

create a better place

update

our staff
magazine
May 2007



81

Photograph: tbkmedia.de/Alamy

Changing climate: changing planet

The pressure is increasing on us all to adapt to climate change. And now that it's top of the political agenda, we're leading the way forward

Spring has arrived, but for many of us winter never really came. In fact, the last 12 months have been the warmest on record, and 2007 is forecast to be even warmer.

Responding to these changes and integrating them into our planning is challenging, but not impossible. The Environment Agency is one of the UK's foremost public bodies with a responsibility for adapting to climate change, and we are taking the lead in England and Wales in a number of key areas.

We're investing more in flood risk management in the medium and long term because of the increasing likelihood of winter flooding. We're adopting a more tactical approach to coastal strategy because our decisions about future risk will require a careful calculation. Chief Executive Barbara Young said: 'Our present efforts to reduce emissions will limit climate change during the second half of the century, but now we need to adapt

to changes that are, for all practical purposes unavoidable.'

The earlier onset of spring is one of the key findings of the most recent assessment report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a team of over 2,000 scientists from all over the world. It examines the global impacts of climate change and how we can best adapt to its unavoidable consequences.

The report, launched on 6 April, found that 99 per cent of observed changes in physical and biological systems were consistent with changes in temperature. Some of these are now familiar reading – reducing ice-caps, retreating glaciers, rising sea levels, warming oceans and increasing drought.

In Europe, up to 2.5 million people could be directly affected by coastal flooding by 2080 and half of Europe's flora could become vulnerable, endangered or extinct



by the end of the century. Heat waves are likely to become more frequent and severe, while lowest river flows could decrease by up to 50 per cent. In winter, flooding will be more common with an increased chance of flash flooding.

As part of our drive to adapt to climate change, we're making 4-8 June Climate Change Week. Tying in with World Environment Day on 5 June, the week will focus on how you can reduce your carbon footprint by changing at work, whether it's recycling more or driving less. 'What we need now is real, practical work on the ground,' said Barbara Young.

[Find out more at the Climate Change Channel on Easinet](#)

Do you know a climate change hero?

We're looking for Environment Agency staff who really think of climate change when making everyday work decisions. You may know someone who's started a green initiative, or deserves some recognition.

Keep a look out during Climate Change Week on 4-8 June, when we'll reveal the first round of climate change heroes in a series of short films. After this, you'll have the chance to nominate yourself or your colleagues to become the next set of heroes. So, start thinking who your heroes may be!

What's in this issue



- 3 News and views
- 6 Creating a better place
- 8 World Environment Day
- 10 Area profile: Derby
- 12 Around England and Wales
- 13 Who's been in court?
- 14 Your news and letters
- 16 In the spotlight: David Cameron

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY
05.06.07

THE MEND OF THE WORLD IS NOW

WHAT WILL YOU DO TODAY?



BIKE IT. DRY YOUR WASHING OUTDOORS.
TURN APPLIANCES RIGHT OFF. USE REUSABLE BAGS.

TELL US HOW YOU'RE TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AT
WWW.MENDOFTHETHEWORLD.ORG



in brief

Bridgwater harnesses solar power

Rivers House in Bridgwater has become the first office in the South West Region to use green energy to meet its electricity needs. The building now has 54 photovoltaic cells installed on its roof, which will generate power for office appliances like computers and photocopiers, as well as office lighting. The cells will convert the solar rays into nearly 7,500kWh of electricity, and save on the release of 3.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, helping us to reduce our organisation's carbon footprint.

NetRegs sets off web campaign

The advisory service to small and medium businesses NetRegs has launched a campaign to promote its Waste Directory. The website allows businesses to check where the nearest licensed waste site is to them, and find out what they can safely dispose of there. It's focused on the agriculture, construction and manufacturing sectors, and is part of a wider plan to help businesses find out about environmental legislation.

Make money, not waste

Some of the country's biggest names in business recently attended a sell-out symposium on waste reduction. The South West England Food and Drink Conference was attended by over 80 delegates, including representatives from Cadbury Trebor Bassett, Heinz and Yeo Valley. The main aim of the meeting was to help companies access the funding available for minimising waste. People were also able to network and share their experiences of money-saving waste reduction projects.

news and views



Working wonders with WaterAid

Through our fundraising for WaterAid, we're helping to improve the lives of some of the world's poorest people. Annabelle Foot found out where the money is being used on her recent trip to India



In the rural villages and urban slums of the world's poorest places, getting clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene education saves people's lives and offers a sustainable long-term future.

Through a network of regional committees and representatives, we're working together with the international charity WaterAid to raise funds for its projects. This enables the charity to help people escape the stranglehold of poverty and disease caused by living without safe water and sanitation.

As part of the WaterAid Overseas Supporters Visit 2007, Anglian Region Strategic and Development Planning Officer Annabelle Foot was selected to visit some of the charity's projects in India recently. Annabelle travelled through three Indian states meeting community leaders, government officials and local villagers.

