



Conference Report

Derbyshire Community Climate Action Conference

Saturday 13th March 2010

Derbyshire County Council, County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG



1. Summary

'We all keep hearing about our carbon footprint and climate change but it can be hard to know what to do about it.

This conference provided plenty of practical advice, tips and ideas on what we can all do to reduce our carbon emissions and go green for the good of our communities.'

Councillor John Allsop, Cabinet Member for Recycling and Technologies (pictured on front cover holding poster)

Derbyshire County Council's first ever Community Climate Action Conference was a great success. Event delegates spent the day discovering new ideas on how our communities can successfully tackle climate change, and indeed, how they already are.

The day included inspiring speeches from Dr. Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner of the Town and County Planning Association and Cathy Cooke, Eco-Centre Manager for Derbyshire Adult Education Service.

Community groups shared their knowledge and skills with each other. Workshops run in the morning session highlighted the diversity of work going on in communities in Derbyshire, ranging from 'Going Plastic Bag Free', to 'Taking Charge of Your Home's Energy Use,' and 'Setting up a Community-Owned Renewable Energy Scheme.'

In the afternoon a range of Service Providers led workshops to demonstrate how their services and programmes could support the work already being done by community groups to reduce carbon emissions and move further towards a low carbon economy.

Conference delegates also had the opportunity to share with each other, with Council Officers and with Councillors, the support they needed to take the climate change agenda forward within their communities. This provided several ideas for how support available to community groups on this agenda can be improved.

Feedback to the Conference was overwhelmingly positive. Perhaps the most obvious sign that the conference met a need amongst community groups was the request from many of the delegates to run a Community Climate Change Conference on an annual basis.

'An inspirational day – well worth repeating.' –
Delegate

2. Overview

Audience

The Conference audience consisted of:

- Individuals or members of existing community groups interested in taking action or forming groups to tackle climate change.
- Representatives from existing low carbon community groups.
- Representatives from local authorities and other third sector organisations who work with low carbon community groups or who are planning to work with low carbon community groups.
- Elected Members.

The second group made up the largest sector represented at the Conference and they clearly felt a need for this kind of event to support them in their work.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Conference were:

- To inspire low carbon community groups. For example, by encouraging them to have a more ambitious or focussed vision, to improve knowledge of how to seek funding, to improve knowledge of tools or techniques to be more effective.
- To enable existing low carbon community groups to take further steps to reduce carbon emissions within their communities.
- To help local authorities and other service providers to engage with, and better understand, low carbon community groups and ascertain what support they need from the public sector.
- To share the good practice which already exists within low carbon community groups in Derbyshire and celebrate their achievements.
- To improve communication and relationships between community groups and 'service providers', amongst community groups, and amongst service providers.

3. Structure of the day

Given the audience, the day was designed to be informal and inspirational. It offered lots of opportunities for community groups to input their own knowledge and skills and network with each other and with service providers. There were also opportunities to hear from experts in the field of climate change.

Keynote speech

The day began with a welcome and introduction to the Conference from Councillor John Allsop, Cabinet Member for Technology and Recycling.

This was followed by an inspiring keynote speech about tackling climate change from Dr Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner of the Town and Country Planning Association (www.tcpa.org.uk). Hugh also answered questions on a range of topics from conference delegates.

Workshops

Most of the Conference was then given over to carousel-style workshops run by community groups and service providers.

In the morning eight community groups provided a workshop which explained an initiative they have undertaken within their community group. Each workshop lasted 25 minutes and ran three times in a row, allowing delegates to choose three of the workshops to attend. The same format was used in the afternoon with workshops run by service providers. Workshops leaders had free reign to run their workshop as they chose, but it was suggested they begin with a ten minute presentation explaining where the idea for the initiative came from, how it was implemented and lessons that the group had learnt from running the initiative. This was then followed by fifteen minutes of questions and group discussion about how the initiative might be repeated and/or adapted by other groups.

'Workshop groups were excellent as they gave great opportunities for sharing ideas and networking, as well as gaining information.'
Delegate

Afternoon workshops were run by representatives from a range of service providers which can offer help and advice to community groups. They followed the same carousel format as the morning workshops.

Organisations who led workshops, and the topics of the workshops covered, are listed below.

