

Share Your Views

My name is Pat Eagle, I work for Stafford College as a Project Manager.



dents feel about all the work undertaken by the group to date and which environmental issues are most likely to get residents involved in the future.

Raising interest, awareness and understanding of Sustainability and embedding it in College life is a key feature of my work and for this reason I embarked on a newly created Foundation Degree in Sustainable Communities in 2010.

So you may well see me at the Co-op armed with a short questionnaire, or at the Food Market in November, or the Hospice or School Christmas Fairs.

I have completed the first year of the course which is delivered jointly by Staffordshire University and Stafford College. My first module this year requires me to examine the issues associated with 'Working with Communities'. Having browsed the website, read all the Newsletters and had a discussion with Mike Kinghan I am really excited to be offered the opportunity to explore the work undertaken by WFEG in more detail.

Please take part - it will only take a little of your time- and the information will also be helpful to WFEG in reviewing its impact and looking at new activities.

I shall be meeting with a range of people involved in WFEG and reviewing as many background papers and statistics as Mike can find for me!

The Questionnaire will also be made available on the WFEG website so please feel free to complete it there.

I will also be undertaking an information gathering exercise in order to establish how resi-

In the meantime if you would like to let me have your views on the work of WFEG please feel free to email me on p.eagle@staffordcoll.ac.uk.

I look forward to meeting you over the next couple of months.

Green Deal is shaping up

Green Deal is a new government initiative designed to help meet the upfront cost of making your home more energy efficient.

The Government hopes the Green Deal will enable households and businesses to improve the energy efficiency of their properties without consuming so much energy and wasting so much money.

Due to be launched in late 2012, the Green Deal will allow you to install energy-efficiency measures and pay for the improvements with the savings on your fuel bill.

The scheme is also intended to help the most vulnerable and to help deliver major measures, such as solid wall insulation, in homes which need more work than Green Deal finance alone can stretch to.

Although you will repay the cost over time, this is not a conventional personal loan as the charge is attached to the meter and paid back through your fuel bill.

There are still many questions about the Green Deal including who will deliver it and what sort of interest rates will be payable.

If you move out, the idea is that the new occupant will pick up the charge while also benefiting from a more energy-efficient property.

WFEG will be following this closely - if you want to stay informed, go to www.wfeg.org.uk and register to be on our regular email bulletin list.

MARKET the place to be

Food Market

Sat 19 November - 9.30am to 1pm
The Bell Inn car park, Main Street, Whittington
local food from local growers and makers

Christmas Market

Sat 3 December - 9.30am to 1pm
Whittington Village Hall
local food, crafts and gifts

regional recognition for our

GREEN LEADER

Mike Kinghan, who has chaired WFEG since it was set up four years ago, has been named as one of the region's green leaders.

The Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) judges were impressed with his innovative thinking and approach to community engagement.

Mike was one of the founders of WFEG which has run a 'ban the incandescent light bulb' campaign, enabled 120 free energy audits and advised on saving measures at the local village hall, church hall, pavilion and pub.

Mike has also played a key role in inspiring new groups to form and works closely with LoCal, HEAT and Lichfield District Council.

He said: "It is vital to spread the low carbon message. We all have a role to play in helping the area reduce its carbon footprint and embrace new environmental technologies."

George Marsh, Chair of SWM said: "This year our green leaders again feature a diverse group of individuals, who are all having a positive environmental impact in helping the West Midlands achieve their vision for a low carbon economy."



Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group

NEWSLETTER

On a journey to a
low carbon future

AUTUMN 2011

HOT NEWS - community energy hits the roof!

The largest array of solar panels in Lichfield District is set to be installed on the roof of St Giles Hospice, thanks to a new community scheme.

which would increase the funds required by a further £20,000.

And you will soon have an opportunity to invest in Southern Staffordshire Community Energy (SSCE), a community co-operative set up by Whittington and Fisherwick Environment Group (WFEG) and Low Carbon Lichfield (LoCaL) to develop of local sources of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency.

This scheme will have many benefits:

- St Giles Hospice (and possibly our Village Hall) will receive the electricity generated by the panels free of charge;
- Investors will receive interest on their shareholding;
- SSCE will make a small surplus which will be used to support other energy or carbon-saving projects;
- Around 22 tonnes of CO2 a year will be saved via the Hospice scheme (and another four tonnes if the Village Hall project goes ahead too).

SSCE have reached agreement in principle with St Giles Hospice for the installation of over 200 solar photovoltaic panels (PV) on suitable roofs of their buildings on Fisherwick Road. These are expected to generate 50kw peak of electricity.