'At the villages, I interacted with the women and children, talking about their families and lives,' said Annabelle. 'We listened to how one woman collects water four or five times a day from a hand pump. She hoped WaterAid would start working in the village in the future – this is where our fundraising makes a difference.'

During the trip, Annabelle went to hygiene education sessions, helped to construct a latrine and opened a new sanitation block facility at a school in an urban slum. She said: 'In many villages, WaterAid is able to set up not only basic water supply, but also irrigation systems that allow crops to be grown and sold locally. This gives people pride in their community, the ability to help themselves and the hope of a sustainable future.'

[Find out more on Easinet at People Matters](#)

Four pillars make strong houses

Our report on the infrastructure needed for new homes sets out how Government and regional authorities can avoid damaging the environment

Supporting every home are essential, hidden services. Without clean water, waste handling and flood protection our homes would soon be uninhabitable.

We estimate that an average of £20,000 will be needed for each new home in the South East to provide water, waste water, waste and flood risk management. But by following the 'four pillars' of sustainable housing growth, we may be able to reduce demand for new infrastructure and its cost.

In two recent reports, we bring this often unseen issue into the open. *Hidden Infrastructure: the pressure on environmental infrastructure* provides a snapshot of the state of infrastructure today. And in our policy document, we set out a series of recommendations for the Government, regional assemblies, local authorities and developers. They are: getting the location right; planning for the longer term; reducing demand for new environmental infrastructure; and securing funding early on.

Chief Executive Barbara Young said: 'We all know communities can't function without schools, transport and hospitals, but behind every one lies a network of essential environmental services that are often taken for granted.'

We are already working with the Government to ensure adequate infrastructure for new homes. But we're still pushing for better investment and maintenance of water and sewer systems. 'Last year, nearly 5,000 properties were

flooded by sewers and more than 3.5 billion litres of water a day lost through leaks,' said Barbara Young.

'New growth can be achieved without harming the environment, but early investment and careful planning is critical. If not, we risk seeing our environmental infrastructure beginning to fail.'

[Read Hidden Infrastructure: the pressures on environmental infrastructure on our website or contact Kathryn Ross on 710 8665.](#)



Top honours awarded

Our Water Efficiency Awards celebrate the achievements of outstanding businesses and show that saving water can mean saving pounds

Water conservationists from the world of business were honoured by Environment Minister Ian Pearson and Director of Water Management David King at our Water Efficiency Awards 2007 annual ceremony recently.

There were several excellent commendations in the Agriculture and Horticulture, and Construction and Renovation categories that were too close to call. But there was a clear winner for the top award of 'Outstanding contribution to water conservation' and 'Leisure and tourism'.

The Malvern Hotel and The Blues Grill in Margate won for their commitment to water saving and 'Every Drop Counts' project. The business has seen a 46% drop in water usage and annual savings of more than £840 since July 2005.

'Through their enthusiasm and commitment, the Malvern Hotel and The Blues Grill managed to



The Malvern Hotel and Blues Grill – winners of the 'Outstanding contribution' award

reduce water use by 46% or 320m³ per year,' said Chief Executive Barbara Young. 'This family-run hotel shows how small companies can make big savings that are truly worthwhile.'

Other winners announced included the Broadland Agricultural Water Abstractors Group in East Anglia for training members in water efficiency and saving 190,000 cubic metres of

abstracted water a year. All the businesses that took part impressed the judges with the time and effort they invested in saving water.

Ian Pearson said: 'The projects featured in this year's Water Efficiency Awards demonstrate not only what can be achieved, they remind us that this is an issue on which every one of us has a responsibility to act.'

'The appreciation of water as a precious resource that we need to use wisely is still a challenging idea for many,' he continued. 'But as we face the inevitable changes brought by climate change, population growth and consumer habits, it is one we are increasingly unable to ignore.'

[Find out more about the winners at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater)

Waste criminals watch out

We're trialling an automated phone system that calls waste firms with a reminder to register and stay on the right side of the law

No illegal waste service provider in the Northumberland area will be able to deny knowing about their legal requirement to register with us. The innovative project means that notification is only a phone call away.

Any company operating waste-related services in the area will receive an automated phone call reminding them that they need to comply with the law. The innovative idea followed a report that, out of 1,700 businesses

identified in Northumberland, only 400 were registered with us.

The scheme, which is funded by the Business Resource and Efficiency Project (BREW), is designed to ensure waste is managed lawfully, and to help prevent fly-tipping and illegal dumping. BREW project manager Arwyn Jones said: 'The large-scale illegal dumping of waste is often masterminded by criminals. This type of illegal dumping of waste is not only an

environmental problem, but it costs us all millions each year to clean up.'

'The automated phone call from the us will remind unregistered firms of the legislation and allow them to register before further action is taken,' he continued. 'We know who these businesses are and this will give them a much-needed jolt. Ignorance is no defence and, if firms continue to flout the law, we will track them down and take them to court.'



End of life electricals scheme

As part of our drive to recycle waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), we've helped publish 37 compliance schemes for producers. These systems of registration and membership will help businesses across the UK meet their new responsibilities to pay for the treatment and recycling of products when they reach the end of their life.