Community Group	Workshop Topic	Website
Sustainable Wirksworth	Going Plastic Bag Free	
Transition Buxton	Buxton 2030 - A visualisation of what our community may be like in twenty years time	www.transitionbuxton.co.uk
Combs Village Hall Trust	Reducing energy use with an Air Source Heat Pump	www.combsvillagehall.org.uk
Transition Chesterfield	Skills share workshops	www.transitionchesterfield.org.uk
Torrs Hydro	Setting up a community-owned renewable energy scheme	www.torrshydro.org
Transition Matlock	Community supported agriculture schemes	www.transitionmatlock.org.uk
Transition Matlock	Taking Charge of Your Home's Energy Use	www.transitionmatlock.org.uk
Transition Hope Valley	Setting up a transition town	transitionhopevalley.wikispaces.com

Service Provider	Workshop Topic	Website
Global Action Plan	Eco Teams	www.globalactionplan.org.uk
Energy Saving Trust	The Green Communities Programme	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
Energy 4 All	Support for community-owned renewables	www.energy4all.co.uk
Planning Aid	Taster session on the planning system	www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Marches Energy Agency	The Low Carbon Communities Programme	www.mea.org.uk
Rural Action Derbyshire	Community Renewables: Feed-in Tariffs / Warm Homes, Greener Homes	www.derbyshirercc.org.uk
Climate Outreach and Information Network	Climate Action Groups	coinet.org.uk
Derbyshire County Council	Current Cost Energy Monitors	www.derbyshire.gov.uk

Please see the appendices for more information on the workshops.

Lunchtime Marketplace

The Marketplace offered delegates the chance to showcase their work and learn what service providers could offer them. There was also an informal opportunity to network with others over a buffet lunch.

In a **post-lunch speech**, Cathy Cooke, Derbyshire County Council's Eco-Centre Manager, explained the launch of the new Eco-Centre, and how will it be used to promote education for sustainable development on behalf of Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service.

(www.collegeofthepeak.org.uk).

Action planning session

The day ended with a feedback and action planning session to enable the council to determine how to move forward in its support of community groups working to tackle climate change.

'Congratulations to the County Council for putting on such a great and needed event.' - **Delegate**

4. Outcomes of the day

Conference delegates raised a range of issues during the feedback and action planning sessions, which informed the council's understanding of what holds communities back from tackling the climate change agenda, and what support is required from local authorities to support groups moving forwards.

What Holds Communities Back

- Communities taking action on climate change are often rich in enthusiasm, ideas and local knowledge. But they are often poor in time, resources, funding and specialist knowledge and skills.
- Some of the groups who attended the conference also spoke of the frustration that sets in when groups have been working in the area for a while and it becomes hard to stay motivated when little seems to be happening.
- Current legislation regarding planning makes it difficult to install renewable technologies.
- Balancing what we do locally, with what is done nationally and internationally.

What Community Groups Want

- A forum for discussing ideas with different groups / sharing knowledge / networking – perhaps electronic. Something similar to the Conference that is taken forwards on a regular basis.
- Support from local authorities and improved direction nationally on engaging a wider range of people in the climate change agenda. There is potential to engage more people by focusing attention on the Peak Oil agenda.
- Changes to the planning system that makes it less restrictive of applications made for proposed renewable energy installations.
- A continued and improved lead on the climate agenda from Derbyshire County Council.
- To embrace the opportunities that moving to a low carbon future will bring. For example, promoting Derbyshire as a hub for building low carbon technologies and renewables, which will in turn, bolster the county's economy.

Feedback

Feedback at the end of the Conference was very positive and many delegates expressed interest for a similar event to support community groups already engaged in this agenda on an annual basis.

People liked the workshop format and the opportunity to network with others and make new contacts. The day was important in helping people to feel confident that they are not working alone and that there are other like-minded people out there. They were also glad to find that there are organisations that can support people to achieve their goals.

Finally, they were also pleased to see the Council doing something to help support them and being prepared to listen to them.

Next Steps

Derbyshire County Council will take the following steps in light of the Conference to further its support of communities.

