

Profile of a champion!

Editor Louise Ridley interviewed Green Champion Karen Weber about her new role with Action 21:



Why did you want to be a Green Champion?

Karen: I am interested in environmental sustainability, focussing on tackling fuel poverty and helping people to achieve affordable warmth in their homes. Fuel poverty can have serious financial, health and social implications, and more and more people are finding it difficult to heat their homes adequately because of the sharp increases in the cost of gas and electricity, so it is important for people to use energy in their homes as efficiently as possible, as well as of course helping to reduce their impact on climate change! Becoming a Green Champion gives me an opportunity to advise people on other areas of environmental sustainability too, I have been recycling household waste for years, but get very frustrated with the amount of unnecessary packaging that supermarkets insist we shoppers want our food wrapped up in! We can all do more individually; being a Green Champion is as much about me trying to do more to lessen my impact as it is about encouraging others to do likewise!

How did you hear about the project?

Karen: I became a member of Action 21 at the Peace Festival in Leamington Spa in the summer of 2006, and it was through Action 21 itself that I heard about the project.

What public events will you go to in the future? What will you talk about there?

Karen: I have already arranged to give a talk next month in my job to forty ten to eleven year olds at a primary school in Stratford-upon-Avon, as part of a week of activities with an energy efficiency theme. This is new territory for me; previously the only work I have done with children is running weekend environmental birthday parties at Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve near Coventry! I hope to be at the Action 21 stand at the Peace Festival in the summer and together with other Green Champions to set up a stand at the Recycle Warehouse in Princes Drive, Leamington, with the aim of engaging with people visitors and talk to them about recycling.

If you would prefer to receive Action 21's newsletter by email, please let us know. Email michelle@action21.co.uk, 01926 456076

Leamington in 'transition' to a new era for energy production

It's a fact we all must face, and sooner rather than later: crude oil, the fuel that we rely on for almost every aspect of our lives, will soon run out, and while it is still around its consumption contributes hugely to climate change. Almost everything we use has at some point required oil in its production, and you may think that to escape from dependence on the fuel would be impossible, but this may soon be one of Leamington's goals. Making an entire town or even city into an 100% eco-friendly environment is the objective of the growing number of 'transition' towns springing up all over the world, and discussions have been underway since September for Leamington to be one of them. In 2007, 28 UK towns had already declared themselves to be in 'transition' and over 400 communities worldwide have been discussing the possibility. The core of the scheme is for communities to pro-actively design their own energy descent in the face of the crude oil challenge. In a wider sense Transition Towns are self-sufficient communities that get everybody involved in the process of reducing our carbon footprint, combining groups such as Action 21 that have been working on low energy development for a while.



February 2008 marked the beginning of an awareness program that aims to bring the concept of transition towns to the people of Leamington. Last month screenings were shown of "The Power of Community", a documentary about how Cuba survived being the first country in the world to face a sudden reduction in its oil supplies, showing that becoming a Transition Town is a real alternative to our current way of life.

To find out more and see what a transition town looks like then visit: www.transitiontowns.org or www.leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk and click on transition town.

Transaction

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Open Here With Care

Welcome...

...to the Spring edition of **Transaction**, your update on the work of Action 21 and its associates.

Opportunities!

The Leamington Peace Fair 14th-15th June 2008

It may seem a while away but preparations are already underway for the Leamington Peace Festival this June; a free arts and music festival at the Pump Room Gardens with the aim of promoting world peace. Sustainability is also promoted; the amazing two days offer a host of activities including Action 21's stalls. As always we need volunteers for our stall and for litter picking and recycling. It is a great opportunity to be part of an Action 21 team and do something that makes a huge impact on the day, as well as getting a free lunch! If you can be part of the team please contact:

michelle@action21.co.uk

What have we been upto?

At the green Christmas Fair hosted by Greenfinder in December, Action 21 sold bicycles, books and general goods from the Recycle Warehouse, as well as talking to people about what we do. The launch of Action 21's Renewable Energy Club in December was a great success with many people getting involved. They have had a second meeting and are now encouraging Warwick and Leamington residents to generate their own electricity and heating from renewable sources such as solar panels. To get involved email renew@action21.co.uk or phone 01926 456076

Various volunteers manning the stall at the Green Fair



NEWS: Recycle Warehouse Closing

Action 21 General Manager Richard Hicks

"Sometime on the night of Sunday 20th January, part of the Recycle Warehouse ceiling fell down. The building is owned by the County Council, who told us that we couldn't use it until the ceiling had been repaired properly, which is something that they would have to arrange for us. A bit of improvisation was needed to keep the shop open in the meantime. By the following Friday we had cleared out the two shipping containers that had been used for storage and had another delivered, making just about enough space to be back in business on Saturday 26th January.

Ben Clarke, Kristie Naimo and Graham Church with the shipping containers that the Warehouse is currently running out of whilst the main building is shut



It now looks as if the Council won't be able to repair the building properly for several months, so the temporary arrangements will have to continue for a while yet. We are investigating ways in which we might be able to improve the current position but the site layout makes this very difficult. In the meantime, the good news is that we are still recycling loads of second hand goods, and earning money to support Action 21's other projects.

Many thanks to all the Warehouse volunteers and staff for the work that they have put in to keep the shop running despite the problems". Contact:

richard@action21.co.uk, 01926 456067

Diary Dates

March

Sat 1st Renewable Energy Club Meeting 10am – 12pm, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick. 01926 456076, renew@action21.co.uk

Mon 10th Energy Group meeting 7.30pm Baptist Church, Chandos St, Leamington. Contact Steven Coulsting stevenC@eco-architects.org

Thurs 27th Transport Group meeting 7.30pm Baptist Church, Chandos St, Leamington. Contact transport@action21.co.uk

April

Sat 12th Eco Spring Fair 11pm-3pm Dale Street Methodist Church in Leamington. Stalls selling green, organic and fair trade goods along with exhibits from local environmental groups and businesses. www.greenfinder.co.uk

May

Mon 12th Energy Group Meeting 7.30pm Baptist Church, Chandos St, Leamington. Contact Steven Coulsting stevenC@eco-architects.org

Weds 14th Warwickshire Volunteer Walk Leaders Event Contact Michelle for more info 01926 456076, michelle@action21.co.uk

June

4th, 5th, 6th 2008 & Beyond – Education Event Contact Michelle for more info 01926 456076

Green Champions

In January Action 21 began piloting a Green Champions project which involves volunteers getting trained up about communicating sustainability issues effectively and then engaging other people about them. Our volunteer champions have now completed their training course and are beginning to share their knowledge at various public events. They will attend all kinds of events: anywhere from schools to farmers' markets; giving talks, running activities and talking to people. By the time *Transaction* goes to print some Green Champions will have attended the Milverton School "Bags of Life" day on 22nd Feb, a day of activities and games to raise the children's awareness of recycling and reusing, including 'Whose bag is it anyway?' – a simulated lost property bin with plastic bags in it containing clues to individual members of staff!