

Judy Steele in new allotments post

Action 21 now has an exciting project that aims to support allotment societies and promote allotments throughout Warwick District.

Allotments are oases of sustainable living. Allotment holders care for the earth, produce good food and take healthy exercise while they're doing so. They reduce food miles, because their food travels a very short distance to the plate. Sometimes it doesn't even leave the allotment! Plot-holders can eat organic food at the peak of freshness for a very small cash outlay.

I am lucky enough to be the person chosen to be the Allotments Link Worker, a part-time post, and I've already been out and about updating what we already knew about the area's allotments through the Action 21 Food Group. Many sites are thriving places, full of enthusiastic people doing wonderful work to keep the allotments going. A few have had their problems over the years, but are now tackling them with a will. We had some ideas of how we could help, beyond looking at individual sites that might need a helping hand. Almost everyone I've contacted is keen that we should produce a leaflet that will promote all the sites in the district. Most of them would also be glad of a welcome pack, into which they could put their own rules and newsletters, to give out to their new members.

We are also planning to take a display round the libraries in the area in the spring, when people start to think about the new gardening season. We need to keep promoting allotments, even if some have a waiting list, so we can fill any vacant plots, and keep them thriving. So many have been lost to building over the years that we want to hang on to those we have, and the best way is to keep them well used.

Judy Steele, Food Group

Energy Theme Group news

In addition to contributing to the ENGAGE project (see box) we have had several visitors from outside organisations including:

- ④ **Tim Woolman** who presented the activities of 'Imagineering' in the run up to the Town and Country Fair at which they had a very interesting stand to inspire children with engineering.
- ④ **Matthew Rhodes** who presented EnCraft, an exchange providing services for domestic customers with eco-projects looking for environmentally-friendly professionals for advice.
- ④ **Pete Young** and **Andy Russell** of Mercia Energy who gave us a presentation about their company, set up to promote and develop biomass energy and heating in the Midlands.
- ④ **Fred Pratt** who introduced his company, NRG Control Limited, a local business promoting energy efficiency in the industrial sector with smart technological applications.

Any Bright Ideas for Renewable Energy?!

We want your ideas for local renewable energy projects. At **Bright Ideas** you can hear speakers from Oxford Solar City Initiative and from Warwickshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. More importantly you can join a discussion on possible renewable energy projects. To get the ideas flowing there will be a **free energy-saving light bulb** for everyone who contributes!! There will also be time for you to browse around renewable energy displays.

Bright Ideas 1-3pm Sikh Community Centre, Saturday 24 Jan

The Bright Ideas event is part of a feasibility study called 'ENGAGE' run by a partnership of organisations including Action 21. If we can show that renewable energy schemes in this area would be possible, and welcomed by local people, we can then get to work on a funding bid to make it happen. To contribute via the web and for examples of what is possible, plus a full description of the project, see www.action21.co.uk. For info call Jenny on 01926 456067.

The Energy group is also working on issues covering domestic, industrial, public spaces in both the conservation of energy and renewable energy production. Our website is a good source of information, for those looking for energy tips and other topics of interest. In the *Diary*, you will see our monthly meeting schedule. We welcome new faces at our monthly Energy Group meetings.

Steven Coulsting, Energy Group

Solar panels for water heating

Avril and Douglas Bates of Leamington Spa have had solar panels installed for water heating for over a year. Having always been interested in sustainable energy, they went to shows and demonstrations of solar cells and visited solar energy websites.

In April 2002, taking into account energy price rises for the next 20 years, they decided to have solar panels installed as a political (with a small 'p') gesture. Their choice was based on compatibility with their combi boiler and tank. They approached about six companies and requested brochures. After comparing the specifications and services available, they concluded that all offered more or less the same services. They chose Smart Energy of Colchester and opted for a system that cost just over £5000 all in, including installation.

Their system was calculated on the size of their household (4-5 adults) and the size of their water tank. The system only heats their water; it is not adequate for heating radiators as well. There is also insufficient solar radiation in the winter to run the radiators.

Avril and Douglas are satisfied with their system. They have had no problems and say that it functions very well. Because it is solid state, nothing can go wrong, aside from a small pump. An LCD panel shows the temperature achieved in the panels each day. There is no risk of freezing. The panels are on their steep roof with optimum southern exposure.

For more about sustainable energy, visit www.action21.co.uk.