MEPs open gate to flood debate

Members of the European Parliament attended a recent reception in Brussels we held to influence their opinion on flooding. The get-together came in advance of their vote on amendments to the directive on the assessment and management of floods. Delegates from eight EU countries, including Italy, the Netherlands and Germany, were joined by three UK MEPs.

Quality control for compost

Together with key players in the composting industry, we have developed a new protocol that will reclassify some forms of waste as compost. The Quality Protocol for Compost will make it easier for businesses and industry to produce more compost, and will mean less organic waste is sent to landfill.

Disaster data recovery record

Major disaster recovery for our data systems is better than ever before, enabling us to be up and running in just 66 hours. We simulated a major incident affecting our data centre in Leeds, and showed that it's possible to relocate and back-up our systems in record time. See the business continuity pages on Easinet for more.

John Harman, Chairman



Step forward for climate change

Remember the bad old days when neither of the major political parties wanted to tackle climate change and the environment wasn't an election issue? Seems like only a few short months ago,

Wait a minute: it was only a few short months ago.

But how quickly things can change. This year has seen an extraordinary cascade of speakers and announcements on climate change. As I write, the Government has just published the Climate Change Bill, proposing to adopt legally binding targets to reach a 60 per cent reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050. By setting in law an interim 2020 legal target of 26-32 per cent below 1990 levels, the UK is leading European efforts to combat climate change.

This is a genuine watershed moment for the climate change issue in Britain – a move to be embraced and championed. The political debate over the Bill will focus on the Government's proposed five-yearly carbon budgets and the opposition's insistence on annual targets.

The Environment Agency is at the sharp end of adapting to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, so we particularly welcome the Government's introduction of a five-yearly review of how the UK is responding to the challenge. Whatever our success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the future, the next 30-40 years will see an increase in flood risk, water scarcity and coastal erosion in this

'We'll be at the heart of ensuring the country is ready for change'

country. We'll be at the heart of ensuring the country is ready for these changes. And the new statutory focus, if it has all-party support, can only strengthen our hand. It's definitely good news.

But what happens if the target is missed? The draft bill suggests a judicial review, but it's unclear what penalty a court would impose on the Government. We have suggested that the Government should be made to buy carbon credits to balance any deficit in its carbon budget, but it seems to be a bit of a cop-out. After all, we don't want to send out the message that you can buy your way out of carbon reduction.

The real penalty has to be electoral – punishment at the ballot box. And that will only happen if voters trust the reporting of the Committee on Climate Change, which means it must be both independent and transparent, and if there is a real sense of national purpose and partnership. That we're all in this together.

In his speech at the recent Green Alliance event, Gordon Brown said that he and his successors will be 'counting the carbon as well as counting the pounds'. We know the cost of failure to prevent climate change will be paid in serious damage to communities, businesses and may mean the loss of life. Few calculations can be more important to get right.



Keeping it special

The quality of the land, sea and air in the South West is crucial to the region's economy and people's livelihoods. Clare Sturges finds out how we're protecting its treasury of environmental assets

Walking along the pristine coastline of the South West of England on a clear day you can see for miles across some of the cleanest seas in Britain. At the height of summer there are beaches packed full of smiling holidaymakers swimming, sunbathing and surfing. People come from all over the UK to enjoy the region's biggest asset – its natural environment.

With an area of 23,800 km² the South West Region is the largest in England. It has a huge number of nationally and internationally designated areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. But beneath the gently rolling hills, lush forestry and fertile farmland are some serious environmental issues.

Over three-quarters of the land is involved in agriculture, which creates challenges that are central to our work. As South West Regional Environmental Planning Manager Tim de Winton says, 'The region has a lot of rainfall, steep slopes and risky soils.'

Despite the issues associated with agricultural run-off, the region's 191 bathing waters are of the highest standard. Last year, for the first time, all the waters tested off the coasts of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset complied with mandatory standards and 80 per cent passed even tougher tests.

Shifting seas

But the sea is at once a gift and a danger to people living on the South West coastline, as Tim points out: 'There's a historical legacy of ports, fishing villages and coastal tourist developments that we protect through flood defences. With the sea-level rises and increased storminess expected

as a result of climate change, we're having to think very strategically about how we manage those high-risk areas.'

The region's popularity as a holiday destination has led to many people buying second homes there, and new developments being built. 'The South West is one of the fastest developing regions in the country,' says Richard Cresswell, South West Regional Director. 'It's a very attractive place for people and businesses to move to. It's also rich in natural resources like wind and sea energy, so environmental technologies are a key sector here.' Our role in

advising Local Authorities and businesses on the best places to plan and sustain developments is key in protecting the region's valuable environmental assets.

All those people and all that development creates a huge amount of waste, and the South West teams are keen to find new ways to deal with it. 'One of the problems with being a peninsula is that you have to deal with your waste close to home,' explains Richard. 'So we're developing alternatives to traditional forms of waste disposal, like recycling more biodegradable material.'

