

## On a bike your emissions only bother the person behind!

What would you suppose is the favourite invention of all time? Well the bicycle comes out top in every survey.

It is remarkable that cycling has spanned the industrial revolution and survived where so many other technologies have been overtaken and fallen by the wayside but 'bikes' keep going. So much so that they have found a new purpose and relevance as we look towards a low carbon economy. The wheel has turned and the 'bike' has come full circle.

If you are of an optimistic frame of mind – and cyclists apparently tend to be – you might feel that the best is yet to come. Increasingly public policy is seeing the light in that cycling can solve so many problems at once. It gives you your daily dose of exercise without ever having to shell out for that gym membership; it's relatively cheap, accessible and democratic – almost every one of us can cycle and could own a 'bike'. And it's kind to the environment.



The 'bike' is also superbly practical and convenient; cyclists know their journey times around the cities to the nearest minute, more or less. 'Bikes' have a civilising influence upon us in that they get us out of our polluting, potentially lethal vehicles which hermetically seal us from social interaction.

## Best laid plans

The current planning system takes account of the social, economic and environmental impacts of proposed developments. But the Government's Planning Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, has major shortcomings which will adversely affect communities' rights and the environment. Ask your MP to call for changes in the Bill so that you get a meaningful say on major building developments planned for your neighbourhood - visit [www.foe.co.uk/resource/local/planning/press\\_for\\_change/planning\\_bill\\_edm](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/local/planning/press_for_change/planning_bill_edm)

## A fishy problem

The idea that there are plenty more fish in the sea simply isn't the case. Decades of plundering the sea's resources have left stocks of many fish species dangerously low. Check out the Marine Conservation Society's online guide to fish that should be avoided and fish that you can eat with a clearer conscience at [www.fishonline.org/advice/eat](http://www.fishonline.org/advice/eat)



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Consider the following:

- If you cycle regularly you can expect to be as fit as an average person ten years younger.
- Almost half the population lives within one mile of a National Cycle Network route, which is longer than the UK's motorway system.
- On a 'bike' you can travel up to 1037km on the energy equivalent of a litre of petrol.
- Cyclists absorb lower levels of pollutants from traffic fumes than car drivers do.
- On average, cyclists live two years longer than non cyclists.

**Sustrans is the charity behind the National Cycle Network.** They strive to help people to choose to travel in ways that benefit individual's health and the environment throughout the UK.

To support Sustrans or find out more about them:  
Call: **0845 838 06 51** or Visit: [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)  
With thanks to the *Guardian Guide to Cycling – March 2007*

## Free Energy Health Checks Training

We are now able to offer FREE training to anyone interested in learning how to carry out energy health checks. This will involve 1 day of your time when you will have the opportunity to learn from the experts – so you can carry out your own energy health checks to a high standard. For more information phone Mike Kinghan on 432238 AND WFEG is setting up an Energy sub-group to look at how we can help villagers save even more energy - and also to look at the potential for renewable energy in the village. If you are interested in joining please phone Mike Kinghan on 432238 or Julian Floyd on 432910.

## SAVE YOUR STAMPS TO SAVE THE ALBATROSS

'Not many people will be fortunate enough to see an albatross, but everyone can take a role in trying to help them. If everyone could be encouraged to send in their stamps to the appeal, these birds would have a brighter future. The RSPB sells stamps to dealers and just £50 will buy a tori-line (bird scaring device) for a longline fishing vessel.' **Sarah Kennedy, BBC Radio 2 presenter.**

You can help the RSPB raise money to save albatrosses by sending them your used stamps.

You can send in ALL types of stamps – whether they are used or unused, UK, foreign or even first day covers. You do not have to steam the stamp from the envelope; just tear off the corner with the stamp intact

How to get stamps to the RSPB

1. Post your stamps to RSPB Stamps, PO Box 6198, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 9XT. Please do not include any other correspondence to this address.
2. People wanting to donate first-day covers or stamp albums can send them to: Bill Lawrence, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL.
3. If you have a large number of stamps, the most economic way for you to get them to the RSPB, is to combine delivering them with a great day out to one of their nature reserves. You can see some fabulous birds, enjoy the countryside and help the albatross all in one go. See [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk) for details



# WFEG

## Newsletter

March 2008

## Our journey has started!



Our Parish is now firmly on its journey to a low carbon future following two hugely successful launch events. On Thursday 31st January nearly 200 people packed into the Village hall to hear leading environmentalists Mark Lynas and Penney Poyzer provide inspiration and guidance on how best to tackle global warming with, Oxfam regional campaigner, Maya Segas highlighting the serious impact that it is already having on the third world.

Then two days later an estimated 2000 people visited the fabulous Big Green Fair where they had the opportunity to see stalls offering practical solutions to lowering carbon emissions and displaying enticing 'green' produce. As well as proving a big draw for villagers, the Fair was the first of its kind in the West Midlands and attracted great interest from surrounding areas. It is certain to become a regular event.