DIARY dates DIARY dates DIARY

January

Monday 12

Energy Group Meeting

7:30pm Sikh Community Centre
Contact Bhajan Aulak 01926 456010 or bhajan.aulak@warwickdc.gov.uk

Saturday 17

Making Sense of Civil War in Sierra Leone

Warwick Quaker Centre, 39 High Street, Warwick. This will be led by Joshua Craze who has recently returned from Sierra Leone. To attend please contact John Myers on 01926 425403 or jmyers4544@aol.com

Tuesday 20

Food Group Meeting

7:30pm Venue tbc. Contact Bill Warrell on 01926 314757 or bwarrell@hdra.org

Thursday 22

Transport Group Meeting

7:30pm Oddfellows Hall. Contact Bob Crowther on 01926 330712 or bob.crowther@warwickdc.gov.uk

Saturday 24

'Bright Ideas' – Public Event on Renewable Energy

1pm-3pm Sikh Community Centre
Contribute an idea and get a free energy-saving light bulb! (see article left)

February

Monday 9

Energy Group Meeting

7:30pm Sikh Community Centre
Contact Bhajan Aulak 01926 456010 or bhajan.aulak@warwickdc.gov.uk

Wednesday 11

Action 21 Board Meeting

7:30pm Contact Jenny Sansom on 01926 456067 or jenny@action21.co.uk

March

Monday 8

Energy Group Meeting

7:30pm Sikh Community Centre
Contact Bhajan Aulak 01926 456010 or bhajan.aulak@warwickdc.gov.uk

April

Monday 12

Energy Group Meeting

7:30pm Sikh Community Centre
Contact Bhajan Aulak 01926 456010 or bhajan.aulak@warwickdc.gov.uk

For the latest listings, check out www.action21.co.uk.

Pumpkin Day a huge success!

The hall at Bath Place filled up as soon as the doors opened for Action 21 Food Group **Pumpkin Day** on 25 November 2003. This year our pumpkins were local. They came from the Beards' farm at Leek Wootton, just a short van ride away. All 60 were used up within an hour and a half, and 20 more pumpkins had to be drafted in from Barry Johns greengrocers. Not local we thought, but this is an emergency. We were pleased to discover that they had been grown in the Vale of Evesham. The children used child-friendly carving tools, beads, pins, cloves and ribbons to create a beautiful array of pumpkin people, which we lit with nightlights and displayed on the stage at the end of the event. Rachel David volunteered all day in the kitchen, serving up delicious pumpkin soup, fresh rolls and pumpkin pie.



Fresh seasonal vegetables donated by HDRA were on sale at a reasonable price, and the money raised defrayed the costs of the day. Rob Brace from North East Leamington Allotments Association kindly offered the whole afternoon to talk to everyone interested in allotments, backed up by a display lent by the County Museum Service.

The Food Group is already planning next year's event, and we need volunteers to help out on the day, from moving tables and chairs in the morning, to assisting in the kitchen, giving gardening advice, or supervising the children's activities. We'll try to focus even more on the importance of local, seasonal food, but most importantly would like to highlight that local food and healthy eating can be fun.

If you're interested in food – growing it, eating it, cooking it – why not join the **Food Group**? We meet regularly and stage one or two events a year to stimulate thinking about diverse aspects of food. For more info, contact Judy Steele. Tel **01926 887119**; judy@dmac.co.uk



Transaction

Winter 2003/2004

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Year. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our readers for their interest throughout 2003 and continued support in 2004.

With the start of a new year, most of us resolve to do something novel, whether for personal growth, professional development, or simply out of curiosity and a spirit of adventure. How about coming to a meeting of an Action 21 theme group to see what we do, or perhaps assist at one of several community events held throughout the year?

It need not take too much of your time – an hour for a meeting once a month, or an afternoon for an event such as Pumpkin Day or The Recycling Roadshow. The returns are sure to be invaluable: diverse perspectives on local action in our community, improving the quality of our food, reducing waste and reusing resources, considering local sources of energy, and making new and stimulating friendships and networks.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Your comments, advice, contributions, photos or cartoons are welcome.

Jeanne Ashkenazi, Editor
jj.ash@ntlworld.com

Theme Group Contacts

Energy

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Transport

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Eco-house

Gareth Davies, g_davies@talk21.com

Local to Global

Bill Evans, wevans@warwickdc.gov.uk

Recycling

Mark Saunders, saunderstagpack@treesaregreen.co.uk

Allotments

Judy Steele, judy@dmac.co.uk

Food & Nutrition

Bill Warrell, bwarrell@hrda.org.uk

◆ Open below with care ◆



For more information about Action 21's past and present projects visit www.action21.co.uk

If you don't have internet access then we'll post information to you.
Contact Sustainability Officer: **Jenny Sansom 01926 456067**
Email: jenny@action21.co.uk

Address label to seal here.

Money for new projects

Has your community group got a great idea for promoting sustainability in Warwick District? Would a grant of £250 help you get it off the ground? If so, why not apply to the Action 21 Piggy Bank Scheme? Your project should promote the saving of resources in relation to food production, transport, recycling or energy. Also projects are more likely to receive funding if they involve the local community and improve the quality of life for disadvantaged groups.

Last year we gave funding to eight projects including a jointly-owned honey processor for beekeepers, a community mural project, and 'litter art' where young people made artwork from litter they had collected in Sydenham.

All applications must be in by **Friday 12 March**. Contact Jenny for details: jenny@action21.co.uk or **01926 456067**.