Another approach is to reduce or recycle waste at source. This is where Envision steps in – an Environment Agency-led partnership that aims to support small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to be greener. Many companies in the South West are SMEs, which are difficult to reach and engage in green issues. They also have the least time and funds to direct towards improving their environmental performance.



The large blue butterfly is making a comeback in the South West



River birds like the kingfisher are doing well in the Region

ISTOCK

Envision Project Manager Phil Moore explains, 'Envision provides quality environmental support and advice to SMEs about making their business greener. The business signs up then they get 35 hours of an Envision mentor's time, which involves an audit of their operations followed by support to help them achieve their aims.'

The scheme is working well, as Envision mentor Fiona Ward confirms: 'We're building strong relationships with local companies, who are slowly but surely making progress. In my role as a trusted advisor, I pass on the knowledge that helps them cut costs, improve efficiency and benefit from being greener.'

Being green means business

Among Envision's successes are Tiki International Plastic and Kitley House Hotel and Restaurant. Tiki Director David Aldrich-Smith says, 'By reducing our waste and recycling more, our business is growing and saving thousands of pounds.' Andrew Huckerby, Director and General Manager at Kitley House, is similarly pleased: 'Making environmental changes has saved us £13,000 a year – it makes good business sense.'

Part of Envision's effectiveness lies in the way it's funded: with partner organisations. Among others, it

Success stories for Envision



Kitley House Hotel and Restaurant is situated on a 600-acre estate in South Devon. With the help of an Envision mentor, it was able to reduce annual CO₂ emissions by 115 tonnes and use its green credentials as a unique selling point to attract customers.



Tiki International Plastics supplies high-quality surfboards and surfing gear to outlets in the UK and Republic of Ireland. It set up a scheme to recycle 50 per cent of waste produced on-site, reducing the amount going in to landfill by 20 tonnes each year.

gets money from the EU Regional Development Fund for Objective One and Two areas, and the Regional Development Agency.

'We use the money to help businesses address issues upfront,' says Jon Rattenbury, Principal Officer, Sustainable Business, and Envision project lead. 'It's about introducing measures so they don't pollute the environment in the first place. Although we already do some work on waste minimisation and pollution prevention, outside funding enables us to do much more.'

With increasing pressures on the environment in the South West,

our work in the four key areas of climate change, soil and agricultural run-off, waste and sustainable development is more important than ever. Maintaining the region's distinctive beauty is at the forefront of Richard's vision for the future: 'I want us to help the public at large to understand the fantastic environmental assets we've got and what they can do to protect them.'

As we all become more aware of our carbon footprint and try to reduce our air miles, perhaps the likes of St Ives, Dartmoor and Bath will overtake St Tropez, the Dolomites and Barcelona as our top holiday destinations?

Fact file

- The South West coastline is nearly 1,820km long
- Of the 493 English bathing spots, 190 are in the Region
- Over 1,100 people work for the Environment Agency in the Region
- Over 99 per cent of businesses in the South West are SMEs
- More than 11 million tones of waste are produced each year...
- ...and 30 per cent of it was recycled last year



Envision team: (clockwise from back left) Phil Moore, Marketing Manager Caroline Durowse (based at GAP), Project Officer Jikta Cox-Benakova and Jon Rattenbury



Diamond in the rough: the Site of Special Scientific Interest near Clovelly, Devon, as seen from Marsland

create a better place

update

our staff
magazine
July 2007



82

Mend of the world

It's now, according to the brains behind World Environment Day's glittering movie poster campaign, must-have merchandise and climate change message



From left to right: Nick Saunders, Ash Woodman, Sarah Dean, Tim Arlett, Gill Fawell, Gary Fulcher, Liam Nevins and four members of Worcester Wildlife Trust clear up the Wilden Marsh conservation site at Kidderminster

Our part in International World Environment Day 2007 was a roaring success. We put on a host of interesting and exciting activities, and attracted support from 12 major external partners.

The environmental leave scheme has been popular with hundreds of people – by the time 5 June arrived, almost 800 Environment Agency staff members got stuck in. One group to take their leave on World Environment Day itself was headed by Liam Nevins, Monitoring and Data Officer in Midlands Region West Area.

Liam and eight colleagues (pictured) set to work clearing Himalayan Balsam, erecting fencing and doing general conservation work with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Liam

said: 'The weather was great and we cleared a lot of the area. We all got something out of it and I'd encourage other people to do it.'

We also launched our own travel carbon calculator, which you can try out on Easinet, plus we kicked off our Climate Change Hero competition with four unique films (see page 3).

As well as our initiatives with companies like IKEA, Centrica, Vodafone, B&Q and Barclays, we set up climate change fairs, dance performances and music. We also put up stands at supermarkets to promote our nationwide survey asking people how they're tackling climate change.

