

Sustainable Youlgrave awarded £20K for renewable energy study

Sustainable Youlgrave has been awarded a grant of £20,000 by the Peak District National Park to find out whether one or more anaerobic digestion facilities can be established in the valley of the River Bradford.

The grant is from the Sustainable Development Fund and will allow us to hire consultants who specialise in developing this cutting-edge renewable energy technology. The money will go towards a full feasibility study that will take place this Spring, hopefully starting before the end of February.

Put simply, anaerobic digestion is a natural process whereby organic green wastes are broken down in a sealed vessel and the resulting gases trapped and converted into 'green' electricity. We hope to find out whether it will be economically and technically viable to establish facilities at suitable locations in the Youlgrave area. Since slurry, farmyard manure and other green wastes are likely to be high on the agenda, we are already working closely with local farmers. Consultation across the community is also planned.

"It's very encouraging that the Peak National Park has confidence in our ambitious plans and are prepared to back community-led green ventures," said John Youatt, Chairman of Sustainable Youlgrave. "Anaerobic digestion plants are common in rural Germany and elsewhere in Europe, but in Britain they're relatively scarce. We aim to prove that renewable energy



A view of Youlgrave from Harthill – including two potential if unwitting participants in our future plans!

technology is not just feasible but is appropriate in a National Park setting."

He also hoped that the generous SDF grant, which is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, would encourage other local community groups to follow in Sustainable Youlgrave's footsteps. Indeed, the project will include the production of a generic report that will be made available to groups who have similar aspirations.

In addition to the SDF award, we are committing some of our own funds (including part of last year's Future Friendly award), as well as discussing a significant contribution from the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) which has shown a keen interest in our proposals and with whom we are in increasingly close touch. Watch this space!



Solar evening proves illuminating

On Thursday 22 January Sustainable Youlgrave held an open meeting to learn more about in the ins and outs of solar and photovoltaic (PV) energy in a domestic context.

About 25 people attended and there was information on not just the technical issues of how a solar heating system actually works, but also some hard facts about how much a 'retro fit' actually costs and what are the likely returns. There were also details of what grants are currently available and the planning rules and regulations as applied to installing solar and PV panels on your homes. Expert advice was provided by two knowledgeable young men from Eco Skies, a Renewable Energy Training Centre based at Chesterfield (more details at www.ecoskies.com). Not only did they bring along actual solar panels for people to examine, but they explained in everyday language how a solar heating system works and why, in this current economic climate (not to mention the other one) it really does make sound financial as well as environmental sense to invest in solar roof panels. The key advice is that solar hot water is now well established and usually doesn't need planning permission. Solar electric is neater, but won't be economically attractive until the now-promised 'feed in tariffs' are in place – up to 30p per unit in a year's time, retrospective!

Why keep spare cash in a bank, gaining virtually no interest, when you could invest it in long-lasting renewable energy technology for your home that will (a) immediately reduce your energy bills, (b) repay itself very rapidly, and (c) increase the value of your home? All in all, a much better financial return and surely a bit of a no brainer!

We are aware that a number of local people who are very interested in installing this technology in their homes were unable to make the meeting, so it's possible we might repeat it. Let us know what you think.



SY ROUND-UP

WOOD WASTE: *We continue to liaise with the Peak District National Park and the Forestry Commission over a local study into the potential of wood waste as fuel. We are commenting on a draft report that covers all our local woodlands and that sets out the potential amount of wood thinnings that could be a resource for fuel if managed properly. Further meetings are planned and we are attempting the not always easy task of identifying woodland ownership.*

YOULGRAVE SCHOOL: *Working with the Head Teacher and Governors, as well as liaising with Derbyshire County Council, we have continued our investigations into the efficiency of the radon fans in the school building. We also hope to make suggestions for improving all-round insulation. The pupils' contribution to last November's Climate Change Awareness Day was fantastic (see opposite page).*

PEAK NATIONAL PARK: *Sustainable Youlgrave will be responding in full to the Authority's draft Climate Change Action Plan that has recently been released for stakeholder consultation. If SY members would like to be involved in our deliberations contact Andrew on 01629 636125, andrew.mccloy@btinternet.com.*

'TALKING HEADS'

A Cotton Grass Theatre production of Alan Bennett's acclaimed and award-winning portrayal of conventional middle-class life in the north. Funny and poignant.

**Friday 13 March
Youlgrave Village Hall, 7.30pm.**

This is a fundraising event for Sustainable Youlgrave. Please come along and show your support. Tickets cost £8/£5 and are available on the door.

