

Practical Steps to a Greener Cropredy.

Open Meeting in the Village Hall, Thursday October 7th 2010

1 Overview

An open meeting for the village, chaired by Stuart Alexander, was organised by a sub group of the Village Plan Steering Group, with additional help from WI members, to explore opportunities for the village community to act on various aspects of sustainability.

There were 63 attendees at the meeting. They sampled a range of regional food and drink (cheese, apples, cake, fruit cordials, fruit juices, wines, cider and beer). The sources of these are provided in Annex 1.

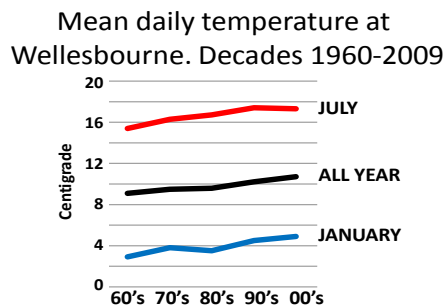
Six short talks covered a range of opportunities for action, following which participants were invited to vote for their priorities and to contribute further suggestions to an Ideas Board. Relevant websites for the talks and other information are provided in Annex 1

2 Summary of talks

Introduction (Simon Bright)

The Village Plan of 2008 identified Sustainability and Green Issues as one of the themes of interest to the Village, but was quite non-specific on precisely what actions would be supported as a result. This open meeting was therefore organised to explore in more detail what the issues might be and where there might be support for action.

Since the establishment of the Village Plan, the issues of global climate change and food security have risen up the political agenda. While these global issues are addressed (or not) in international negotiations, there is merit in looking at what can be done at a local level. With this in mind, some data on the changes in average temperatures in a nearby location (Wellesbourne, Warwickshire) taken to support crop research studies indicate that even locally we can see that there has been an increase of summer and winter temperatures over the last 50 years with the yearly average increasing from 9.1 °C to 10.7 °C



Unpublished data courtesy of Jane Fellows, Warwick University

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Speaker 1: Lower Carbon Cropredy (Tom McCulloch, ORCC)

The Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is a charity established in 1920 to support village life across the county including support of village halls, community transport and housing. Tom is the project leader of the ORCC project to support the development of low carbon communities in Oxfordshire in collaboration with Climate-X. This provides a service to improve access to energy efficiency advice, administers an energy incentive grant scheme and supports community engagement.

A specific programme at the moment is **“The Big Carbon Challenge 2010”** which offers training and support to newly formed groups wanting to take action to reduce carbon footprints between October 2010 and May 2011. **Closing date for this is Oct 31st. Anyone interested in joining such a group please contact Simon Bright.**

Website addresses are in Annex 1 for more information. Tom provided a hard copy “Oxfordshire climate change community groups handbook” which contains lots of ideas and information on what other communities are doing which is available for loan from Simon Bright.

Speaker 2 : Cropredy Church of England Primary School Eco-Council (Pupils: Oliver, Madison and Max).

The school has established an Eco-Council. Three pupils from this group, alongside the new Head Teacher, Lynne Bowen gave a splendid talk on their work on exploring insect biodiversity, plants growing in the school garden and reducing the school’s carbon footprint by using alternative transport options for the pupils such as the school bus, cycling, scooting or walking to and from school. They came up with several ways that villagers could help their work.

1. Involvement with the gardening club
2. Helping with footstep training
3. Helping with cycling proficiency training
4. Supporting the objectives by driving slowly and using alternative transport where possible.

Interested parties are requested to contact the school office directly:

office.3000@cropredy.oxon.sch.uk

Speaker 3: Greener energy (Peter Bright, Westbury sub Mendip, Somerset)

Peter lives in a village of similar size to Cropredy with many of the same challenges to developing their community. They already have an established tradition of making cider as well as apple and pear juice (which were available to sample). He described the use of **solar thermal** panels which turn sunlight into hot water and **photovoltaic** panels which produce electricity. The solar thermal panels provide his hot water without any other energy for about half the year. He had installed 24m² of photovoltaic panels which can produce 5kw of electricity at maximum sunlight. Over the previous year he had generated just over 4800 kwh (units) of electricity. His usage had been less than that so the rest was exported to the National Grid. Both of these activities are paid for under the “feed-in tariff” to support renewable supplies of electricity, which is, apparently, guaranteed for 25 years. Overall a benefit of £1968, tax free, was accrued on the initial investment of £24,600. This equated to a return of 8% and a payback period of 12.5 years at the current electricity prices. An

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important benefit of the installations is that they allow monitoring and control of household energy use.

