

Blane Valley Carbon Neutral Group

Quarterly news update – August 2009

1. Expressions of interest.

In an earlier meeting, the group had a visit from one of the planning officers from Stirling Council who explained the strategic planning process and how we could provide input to the new local plan which Stirling Council are currently working on.

The group submitted 7 “expression of interest” forms to Stirling Council which should hopefully mean more carbon neutral inclusions in the new local plan.

The 7 forms were -

- a. For the local plan to support allotments
- b. For the local plan to retain and increase the amount of land zoned for business use thereby reducing the need to commute for work and shopping.
- c. For the local plan to require “PAN 84” carbon reduction measures for all new homes, not just large developments.
- d. For the local plan to prevent further development on the old railway line thereby facilitating its future reinstatement.
- e. Provide support and encouragement for local renewable energy schemes
- f. To create a cycleway to Milngavie.
- g. To create a proper village centre to encourage local businesses and reduce the need to travel for shopping.

2. Allotments.

The allotment sub group have been busy visiting each others veggie plots and comparing notes. We had a particularly interesting visit to one of our members smallholding which included sheep and pigs.

We are still searching for a suitable site, having found nothing suitable within the village perimeter – our next step is to search on the village outskirts. If you know of any suitable sites then please contact us.

We now have 10 people who definitely want an allotment locally so there is a real demand.

3. Energy Audit.

The audit will begin in the early autumn. The first steps are to recruit and train the advisors who will work on a part time basis on a flexible basis to be available when most people are at home.

The process will start with the team collecting infra red images of heat loss in buildings. This cannot start until we have colder and darker evenings and at a time when houses have their heating on. We will also be advertising the availability of the FREE audit and advice to all in the September Blane.

If you know of anyone in particular who would benefit from this scheme please hold onto their names and let us know nearer the time.

Our intention is to provide this service to everyone in the village and through insulation and advice reduce our village’s carbon emissions (and save money)

4. Energy Strategy

The Energy Strategy subgroup is consulting on possible funding for two proposed feasibility studies -

- Utilise natural resources within the community, producing electricity from renewable sources, thereby contributing to a reduction in the community's carbon footprint;
- Take community buildings off-grid (as far as possible), reducing dependence on grid power and mains water, thereby increasing sustainability and resilience (again reducing the community's carbon footprint).

We have a meeting with CARES (the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme, formerly the SCHRI programme) at the end of August and will update you in our next newsletter.

5. Odds & Sods

- Did you know you can now buy biodiesel in Morrisons at Anniesland?
- Don't forget about our bulk purchase scheme for ecover products – please contact us for more details.
- Energy saving tip – Please switch off your computer when not in use, but if you can't do this, then your computer has a number of energy saving options (go to start->control panel and then select power options)

7 Do you know how we are organised?

We are a working group of Strathblane Community Development Trust

We have a core group of people who meet every 3rd Thursday of the month in each others homes, usually 6/7 of us. We have a wider group who receive emails. We are trying to provide the wider group with more information on our activities, hence this update. If you have any comments or questions regarding our activities please email them to us. If you would wish to join in, in any way or feedback please feel free to make contact.