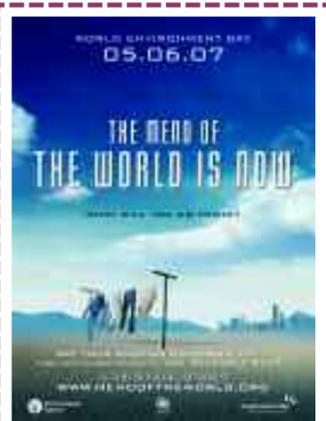
Leading up to the day, Campaign Manager Greg Brina and his

team set up a funky website, eye-catching poster campaign and an Ipsos/MORI poll to find out what we really think about the environment. They also got exclusive news coverage on ITV and worked with designer Wayne Hemingway to produce some good-looking merchandise.

The initial poll of 1,838 people showed that 59 per cent of us are still doing nothing to tackle climate change. So the message is getting through to two-fifths of the population, but there's still some apathy around. Greg explains: 'The Ipsos/MORI poll was a toe in the water. We wanted to see what things people felt would tackle climate change and help them think about what more they might do. Our own survey will help us to target our efforts in future years – not just for World Environment Day but for climate change as a whole.'

The celebrations don't stop with 5 June – there are events planned across the regions throughout the summer and you'll be able to take environmental leave at any time. Just have a look on Easinet > A-Z to find out how.

And don't forget to visit our World Environment Day website, where you can join thousands of other people and fill in the survey about tackling climate change. Go on, what's stopping you?



Ask yourself

- 1 What is the number one thing you are doing to help tackle climate change?
- 2 What one extra thing could you do to tackle climate change?
- 3 What's stopping you?

Log on to www.mendoftheworld.org and have your say!

What's in this issue



- 3 News and views
- 6 Reworking the web
- 8 Hitting the mark
- 10 Region profile: South West
- 12 Around England and Wales
- 13 Who's been in court?
- 14 Your news and letters
- 16 In the spotlight: Michael Guthrie

insights

Barbara Young,
Chief Executive



Right here, right now

The climate is already changing, and probably faster than we thought. No matter how effectively we reduce greenhouse gases, the trend in global warming is likely to continue over the next 30–40 years, meaning increased risk of flooding, tidal surges, water shortages and the loss of biodiversity.

Some degree of climate change is unavoidable, and we must adapt now if we are to protect lives, property, the economy and the environment. As the leading organisation helping England and Wales prepare for climate change, we are refocusing on four key areas.

We are investing more in flood risk management to keep pace with climate change. During 2006–2007, we offered more people living in the floodplain an appropriate flood warning service than ever, and ensured 77 per cent of people took the right action based on those warnings. But too few people are preparing in advance for flooding, and these risks will increase.

In the last year, we have succeeded in reducing the risk of flooding to over 30,000 houses in England and Wales. Along our coastlines, we are developing new ways to prepare for flooding, storm surges and further coastal erosion.

As the frequency and severity of summer drought increases, our

‘we must continue “climate proofing” our own activities – making sure we are aware of and ready for climate change’

role in water resource management is more vital than ever. Our key work in identifying the areas of England most at risk of water stress will mean that the installation of water meters can be targeted to help households reduce water use.

We are also working to ensure that wetlands are protected and new habitats are created to give native species space to survive in the face of climate change. We created 492 hectares of habitats, including saltmarsh and mudflats, as a result of our flood management activities last year, and we spent £2.3 million on priority water level management plans for biodiversity.

But there is still a great deal of work to do. As an organisation, we must continue ‘climate proofing’ our own activities – making sure every part of our organisation is aware of and ready for climate change.

We aim to reduce our own carbon emissions by 15 per cent by 2010 and 30 per cent by 2012. This means everyone becoming much more aware of their carbon footprint and how they can lighten it.

So as you go about your daily work, question whether your actions affect climate change. Think of ways in which you can reduce the carbon impact of your job. If you have any ideas about how to improve things, go to the Climate Change Channel on Easinet and share your comments.

Our involvement in World Environment Day on 5 June this year reminds us that we need to set an example in international efforts to tackle climate change. You can take the opportunity to make a difference too – just read the Climate Change Heroes article opposite to find out one way how.

Climate change is a reality, and we need to take measures to adapt to it now!

in brief



Blitz beats rod licence dodgers
Illegal anglers had nowhere to run and nowhere to hide during the May Bank Holiday when we cracked down on people fishing without a rod licence. Officers targeted 10,183 anglers at rivers and lakes across England and Wales after all rod licences expired on 31 March. During the three days of sweeps across 928 waters, 595 anglers were caught fishing without a licence.

Waste shipment shapes up
New rules coming into force in July will make it easier for us to track waste shipments, and give us new powers to prosecute companies. In particular, green list waste like paper, plastic and cardboard will be subject to tighter controls, making it easier to trace. Companies will be more responsible for making sure the waste they export is processed in an eco-friendly way at its destination. And our Transfrontier Shipment of Waste National Service will take over notifications work from the regions.

Cementing relationships
Our Cement Inspectors Group met with the British Cement Association and the UK’s main cement companies at Cemex Barrington Cement works recently. As part of the event, the Community Relations team brought together cement inspectors and company reps in a workshop for the first time. The group used the Building Trust With Communities approach to find practical ways to improve our relationships with communities around high public interest cement sites. All present agreed the event was informative and useful.