Finance for the panels will come from a community share issue offering local people like you the opportunity to buy shares with a minimum value of £250 and a maximum of £20,000. Interest will be paid on the shares at a target level to be announced at the launch events on Thursday 10th November when a full share prospectus will be made available. The prospectus will be also be available from the

In order to achieve this we need to raise approximately £100,000 through community investment.

SSCE is also hoping to reach agreement with Whittington Village Hall for a 10kw scheme

YOUR CHANCE TO INVEST

You are invited to the Southern Staffordshire Community Energy Share Issue Launch

Thursday 10th November

6pm - St Giles Hospice, Fisherwick Road, Whittington

8pm - Methodist Church, Tamworth St, Lichfield

*Speakers: Cllr Matthew Ellis, Staffordshire CC
Jon Halle, Sharenergy Ltd
Mike Kinghan, Chair, SSCE*

SSCE website www.ssce.co.uk from Friday 11th November. £20,000 has already been pledged towards the project. Please go now to the website and make your own pledge.

SSCE is registered as an Industrial and Provident Society for the benefit of the community - a form of co-operative. Shareholders will be able to elect the Board and decide its future policy. There are currently six directors, who have been working on this project for the past year in a voluntary capacity.



Photographic mock-up of the panels at St Giles Hospice (courtesy of BHB architects)



www.wfeg.org.uk

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Sunny Days for Solar Power

Whittington has established itself as the epicentre of the solar revolution with 21 homes now generating their own electricity from solar panels on their roofs. The move further boosts the Parish's credentials as a national leader in tackling the threats of climate change, peak oil and energy security.

Across Lichfield District and surrounding areas more and more residents are directly realising the benefits of generating their own electricity from solar photovoltaic (PV) panels.

In only six months WFEg and LoCal's Solar 500 scheme has already hit its annual target of 500 panels installed. Forty-eight households have signed up to have PV systems installed under the project with more joining at a rate of around two a week.

By the time you read this all 48 systems should be up and running and save over 50 tonnes of CO₂ per annum.

The first family to have panels installed in Whittington, the Williams, generated over 150kWh of electricity in the first two weeks.

Lyndon Williams said: "This great scheme has made solar electricity affordable for the first time and the whole process was really simple and efficient."

The Williams are anticipating a total financial benefit of £800 from the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) and savings on their electricity bill this year and on this basis hope to have paid for their installation in just seven years.



Thumbs up from the Williams for Solar 500

Stuart & Lisa White had their ten panels installed in June and so far 7000 kWh of electricity has been generated. They said that "the workmen from New World Solar (NWS) were very professional, did an excellent job and we have no hesitation in recommending the Solar 500 scheme to others."

The cost-effective Solar 500 scheme enables householders to take advantage of the government's generous feed-in-tariff payments and do so at a very competitive price. For example a six-panel solar PV system is now available for less than £5,000 under the scheme and with the government's FIT it is possible to recoup the cost of the panels in six to eight years.

The FIT currently pays a generous 43.3p per kilowatt hour (kWh) for the electricity generated for systems of less than 4kw - this is guaranteed for 25 years, tax-free and inflation-linked. And of course this is in addition to the potential for a reduction in domestic electricity bills from the use of the electricity generated by the system. However the FIT is due to be reviewed very soon and is certain to be reduced on 1st April 2012 - if not before.

Under the Solar 500 scheme, NWS carries out a free no-obligation survey, and then prepares a quote specifically for your house. If you are happy to accept the offer you will then be contacted to arrange your installation date.

New World Solar is a local installer of renewable energy systems who were established in 2006. They have completed over 1,000 installations for clients including the Family Housing Association and Birmingham City Council.

For more information or to request a free no-obligation survey contact Mike Kinghan, of WFEg, via mike@wfeg.org.uk, or on 01543 432238; or Colin Strong, of New World Solar, on 07831 533024. You can download full details from www.wfeg.org.uk.



Solar panels on the school roof

WHITTINGTON SCHOOL Solar Pioneers

Whittington's own primary school has become the first community building in the parish and the first school in Lichfield District to install solar panels on its roof. The 22 panel system will produce around 3260 kWh of electricity per year and produce CO₂ savings of around 1.6 tonnes per year.

The panels are invisible from the ground but there is a display panel over the hall door so that students, staff and visitors can see how much electricity the panels are generating at any given time, how much has been produced in total and what the carbon savings are.

The idea was first suggested almost four years ago when WFEg funded an initial energy audit of the school. This was followed in late 2009 by a detailed feasibility study of the school's renewable energy options. Then the school and WFEg worked together to find funding for the project, and were successful with a grant application for 50% of the cost to British Gas's Energy for Tomorrow Fund in July 2010. The School's PTA then agreed to find the remaining funds.

After lengthy investigations into the strength of the roof and a planning application, the system was finally installed in September - just in time to get the benefit of the astonishing Indian summer.

