

UpBEAT

Newsletter from Blackshaw Environmental Action Team (BEAT)



Issue 11 : January / February 2011

From the Editor

This issue of **UpBEAT** has a **supplement on energy conservation, more specifically how to reduce heat loss** in your house. Heating your house is usually your biggest and most costly energy use so if you can reduce your energy use, you will save money and reduce the amount of greenhouse gases damaging the environment. The main drawback is that you usually need to make investments before you can reduce your heating bill substantially – unless you like to live in a cold house!

How to insulate your house can be a difficult choice if you live in the Upper Calder Valley where most of the houses are 'hard to treat' houses (houses with stone walls, often built before 1930). In the supplement to this issue **we outline some of the options and their costs** – with the help of the Alternative Technology Centre in Hebden Bridge and Anne Handley, a local energy assessor. The supplement can also be requested from finn.jensen@rocketmail.com

BEAT is planning to arrange a public meeting with Richard Armitage from Calderdale Council and Anne Handley when the Council's pilot project on 'hard to treat' houses is completed and analysed. The meeting will inform local residents about possible ways to insulate their houses and what it might cost.

Ten local households jointly decided some years ago to produce a bit of renewable heat themselves in the form of thermal solar panels. The panels warm the hot water for the house but not the radiators. Other households have since done the same. BEAT is looking into how we can get more sustainable heating, as well as electricity, to the area - more on this in the future.

The government has now launched its Energy Bill 2010 / 2011 with **The Green Deal** being a central part of the bill – see www.decc.gov.uk. **The Green Deal offers millions of households the chance to improve the insulation of their house.** The savings you make on your energy bill as a result of the insulation pays for the work done to your house. In addition an Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will particularly help the vulnerable, low income households and properties with solid walls. If the Bill becomes law, many households in the Upper Calder Valley could benefit.

Calderdale Council has received confirmation of a grant from central government for a Domestic Energy Efficiency Program (DEEP). This will be for a pilot project for the central Hebden Bridge and Heptonstall areas. Calderdale Council is also involved in the planning of a similar project covering several local authorities in Yorkshire but funding for this is still not guaranteed.

The BEAT team

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Buy Your Green Electricity through BEAT

BEAT has teamed up with Green Energy UK to offer local residents the opportunity to get their electricity from 100% renewable sources thus reducing damaging greenhouse gases. If you buy your electricity through BEAT you will get a 10% discount and once ten households have signed up BEAT will receive a small payment as well. If you currently get your electricity from **e-on** you could **save around £44 per year** by switching to Green Energy UK – and you will help the environment.



For more information please contact Green Energy UK on **0800 954 0675** and speak to Liz Bell.

To sign up to Green Energy UK through BEAT, or to learn more, go to:

http://www.greenenergyuk.com/?PARTNER_ID=560.

If you have got problems entering this web link into your internet browser you can email help@greenenergyuk.com or finn.jensen@rocketmail.com and ask them to email you back with the link.

BEAT Meetings

On **Wednesday 12th January** we had Peter Hill from the Alternative Technology Centre talking about possible hydro projects in our area producing green electricity. Many thanks to Pete for a very interesting talk. After his talk BEAT discussed business items including:

1. BEAT's vision for a sustainable Blackshaw, which you will find in this issue of **UpBEAT**.
2. Policies for BEAT: the Environmental Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy were approved.
3. Proposed village clean-ups on 29th January and on 16th April 2011 at 10.30am were agreed.
4. BEAT membership of the *Low Carbon Communities Network* was approved.
5. It was agreed BEAT should find out how many of the local groups in the parish want to do a joint fundraising event in the Summer.

There were two **film evenings** in November and December showing 'The Age of Stupid' and films on fishing (thanks to Ash Sharpe for a very interesting talk on unsustainable fishing practices).

The next film evening will feature "*The Power of Community – How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*" on **Wednesday 9th February at 8pm at the Sportsman Pub, Kebs**. Cuba had its imports



of oil drastically reduced when the former Soviet Union suddenly collapsed, creating a food shortage, health problems, transport problems and energy shortages, etc. Many researchers, including the International Energy Agency, say the same will happen to the rest of us when the era of cheap oil will shortly come to an end worldwide. How do we prepare for this possibility?

On **Wednesday 9th March at 8 pm at the Sportsman Pub** Geoff Boswell will introduce the film "*The 11th Hour*", produced and presented by Leonardo DiCaprio. Geoff is a local author of walking books, scientist and photographer. He used to give talks at the Sportsman. You may have also come across him selling calendars, photos etc at the village fete in previous years.

In order to see any of the BEAT films you will have to be a member of BEAT, which costs £1 per year. You can become a member when you arrive to see a film. As a member of BEAT you will also get our newsletter emailed to you.

Everyone is welcome to attend all BEAT events.



A Vision for a Sustainable Blackshaw

Blackshaw Environmental Action Team (BEAT) wants to **encourage a debate in our community on how we can make the community more sustainable and more resilient from shocks from the outside world** – like economic recessions, high energy prices, climate change and cuts in public services.

How can we create more local employment opportunities, locally produced food, cheap housing for our young people, locally produced energy, better public transport, etc?

BEAT wants to **generate a steady income that can be re-invested in our community** on issues decided by the community. The income could come from community owned energy schemes where the Feed-in-Tariff and the Renewable Heat Incentive can produce a surplus from renewable energy technologies.

Potentially this can be tens of thousands of pounds per year for the next 20-25 years!

By comparison our Blackshaw Parish Council has a total annual budget of a couple of thousand pounds.

BEAT is also suggesting:

1. Working with Blackshaw Optimistic Gardeners (BOGS), Blackshaw Food Network (BNF) and individuals **to help them produce (and for some sell) local food**. BEAT has a list of local residents who are willing to let some of their land be used for community projects, like food production. BEAT can match

them with people who want to grow more food but do not have access to land.

2. **Create awareness on sustainability issues** through BEAT's public meetings and newsletter, fundraising events, offering activities at local schools on sustainability, etc.
3. **Work with other local community groups in the Calder Valley, the Parish Council and Calderdale Council** on issues like house insulation, public transport, job creation and energy schemes.
4. **Look after our local environment** through tree planting, objecting to inappropriate planning applications, organising regular village clean-ups, etc.
5. **Assist the Way-Ahead group and the Parish Council** in the implementation of the five-year village plan.



BEAT is encouraging individuals and groups to send in their views on the future of Blackshaw Parish. The above is a summary of a longer draft vision document, which is available by contacting finn.jensen@rocketmail.com.

Once the vision has been finalised BEAT's working group will produce a plan for the implementation of the vision – which will also be submitted for community consultation.

Agreed by BEAT on 12 January 2011.



A member of BEAT attended the Low Carbon Communities Network (LCCN) conference on 16th and 17th January 2011 in London. The conference was funded by Energy Savings Trust (EST), Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and Groundwork UK.

Day 1 involved 120 people, primarily from community level projects. At the end of day 1 there was the LCCN Annual General Meeting.

Day 2 had up to 200 people including representatives from DECC, EST, the Community Energy Practitioners Forum, Local United and the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund.

Low Carbon Communities Network is a newly established network with around 200 local communities as members (one of them being BEAT) and another 180 plus associated – with many more signed up to the Facebook site.



LCCN has an expanding website and produces a weekly newsletter. It has a Management Committee elected at the AGM. The office is based in Oxford in an organisation called COIN (Climate Outreach Information Network).

Apart from providing information to its members, **LCCN organises mentoring where more experienced groups offer advice to the less experienced groups.** Around two thirds of the groups are purely voluntary but one fifth are larger enterprises employing 5 or more staff.

Many local groups have either already set up, or are planning (like BEAT) to set up, community

owned energy schemes that generate a surplus that can be reinvested into the community on projects decided by the local groups. Local authorities are increasingly interested in supporting such schemes.



LCCN is working closely with

Transition Network, Community Energy Practitioners Forum, Local United, Energy Saving Trust's Green Communities and Scottish Climate Challenge Fund. It was **agreed to establish a network of networks** – initially made up of the those noted above – with the purpose of making each of the networks more effective. It will be called **Communities & Climate Action Association (CCAA)**.



The two-day conference had a series of inspirational speakers, workshops and stalls. A lot of free information is available for communities, including some very useful tool-kits. There are also **several organisations available to help local communities setting up schemes to make them more sustainable.**

Some communities have achieved some amazing things and are worth visiting to be inspired. If you are unable to do that BEAT has got some PowerPoint presentations to illustrate what these more advanced communities are doing. We do not have to reinvent the wheel!

For more information, visit
www.lowcarboncommunities.net
www.transitionnetwork.org
www.nef.org.uk
www.decc.gov.uk
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe

Village Clean-Up

With the snow gone, for now at least, a lot of rubbish has come to light. Some of the plastic in the fields seems to have blown off the vans collecting the recycling. BEAT has suggested to the Parish Council that they contact Calderdale Council regarding this.



BEAT also decided to do something about it. On 29th January BEAT organised an extraordinary village clean-up.

There will also be a village clean-up on Saturday 16th April 2011 at 10.30am. Everyone is welcome and there will be refreshments afterwards in the Chapel.

**Saturday 16th April
10.30am @ The Chapel**



Becoming Sustainable

Some communities are making good progress towards becoming sustainable.

BEAT's working group have now worked for a year on how Blackshaw could become more sustainable. It is both encouraging and inspiring to see how other communities in the UK and abroad have achieved some amazing things.

Here we list some examples from the UK:

www.hockertonhousingproject.org

www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk
(regarding Ashton Hayes)

www.transitiontowntotnes.org

www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk

WEA Course on Sustainability

The Workers Education Association (WEA) is running a 10 week course as an **introduction to sustainability** from April 2011. The course will cover issues like:

- will the world face an energy and food shortage in the coming years?
- can we replace all fossil fuels with renewable technologies or do we need nuclear power?
- climate change
- how can we avoid the loss of biodiversity?
- what could a sustainable society look like and how can local communities take part in this process?

WEA charges £60 for a ten-week course for people working and £3 for people on benefits. The course will be held in Hebden Bridge, an evening a week.

If you are interested in the course, without committing to signing up, please let Finn know on 01422-846863 or finn.jensen@rocketmail.com.

If after the ten-week course there is interest in having more in-depth courses on aspects of sustainability (with the possibility of some courses being accredited) WEA is very interested in supporting such an arrangement.



Diary

Important dates for your diary:

09 Feb : Film Evening (see pg 2)

09 Mar : Film Evening (see pg 2)

13 Apr : Speaker &
BEAT business

16 Apr : Village Clean-up



Did You Know.....?

1. Turning off your computer monitor when you leave your desk, even for 10 minutes, and encouraging 20 others to do the same, can **save one tonne of carbon dioxide emissions in an hour**. If people forget to switch them off, ask them to enable their computer standby functions as this will save carbon emissions too!

2. A photocopier left on overnight uses enough energy to print 1500 A4 laser copies, so remember to switch off at night and at weekends and holiday periods.

3. When upgrading  computers, monitors, and printers, improve your energy efficiency by buying ones with the **Energy Star Logo**, the EU energy efficiency label.

4. Switching off a typical fluorescent light for one hour in each working day will save 30kg of carbon dioxide emissions annually. Also fit compact fluorescent lamps

which are low energy and last 10 times longer.

5. At least 12% of heat is lost in a building through draughts; easily saved by carrying out simple and cheap draught-proofing techniques. Essential if your building is a very old and draughty one!

6. If everyone boiled only the water they needed to make a cup of tea instead of 'filling' the kettle every time, we could save enough electricity to run practically all the street lighting in the UK.



7. Each person in the UK uses 150 litres of water a day mostly for cleaning, washing and flushing. But really we each consume over **3400 litres every day!** This amount includes the water we use daily in our homes, but it also includes the amount embedded in all that we consume – about 65% of which is in our food!



Become a Member of BEAT

Become a member of BEAT for only £1 per year by contacting George (01422 844636 / george@arbolution.co.uk).

We meet on the **second Wednesday each month** (see **Diary** for specific dates) and all of them are at The Sportsman pub at Kebcote at **8pm**. In support of our aims, our start time fits in with the local bus (Bus E arrives at the pub at 7.35pm).

In October, January, April and July we have speakers and business to deal with. All other months (except August) there will be a film showing.

BEAT : Contact Us

To find out more about BEAT, or any of the articles in this newsletter; to join, or contribute your ideas, you are welcome to contact

Tim : 01706 813800 or dargancole@btinternet.com

George : 01422 844636 or george@arbolution.co.uk

Finn : 01422 846863 or finn.jensen@rocketmail.com

Or visit our website on www.blackshaw.net/BEAT