Contact Community Relations on 01454 205714 for more.

news and views



New flood defences in Boscastle



Adaptation on the Wear in Durham



Raising awareness in St Ives



Biomass burns bright in Rye

Eco super-heroes

As the search for the next Superman or Wonderwoman of climate change kicks off, we profile the first four nominations in our Climate Change Heroes competition

We launched the contest for this year’s Climate Change Heroes as part of World Environment Day on 5 June to give anyone doing their bit for climate change the chance to get a big pat on the back.

The Boscastle Flood Defence Scheme – taking place in the town that floods devastated in 2004 – illustrates our work in adapting to climate change. Gordon Trapmore, Area Flood Risk Manager for Cornwall, considered climate change at every stage of rebuilding. ‘Climate change means more dramatic events could be on their way,’ he said.

The Adaptation on the Wear scheme in Durham challenged 100 businesses to think about how climate change would affect the area. Peter Kerr, Levy Programme Manager, said: ‘There is a need for detailed information about how we can adapt to climate change.’



Clockwise from top left: heroes Gordon, Peter, Fiona and Pat

And when it comes to reducing our impact on climate change, Fiona Geddes was nominated for her carbon reduction work in St Ives, and Pat Pica for his biomass boiler at our Scots Float depot in Rye. Fiona said, ‘It’s become second nature for me to look for improvements every day.’ And Pat echoed her enthusiasm: ‘The biomass boiler runs on waste woodchip from our own riverside work and will save 25 tonnes of CO₂ a year.’

Now the challenge is on for the next round of Climate Change Heroes. If you’d like to nominate a colleague who’s going out of their way to tackle climate change, or you’re making a big effort yourself, enter using the nomination form on Easinet. The winner will be announced in October.

Trading places

Strong messages and firm talks at a Brussels seminar show European industry leaders that we mean business about emissions trading

The European Union and the Environment Agency have a vital role to play in leading other nations to reduce carbon emissions and limit the impacts of climate change. This was the bottom line message at a recent European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) seminar in Brussels organised by us recently.

European industry leaders, non-governmental organisations and

politicians got together at Belgian think-tank The Centre to discuss what needs to be done to improve and strengthen the EU ETS, which is said to be the blueprint for future global schemes.

Delegates suggested that we should focus efforts on larger emitters and remove smaller emitters from the scheme. They also agreed that we need to inspire confidence in industry that



The group of 60–70 leading policy-makers gets deep into a discussion led by Tricia Henton

emissions will be accurately monitored and that enforcement of the rules will be fair.

Director of Environmental Protection Tricia Henton, who chaired the seminar, said: ‘The current review of the EU ETS

presents a real opportunity to shape the future scheme so that it delivers reductions in CO₂ emissions without disadvantaging European industry. At the same time it provides the credibility essential for future global expansion of the scheme.’



Quaggy makes a come back

Revitalised London parks welcome visitors for riverside fun and games



Central London kids get familiar with the river during a pond-dipping session

ANA PURKISS

Residents of the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich celebrated the completion of the long-awaited Quaggy River flood alleviation scheme at a specially organised party recently.

The opening of Manor Park – the last part of the £18 million project – coincided with World Environment Day and attracted a steady stream of visitors. There was a ‘junk funk’ band, a free barbecue, pond dipping and a game about the risk of flooding and how to protect against it.

Ian Tomes, Flood Risk Manager for South East Area Thames Region, said: ‘It’s fitting that on World Environment Day we can welcome back the Quaggy River that, like many of the capital’s rivers, has been neglected.’

The scheme, which was designed in partnership with the local authorities and community, has seen a three-fold redevelopment.

In Sutcliffe Park, significant areas of wetland have been created, with raised boardwalks and enhanced wildlife habitat. In Weigall Road A, the flood storage area now has the capacity of 13 Olympic-sized swimming pools. And from Weigall Road to Lewisham town centre, flood defences have been improved, while Manor Park has been restored.

As part of the project, bird and flora boxes have been installed in the river walls to encourage kingfishers and wagtails to nest. Pools, meanders and areas of faster and slower moving water will also allow fish to flourish in the river.

‘In the 1960s the Quaggy River was put into concrete channels and buried in culverts,’ said Ian. ‘By bringing the river back above ground and back to life, we have shown how managing the threat of flooding can bring long-lasting benefits for the environment and local community.’

A spoonful of water...

...helps the environmental message go down, as a group of schoolchildren found out at an awareness-raising event in Oxford

The children of St Nicolas’s School in Abingdon hadn’t counted on going into work quite so young. But staff at the Hill End Field Study Centre put them to good use during a week of fun days.

Pupils were asked to act the part of farmers, sewage plant workers and environmental managers as

part of the ‘Groundwater Experience’ – a partnership scheme we ran with Oxfordshire County Council, the British Geological Survey and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

Using interactive games and models, 300 children from seven schools learned about the

importance of preserving and protecting groundwater. As well as our five top water-saving tips, the pupils got hands-on experience of the water cycle and borehole pumping. They were also shown how pollution and unmanaged waste can taint and damage the environment.