- Support Rural Action Derbyshire in setting up a Community Climate Change Network, to communicate feelings from community groups/individuals tackling climate change, to decision-makers, via the Local Area Agreement representative on the Derbyshire Partnership Forum's Climate Change Sub Group.
- Update the Climate Change section of DCC website and including a Communities section to support local action.
- Actively consider how to engage a wider Derbyshire audience in the climate change agenda, potentially by using Peak Oil and other issues, if it is these which make people listen and take action. This issue will be on the agenda at the next meeting of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum Climate Change Sub Group.
- Continue to engage County Councillors in the climate change agenda to develop improved support network to filter through to communities.

5. Resources Available Post-Conference

Everybody's Talking About Climate Change Website: www.everybodys-talking.org

This website was re-launched in April 2010. The site is a local online resource for climate change action in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Community Climate Action Network:

This network is was re-launched in April 2010, having originally run from April 2008 to March 2009. It consists of:

- **An E-Newsletter (nine times per year)** with all the latest news on events in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and climate change developments. Subscribe by sending an email with 'Subscribe' in the title line to caroline.harmon@mea.org.uk. Send items for inclusion to the same email address.
- **A Networking and Signposting Service** allowing groups to access information on organisations that can help them and groups which are doing similar work. This will be accessible by both a phone and an email service.
- **Online Profiles of Climate Community Action Groups on the Everybody's Talking About Climate Change Website.** www.everybodys-talking.org/communities-area. All groups which have members subscribed to the existing e-newsletter were sent a profile form to fill in during May or June 2010. Any other groups wishing to have a profile should send an email to caroline.harmon@mea.org.uk.

Enjoyed the day and felt reinvigorated by it.' - **Delegate**

Appendix 1: Summary of Community Group and Service Provider Workshops

Sustainable Wirksworth

Going Plastic Bag Free

- A loan from the Town Council provided start up costs, to purchase first batch of 500 biodegradable bags with Sustainable Wirksworth logo.
- Approached traders about stocking biodegradable bags, with most supportive of the initiative.
- First batch were sold on the street and with a pilot scheme in one shop. Sold out within a week and next order included bags for all food outlets and some gift shops.
- When the window of the Mini Market was smashed they decided to replace it using our logo, which was a major show of their commitment.
- Most people now take a biodegradable bag with them, and most shops ask for a donation for non-degradable bags if one is requested.

Transition Buxton

Visioning 2030

www.transitionbuxton.co.uk/

- Buxton 2030 was an evening event to create a vision of what Buxton could be like in 2030, having successfully made the transition to a low energy, low carbon and resilient community.
- To start to get a feel for what our lives as individuals might be like in that future Buxton.
- Identifying how we are currently reliant on oil as a prelude to identifying what changes are required within our communities.
- Completed several exercises from the Transition Handbook, including game with a ball of string to demonstrate community's resilience.
- Event ended with a summary of what Transition Buxton has been doing, and how others can get involved.

Combs Village Hall Trust

Reducing energy use with an Air Source Heat Pump and solar tubes

www.combsvillagehall.org.uk

- Combs Village Hall and original chapel (1864) are sub-leased to Derbyshire County Council for use as an infant school, with Combs Village Hall Trust being responsible for all utility bills.
- Dramatic moves in energy prices, as well as the introduction of ICT into the school curriculum has meant that energy costs have risen significantly since 2006.
- Combs Village Hall Trust has introduced upgrades and new energy conversion technologies (air source heat pump) in order to survive and continue to provide services to the community.
- Reduction in energy consumption in the Village Hall since implementation of new technologies is impressive.
- Current stage of the project is to work in partnership with High Peak Borough Council to make information on the project available to a wider audience via workshops and websites.

Transition Chesterfield

Skills share workshops

www.transitionchesterfield.org.uk

- Since Oct 2008 Transition Chesterfield has organised over 30 workshops, attended by around 300 people.
- Subjects range from wild food foraging to bread-making to bike maintenance. Workshops are hugely popular with many workshops fully booked within days.
- Workshops identify skills in the community. Many workshop leaders are people who have been on previous workshops.
- Workshops bring in lots of new people and provide soft introduction to hard issues.
- Workshops are all led by volunteers, often in people's homes, mostly 2 hours duration, £2 per person.

Torrs Hydro

Setting up a community-owned renewable energy scheme

www.torrshydro.org

- Torrs Hydro: New Mills, is the UK's first community-owned hydropower scheme. It has been producing power on site since September 2008 and recently generated its 275,000th kWh of electrical power.
- In total, the scheme cost around £330,000. A community share issue raised over £125,000, with grant funding providing another £165,000.
- Members - the 230 shareholders - own the scheme. The shareholders are mostly local people and businesses plus people from further afield who wish to support renewable energy schemes.
- The local supermarket buys all of the electricity produced. Any power surplus to its needs is sold through the national grid.
- Torrs Hydro holds well attended open afternoons over the summer and has commenced an educational programme with local schools. Future profits from the scheme will fund a community grants programme.

Transition Matlock

Community Supported Agriculture

www.transitionmatlock.org.uk

- Developing a partnership between consumers and producers where the responsibilities, risks and rewards are more evenly shared.
- Key characteristics include shared risk, transparency and democratic governance, access to land for leisure and the development of a social network around the farm.
- Supports local people to benefit from farm projects by paying towards the cost of these projects, and receiving a share of the produce.
- Project supports reduced food miles – lambs travel two miles from fields to local abattoir, and butchers. Keeps money in the local economy and develops a sense of community and trust.
- Want to continue project by initiating schemes to complement the local organic food that is already available.

Transition Matlock

Taking charge of your home's energy use

www.transitionmatlock.org.uk/

- Transition Matlock's Home Energy Group aims to encourage and assist people to understand and reduce their energy consumption, energy bills and carbon footprint.
- Seeking to develop a network of people in the town who have understood and reduced their energy consumption, who can pass on the low carbon, smart living message further.
- Currently putting together a low energy light bulb library to loan out to supporters and the public, together with the Current Cost Monitors.
- Daytime stalls at public eco-events with displays of low energy light bulbs and current cost monitors have proven successful, with each event engaging between 30 and 70 people.
- Currently considering the benefits of focusing solely on running stalls at public eco-events, rather than stand-alone workshops which are not always well attended and are time consuming to organise.

Transition Hope Valley

Setting up a Transition Community

transitionhopevalley.wikispaces.com

- The workshop enabled participants to share and reflect on experiences of setting up a transition community.
- Link Transition Town movements to existing initiatives within your community (e.g. Business Energy advice groups).
- Consider large scale 'green' events, and skills sharing workshops to raise awareness and increase support for the movement.
- Don't let your energies / achieving your goals be distracted by a necessity to meet criteria in place to access grant funding.
- Need to let members focus on their enthusiasms to ensure group doesn't run out of steam.

Global Action Plan

Eco Teams

www.ecoteams.org.uk

- Eco Teams are groups of residents working together for 5-6 months to reduce their household environmental impact, through a Global Action Plan programme.
- Eco Teams cover energy, water, rubbish/recycling, shopping and travel and each meeting has a pattern – review previous actions, discuss new topics, agree actions to take for next month.
- Global Action Plan has ranked 100 actions in terms of carbon savings, to help participants work out which are the most significant things for them. We aim to help people to take things as far as they can.
- Because the teams last for a short duration they can be a good ‘taster’ for people, or a starter to link them into other initiatives (can fit into a Transition Town programme, etc)
- We ask people to check their gas, electricity and water meters each month. This allows Global Action Plan to give personalised feedback on the changes that have been made.

Energy Saving Trust

Green Communities

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

- The Green Communities section of the EST website provides help and support available to groups wishing to reduce their Carbon Footprint.
- Telephone and email support to answer questions, provides impartial and independent advice.
- Provide funding advice and access to a comprehensive funding database, a Baseline tool for development of an Action Plan, and Community Carbon Footprint tool.
- Offers a variety of training courses including on The Planning Process, Old or Listed Buildings, and Income Generation Models for community energy.
- Green Communities is a flagship project supporting 5 schemes in the East Midlands with dedicated and long-term support.

Energy4All

Support for community-owned renewables

www.energy4all.co.uk

- Energy4All was formed in 2002 to expand the number of renewable energy co-operatives in the UK as an integral part of our transition to a low carbon economy.
- Can provide innovative financial models to raise equity capital through share issues, supported by bank facilities where appropriate.
- Can undertake site monitoring and management services once a project is established.
- Many co-ops in the Energy4All family spend a proportion of their income on environmental work in their local communities.
- Energy4All has established the website www.energysteps.coop which provides tools for an initial self-assessment on whether wind energy projects are likely to be financially and technically viable.