Climate Change brought closer to home: making local and community connections

The Village Hall was buzzing on Saturday 1st November last year with people trying to find out how to save energy and money – and the planet. Sustainable Youlgrave's Climate Change Day had lots to see and do.

The local authority Climate Change bus was parked on Holywell Lane. There were free cotton shopping bags, carbon calculators and light bulbs and information about recycling, composting and renewable energy from wood fuel. Andrew Hubble exhibited pictures of two local ground-source heating schemes he has recently installed. Sally Wheel from the Peak National Park's Ranger Service helped us work out the size of our carbon footprints.



Youlgrave School produced an exhibition (specially commissioned for the event) of children's paintings and poetry on the theme of the environment. Youlgrave Cinema showed a series of short films on climate change – Mark Shearing transformed the village hall stage into a superb small film studio.



Maggie Ford from Bankside Wildlife Garden offered tours of the estate, while Haddon trout fishery (a slightly bigger estate) brought information about their proposed mini hydro scheme. No less importantly, the Bangbutt Committee provided a Developing World perspective about their work helping villagers in Sierra Leone.

Youlgrave Water put their product on the line and offered a blind tasting. Could you tell the difference between Youlgrave Water, Severn Trent and the bottled stuff? The results were very interesting, if a little contradictory. Youlgrave Waterworks has said it will go public with them, once it's worked out what it all means!

Our photographic competition (on the theme of climate change and the environment) attracted a small but high class field - and was won by Tricia Donnison.

Drinks, snacks and locally-sourced lunches were provided by Jean Youatt and Glenys Moore in the social room. They did a roaring trade all day and kept the exhibitors well refreshed.

All in all, it was a rewarding and enjoyable day. Thank you to everyone who exhibited and helped to make it such a success.





Sustainable Youlgrave began in 2006 when a group of likeminded villagers in the Youlgrave area came together to discuss ways in which, by thinking globally but acting locally, we could do our bit to combat climate change and at the same time make our rural community fully sustainable. We are exploring a range of initiatives which covers renewable energy generation, educational and energy-saving projects, plus related themes such as promoting local shops and services. We cover the main settlements of Youlgrave, Alport and Middleton-by-Youlgrave. Sustainable Youlgrave is an independent community group run by and for local people. To get involved contact John Youatt on 01629 636241 or Andrew McCloy on 01629 636125, or email sustainableyoulgrave@sustainableyoulgrave.org



The new LEADER gets going

Last Year Sustainable Youlgrave was invited to put forward a representative to sit on the Local Action Group for the Leader grant programme in the Peak District. SY Chairman John Youatt volunteered and at its January meeting the LAG approved the first four of many applications in the pipeline, subject to contract.

- ◆ *fleece and fibre processing at an old mill*
- ◆ *new osteopathy clinic in an old smithy*
- ◆ *mixed uses at another old mill, including woodworking, 'greening' the site and a conservation consultancy*
- ◆ *improvements to the bunk barn and campsite at a country inn.*

John comments: "These first four were a joy to receive and approve, as they seem to me to be the essence of rural life and business". The grant regime is very strict but fair. Maximum grant is 50%, the other half must be your own. A fuller account of the Leader programme will appear in a future edition of Youlgrave's Bugle. Meanwhile, ask John if you have a project you think might qualify (636241).

NEWS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

'Greening' community buildings

Last year, Bonsall Energy Group commissioned the Centre for Alternative Technology to carry out a study into the energy efficiency of local community buildings, including the village hall and school, the parish church and chapels. The draft report has now been completed and it looks at how the efficiency of the buildings can be improved, as well as the potential for renewable energy generation in the village. It may well contain information that proves useful to other community groups. To see the full findings go to www.bonsallvillage.org and click on 'Energy Group'.

Bakewell gets sustainable

Newly-founded Sustainable Bakewell has been given a boost by the National Park's Sustainable Development Fund, which has given the group over £8,000 to initiate a number of key local projects within the town and establish a community interest company. The proposed projects involve awareness work with local residents and schools, a feasibility study into local mini hydro and improved cardboard recycling for local businesses. For more details go to www.sustainablebakewell.org.uk/

Matlock in Transition

Transition Matlock is holding an introductory event at the Imperial Rooms in Matlock on Wednesday 25 February, 7.30-9.30pm, for anyone who would like to know more about the group's activities and what Transition Towns are all about. There's some useful details at www.littlegreenspace.org.uk/transitionmatlock.htm and for the fuller picture on Transition Towns go to www.transitiontowns.org.

**Everybody's talking about
climate change**



A DEFRA supported local government climate change public awareness campaign throughout Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire