Al Gore's, 'An Inconvenient Truth', Leonardo DiCaprios's, 'The 11th Hour', 'Lost in Palm Oil' and many more. If you would like to borrow one of these only a deposit is required. Contact the Vision 21 office to reserve.
16. Chairing Cheltenham's Low Carbon Partnership. V21 has helped to entirely reshape this group and recruited 11 new members from industry and the public sector. The group is working on a focused plan to reduce Cheltenham's carbon footprint.
17. Contributions to local strategic documents. Vision 21 continues to be involved with and comment on local strategic documents including Gloucester's and Cheltenham's Climate Change Strategies.
18. Recruitment and development of volunteers. Vision 21 has recruited and developed many volunteers including many highly qualified individuals.