

Happy New Year! We hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and that you've recovered from any over-indulgence. The majority of us here at the Green Shop and Holbrook Garage were struck down with the somewhat nasty flu bug that was doing the rounds. Luckily we've all recovered now and are looking forward to seeing what 2003 has in store for all things green. For most of us the new year will be a time to make sure we stick to the eco-resolutions we've made as shown below.

Eco-resolutions – some easy steps we can all take towards a sustainable future

1 - SWITCH TO GREEN ELECTRICITY

The two companies we'd recommend are Unit[e] and Ecotricity. They both have good credentials when it comes to their commitment to both present and future environmental policy and top the FOE league of green energy suppliers. www.unit-e.co.uk 0845 6011410 or www.ecotricity.co.uk 0800 0326100

2 - SAVE ENERGY

There are many simple steps you can take to save energy at home. How many of us do everything we could? – honestly it's really not that much effort. For inspiration visit Energy Saving Trust website at www.saveenergy.co.uk or ring their helpline on 0845 7277200

3 - BANK ETHICALLY

The Co-operative Bank is a UK bank whose products are only available to those in the UK. Great ethical policies combined with good customer service - what more could you ask for? For more information have a look at www.co-operativebank.co.uk 08457 212212, www.smile.co.uk

4 - START COMPOSTING

Put your kitchen and garden waste to good use by making a compost heap or investing in a wormery. If you are short of space the junior wormery may be the solution. At only 17" high it can easily be stored in a small kitchen. Wormeries and information about composting available from The Green Shop.

5 - BUY LOCAL FOOD

Buying local food is good for all concerned. The farmer benefits from better prices and the consumer gets fresher and tastier food. The environment suffers less due to a reduction in food miles and the local economy is strengthened by keeping money in local pockets for as long as possible. Interesting websites: www.farmersmarkets.net, www.bigbarn.co.uk, www.soilassociation.org.uk, www.foodlinks.info



6 - CYCLE TO WORK

Get in shape, save yourself money and help the environment all at once by cycling to work. Have a look at the Sustrans website at www.sustrans.org.uk or call 0117 990888 for details of cycle routes near you. Keep your ear to the ground for new developments in the electric bike market too.

7 - BANISH JUNK MAIL

Take action on unwanted mail. Contact the Mailing Preference Service through www.getitsorted.org or ring 0870 2416206 for a registration form. Alternatively put junk mail to good use: COMPOST IT – tear and screw up and add to your compost throughout the winter months.

8 - SHOP ETHICALLY

Think about what you buy and where you buy from. Use your consumer clout to support ethical companies and boycott those that are not. Read Ethical Consumer magazine or visit their website at www.ethicalconsumer.org or call 0161 2262929 for up to date information on all things ethical.

9 - CONSERVE WATER

2003 is officially International Year of Freshwater. Some facts:
- We are currently using 54% of all of the worlds accessible freshwater.
- By 2025 this will have jumped to 70% leaving two thirds of the worlds population with severe water shortages.
- 50% of the water we use at home is for uses such as toilet flushing and car washing. We could save this amount of freshwater by using rainwater instead.
To find out more on reusing the rain that falls on your home visit www.rainharvesting.co.uk or ring 01452 772000

10 – EAT FAIRTRADE CHOCOLATE

As a reward for keeping all these resolutions.

CLEAR SKIES RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANTS,



There has never been a better time to take the plunge into solar hot water. £500 grants are now available for households in the UK. Find out more: www.greenshop.co.uk/energy

DEAR GREEN SHOP,

I Purchased a Solar cap just before going to San Diego on holiday this year and where ever we went we were asked where did we get our Cool Hat. We travelled some 3000 miles to Yosemite and the Bodie Ghost town in the Sierra mountains and every store we went to wanted to know where we purchased the Caps. If you get an agency in one of Yosemite stores you no doubt sell as many as you can get your hands on, it was great being the centre of attraction.

- Thanks Stan Forbes

MEETING MICHAEL MEACHER

The Green Shop sent delegates Roger Budgeon and Dave Cockcroft to meet Michael Meacher, the Minister of State for Environment, at a recent conference in Stroud. The conference organised by the Stroud MP David Drew was well attended by a wide range of local groups working to further the green agenda.

Roger thought the conference was very positive and felt "Michael Meacher has an extremely wide view of environmental problems and directions. He'd clearly like to do more if Gordon Brown would let him have the money and Tony Blair's government exhibited a little better joined up government."

Roger further pressed Bob Eccles the chair of Gloucestershire County Councils Environmental committee on the lack of joined up thinking in central and local government. He asked "How can you justify GCC use of renewable energy for street lighting whilst failing to facilitate the production of renewable energy in the county." Bob gave the classic political response of "it's another departments responsibility" which is of course unacceptable, especially when the other department is Stroud District Council where Bob is also a member.

Dale Vince of Stroud based renewable energy generator Ecotricity gave an inspiring talk on the potential of wind power and new Ecotricity initiatives including teaming up with Greenpeace to take the government to court over the bailout of private nuclear generator British Energy. Dale made it clear that the UK has a huge potential for wind generated clean energy and the only thing holding it back is the planning process. "At present we have to go through the same process to put up a wind generator as we would to build a nuclear power station" said Dale.

Michael Meacher answered a wide range of questions in a most knowledgeable and straight forward manner. As a politician he's a breath of fresh air and the environmental movement should be grateful to have such a good minister. However he clearly indicated that his hands are tied over many issues. Given a free rein Mr Meacher would be pushing a much more progressive green practice in many areas. One illustration of this is how the new landfill tax rates will generate well over £1 billion per annum, but this goes into the treasury and only a little trickles back to fund green practices.

Despite Mr Meachers friendly presentation Dave Cockcroft still felt the governments commitment to environmental issues lacked substance and amounted to little more than greenwash. "For me the most telling thing Mr Meacher said was that there are no more than a dozen labour MPs who make a priority of environmental issues. One of them is David Drew and I know something of his workload, he spends only a small fraction of his time on green issues" said Dave.

Michael Meacher was asked about whether the war in Iraq had anything to with oil. Of course he was unable to express an opinion on the matter.

However we at the Green Shop think a massive investment in renewable energy technologies is infinitely preferable to a massive investment in war fighting technology.



GREEN SHOP GOES CREATIVE

On 5th December the CREATE Centre in Bristol held their popular Festive Fayre. Artists, craftsmen, local producers and Christmas tree sellers all converged on the Centre for a night of festive fun. All sorts of natural, hand-made, organic and eco-friendly goodies were available. The Green Shop had a stand downstairs next to Days Cottage Apple Juice and we all had a fun filled evening talking to customers, drinking mulled wine and even doing a bit of Christmas shopping. Looking forward to next years Festive Fayre already!

What is the CREATE Centre?

The CREATE Centre is a unique Environmental Centre owned and run by Bristol City Council. It is home to Bristol's Sustainability Unit along with several other non-governmental organisations. A special feature of the centre is the ecohome (with paint supplied by us) and garden - a living demonstration of techniques and materials for sustainable living. Also housed in the Centre is a recycling exhibition, conference facilities and a café serving hot breakfasts and lunches. The CREATE Centre is open Monday - Friday from 9 - 5pm and entry is free. To find out more log on to www.bristol-city.gov.uk and search for CREATE Centre.

LOCAL EGGS

Holbrook Garage is now selling local free range eggs from Dave & Heathers Egg Farm in Bisley. They are delivered daily by Heather who has also joined the team at the garage so a big welcome to her!



feedback... let us know if there's anything you'd like us to cover in future newsletters. We'd like to do a letters section but no one ever writes to us...

The Green Shop, Cheltenham Road, Bisley, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 7BX.

Open from 9am to 7.00pm on Monday to Friday, 6.00pm on Saturday and 9.30am to 1.00pm on Sundays
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