



## Community Renewables Initiative Newsletter

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Community  
Renewables  
Initiative

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### **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 continues to receive a steady stream of enquiries and potential new projects and we will feature more of these projects in subsequent issues of the newsletter.

As part of our strategic work we supported the RDA in running a consultation event in Swindon on the Strategic Framework for Renewable Energy in the South West.

We are currently working to bring forward projects to make early applications to the new DTI renewable energy grant scheme which will be announced at the end of January. Early indications are that the new grant scheme will provide significant capital funding to community renewables installations. This could be the incentive many of us have been waiting for to help kick-start community renewables projects. We also hope that the scheme will help to boost the market for domestic renewables such as solar water heating and wood pellet heating with substantial grants available.

We hope that the scheme will be inundated with good applications, so if you have a project idea, get your application in early!

***Graham Ayling***

## **Wiltshire Energy Strategy**

The first renewable energy workshop for Wiltshire was held at Trowbridge Council Offices on September 10<sup>th</sup>. The aim of the day was to determine what could be done by local authorities to develop renewable energy in Wiltshire.

Attendees included: Councillors, local authority officers, ESD, and Community First.

The main barriers to renewable energy projects were identified as: Listed buildings, landscape designation, government policy, lack of understanding of renewable energy and different types of renewable energy at all levels - public, council and governmental.

Notes are now available, please contact Jo Badham at the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, see contact details.

## **Project Focus**



Lydney Local Power (LLP) is a project designed to involve the people of Lydney and the surrounding areas in designing, siting and owning a range of renewable energy projects specific to the resources available in the local area.

A community energy club has been established to introduce the people of Lydney to the opportunities for energy efficiency in their own homes and to begin to formulate a local energy plan. Club members will have the opportunity to discuss the renewable energy options available in and around Lydney and to influence decisions as to which of the technologies are actually implemented.

Plans for the regeneration of Lydney docks have been drawn up by the Environment Agency and British Waterways. The new harbour master buildings, boat house and observation tower will incorporate building integrated PV and a small vertical axis wind turbine.

A Steering Group of local Energy Club members are looking at the possibilities for several micro-hydro schemes; the feasibility studies have been done and the group are considering the different community ownership and financing possibilities. A second Steering Group will be concerned with a possible wind farm close to Lydney with land owners and potential developers already involved. Plans are also being laid for a biomass (wood chip) fired school heating system using locally sourced forest and saw mill residues with Short Rotation Coppice grown for longer term supply. Finally an anaerobic digester may supply both heat and power at a local craft centre and plant nursery using the slurry from a local dairy farm.

It is hoped that LLP can deliver a series of different Renewable Energy technologies across the Lydney area with the support and direction of the local community.

The structure of the projects will be set up to ensure that the financial, as well as social and environmental, benefits of the scheme are kept within the local area.

***Kierson Wise, Lydney Project co-ordinator***

## **Renewable Energy Opportunities for Farmers**

We are planning to organise a seminar on renewable energy for farmers. This will cover anaerobic digestion, wind power, solar water heating and wood fuel/biomass. It is hoped that we will have a range of speakers making presentations on the different technologies. The event will be held early next year, the date will be confirmed shortly.

SWEA is currently looking for funding to run the seminar and would be grateful to hear from anyone who may be interested in sponsoring this event.

## **Landfill Tax Credits Scheme**

*Funding from Landfill Tax can contribute to renewable energy projects where there is potential for crossover between renewable energy and waste minimisation. Bob Bradshaw, Landfill Tax Credits Manager for Community First, reviews the Wiltshire Landfill Tax system.*

The Scheme started in 1996 and has continued with only one major change until the present. This change was not to the regulations themselves but in the interpretation of one of them. Most landfill tax credits (LTCs) allocated to projects in Wiltshire and Swindon are for a) waste minimisation and recycling or b) public amenities. A small amount is spent on buildings or other structures of architectural or historic interest eg chalk white horse funded at Cherhill by Hills Waste.

The change occurred when the Treasury decided that 65% of all tax credits should be spent on category a) above. This means that there is now much less for public amenities. However, site operators still like to allocate much of their tax credits to projects around their landfill sites. This helps to compensate communities who live in such vicinities, with the possible anti-social dis-benefits, including landfill vehicle movements.

Community First accesses tax credits from several site operators both local and national and amenity projects include village and community halls, play areas, Scout Halls and conservation projects and some strategic foot-paths. There are also unusual projects such as the re-introduction of the Great Bustard onto Salisbury Plain. Landfill sponsors for this are currently being sought.

Because the majority of tax credits now has to be spent on category a), such projects are in demand and are relatively easy to fund. Current projects include Wiltshire Play Resource Centre and Swindon Scrapstore, brown and white goods and computers recycling, kerbside and company collections of paper, aluminium, glass and plastic, community composting and the recycling of wheelchairs to Russia! Some projects are concerned with the purchase of recycled street furniture combined with interpretation boards explaining the recycling manufacturing process and its benefits, whilst others are educational or the raising of awareness.

In June of this year, the Government concluded a consultation process on the Scheme. The results of this will be made public in the Chancellor's Pre-budget Statement in November. It is rumoured that the tax may be doubled: will this result in more tax credits?

***Bob Bradshaw, Landfill Tax Credits Manager, Community First***

## **Contacts for further information on the CRI :**

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