

It's getting cold out...

If like me, you have been watching the BBC's Autumnwatch programmes on Friday nights (BBC 1 - 8.30 - 10pm) you will have a busy weekend ahead, doing all you can to help the wildlife in your garden to survive the winter ahead.

I suspect that like mine, your garden may be looking a little tired and messy at the moment, but please resist that temptation to tidy it all up. I'm not asking you to leave it as it is, just to find a compromise for you and the wildlife that depend on your garden for survival. Your garden really can make the difference between life and death for wildlife in winter and in turn you will be rewarded with free pest control (organic too!), as well as having the pleasure of watching a great diversity of bugs, birds and creatures in your garden.

Hedgehogs and many insects survive the winter by hibernating, not only do they need a safe place, but also have to fatten up enough beforehand. From a wildlife point of view, a little untidiness can therefore go a long way. I'm not asking you to have a wild garden (unless of course you want one), but a garden managed for wildlife. You can find loads of information and ideas at www.bbc.co.uk/autumnwatch but here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Don't throw all those autumn leaves away - you can provide great homes for insects and bugs by piling them up in an undisturbed corner of your garden (use an upright tube of chickenwire to stop them blowing away)

- Build a log pile or have some fun with the kids by making a bug hotel tower. See www.buglife.org.uk for instructions

- Leave seed heads standing, as these provide food for birds and shelter for insects such as ladybirds who will huddle inside the stems to survive the winter

- It's never too late (or early) to make/buy and put up a bat or bird box or a hedgehog house

- Try and make sure you have plants all year round that will provide nectar for hungry insects foraging in warmer spells - ivy is the best all rounder for late autumn nectar but most winter/early spring flowering shrubs and climbers are good too. For more information and ideas, visit www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

- Don't forget to feed the birds, as this really can make the difference between life and death for them. Try and provide a variety of feeders and foods in different areas of the garden, but only place food on the ground where birds can't be ambushed by local moggies!

- It's important to feed your birds regularly, as they will come to rely on it. It's also important to provide a clean supply of water for them to drink and bathe and to ensure feeders and feeding areas are kept clean to avoid infections

- If you want more information on looking after the birds in your garden visit www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden where you can also send off for free booklets about the birds and the wildlife in your garden

So, go on, get out there now and do you bit for wildlife - you'll certainly notice a difference in the amount of creatures you get in your garden all year round and we would love to hear about your experiences.

Tell us by writing to sian@wfeg.org.uk We look forward to hearing from you and publishing the best bits in our next newsletter.

Cut 10% in 2010!

What is 10:10?

10:10 is an ambitious project to unite every sector of British society behind one simple idea: that by working together we can achieve a 10% cut in the UK's carbon emissions in 2010. A national campaign has been launched to encourage everybody, individual, household, business, public body, community organisation to sign up to TRY and reduce their carbon emissions by 10% in 2010.

Why bother?

Cutting 10% in one year is a bold target, but for most of us it's an achievable one, and is in line with what scientists say we need over the next 18 months. We now know that unless we act quickly to reduce our use of dirty fossil fuels, humanity will face terrible problems in the years to come. Politicians have so far failed to do what needs to be done, so it's time for ordinary people to step in and show that we're ready to defend our children's futures. It's now or never for the climate.

By signing up to a 10% target we're not just supporting **10:10** - we're making it happen. We'll be backing each other up as we take the first steps on the road to becoming a zero-carbon society. It's easy to feel powerless in the face of a huge problem like climate change, but by uniting everyone behind immediate, effective and achievable action, **10:10** enables all of us to make a meaningful difference together.

Our foot printing survey shows that many of our parish residents have already made reductions of 10% or more - some of them have signed up for another 10%. **It can be done.**

WFEG are supporting **10:10** - so are Tottenham Hotspur, Sara Cox, O2, Manchester City Council and thousands of others.

Get started - go to www.1010uk.org and sign up now.

Volunteers Wanted!



Woodhouse Community Farm is having two volunteer days. Day 1 Sunday 15th November to clear ivy from the wall and Day 2 Sunday 29th November ground clearing around Ha-Ha wall. All volunteers welcome - please come down to the farm for 10.00am.

WFEG donates £1000 to Parish Council

£1000 of the money we earned for Parish energy projects through our Cavity Wall Campaign last year has been donated to the Parish Council to help fund the installation of double glazing and an air source heat pump in Bit End Field Pavilion.

Our Energy Monitors could save you money!

WFEG has purchased a number of Energy Monitors, which are available for you to borrow...with no catches!

The OWL was the first readily accessible hand-held energy saving device to help you save the planet, as well as your pocket. It cleverly measures electricity consumption using kilowatt hours, it also measures the resulting CO₂ emissions in Kg as well as in-home humidity and temperature.

The Wattson is an ingenious little white box that displays the amount of electricity you are using at any given time, through a clever system of colours and numbers.

Both systems are easy to install, which you can do yourself from the instruction manual or a member of WFEG will show you how. They are both simple devices, no electrician is required and no harm is caused to your wiring or any devices. Simply clip the wireless sensor onto one of the cables between your electricity meter and the fuse box and stick the OWL or Wattson somewhere you can see it (trust us, you'll want to see it). Wander round your house switching stuff off, and you'll see the power (and cost) savings in real time. Just don't blame us if you end up sitting in the dark for hours!



Using either the OWL or the Wattson allows you to see the amount of energy we waste in our homes, as it measures the electrical usage of our home appliances. If we then respond by changing our behaviour towards energy use, they really can help us make a difference in the fight against climate change, which is why WFEG would like you to take part.

Families living in the parish have been using the monitors since the summer. All of them have learnt ways to save money and have found the experience revealing, informative, and surprising. A member of WFEG delivers the device and each family has a monitor for approximately a month, which is long enough to work out ways of reducing energy bills and the device is then collected and moved on to the next family.

If you would like to take advantage of the offer please email **Dave Murcott** on ospregreen@hotmail.com and he will put you on the list for the next available monitor.

WFEG Dates for your Diary 2009 are:

The Village Market - The Bell Inn car park - Saturday 21st November 9am to 1pm

WFEG Social - The Bell Inn - Thursday 3rd December 8pm

Candlelit Vigil (in support of The Wave in London - COP 15 Rally) - The Bell Inn car park - Saturday 5th December 6pm

The Village Market - The Bell Inn car park - Saturday 19th December 9am to 1pm

Cavity Wall & Loft Insulation offer

This year WFEG has obtained an even better deal on insulation for the village!

There has never been a better time to consider insulating your home. Energy costs are sky high and thanks to the grants currently available, the cost of insulating has never been cheaper.

We have teamed up with a major insulation company to provide one of the cheapest deals on the market for home insulation. The standard prices for homes with up to 4 bedrooms are:

- * Cavity walls insulated - £129 (standard house up to 4 bedrooms)
- * Loft insulation and top up - £149 to £199 (as above)
- * Free to over 70's and people in receipt of benefits

The installer will visit and carry out a survey to show how your house could best be insulated, and then provide you with a quotation.

By having your cavity walls insulated, you can cut the heat lost through your walls by more than half, **saving up to 30% on heating bills**, and considerably reducing your carbon footprint. The pay back in energy cost savings is estimated at just 12 months!

It is currently recommended that loft insulation thickness should be 270mm. Full loft insulation or top up starts at £149 for a typical 4 bed property or smaller, and again, if you are over 70 or receive benefits then it is very likely to be FREE.

Also, for every house that is insulated in the village, the installer will pay £25 to WFEG to fund a community insulation or renewable energy project in the Parish - last year we earned £1100.

To register your interest, or just find out more... Please contact our Project Co-ordinator **Thia Knowles: 01543 432188** or thia@wfeg.org.uk

All wall insulation on offer has a 25-year guarantee from the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Association.

WFEG

Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group

NEWSLETTER

On a journey to a low carbon future

NOVEMBER 09

Our shrinking footprint

First of all a big thank you to the 105 households who entered their carbon footprint during our online foot-printing window at www.wfeg.org.uk. This information is hugely valuable in identifying trends and helping to understand the impact of WFEG's work and our community's use of energy.

Looking at the headline reduction which is the difference between the average footprint from the MEA audits and the recent online survey, we see a reduction of 8.4% from 13.12 to 12.10 tonnes. This is encouraging, although because it is not the same group of people, caution is needed in drawing conclusions - but it does suggest a move in the right direction. Multiplying up this would give a village total reduction equivalent to 1246 tonnes per annum.