Speaker 4: Local production & use: greener village, food for thought (Frances Whitaker, WI)

The WI has a long history of working positively for the environment and for neighbourhoods for instance through campaigns on supermarket packaging; by no means just jam and Jerusalem. Women are still the primary educators of the next generation and therefore have huge power to change the way in which today's children think about their coexistence with the planet.

Current initiatives are in keeping with the drive for a greener village

- Eat foods in season when they can be most local and cheapest
- Grow foods in season
- Love food hate waste; use what you buy by proper storage and careful use. Love your leftovers and then use the food recycling waste bins.

Speaker 5: Enhancing biodiversity (Ian Staples)

2010 is international year of biodiversity. Ian addressed the topic by describing what he had done (and not done) to encourage biodiversity on his patch of land at Appletree Lane over the last 25 years. This included minimising inputs of fertiliser, no use of pesticides, planting various native trees throughout and developing a pond in an habitually marshy area. This has led to an abundance of insect and bird life as well as wild vegetation appropriate to the different habitats. This land could be used for children's study visits and the approach could be applied to other areas of the village.

Speaker 6: Developing a community orchard (Raymond Evans, Eynsham).

The town of Eynsham subscribes to the Transition Towns movement which encourages communities to act now to reduce energy and prepare for a lower carbon future. There are groups working on energy, waste, transport and food. A hundred years ago, Eynsham was surrounded by orchards. This project is aiming to plant fruit trees in suitable small and large spaces such as new housing developments, parish land and verges. They have also organised an Apple Festival to celebrate the apple harvest. They are very happy to help other community groups to develop their own orchards.

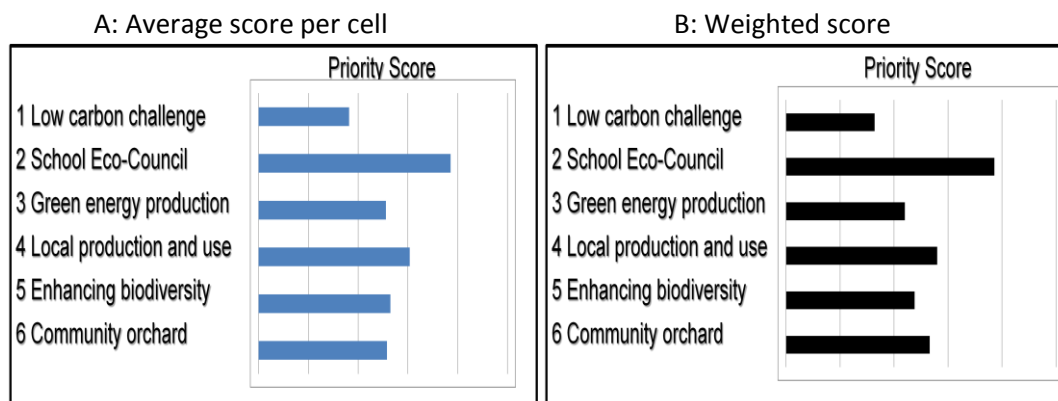
3 Voting on priorities

The audience were then invited to vote for their preferences for action by marking the voting slip with their priority order of support for the six areas (1= highest priority), leaving blank any they did not support. Thirty-one ballot papers were returned. The results were analysed in different ways which gave broadly similar views of the priorities for action. The anonymised raw data is available if people are interested in doing their own analysis

a) *Average scores per cell*: the sum of each marked cell (1-6) was divided by the number of marked cells (ie discarding cells left blank). The score was then subtracted from 6 so that highest priority stands out (option 2).

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b) *Weighted score*. The scores were weighted to reflect a higher priority for early preferences. 1=10, 2=7, 3=4, 4,5,6=2, blank=0



Conclusions from this analysis are:

1. All the options were supported to some extent. Each option had at least one person who marked it as their highest priority. There is no limit on the number of options that interested parties can take forward
2. Supporting the work of the school Eco-council was the highest priority activity overall. Nineteen people placed this first or second preference.
3. The topic of local production and use was the next most highly rated priority, followed by the biodiversity and orchard ideas which perhaps share some overlap. Green energy suggestions were taken up in the ideas board as well as having generated some support (nine people placed it first or second preference).
4. The Low Carbon Challenge received the least support. However, there is only a need for a few households to undertake this challenge, should they wish.

