

Visit to the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) 19th July

Our planned trip by coach to CAT is confirmed for Saturday 19 July at £11.50 per person with admission charges extra/payable on arrival (£7.40/£4-20 children).

The coach will leave from Whittington Village Hall on Saturday 19 July at 08:30 hrs prompt, leaving CAT for the return journey at 18:00 hrs. Please note that the journey time is around 3 hours each way.

To confirm your coach seats, please forward your cheque (payable to WFEG) along with the names of your party to Phil Taylor, 4 Sandcroft Cottages, Fisherwick Road, Fisherwick, Lichfield, WS14 9JN by no later than FRIDAY 20 JUNE. Remember to include your name, address, telephone, email and the number of adults & children in your party please.

Priority will be given to WFEG members. Your booking will be confirmed.

Five ways to reduce your Carbon Footprint

Our health checks have shown that home energy and transport are the two main areas where we can reduce our carbon footprints – here are some ideas on how to go about it.

1. Fit Low Energy Light Bulbs

There are now low energy alternatives for all light bulbs. The cost and carbon savings for changing your bulbs can be dramatic. For instance the running costs for a 60 watt bulb which is on for 6 hours a day for 365 days will cost approx £18.83 a year, whereas an 11 watt low energy equivalent will cost £4.47 in the same period.

Even worse are the GU10 spots found regularly in kitchens and bathrooms and which often have four or more 50 w bulbs. Running costs for 4 hours a day will cost you approx £40 a year, whereas an 11w alternative will cost you £9. Borrow our light bulb library to help you make the right choice for your home – see front page.

2. Insulate, Insulate, Insulate!

We can seriously reduce the cost of heating our home and cut carbon emissions by insulating our lofts and cavity walls. See the piece on Warmer Homes, Greener District article on page 2 where you can learn how to find out what grants you might be eligible for!

3. Way to Go?

As our energy health checks have shown, transport is one of the big contributors to our Parish's Carbon Footprint. Think about the necessity of each of the journeys you take and consider alternatives to reduce carbon emissions.

Remember that one long haul flight can increase your footprint by up to 24% - how about a holiday in the beautiful UK instead?

Use public transport– the bus service to and from Whittington has recently improved and there are now two buses an hour to both Lichfield and Tamworth, or get fitter and use a bike!

If you have to use the car, here are some easy carbon-cutting wins:

- Cars use 25% less fuel driven at 55 mph than at 70 mph.
- Smooth driving can save 30% on fuel consumption, reducing carbon emissions - this means reducing the amount of sharp braking and sharp accelerating while you drive
- Under-inflated tyres can increase fuel consumption by 2%. Check your tyres regularly
- Roof racks and bull bars increase drag and fuel consumption by up to 5% - take them off when they're not needed
- Air conditioning can add 10% to consumption - do you need it on all the time?

4. Choose a Renewable Energy Supplier

Buy your energy from a renewable energy supplier. Switching your electricity supply to a Green Supplier is a good way to reduce your carbon footprint. Many companies are now offering Green Tariffs which vary considerably in what they offer, so do your research before committing.

www.electricityinfo.org/suppliers is a useful website. There are three companies offering high renewable energy fuel mix supply and they are:

- Good Energy www.good-energy.co.uk
- Ecotricity www.ecotricity.co.uk/greenenergy and
- Green Energy www.greenenergy.uk.com

Otherwise go to the Uswitch website at www.uswitch.com/green-energy to view all green tariffs available.

5. Consider Home Energy Production – Solar - Photo Voltaic - Ground Source Heat Pumps – Biomass etc

Dramatically rising energy prices and global climate change are the two primary reasons to consider alternative energy production at home. It is possible to considerably reduce, or even eliminate your energy bills, as well as reducing the amount of greenhouse gases generated by your household energy consumption. There are also various grants available to help cover some of the costs. For information and a quotation on solar panels visit www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk or you could try one of the following organisations who exhibited at our Big Green Fair in February:

- D Hill Heating and Plumbing, Tamworth on 01827 314629
- Solar Shop UK, Tamworth on 01827 312725
- Eco Energi, Beech, Staffs on 08450 175282

For advice on Photo Voltaic, Ground Source Heat Pumps and Biomass view the Energy Saving Trust website at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housingbuildings or contact a local consultant like Eco Energi on 08450 175282. Ground Source Heat Pumps have been installed in the village by Ice Energy who can be contacted on 0808 145 2340. For Photo Voltaic, you could get information from Solar Shop UK Tamworth 01827 312725, who install Schuco Photo Voltaic panels.

Julian Floyd

Promoting Local Food

WFEG wants to stimulate further interest in the community in sourcing locally produced food. As well as supporting local businesses and farmers, this helps us to reduce our carbon footprint through fewer food miles – and gives us fresher, tastier produce.

We want to set up a Local Food Group within WFEG and are actively looking to recruit members of the Parish with an interest in food to join us in promoting local produce and making it easier to get hold of.

We'd like to hear about any of local supplier contacts you may have – whether it is fruit & vegetables, meat, cakes dairy produce – or about any ideas or suggestions you may have about taking this initiative further.

Similarly if YOU are a local food producer and would like to be involved – get in touch and tell us what you do!

We are planning to invite some local suppliers to offer tastings at each of our social events, and our eventual aim is to set up a local Farmers Market here in Whittington / Fisherwick on a regular basis, and possibly even a local food co-operative.

If you would like to be involved in this project or just have some suggestions or ideas then please contact Sally Shoemith on 01543 433520 or email Sally at sally@essentialhealth.co.uk.

WFEG Newsletter

June 2008

From a high carbon present... to a low carbon future?

WFEG passed two major milestones on 8th May when it celebrated both its first birthday and the completion of 120 audits energy and carbon foot printing with a riveting presentation by Simon Ross of Marches Energy Agency. Simon gave a talk which managed to be both entertaining and inspiring with an overview of the surveys he has completed in our Parish on behalf of WFEG. A summary of his talk follows

The Health Check Surveys

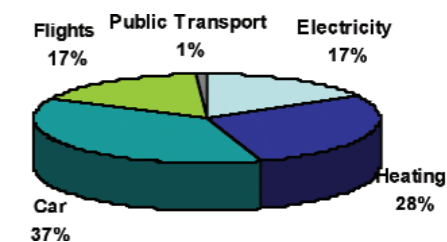
Over 90 per cent of these surveys were for households, while 6 were for village organisations and 3 were for businesses. This means that about 10% of households in the parish have had the health check

survey. Each participant was provided with an action plan and cost/benefit analysis that was unique for each home. Each plan covered insulation levels, heating controls, boiler efficiency, low energy lighting, renewable technology potential and behavioural changes, and can be used over the next 5 years as householders all start out on their own domestic low carbon journey's. The reports also provided a list of contacts and information on funding sources to allow the customer to follow up on any of the recommendations.

Our Community's Carbon Emissions

As well as giving valuable advice and guidance to individual householders and organisations, this provides a unique picture of the nature of our community's direct carbon emissions. (We also create emissions indirectly by purchasing goods and services including food and household items).

The table below shows the breakdown of villagers' direct emissions.



It can be seen from the above that the single most significant source of carbon emissions for households in Whittington arises from car use. It is also worth noting that flights, which predominately are for holidays, are responsible for the same level of emissions as annual electricity consumption. This has implications for the sorts of changes needed to help reduce our contribution to climate change.

The average reported direct emissions per head for those residents participating in the surveys was 8.5 tonnes per person per year. While we cannot be certain that those surveyed were typical of the parish, this is broadly comparable with the national average of 9.3 tonnes per person per year. The national average figure for indirect emissions from goods and services is 3.5 tonnes per person per year: adding

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Seeking enlightenment?

WFEG has two comprehensive light bulb libraries available on FREE LOAN to any resident in Whittington and Fisherwick.

We're often asked about different types of fitting and light output but the best way to select the right low energy light bulb for you is to try before you buy!

They come in all shapes, sizes and fittings and the technology has improved dramatically in recent years – modern low energy bulbs are a far cry from the early days. So if you dismissed low energy bulbs when they were in their infancy – why not give them a second chance?!

Please contact Chris Knowles on 432188 or email him on ck500@tiscali.co.uk if you would like to borrow the library.

There's no charge or pressure to buy – you can try them out at leisure and if you're happy – we can take your order and deliver them to you...What could be simpler?



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper using vegetable inks



WFEG

Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group

This edition has been part sponsored by Whittington & Fisherwick Parish Council

The newsletter from the Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group



this to the 8.5 tonnes of direct emissions gives a total per head of 12 tonnes. This gives an overall carbon footprint for the 2 parishes of Whittington and Fisherwick of around 21,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

The Big Challenge
Many scientists and experts believe that we need (at least) an 80% reduction in our current level of emissions by 2050. This would mean that the

average footprint in Whittington needs to reduce to 2.4 tonnes per annum from the current 12 tonnes. Much of this will depend on government action to develop renewable energy, carbon capture and other measures, but we as individuals and as a community can also make a big difference.

How Energy Efficient Are We?

Not very - according to our survey! For instance

- 50% of us have fewer than 25% low energy lightbulbs – only 5% have over 75% low energy bulbs
- Only half of our homes with cavity walls have them insulated
- Only one fifth of our boilers are the energy-efficient condensing ones
- (on the plus side) 91% have thermostatic radiator valves

So there is lots we can do to improve our energy efficiency – with energy prices rising rapidly it makes real economic sense.

Getting Ahead of the Game

Households are already taking action to reduce their emissions based on the surveys. We already know of two households who have installed condensing boilers, one who have reduced their energy consumption by 30% (by changing all their bulbs, turning down their water temperature, putting their heating on for a shorter time). Two household have switched to smaller cars. Others have installed cavity wall insulation, and many more are considering a range of measures.



Chair of WFEG Mike Kinghan cuts WFEG's 1st Birthday cake.

WFEG Insulation Initiative

WFEG will be launching lots of initiatives and events over the coming months to help people to find ways to address the issues emerging from the surveys. As a first step we are launching a new initiative to help villagers to reduce energy emissions – we have negotiated a great deal with a major insulation company and are able to pass on considerable savings on cavity wall and loft insulation. There are more details in the enclosed leaflet. Keep on reading our newsletters and visiting our website at www.wfeg.org.uk for updates.



District wide initiative launched to help residents save energy and money



Recent rises in fuel costs, along with homes that are energy inefficient, means thousands of households across the district are wasting money and energy every month heating their homes. We know from the WFEG Energy Health Checks that this is the situation in Whittington and Fisherwick.

To tackle this, Lichfield District Council is launching a district wide energy efficiency initiative called Warmer Homes, Greener District. The initiative will see the Council helping local homeowners make their homes more energy efficient.

Warmer Homes, Greener District is offering all homeowners, regardless of their circumstances, generous discounts on loft and cavity wall insulation, which can dramatically cut the amount of heat lost through the walls of homes. Free insulation is available to everyone aged 70 or over and for households that meet criteria, cavity wall, loft insulation and new heating systems, will be free.



If you live in Lichfield District, find out what grant you are eligible for - call free on 0800 56 77 501 or visit www.warmandgreen.co.uk.

Get a sneak preview of our new local RSPB reserve

Nestled within the beautiful River Tame valley, just south of Tamworth in Staffordshire/Warwickshire, Middleton Lakes has become a new RSPB nature reserve due to open to the public in 2009.

The 160 hectare site is a former Hanson Aggregates gravel quarry adjacent to Middleton Hall and between the River Tame and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal.

Quarrying ended during 2007 and the RSPB is now working to ensure that the final restoration benefits birds, wildlife and visitors. The area is already regionally important for over-wintering wildfowl such as pochards, tufted ducks and smews. By 2015, Middleton Lakes will become the most important site for breeding waders in the West Midlands region and adjoining counties of the East Midlands. Its lakes, reed beds, meadows and woodlands will make it one of the best bird-watching sites in the area.

Other wildlife of conservation importance includes otters, water voles, wetland plants, and insects such as dragonflies.

You can enjoy a free guided tour of the new reserve between 10'00 and 12'00 hrs on the following Saturdays in June – 7th; 11th and 29th. For more information and to reserve your place call 01827 259454.

Free Energy Health Checks continue!

The economic forecast is gloomy and energy price rises are set to continue, so now is an ideal time to discover how you could reduce your energy use and save money.

Although Simon Ross has now completed his series of energy health checks the good news is that he has trained a group of WFEG volunteers to carry them out.

This means that we are now able to continue to provide the health checks completely free of charge to as many other households in the parish who want them.



Please contact Thia Knowles on 432188 or by email on ck500@tiscali.co.uk if you want a home energy health check.

Thia will arrange a convenient time and date for two of our volunteers to visit your home (we will bring identification), and the home health check should not take any longer than 90 minutes. A report will be produced with details of your energy consumption and advice on how you could reduce your bills.

Help stop balloon risk to marine wildlife

Please join us in supporting the Marine Conservation Society's campaign for responsible balloon use.

Balloons pose a deadly threat to wildlife, both on land and at sea once they float back to earth. Most burst, but even if they don't, whole balloons and balloon pieces can be mistaken for prey by seabirds, marine turtles, and other marine wildlife.

Marine litter, especially plastics can be dangerous to sea life and seabirds through entanglement and ingestion, and once swallowed can lead to eventual death.

Research has shown that even biodegradable latex balloons can retain their elasticity in seawater for up to twelve months. Once marine animals ingest balloon pieces they can stay in the gut long enough to cause death by starvation.

You can enjoy balloons without putting wildlife at risk:

- Keep balloons safely indoors and dispose of burst balloons responsibly
- If balloons are being used outdoors, tie them securely with natural cotton string rather than plastic ribbon
- Fill balloons with air instead of helium
- Find alternatives to balloon releases such as hiring a balloon artist or guess the number of balloons before disposing of burst balloons responsibly

Courtesy RSPB



Have we got worms for you? FREE WFEG Social Event



Join WFEG at 8pm on Thursday 19th June at Whittington Social Club for a friendly and informative social evening.

Hear Anne Nagle from WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme, pictured) talk about Home Composting...

It might sound like a load of old rubbish but trust us it's not! Learn how to make fabulous high quality compost from your own kitchen and garden waste, save money and time and have the pleasure of knowing you've helped the environment at the same time!



There's a chance to meet some wiggly wormers (and some new people)... Anne's presentation will be followed by informal questions & answers, and light refreshments are available.

All welcome – just turn up!

Other free social events planned for 2008 are:

17th July	Climate Change
18th September	Home Energy Efficiency
16th October	Local Food
20th November	Film Night
18th December	Quiz Night