



Community Renewables Initiative Newsletter

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Community
Renewables
Initiative

This Newsletter:

CRI Update

CRI Diary

Renewable Energy Opportunities for Farmers Seminar

White Paper on Energy

Project Focus: *Base for the Energy 21 Network near Castle Combe?*

In Brief:

- 'Joules or Jewels' conference
- Clear Skies
- REvision 2010

Contacts for further information

The CRI

The CRI aims to encourage community involvement with renewable energy and maximise the local benefits from renewable energy projects. Severn Wye Energy Agency manages the CRI for Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and South Gloucestershire and provides help and support to community groups and local organisations interested in developing renewable energy projects.

CRI Update

The CRI advisory group was held in Swindon the 15th of January and the 2nd Wiltshire renewable energy strategy meeting in Trowbridge on the 21st of January (notes available from Jo Badham, see contacts details at the end of the newsletter). Jo Badham is also currently assisting a group in South Wiltshire putting together a Millennium Awards funding bid to establish a Solar Club.

We also ran a one day seminar in Gloucester for farmers in Gloucestershire on the 10th of March, to explore some of the renewable energy opportunities for farmers and landowners. The day was well attended with over 45 delegates. It was a good opportunity for farmers to hear about renewable energy projects around the UK to ask practical questions about the technologies and to hear about funding schemes for renewable energy. We are keen to replicate the meeting for other areas.

Other developments in the last few months have included the announcement of the Community and Household grants scheme (now called Clear Skies), the new REvision 2010 project to develop sub-regional targets for electricity generated from renewables and also the long awaited white paper on energy policy which looks positive for renewable energy.

Ben Sang

CRI Diary

Forthcoming events in the CRI diary are:

- REvision 2010 consultation events on renewable electricity :
 - Former Avon area, 10th of April.
 - Wiltshire, 3rd of April.
 - Gloucestershire, 1st of April.
- “Joules or Jewels - What is energy costing your business” - a GEBF conference at Gloucester City Council on Monday 24th March.
- Wood Heating Tours in Devon (see attached flyer): -
 - 21st of March (fully booked)
 - 15th of April
- 29th of April the 3rd Wiltshire Energy Strategy Meeting
- 1st of May CRI Advisory Group

If you have an event that you would like to feature in the CRI diary please contact SWEA.

Renewable Energy Opportunities for Farmers Seminar

On Monday the 10th of March SWEA held a 1 day Renewable Energy Seminar for Farmers to explore some of the renewable energy opportunities that exist. The event was arranged in partnership with Gloucestershire FWAG, NFU and Business Link.

Around 45 delegates attended the meeting, with roughly half the delegates actually being farmers from across Gloucestershire, the remainder including representatives from DEFRA, Government Office South West and Cotswold and Gloucester local authorities. The seminar hosted the following speakers: -

- **Wood fuel** Robin Cotton
Renewable Heat and Power Limited
- **Coppice** Rupert Burr
Roves Energy
- **Miscanthus** Paul Carver
Bical
- **Anaerobic digestion** Mark Christensen
Farmatic
- **Solar water heating** Roy Blower
Filsol limited
- **Wind power** Marcus Beddoe
Ecotricity

The end goal of the meeting was to provide farmers with some of the practical information required to allow them to identify renewable energy opportunities on their farms. Projects that come forward from the meeting will be offered the support of the CRI team. Alternatively if there are areas of special interest, further meetings could be arranged to concentrate on these topics.

Ben Sang

Government White paper on Energy Policy

The Energy White paper was launched on the 24th February 2003. This sets out the UK's energy policy to 2020. The Government has set four goals for the UK's energy policy:

- To put ourselves on a path to cut the UK's CO2 emissions by 60% by 2050, with real progress by 2020;
- To maintain the reliability of energy supplies;
- To promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and improve our productivity; and
- To ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

The white paper recognises the importance of the need to cut greenhouse gasses in order to minimise the impacts of climate change. The policy looks at the decline of the UK indigenous energy supplies - oil, gas, nuclear and coal; by around 2006 we will be a net importer of gas and by around 2010 of oil. By 2020 we could be dependent on imported energy for three quarters of our total primary energy needs, with this comes the issue of security of supply.