4 Ideas Board

25 ideas were put forward to the ideas board and were grouped into six areas.

Group 1: Energy saving

- Turn off street lights
- Efficient lighting in public and private buildings (uplighters in the Village Hall?)

Group 2: Energy generation

- Look into solar panels for the village hall or sports pavilion or church
- Energy solutions for village hall/ church
- Cropredy sewage plant for methane gas generation
- Electricity from river/ canal

Group 3: Sustainable production, use and recycling

- Reduce food waste by sharing/ exchanging
- Swap scheme with pubs/ shop in exchange for vouchers
- "Unwanted goods" section on village website to pass on domestic items eg furniture/ electrical goods
- Sharing scheme for excess/ waste fruit/ veg

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- Nappies washable v disposable
- Boaters blue box scheme was a disaster but individual collected blue boxes could be more successful

Group 4: School

- Encourage use of bicycles: places to lock/ park
- 20 mph limit throughout Cropredy to encourage cyclists

Group 5: Enhancing biodiversity

- Plant fruit trees in the childrens playground
- Area for a woodland walk (as well as orchard)
- Village beehives
- Create biodiversity area in playground (mini woodland, wild flowers, long grass)
- Village pigs in community orchard
- Allow churchyard to grow, mow only essential areas
- Bring sheep back to the churchyard

Group 6: Communication

- Green page in the Cropredy Crier to exchange ideas
- Link into existing groups eg WI, Horticultural Society flower and produce show
- What local grants are available?
- Leaflet to provide information on grants/financial assistance available to householders

5 Next steps

1. This meeting report will be posted on the Village website and emailed to the contact list. A brief update has already been provided to the Parish Council and will appear in the Cropredy Crier
2. People interested in supporting the school eco-council should contact the School Office directly office.3000@cropredy.oxon.sch.uk.
3. Closing date for the Big Carbon Challenge competition is Oct 31st. Anyone interested in forming or joining such a group please contact Simon Bright very soon.
4. The WI committee will consider what follow up there could be after the support expressed for their initiatives.
5. The organising group with any additional volunteers will develop further follow up plans. They would be most interested to hear of actions taking place as a result of the talks and discussions at the meeting.

Simon Bright 19 October 2010

Contact simon@jbright.demon.co.uk.

ANNEX 1: Food for thought

Suppliers



Banbury boiled cake by Gill Harris, Cropredy

English wine from Three Choirs Vineyard, Glos <http://www.three-choirs-vineyards.co.uk/>

Cider from Windmill Vineyard, Hellidon, Daventry 01327 262023

Hook Norton Ale <http://www.hooknortonbrewery.co.uk/> from Majestic Wine Warehouse Banbury and Spar Shop

Truckle cheese: Fowlers of Earlswood, Warks <http://www.traditionalcheeses.co.uk/> & Banbury Farmers Market <http://www.tvfm.org.uk/market/3/banbury/>

Elderflower cordials: Blossom Cottage and Belvoir Farms (J Sainsbury)

Berry cordial: New Creation Farm, Nether Heyford, Northants & Banbury Farmers Market http://www.newcreation.org.uk/nccc/businesses_gt.shtml

Internet resources

Speakers organisations

Cropredy Village Plan <http://www.cropredyvillage.info/New%20Village%20Plan.htm>
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council <http://www.oxonrcc.org.uk/>
Cropredy School http://www.cropredyprimaryschool.org.uk/EcoSchool_00.html
Westbury sub Mendip <http://www.westbury-sub-mendip.org.uk/current/index.php/>
The WI & Climate Change <http://www.thewi.org.uk/standard.aspx?id=10951>
Eynsham transition town <http://www.eynsham.org/teahome.html>

Other Information

Oxon climate activities <http://climatex.org/>
Low Carbon Hook Norton <http://hook-norton.org.uk/village-groups/low-carbon-hook-norton.html>
Community Action Groups <http://www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk/>
Warwickshire Action 21 charity <http://www.action21.co.uk/projects.html>
Carbon Footprint calculator <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe>
Start: Prince Charles & Sustainability <http://www.startuk.org/about.aspx>
Ecotricity energy company <http://www.ecotricity.co.uk/>
Maths lessons for locavores <http://budiansky.blogspot.com/2010/09/sustainable-sentiments.html>
Eating seasonably www.eatseasonably.co.uk
Love Food Hate Waste <http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>