Over the two days the Group gained 130 new members and 60 villagers signed up for the free Energy Health checks on offer. WFEG Events Group Chair, Sian Watkin commented 'We were delighted by the support that local people have given. Until now WFEG has been a fairly small group of committed people. Now we know we have widespread community backing. It was really heartening to have such a vote of confidence in the idea of our becoming a Low Carbon Community and improving our environment.'

Mike Kinghan, WFEG's Chair said 'Whittington and Fisherwick are leading the way for Staffordshire in showing that people really are concerned about global warming and their local environment and

wanting to do something practical. We've aroused the interest – and we are showing there are practical solutions. There is a huge amount to do but our journey to a low carbon future has well and truly started'



### Low Carbon Community Launch Meeting

On Thursday evening (31st January) 200 people packed into Whittington Village hall to hear leading environmentalists Mark Lynas and Penney Poyzer speak at

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## 08-SUPERSURVEY SET TO SURPRISE

With your help not one blade of grass will remain unturned once our community's biggest ever wildlife survey is launched, on March 21.

The Whittington and Fisherwick Environment Group (WFEG) wants every one of the 3,000 inhabitants in our parish to take part in the year-long project, and predicts there will be some astonishing revelations for our volunteers to uncover as they peer into every aspect of the natural world.

Spokesperson Debbie Barnish, says: "We aim to produce the definitive wildlife report noting every type of plant, bug and beastie in the area. The results will be lodged with the Staffordshire Ecological Record Office and bear the name of everyone who helped compile it."

"Our document will be immensely valuable in future as a bench-mark that will tell us how climate change and other environmental influences are altering our natural world."



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Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group

The newsletter from the Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group



But this hugely ambitious goal can only be achieved if every village resident – whatever their age – helps out. No special knowledge or wildlife expertise is needed – just enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. You can pick and choose what types of wildlife you want to record: plants, birds, mammals, invertebrates, fish, amphibians or reptiles.

WFEG will launch its '08-SUPERSURVEY' on Friday, March 21, at 10.30am.



Everyone is welcome to Bit End Field, Whittington, to listen to a project brief and take an inaugural walk around the parish to check out some wildlife habitats.

People will be able to put in as much or as little time into the project as they like. Some may wish to carry out fieldwork in search of otters, or tawny owls, while others may prefer to keep count of the bird species visiting their garden feeding tables.

Those with a gift for sketching will be invaluable in keeping a record of finds. So will amateur photographers.



People who want to get serious can learn exactly how to carry out a detailed scientific species survey.

Information can be obtained by ringing Debbie Barnish, on 01543 432341, or by emailing [wildlife@wfeg.org.uk](mailto:wildlife@wfeg.org.uk).

WFEG's launch event. Mark reminded us that the overwhelming consensus among world scientists was that the average world temperature was rising at an unprecedented rate as a result of human use of fossil fuels. They say that any rise of more than 2 degrees may be very dangerous to both people and wildlife. However, he said, there was still time to act – but urgent action was needed by both by Governments and individuals. He urged the audience to join the campaign for world leaders to come to a tough agreement on reducing carbon emissions at a major conference to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009 - and he challenged us to take a coachful of residents



to Copenhagen to show our concern!

Our schoolchildren then treated us to a presentation about the work of the School Eco-Council. They told us that they have already

achieved Bronze Eco-school status and are keen to progress through Silver to the top level of Green Eco-School. The Eco-Council meets every two weeks and has a representative from every class. They are developing a school wildlife area and have had one of WFEG's Energy Health Checks. As a result they are keen to raise funds to change to energy-saving lighting and maybe even install solar panels or a wind turbine.



After the interval (with gorgeous cakes and tea provided by our very own WI) Penney Poyzer gave a very entertaining talk, though with a serious message, describing her own low carbon life in some detail. She urged us all to think carefully about our lifestyles and spelt out how every decision we make about our lives has consequences for the planet – including the food and other articles we buy and the energy we use. She described how she and her architect husband have turned a mid-Victorian semi-detached house in the suburbs of Nottingham into an eco-home. Its features include the highest standards of insulation, a wood burning boiler, a ground source heat pump, using rainwater to flush toilets and supply the washing machine and composting toilet. (For more information and a virtual tour go to [www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/360/where\\_to\\_go/ecohome](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/360/where_to_go/ecohome))

Finally Maya Segas, Oxfam's regional climate change expert explained that climate change is already severely affecting the lives of many of the world's poorest people. She showed distressing film of uprooted people in Bangladesh where flooding has increased dramatically in recent years, and spoke of Oxfam's work to resettle those affected.