Lawrence Bee, Environment Studies Officer at Hill End, said: ‘When children see the effects of feeding water through our supply chain, they understand the impacts of water usage on their own lives more clearly. We hope these fun days will raise awareness of the actions they can

take in their own lives to protect and preserve water.’

Top 5 water savers

- 1 Put a save-a-flush object in your toilet cistern
- 2 Water the plants in your house with washing-up and cooking water
- 3 Don’t run the tap to wait for cold water – filter some and keep it in your fridge
- 4 Have a quick shower instead of a bath
- 5 Turn off the tap when you shave or clean your teeth



Waste not, want not

Defra has published its new Waste Strategy for England 2007, a revision of the previous seven-year strategy. The milestones set out in the plan echo our own vision and support our work to encourage people to use resources efficiently, drive businesses to improve their environmental performance and make waste crime unacceptable. Work is under way to ensure we’re able partner with others at a national, regional and local level to achieve our aims.

Networking for success

We’re getting together with the Department for Trade and Industry to take advantage of its free Knowledge Transfer Network in Resource Efficiency. The web-based facility is for sharing information and developing new green ways of doing business. It links industry with academia and offers news, forums, search options for articles, business data and funding, as well as practical case studies and links to policy and legislation.

Log on to www.resource-efficiency.org to sign up.

IEM sets five-year targets

We’re building on reducing our impact on the environment with a further five-year plan. The Internal Environmental Management (IEM) strategy, produced by the IEM team in Human Resources, outlines exactly what we’ll be doing – from the usuals like meeting targets for business mileage and calculating our carbon footprints at work to sourcing ethical business clothing.

Visit Easinet > Human Resources.

John Harman,
Chairman



Out of sight, out of mind?

Britain’s population is increasing and we need more houses. Higher levels of housing growth mean greater pressure on the environment, and this presents us with a big challenge. How can we manage and fund the infrastructure that supports them, while protecting land, biodiversity, water, people and their property?

Collectively, if we go on building at current rates using existing practices, we may be heading for infrastructure failure, with the risk to human health and the environment it presents. So we’re urging the Government, housing planners and developers to adopt a four-pillar approach to sustainable housing. It’s no longer location, location – but location, long-term planning, managing demand and securing funding.

Two of our recent reports are geared up to help make it happen. *Hidden infrastructure: the pressures on environmental infrastructure* is a snapshot of the state of essential services like water, sewerage and flood protection. Estimates in it show that providing sewage treatment for the new housing proposed in the South East Plan will cost £7.5 billion over the next 20 years.

Rising population density, water consumption and overabstraction mean some places are already water-stressed. At the same time more than 3.5 billion litres of water a day was lost through leaks in 2005. We created 335 million tonnes of waste last year and need more facilities to cope with it.

‘We need to think about where we build new homes’

The accompanying policy report sets out our ‘four pillars’ of sustainable housing and environmental infrastructure. Many of the recommendations we make aren’t new, but it’s the first time we’ve brought all of our key messages together in one place.

Pillar one aims to encourage people to think carefully about where they build homes. We recommend in-depth assessments of the environmental impacts of development and of whether plans that rely on infrastructure are really viable. We also strongly recommend that developers should use the findings of these studies to inform their decision-making – and we must hold them to account for these decisions.

In the second pillar of the policy report we advise long-term planning frameworks to enable us to adapt to climate change and plug existing infrastructure gaps. Measures like 25-year planning for sewerage and wastewater, and long-term planning for urban flood management are shown to be better than the usual five-year

horizon driven by the water price-fixing timetable.

As well as that, we propose new ideas for steering development away from seriously water-stressed areas, and identifying when and where we need to use water more efficiently.

Pillar three is all about managing and reducing the demand for new environmental infrastructure. We recommend using accelerated metering in water-stressed areas, water usage targets, Government regulation and variable charging for waste management. We also put forward a number of large-scale pilot projects for managing water and waste demand.

In the final and fourth pillar, we advocate better funding streams for environmental infrastructure. We say that costs should fall on polluters, developers, consumers and taxpayers in a transparent and defensible way. Through this pillar we’re aiming to influence and encourage the Government to deliver a well-rounded package of funding options.

Environmental infrastructure tends to be out of sight and therefore out of mind. But the twin pressures of development and climate change mean we can’t take it for granted. Achieving sustainable housing growth means changing the way we plan and build, from the locations we choose to the infrastructure deep below.



Our role as a regulator of industry is changing. More and more, we're giving advice, offering guidance and changing the way we permit to make it easier for businesses to get it right

Regulation for the nation

If you ask 10 different people across the Environment Agency what 'modern regulation' means to them, you're likely to get 10 very different answers. But when you boil it down, 'Mod Reg' aims to cut red tape for businesses, streamline our processes and make us easier to do business with.

For a number of years, we've been reducing the number of forms businesses have to fill in, following a risk-based approach to inspections and making it easier for customers to benefit from our advice and guidance.

