

Manager's Message



We've got a busy year ahead of us this year, driving on with new projects to encourage sustainability in Warwickshire. Our latest member of staff, Sam, will be driving forward our energy projects over the next 6 months; we've got an office move ahead of us as well as becoming a recognised charity; and we're going to be setting up a Sustainability Centre at the heart of Leamington Spa. But, with the dedicated support from our volunteers, from local businesses and members, as well as the hard work of our staff, I've no doubt that this year will be another successful one for Action 21.

The energy future

Meet Sam, our new Interim Energy Manager

What's your job?

My job as the Interim Energy Manager is to identify and deliver practical sustainable energy projects, which will educate, inform and benefit the local Warwickshire community.



Why is energy important to you?

Energy has transformed our lives: without it we would not have any of the modern systems or comforts which we all take for granted. Our modern life was built on cheap, endless fossil fuel usage and it was believed that we could use these ancient stores of sunlight without any environmental determination.

Unless serious measures are taken now, on both the local and global levels, then human life on earth will change massively in the next century, and I believe not for the better.

What do you think the future of energy production is?

I believe the future of energy to be demand reduction and energy efficiency, combined with CHP and small and large scale renewable projects. Currently our large centralized energy production system wastes over two thirds of the electricity we produce. A smaller, de-centralized energy system would save massive amounts of energy, conserving what finite resources we have left and allowing renewables to have the lead in time they require to

have the impact that is needed. This is the energy future I am going to help achieve throughout my working life.

What's your favourite type of renewable energy?

Tidal power is currently one of the most exciting developments in renewable energy. Tidal offers a predictable and constant source of renewable energy and as sea covers 75% of the planet, tidal could offer a large amount of the global energy usage.

How did you get interested in energy?

I began my interest in the environment during my childhood growing up on the family farm, and as I believe that energy use has the biggest part to play in protecting the local and global environment this is where I focus my time and "energy".

Second-hand fairy lights at our Christmas party

Our Christmas party 2009 was, if we do say so ourselves, a great success. A horde of brilliant volunteers helped to set up the Re-Useful Centre with second hand Christmas decorations and re-used fairy lights. Kristoff the Clown visited, dishing out second-hand presents to the children, and everybody enjoyed the activities and live music.



There was food for all and especially tasty soup from Bath Place. It was a great way to celebrate Christmas, the successes of the last year and our eighth anniversary of incorporation.

Bringing history to life on the Leam: can de Normanville's turbines run again?



There have been watermills on the Leam near Mill Bridge for most of the time since the Domesday Survey of 1086. The last use of water power from the site

was to a plan by Victorian borough engineer, William Louis de Normanville, who installed a water pumping turbine in the bridge abutment. Now a proposal prepared by engineering consultancy Encraft, to generate power again from the Leam at the Mill Bridge has been put forward by a consortium of local groups. Action 21 is among these groups

On Thursday 11 March at 7.30pm at a meeting of the Warwickshire Industrial Archaeology Society in the Pyne Room at Warwick School, Matthew Rhodes (Managing Director of Encraft) and Bernard Perkins (Project Manager and Action 21 Director) will give an overview of the history of energy generation at the Mill Bridge and describe how the latest plan could bring this back into operation, and the many obstacles that still remain.

Pedal-powered generators

Action 21 is going to build a pedal-powered generator, bringing together our transport and energy themes. She went on a workshop a couple of months ago and came back with loads of great ideas, and she'll be working with a group of volunteers to develop this project. Email laura@action21.co.uk or call 01926 453030 for more information.



Saving energy through re-using electricals

The Re-Useful Centre now has its very own Portable Appliance Testing room, effectively doubling our capacity for electricals testing. As far as we know, Action 21 is the only organisation in Warwick District accepting donations of electrical goods which also tests the goods on site. We don't send them away to be tested elsewhere and so we don't need to pay for transport fuel. Our volunteers have been working hard to get the room up and going, to put training manuals together, and they're now testing a variety of donated electrical goods for re-sale and re-use.



Electricals waiting to be sold at the Re-Useful Centre!

Project report: Solar 300 challenge

We've had 21 expressions of interest in the Solar 300 Challenge since we launched the project last May, and 12 of these have completed the second questionnaire. We're hoping that now the project has its own dedicated member of staff we'll see even more people signing up.

Project report: Bicycle workshop

The bicycle team refurbish and sell around 30 bikes a week since the start of 2010. Well done!

Project report: Sydenham Community Insulation Project (SCIP)

The SCIP now well on its way to meet and exceed the target of helping to insulate 45 homes in Sydenham, helping homeowners to save money and energy, reducing fuel poverty and improving the quality of life.

Coming up at Action 21:

Dobson Lane Community Allotment: Woodland work party on Saturday 20 March, 10am-3pm (there are still some left, so call Louise on 01926 456067 to bag yours). The inaugural AGM of the Allotment Association will be held on Wednesday 24 March.

Photography exhibition: The winning entries from our competition entitled "Re-use: the possibilities are endless" will be displayed (along with some of our other photos) from 7pm-10pm on Thursday 18 March at the Oddfellows Hall in Leamington Spa. It's not too late to enter! Send in your A4 print of a photo to Action 21's office by Sunday 7 March (or email it to leanor@action21.co.uk if you can't print it out).

Green Drinks: Get together with other like-minded, green-minded people at the Slug and Lettuce function room (in Leamington), from 7.30-10.30pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

Peace Festival: On Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 June Action 21 will be at Leamington's Peace Festival, holding a stall and organising the recycling and litter-picking. We know it looks like a long way off, but we didn't want you to think that we'd forgotten!