Planning Aid

Taster session on the Planning system

www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

- Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees.
- It complements the work of local planning authorities, but is wholly independent of them.
- Planning Aid can provide support by commenting on planning applications, participating in preparing plans and to develop understanding and use of the planning system.
- Planning Aid helps to meet one of the key aims of the government's planning reform agenda, which is to place community engagement at the heart of the planning system.
- Key principles of the Planning System include spatial planning, community involvement, being deliverable, and sustainability.

Marches Energy Agency

Low Carbon Communities

www.mea.org.uk

- Low Carbon Communities is a programme seeking to inspire a step change in responding to climate change and fuel security at a community level.
- Provides sustainable energy tools and knowledge directly into homes, schools, businesses and community buildings.
- MEA offers a range of options as part of your Low Carbon Communities Project, including energy surveys for homes, community buildings and small businesses, workshops for homeowners, online energy monitoring, work in schools, volunteer training, help and advice on funding opportunities and project coordination.
- Access to resources including energy display monitors and light bulb libraries.
- A shared journey that builds momentum so that taking action becomes the norm and people feel empowered and supported to do so.

Rural Action Derbyshire

Community Renewables: Feed-in-Tariffs

www.derbyshirecra.org.uk

- Rural Action Derbyshire works in close partnership with other agencies to help Derbyshire's rural communities tackle the challenges and opportunities they face – both now and in the future.
- Workshop enabled participations to share knowledge on Feed-in-Tariffs and identify how they could be used in our communities.
- The scheme provides a fixed payment for the electricity you generate, called the "generation tariff". It also pays for any unused electricity that you export to the grid, the "export tariff". A further benefit is that you won't have to pay for the electricity that you generate and use yourself.
- Community projects can qualify for the scheme, provided installations are no greater than 5 megawatts.
- Technologies that qualify for the scheme include wind turbines, solar photovoltaic (PV) electric, hydroelectricity and anaerobic digestion.

Climate Outreach and Information Network

Climate Action Groups

coinet.org.uk

- COIN inspires lasting changes in attitudes and behaviour through the use of innovative action learning methods and by assisting people to communicate their own messages to their peers.
- Climate Action Groups (CAGs) are for people who want to come together to share thoughts, ideas, feelings and concerns on climate change and to then take decisive action within their local communities.
- COIN has launched a Climate Action Group toolkit that incorporates learning from previous Climate Action Groups and provides all the information you need to set up and support CAGs in your local area.
- COIN works with a local individual or group to set up a “matchmaker meeting” to enable people to form groups around particular topics.
- From a single matchmaker event, several Climate Action Groups are formed on issues ranging from lobbying local government to do more to reduce emissions to promoting green technologies in the home.

Derbyshire County Council

Current Cost Energy Monitors

www.derbyshire.gov.uk

- The Council is lending out electricity current cost monitors through a loan scheme operating in county libraries.
- Borrowing a Current Cost Monitor provides an opportunity to monitor household electricity consumption over a 28-day period to help you identify how you are wasting electricity and money.
- The monitors predict the cost of your consumption per day and per month based on your current usage.
- The Current Cost Monitor won't cut your electricity consumption or your fuel bills on its own, but it can encourage you to change your electricity-using habits.
- Those who have monitored electricity consumption for 28 days have recorded significant reductions in electricity usage and corresponding financial savings from taking part.

Appendix Two: Conference Programme

Derbyshire Community Climate Action Conference
Saturday 13th March, 9.15 – 16.00
Derbyshire County Council, County Hall, Matlock

Programme

9:15	Registration and Refreshments
9.45	Welcome to the Conference Councillor John Allsop, Cabinet Member for Technology & Recycling, Derbyshire County Council
9.50	Keynote Speaker Dr. Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner, Town and Country Planning Association
10.15	Introduction to the Morning Workshops
10.30	Carousel Workshops 1 - 3 led by Community Groups
12.15	Morning Feedback and summary Plenary session
12.30	Lunch, Networking and Market Place (Committee Room 1)
13.15	Speaker Cathy Cooke, Eco Centre Manager, Derbyshire County Council
13.30	Introduction to the Afternoon Workshops
13.45	Carousel Workshops A – C led by Service Providers
15.30	Afternoon feedback and summary Plenary session
15.45	Next Steps
16.00	End

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/climatechange