Paul Leinster, Director of Operations, says: 'This is all about More for the environment: modern regulation is focussing on environmental outcomes, looking at what the risks are and targeting poor performers.' So how have we been working to meet this challenge?

In May last year, we needed to regulate the waste from farms and within the agricultural community. It was a big job, as there are about 162,000 farms across England and Wales, and they had a year to register.

Jo Price, Customer Operations Manager at the NCCC in Sheffield, helped to make it happen: 'Previously, farmers had to fill in copious amounts of paperwork, which could be confusing and time consuming. So we worked closely with Defra, the National Farmer's Union and some stakeholder forums and came up with a simple form,' explains Jo. 'Now we've received thousands of applications of a high quality because the forms are easy to fill in.'

Rhys Ellis, an Environment Officer in Bangor, has mostly enjoyed a positive reaction from farmers. 'Soon after the regulations came into force, I went out with a member of the agricultural team to do a presentation to



farmers. It gave them the chance to ask questions and also highlight some of the issues they weren't clear about,' says Rhys. 'Going out and meeting farmers is important – it means we can sit down and go through the regulations out in the field. It also gives us a presence in the local community.'

In the flow of things

Another highly successful scheme involved the deregulation of small water abstraction licences. We've been able to cut the numbers of

low-risk licences by 48 per cent nationally, reducing our administrative burden and enabling us to target our efforts at higher-risk abstractions.

In the South West Region there have always been a lot of small water abstractions for private, domestic and agricultural use. In Devon, the number of licences has fallen from around 4,300 to 670 – so it's made a big difference. Businesses drawing less than water under 20m³ of water no longer have to go through licensing

Key elements of Mod Reg

Risk-based: allocating resources proportionally according to a risk assessment and explaining our decision not to focus on low risks.

Results-focused: focused on ensuring the best possible environmental outcomes.

Consistent: common ways of licensing and permitting across all geographic areas.

Transparent: better communications with customers.

Accountable: explaining decisions.

Environment Officer Chris Hitchings on patrol in the Gerrans Bay sea area off the coast of Cornwall (right). Ryder Rocks, Dartmoor (below)



procedures and they pay less. Terry Folland, a Regulatory Officer in Exeter, says: 'We were spending an inordinate amount of time on small abstractors with lower impacts while not being able to deal with the larger ones with higher environmental impacts.'

According to Terry, some customers were surprised to hear we were deregulating water use, given that climate change may mean it's a scarce resource. But having the time to deal with bigger issues has had some added benefits. 'In the last 18 months, we've had lots of enquiries for hydro-power,' explains Terry. 'We've been able to develop local partnerships to investigate how hydro-power may affect the rivers in Special Areas of Conservation in Dartmoor where salmon migrate. These kinds of applications take up a huge amount of our time, so deregulation has made a significant difference to us in our part of the world.'

Hook, line and sinker

A little further along the coast Mark Pilcher's team has been taking a thoroughly joined-up approach when it comes to protecting the coastal fishing waters of West Cornwall. We're the Sea Fisheries Authority in the area, which means we oversee all the regulations for salmon, as well as sea fish and shellfish such as cockles.

Mark's team found it was spending a great deal of time dealing with illegal netting incidents and tip-offs, so he contacted the other regulators in the area and found that they had common interests. They immediately saw the advantages of working together and now share CCTV footage, information about where fish are illegally landed and sold, and the names of repeat offenders. 'Working closer with the Marine Fisheries Agency and Cornwall Sea Fisheries has allowed me the time to deal with historical issues in higher-risk areas like Falmouth Docks,' says Tolgus Depot Environment Officer Chris Hitchings.

Mark follows on: 'The legitimate fishermen really benefit, because the illegal netters are undermining the market price of the fish. And the environment benefits because the fish populations in vulnerable areas like estuaries are protected and fished more sustainably.'

Most of us are doing things in a 'Mod Reg' way on a daily basis, but Paul Leinster recognises some of the people we regulate feel we're resistant to change as an organisation. He urges us to discuss the issues more, both internally and externally: 'It's important that we talk about Mod Reg in our teams and with our managers to really understand what we are trying to achieve for the environment.'

A recent survey shows that a high proportion of us do understand Mod Reg and are aware of how we're changing the way we regulate businesses and individuals. Across the Environment Agency, there are clear examples of how we're becoming easier to do business with and how we're producing big environmental benefits.

FIND OUT MORE
Easinet > A-Z > Modernising Regulation > Portal

Business successes for Mod Reg

Construction – By seeking our advice on pollution prevention and control (PPC) before starting work on the Porth Relief Road Scheme in South Wales, Costain Ltd have made sure there have been no significant pollution incidents throughout the scheme so far.

Food and drink – Working with our partner Envision project – a scheme that offers green guidance to small businesses – Sharps Brewery saved over £19,000 in 2006 by introducing schemes to reduce its energy use, waste and water bills.

Metals industry – We prosecuted and fined catalytic converter manufacturer Johnson Matthey Plc for breaching PPC regulations. The company has since spent over £500,000 on improving plant technology, achieving ISO accreditation.