After the talks there were questions from the floor and a lively discussion before Mark Lynas suggested that the debate be continued in a nearby hostelry. Attendees at the event included Cllr Terry Dix, Chairman of Staffordshire County Council, Cllr John Wilkes Deputy Chairman of Lichfield District Council and Nina Dawes, OBE, Chief Executive of Lichfield District Council. Local District Councillors Alan White and Colin Ablitt were also in the audience.

WFEG member Julian Floyd said 'These speakers showed just how important it is for us to take rapid action to reduce our carbon emissions. Global warming is not some distant possibility, it's happening here and now. It has really inspired residents to work even harder to help our villages become low carbon.'

### Big Green Fair

On Saturday people flocked to Whittington Village Hall for our first Big Green Fair. We estimate that almost 2000 people visited the Fair to see a great range of 'green' products and to find out how to lower their carbon emissions. Visitors came from as far afield as Walsall, Sutton Coldfield, Uttoxeter and Derby as well as the two villages.

The ice Polar Bear, which was unveiled by children from Whittington School to launch the Fair, attracted lots of attention and slowly melted during the day. The ice Bear symbolised the melting of Arctic ice caused by global warming which is threatening the habitat of Polar Bears. Another colourful draw was the 20 foot high stiltwalker 'Florabunda' who attracted the attentions of Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield. Other notable visitors included David Smith, Leader of Lichfield District Council, Lichfield Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Wilkes, Tamworth MP, Brian Jenkins and County Councillor, Matthew Ellis.



A terrific variety of stalls greeted visitors. There were opportunities to find out about a whole variety of ways to save energy from exhibitors such as EAGA Insulation installers, the Energy Saving Trust, Renewables experts Eco-energi from Stafford and solar hot water installer Derek Hill from Tamworth, who received 35 requests for home visits for estimates. Marches Energy Agency provided Green Advice surgeries and a carbon footprinting service. Local food and drink businesses were well represented with Whittington's very own Lynn's Larder, Packington Farm Shop, Buzzard's Valley Wines from Bassett's Pole and River Nene Organics who deliver organic fruit and veg boxes in our area. The Council's Recycling team was there to encourage us to deal responsibly with our waste and, representing wildlife interests, were stalls from Whittington Woodland Group and also Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.



And there was lots of fun and entertainment to be had with an Eco-trail for kids, low carbon Horse and Carriage rides, morris dancing from Ryknild Rabble, clog dancing from Beggar's Oak and music from Mike's Ceilidh band. Once again our stalwart WI kept the positive mood going with delicious organic soup and other delicacies, while people browsed, bought and chatted.

WFEG member and Fair organiser Debbie Barnish said 'This is a huge boost to our aim for Whittington and Fisherwick to lead the way for the region in reducing our carbon footprint. It shows that there is a real concern about climate change amongst villagers and a big appetite for practical information and advice about how to reduce their carbon emissions.'



The events were supported through a grant from the Staffordshire Aggregates Levy Grant Scheme, funded by Defra and managed by Staffordshire County Council.

## Beatrix Potter Green Award 2008

Do you know anyone between the age of 5 - 11 with a love for all things wild and a concern for our planet?

Then perhaps you should tell them about the Beatrix Potter Green Award 2008? If they can voice their passion by writing and illustrating a story they could win a mountain bike and a year's free National Trust membership or a free goody bag.

Closing date for entries 30th April 2008

To find out more visit [www.peterrabbit.com/greenaward](http://www.peterrabbit.com/greenaward)

## Only 10 to go – don't miss out!

Take up of our Home Energy Health Checks really gathered pace at our recent launch events when we signed up nearly 60 villagers for their FREE home audit.

This means we have only a handful of the checks – worth nearly £200 each – to give away.

Remember - There's no obligation to buy or do anything if you apply for a Health Check – you'll simply receive some sound, practical advice as to how you can reduce your energy bills – by the way if you haven't opened yours for the winter quarter yet, make sure you're sitting down when you do! – PLUS you'll be given up to 15 FREE low energy light bulbs to get you started.

You can't lose so what are you waiting for? Call Cynthia on 432188 to book a convenient date now!

## Hare today, gone tomorrow?

Brown hares have suffered a 75% decline over the past 50 years, but the UK biodiversity action plan (BAP) aims to increase the population to 2 million by 2010, following several years of a stable population at ¼ million.

Intensive farming practices are slowly changing, as consumers are demanding tastier local and organic foods and as a result of this and government directives, many UK farmers have been leaving areas of grass uncut and maintaining hedgerows to provide shelter from predators of hares, such as foxes. The natural regeneration of wild plants in spring and early summer also provide an ideal habitat and food source.

### What can you do to help?

Buy local or organic produce whenever possible and demand the same from your local supermarket.

To find out more about hares or how to watch them without disturbance visit

[www.brown-hare-preservation.co.uk](http://www.brown-hare-preservation.co.uk)

