

Southern Upland NEWS

Newsletter of the Southern Uplands Partnership

#11 Spring 2003



This edition of the Southern Upland News concentrates on two particular issues of major concern to the Partnership – renewable energy and rural housing. We have tried to collate information on a wide range of initiatives from across the Southern Uplands in the hope that this will encourage debate and perhaps some new ideas. There are certainly exciting opportunities at this time for those prepared to be innovative. The funding section contains info on the wide range of current support mechanisms and sources of advice and further information. We would be pleased to hear of other projects that we might be able to include next time.

Making it happen at the SWALLOW THEATRE

The Swallow Theatre in Whithorn has recently converted to renewable energy. David Sumner writes:

"When the Swallow Theatre first opened its doors in 1996, I had not long before been campaigning against the expansion of Sellafield. Having criticised the nuclear industry, I felt honour bound to try the alternatives: could we light our new Theatre with renewable energy? In some ways this is a rather mad thing to do, as the requirements for Theatre lighting are very different from those of a conventional household. For the latter, we need relatively low power lighting for many hours continuously. In contrast, a theatre needs a lot of light for a relatively short time, and the ability to light different areas of the stage independently. Undeterred, we decided to experiment, starting with a single solar panel and a small wind turbine, each giving a peak output of about 50W. Thanks to the generosity of the Ashden Trust and the South West Environmental Action Project (SWEAP), we have been able

to add a further three solar panels, giving us a total peak power of about 300W. The solar panels and wind turbine charge four batteries — necessary storage, as of course the sun doesn't always shine and there isn't always a wind. The batteries provide a direct current, low voltage source of electricity, so it makes sense for the lights to be low voltage too — we use 18 high efficiency 20W halogen lamps on the stage, controlled by a 12 channel dimmer board. Adding in 'Front of House', backstage and dressing room lights, the power consumption can be nearly 500 W; but given a sunny morning after an evening performance, the batteries can be recharged by lunchtime!"

For further information please contact:

David Sumner

Tel: 01988 850368

e-mail: mail@swallowtheatre.com

Environmental Attitudes

A National Statistics Publication study has been published into public attitudes to environmental issues in Scotland. The survey, funded by the Scottish Executive, SNH and the Forestry Commission showed that 75% of Scots believe that people in Scotland should change their way of life in order to allow future generations to enjoy the same quality of life and the environment. Respondents indicated that they would prefer almost half (49%) of electricity to be generated from renewables, 16% from nuclear, 16% from coal and oil and 18% from gas. Wind power proved to be the most popular form of generation, being consistently perceived as the least expensive and least polluting method.

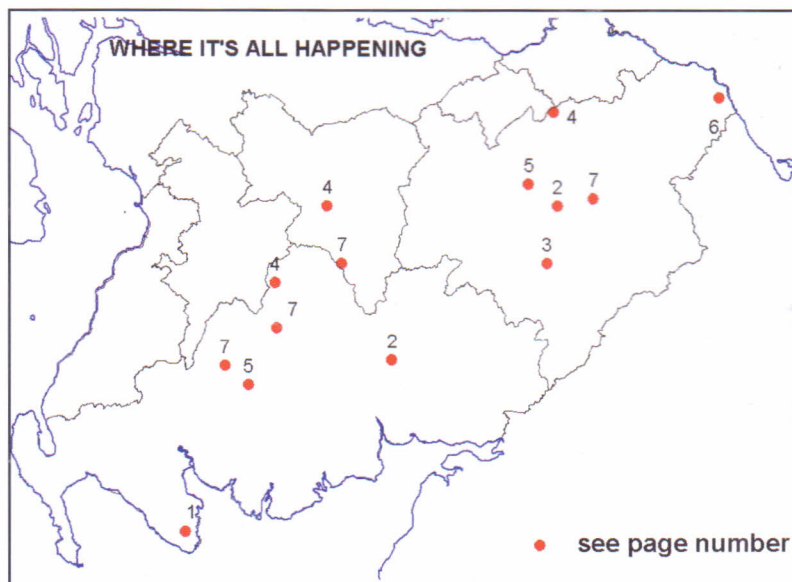
Survey of Public Attitudes to the Environment in Scotland: www.scotland.gov.uk/eas

Did You Know? . . . With UK coal, gas and oil reserves all likely to be exhausted by 2010, the UK could be dependent on imported energy for 75% of its total energy needs by 2020, according to the Energy White Paper.