Headteacher Sally Wilmot said "We are thrilled to have our solar panels installed and working. It's been hard work to get here but it's a great learning tool for our children to help them understand how it is possible to harness the power of the sun to produce energy for the school and the environmental benefits that brings.

"It's been really good working in partnership with WFEg to get this off the ground and we are really grateful to the PTA and to British Gas for providing the funding to pay for the installation."



Eleanor and Ethan, from Whittington School Eco Council, with the Solar PV display showing the amount of CO₂ being saved

October's APPLEFEST



Whittington and Fisherwick celebrated the glorious English apple with two special events in October.

Local apple specialties featured throughout the regular monthly Food Market in the morning. Stallholders baked and cooked a range of apple products to mark the day.

Shoppers could enjoy treats such as beetroot & apple soup and apple bread, from Judith Berry (aka The Baking Tin), crabapple jellies, apple pies and toffee apples from WFEg members, apple shortbread from the St Giles Church stall, apple traybakes and pork & apple pies, from Packington Moor Farmshop.

Apple and fruit expert, Paul Hand, of Bees and Trees, brought a range of unusual apple varieties to taste, a press to make juice and Staffordshire apple trees to sell, such as the rare Betsy Baker and Roland Smith varieties.

People were invited to bring their own apples to swap, and for Paul to identify. A steady stream of mystery apples from ancient trees dotted around the parish were brought in for him to sniff, taste and name. Some remained un-identified, but apples from the old tree in the farmhouse garden at Woodhouse Community Farm turned out to be the variety Charles Ross - a Victorian apple popular for both eating and cooking. And a 'nutty flavoured' apple from Back Lane was identified as an Egremont Russet - another survivor from Victorian times.

Children were fascinated by the mechanical device which peeled, cored and sliced an apple - all at the same time. But most of their attention was devoted to the basket full of baby mice which Paul's young assistant, Emma, had brought along as part of a demonstration about the importance of old mouse nests as homes for bumble bees.

In the afternoon, WFEg hosted a special apple history and grafting workshop in a local domestic orchard. Paul Hand explained the history and origins of the apple and brought along wild and ancient varieties for everyone to taste.

In the October afternoon sunshine, he showed visitors how to propagate their favourite apple varieties by grafting. Tips on selecting the right pieces of wood to

propagate from were followed by a hands-on class practising how to make the cuts and match the scion (the top or fruiting stem) with the rootstock.

Apple Day was started by the charity Common Ground in 1990 and is an annual celebration of apple, orchards and local distinctiveness. It is now an established date in the festive calendar and is celebrated annually on or near 21st October.

Apple Day is already an integral part of the calendar of many villages, local authority and city markets, it is a celebration and demonstration of the variety of apples and the richness and diversity of environments, landscapes and cultures from whence they originate. Apple Day is a simple and traditional way to celebrate our past; to link culture with nature; to demonstrate what the apple means to us; and, hopefully, to maintain the enormous variety of apples that are currently available but, without our help, are in danger of being lost.

The following varieties are believed to have originated in Staffordshire. The first is quite well known, far less is known about the second and the third is probably the best known and considered to be the best fruiting crab:

1. **Betsy Baker** - a Cannock apple re-discovered several years ago.
2. **Roland Smith** - raised by a gardener at Weston Park (south Staffs).
3. **John Downie** - the most famous of the crabapples, recorded as being raised in Lichfield in 1875 by Mr E Holmes and believed to actually have originated in Fisherwick.



Paul Hand shares his apple expertise in a sunny Whittington orchard



Apples galore at October's market

Other varieties, although not raised in Staffordshire, nevertheless have strong links with our county:

1. **Bakers Delicious** - an apple thought to have been raised in Wales but first grown in Codsall (South Staffs) by Bakers Nursery. Widely planted locally and in Shropshire.
2. **Yellow Ingestre** - raised near Ludlow by the owner of Ingestre Estate (near Stafford) and named after his estate.
3. **Moss Seedling** - raised just over the county boundary at Newport (Shropshire) and planted locally in west Staffordshire
4. **Bee Bench** - once widely grown in the northwest of the county and into Cheshire.

There are many distinctive local patterns of fruit tree plantings, these are two of the many varieties that have been commonly grown in Staffordshire:

1. **Bramley Seedling** - not a rare one, but it was extensively grown throughout the county and forms the bulk of late nineteenth/early twentieth century cooking apple garden plantings.
2. **Keswick Codlin** - of Lancashire origin extensively found as an early cooker up until early twentieth century, but rarely planted since.

A number of local people have beehives situated near to their apple trees and we are keen to enhance the wildlife opportunities that are available when apple trees are planted.