We have two sets of footprints for 45 households who completed both the MEA energy health checks in 2007/08 and the recent online survey. These 45 households reduced their carbon footprint by an average of 1.5 tonnes each or 11.6% giving a total of 67.5 tonnes between them - a considerable achievement. If this was multiplied up across the whole parish it would represent a saving of 1828 tonnes per annum.

This is likely to be an overestimate for the parish as a whole as it is likely to include some of the most highly motivated residents, but we know from your comments that many more than 45 households have made big strides in saving energy - that's been fantastically encouraging.

The foot-printing information and the other data from our online questionnaire will be invaluable in helping us to understand what is happening in our community regarding one of the most - possibly the most - important issue(s) of our time. It will help us in funding bids e.g. one of the criteria for the Low Carbon Communities Challenge is communities who have already got some historic information on their carbon footprints.

The survey gave us lots of other useful information which we are still analysing. It was very encouraging to discover that 85% of respondents (79 people) felt that WFEG's low carbon community initiative had encouraged them to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint and that 84% felt it had a positive effect on the community. 14% did not know if it had or hadn't had a positive effect on the community and only 2% (2 respondents) definitely felt that it had not had a positive effect.

It's really important that we get this feedback - thanks again - and we will be asking for your help in repeating the Parish Foot-printing exercise once again - next year!

Another Regional Prize for WFEG

WFEG's Low Carbon Community Project has won the West Midlands region's prize for the **Best People & Environment project of 2009**. The awards programme is organised by RegenWM, the regional Centre of Excellence in regeneration.

WFEG will receive a prize of £1000 which we plan to use to investigate the setting up of a non-profit Community Benefit Society to commission renewable energy projects in the village such as solar panels on buildings.

What the judges said: "This is grass roots involvement at its very best and the sharing of good practice should be praised wholeheartedly."



Coming hot on the heels of the top award at this year's Prince's Mayday event for the region's best community carbon reduction project, this is solid recognition for our community's outstanding efforts to tackle climate change from the bottom up.

WFEG
Whittington & Fisherwick Environment Group
www.wfeg.org.uk

Designed by [perceptis](http://www.perceptis.com) software • web • marketing
www.perceptis.co.uk 01543 416060

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER USING VEGETABLE INKS

Want to get in touch? E-mail us: nichola@wfeg.org.uk

The Newsletter from the Whittington and Fisherwick Environment Group

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS! Low Carbon Communities Challenge

The Government Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), headed by Ed Miliband, has issued an invitation to local communities to bid to become one of 20 'beacon areas' for low carbon initiatives under the title of Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC). Each successful community would receive up to £500,000 in capital funding which can be used to fund energy efficiency and renewable for community buildings and private households and other carbon reduction projects. The 20 will also get help and advice on how to take effective action on energy, waste, water and setting up social enterprises etc.

To bid, communities must be willing to prepare integrated carbon reduction plans. Bids have to be submitted by 30th December, and WFEG Management Committee feel that this is a great opportunity given the foundations that have been put in place over the last few years in our Parish in addressing low carbon issues in our community.

The sort of projects that are likely to be funded are:

- Renewable energy projects and improved energy efficiency or water saving for our community buildings e.g. school, village hall, church hall.
- A loan and/or grant fund for households to carry out major energy efficiency improvements or install renewables.
- Local transport projects e.g. purchase of a demonstration electric car (for car share) or purchase of community bikes.
- Energy improvements to housing in the village.

Our thinking to date is that we would put together a broad long term vision for what a low carbon community might look like, seek commitment from village organisations and businesses to the overall



Working Together...WFEG and Whittington School



WFEG members are working closely with our primary school to help it become a beacon of sustainable activity. Having assisted the Thomas Spencer Hall with insulation and low energy lighting, the Village Hall with cavity wall insulation and the Pavilion with loft insulation and an air source heat pump, we are now looking to see how we can help our school. We helped the school to secure funding from the BIG lottery to undertake a study on how to improve the school's energy efficiency and introduce renewables. As a result the County Council has identified Whittington school as an exemplar school, contributing £3000 from its climate change budget for improvements.