It is also recognised that over the next 20 years much of the UK's energy infrastructure will need replacing or updating. The White Paper recognises the need to adapt electricity distribution networks to accommodate renewables, small scale and decentralised generation, including energy storage technology for intermittent renewable energy sources.

The paper outlines the future importance of both larger and small scale renewable energy sources and the need for energy efficiency improvements to reduce overall demand.

To see the white paper visit www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/index.shtml

Project Focus: Base for the Energy 21 Network near Castle Combe?

Energy 21 has completed an initial feasibility study on an exciting proposal for land near Castle Combe, not far from Chippenham in Wiltshire. The educational charity has been working closely with Paul and Karen Lysley, the owners of the Castle Combe Estate to develop the idea of a "Renewable Energy Action Area" (a planning concept) which will focus on demonstrating energy farming as a key part of a sustainable future. In order to see if a project in this location could be viable, three issues were researched: Can a project be developed which will receive planning permission? Can funding be secured? Will the local people be supportive and the local community benefit?

Tony Currivan of ASTAM came up with a proposal for refurbishing a stone barn on the estate which could become a Renewable Energy Institute and the base for Energy 21's work as the national network of renewable energy grassroots groups. The barnyard and buildings could become a venue for courses and a research base.

The opinions and needs of the local people are particularly important, as Energy 21 is essentially a community group, rather than a commercial business or an off-shoot of government. A public exhibition was held in Castle Combe Village Hall from 10th – 12th January and over 170 people came. The atmosphere at the exhibition was happy and friendly, although a few people had doubts and concerns. Energy 21 was pleased to be able to discuss these concerns, as the whole idea of the proposed project is to find ways of introducing local sustainable supplies of energy which benefit and please people. A spot-voting board began to identify the kinds of renewable energy that are the most popular.

The directors of Energy 21 considered the feasibility study results at the end of February and they approved the continuing expenditure of resources, so further investigations are continuing. Fund-raising has commenced and we hope soon to employ a consultant to work on a detailed investigation of local renewable energy sources and a co-ordinator of the work to continue public dialogue.

Jackie Carpenter, Managing Director, Energy 21.

In Brief:

‘Joules or Jewels’ Conference - What is energy costing your business?

A one day conference and exhibition to update local businesses on energy saving issues and renewable energy opportunities. There will be range of speakers in the morning and workshops and shared discussion in the afternoon, speakers are to include:

- Introduction - David Drew MP.
- “Worst practice in energy & environmental management” - Phil Harding - GOSW
- “Action Energy - What’s in it for Gloucestershire businesses” - Mike Brain - Action Energy
- “What the Energy White Paper means for the South West” - Matthew Spencer - RegenSW
- “Renewable energy Solutions” - Jackie Carpenter - Energy 21
- “A Business Perspective” - David Pealing - Severnpoint

This event is to held on the 24th of March 2003 at Gloucester City Council, Gloucester Docks. For more information, prices and a booking form for this event, see the attached flyer.

Clear Skies Grants

The Clear Skies Grant scheme was launched on the 14th of January, this grants scheme is managed by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). There are 2 main grant streams:

- Household grants - grants are in the region of 30% of the cost of professionally installed systems. There are grants available for technologies including micro-wind, solar water heating, micro-hydro power, ground source heat pumps, automated wood pellet stoves, wood fuel boiler systems.
- Community grants - grants are also available for community renewable energy projects, the level of funding is 50% of total capital and installation cost, or £100,000, whichever is smaller. The first of the quarterly deadlines is expected to be the end of April.

For full details on the grant scheme visit the web-site www.clear-skies.org

REvision 2010

REvision 2010 is a project in the south west to develop sub-regional renewable electricity targets. REvision 2010 will provide technical support and a process of stakeholder engagement aimed at identifying the opportunities, implications and constraints for the development of renewable energy targets for the 7 counties.

For more information on REvision 2010 visit the web-site - www.oursouthwest.com/revision2010/

Contacts for further information on the CRI :

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