The study has identified the opportunity for a substantial installation of solar panels on the school roof and has also recommended improvements to the efficiency of the heating system, and also confirmed that a wood pellet heating system would be suitable. Our task now is to raise the funding to make the improvements which could result in considerable financial and carbon savings and we will be working together to help raise funds in the coming months. We are keen for the school to become a really good example of 'green' energy so that children and parents alike can learn more about how it works and see it in action.

A bid for over £250,000 has already been made to British Gas via a competition called 'Green Streets' to carry out energy improvements to the school, help the children to learn about energy issues and work with a group of families. The joint school/WFEG bid reached the Midlands regional final but lost out narrowly to a project for a deprived area in inner city Nottingham. However British Gas will be awarding wild card prizes to a number of the runners up in late November so we are still hopeful. Failing this there are other potential sources we can turn to for smaller amounts of money to carry the work forward.

In addition to this our school - which is already a Bronze 'Ecoschool' - is looking to go for Silver status and then bid for the coveted 'Green Flag' top award.

...just another

Meat Free Monday

Meat Free Monday is a food campaign to encourage the nation to help slow climate change by reducing their meat consumption by having at least one meat free day a week.

Having a MEAT FREE day every week is a simple way to start making a real difference in the world. The more people who join in, the more difference we can make.

Find our more at www.supportmfm.org

concept and submit a package of projects that would be eligible for the LCIF funding. We are talking to village organisations about this right now.

This would be linked to a plan to look at how we could improve energy efficiency in the parish more effectively and perhaps generate our own energy e.g. via using farm waste or even some community owned wind power (in an appropriate location), grow more of our own food and reduce transport emissions.

This could involve setting up a community energy company and maybe a recyclable loan fund or generate income from owning renewable installations - and this income could be recycled into other village energy projects.

If we were successful there would be a consultation process with at least one open community meeting to discuss the plans.

We would love to hear your ideas and input. Please go to: www.wfeg.org.uk/forum and join the discussion on our website.

If you would like to get involved or help with this bid in any way or with setting up a community energy company contact Mike: 01543 432238 mike@wfeg.org.uk

Adventures in Home Brewed Biodiesel

One of our village residents has recently embarked on learning how to make biodiesel from waste cooking oil. In this article he shares the highs and lows of the process.

When I first began to read about home-made biodiesel I was convinced that the claims were simply too good to be true. I read endless articles claiming that a cheap, sustainable fuel could be simply made in ones own back garden with very little or no previous experience of similar ventures. Unfortunately, most of the information you read about biodiesel is written by people trying to sell you something so, as I thought about the right way to draft this article, I decided to lay out these many claims, one by one, and add my own thoughts on their accuracy based on my experience to date. So here goes:

Biodiesel is easy to make at home

I honestly would have to disagree with this statement. There is undoubtedly a learning curve that needs to be travelled before anyone can make consistently good biodiesel...my estimate is that it takes a full year to do this. The reasons are many...firstly, the manufacturing process involves methanol and sodium or potassium hydroxide; both are chemicals that need to be treated with respect and safely handled...there are NO short cuts on this. Next, the waste cooking oil that forms a large part of the feedstock can vary hugely in quality and must undergo thorough treatment to remove water, acids and solids that are created in the deep-fat fryers. Finally, it is much easier to run a car on biodiesel in the summer than the winter...cold weather can make some biodiesel much more difficult to pump and appropriate precautions must be taken.

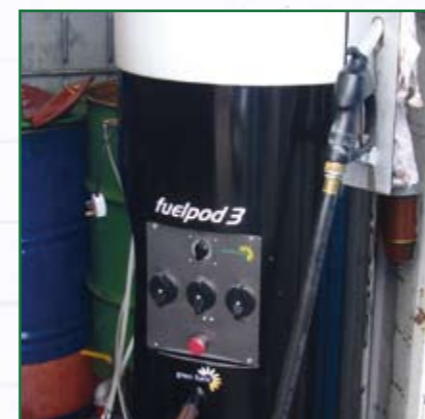


Cars need no modification to run on biodiesel

In my experience this has proved to be true BUT, and I will stress this point again later, the biodiesel MUST be well made. There are many stories of people who have tried to run expensive 4x4 vehicles on their 'early' material and have experienced blocked fuel filters and clogged fuel lines or worse. I would recommend running an older vehicle (preferably not one of the modern common-rail engines) on home-made biodiesel until you are happy that the quality is consistently good. It's my experience that good-quality biodiesel gives a smoother (i.e. quieter running) engine than regular diesel with about 90% of the mpg. Emissions on the MOT test are also significantly lower.

You can buy an 'Off-the-shelf' Biodiesel unit very cheaply

There are a huge range of 'homebrew' reactors available, ranging in price from 200 pounds to 3000 pounds or more. Some of the cheaper units are, frankly, an accident waiting to happen but, conversely, the more expensive units do not always give good value for money. The choice is also complicated by your own experience...if you have any experience in the general area of engineering or manufacturing, then you will be looking for a unit that does not come with all the bells and whistles of a turnkey processor.



Anyone facing this challenge should consider discussing the options with an experienced biodiesel maker. Some of the innovative 'homebrew' companies offer to rent a processor to you rather than a traditional purchase...I think this is a very sensible option for those with little or no experience.

Biodiesel is cheap to make

This claim is the easiest for me to answer. Yes, it is...with a year's experience under my belt I can make biodiesel for approximately 12p per litre including all raw materials and utilities. The first 2500 litres of biodiesel made per year for road use (it can also be used as heating oil) is free from duty. This assumes that your waste oil is picked up for free...as biodiesel evolves, waste oil has become something of a commodity and many restaurants now no longer give it away...there are lower-quality waste oils which are still 'free', such as the palm oil typically used by chip shops, but these are more difficult, and more expensive, to turn into good quality biodiesel.

Some final thoughts

Making your own biodiesel is not something I would recommend for everyone. If you can find a regular source of oil and are prepared to devote your time and energy to travel the unavoidable learning curve, then biodiesel homebrew can be a great investment for you and the environment.

As a parting shot, if there are any readers who have any waste cooking oil going spare, please feel free to drop me an e-mail at: wastevegool@hotmail.com



LIGHT A CANDLE for a safe climate future



On Saturday 5th December, ahead of the crucial United Nations climate summit in Copenhagen (COP 15), tens of thousands of people are expected to flock to London to take part in The Wave to demonstrate their support for a safe climate future for all.

The Wave, organised by the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition, will show mass support by people from all backgrounds for a better, low carbon future for the UK and the rest of the world.

We want to urge our government to show leadership at Copenhagen and inspire the world to reach the deal it needs.

How you can help

1. If you can, get to London and join The Wave starting in Grosvenor Square at 12 noon. Several members of WFEG and Low Carbon Lichfield are already committed to being there. See www.stopclimatechaos.org
2. If you can't get to London, show your support for The Wave and our representatives by joining Whittington and Fisherwick's very own candlelit vigil, at the Bell Inn car park - 6pm on Saturday 5th December.

We'll be laying on mulled wine, roast chestnuts, mince pies and music to keep everyone warm and entertained. People of all ages are already promising to come - join us - and bring a friend or two. And don't forget to bring a candle, lantern or torch!

Market in your Diaries!

Whittington's very own outdoor village market got off to a great start in October. People were already queuing to buy before the stall holders had finished laying out their wares.

On offer at the first market were rare breed beef, venison sausages, cakes and jams, freshly cut cabbages and cauliflowers, beetroot, traditional apple varieties and big bunches of parsley. Plus help on dealing with food waste and advice on cutting energy costs.

Early birds could tuck into warm bacon and cheese pastries for a late breakfast while later arrivals tucked into Beaudesert Park Farm's beef and venison burgers that stall holders Mary and Amy Cope sold out of by the end of the morning.

Organiser Debbie Barnish said: "We were thrilled to see so many people at the market - it turned into a great place to meet and chat to friends as well as buy great food."

"From now on the market, staged at The Bell Inn car park in Whittington, will have regular slot of the third Saturday of the month and we aim to make it bigger and better for November. We are working hard to ensure that there is a wider range of food available, including eggs and bread, plus some Christmas gift ideas too."

Make sure you put the market days in your diary:

21st November
19th December
January 2010 (no market)
20th February 2010
20th March 2010



BIG GREEN FAIR 2010

Our third Big Green Fair will take place on Saturday 6th February 2010 at Whittington Village Hall.

Building on the success of this year's fair with nearly 1500 visitors, we aim to make the 2010 event even bigger and better this time around.

If you would like to reserve a stand or participate in any way, please e-mail debbie@wfeg.org.uk.