CONVENORS COMMENT

You will see from this newsletter just how diverse are these activities as we continue to try to inform and influence those charged with the support of our landward population. Cross border co-operation is vital if we are to achieve the necessary consistency of approach in tackling economic prosperity and environmental gain.

Renewable energy is one strand of that. Rural housing is also of increasing concern in terms of location, quality, design and affordability. There is a range of views on how to move forward. This newsletter attempts to lay these out for your consideration and for debate. That is what the SUP is all about.



Project News

TWEED TRAILS/SOUTH SCOTLAND COUNTRYSIDE TRAILS continues to develop – with work on a number of routes due to start as soon as weather permits. In the Borders there will be a major launch of part of the route during the Festival of the Horse in May – watch the local press for details. We are also arranging for a one day conference on the potential of equestrian tourism which will take place in May at the new Hotel at Cardrona. Contact the office or visit the website www.sup.org.uk for details.

The **BLACK GROUSE** project application is sitting with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The **NATURE BASED TOURISM** audit is making good progress with over 500 sites listed for Dumfries & Galloway and over 200 for the Borders. The next stage is to map the sites and identify clusters which could be packaged and marketed. This work is due to be completed in April.

The SUP has been asked to play a role in the planning of celebrations to mark the 20th anniversary of the **SOUTHERN UPLAND WAY** and to assist with a more integrated approach to route promotion and marketing. The first phase of this will involved the employment of someone to produce a project plan which should be ready by the end of June. During 2004 we hope there will be a series of walking festivals, a linear sculpture exhibition along the Way and the launch of a revised official guide and map.

CORE FUNDING for 2003 – 2004 have now been secured from Scottish Borders Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Natural Heritage and Dumfries and Galloway Council and we are very grateful to them for all their support. We have also applied to the Esme Fairbairn Foundation for extra funds to allow us to take on a Project Officer. We will hear the outcome of this application in June.

RED SQUIRRELS IN SOUTH SCOTLAND PROJECT – THE FUTURE

Phase II of the Red Squirrels in South Scotland project is due to start in August 2003. Planned to run for 2 years, Phase II will have two main objectives:

- Production of detailed management plans for the top 25 Priority Woodlands across south Scotland.
- Involvement of the local communities surrounding Priority Woodlands, raising awareness of native species and biodiversity, and development of appropriate sites for nature-based tourism with associated educational and interpretive resources.

We are still seeking the funding to make this plan a reality. If you are able to support this project, please get in touch with one of the Red Squirrel Conservation Officers – our phone numbers are below. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their hard work and support over the past three years, with a special thanks to those funders that have supported us throughout:

Scottish Natural Heritage
Esme Fairbairn Foundation
Scottish Power
The Joicey Trust
The Borders Squirrel Management Group
Red Alert South West Scotland

For further info contact:

SARAH OAKLEY (Borders)
Tel: 01750 23446 or Mobile 07733 121838
ZOE SMOLKA (Dumfries and Galloway)
Tel: 01387 860442 or Mobile 07733 121837



Did You Know? . . . 1000 litres of heating oil can be replaced with approximately:

5–6m³ of split hardwood logs or 7–8m³ of split softwood logs or 10–15m³ of wood chips or 2 tonnes of pellets.

WOODFUEL IN SOUTHERN SCOTLAND

Wood has been the main source of energy from the earliest days of man until around 100 years ago. When we want heating we usually think of gas or oil as the only choice of fuel. But wood fuel is a real alternative fuel for Scotland, a real renewable energy source which we can control. It can give us heat when we need it, does not cause an eyesore on the local landscape, contributes to Scotland's rural economy and helps to sustain jobs in the forestry sector justifying sustainable management of Scotland's woodlands for future generations.

The first wood fuel central heating solutions were attractive modern woodstoves- more efficient than the old pot belly stove but still giving mainly radiant heating and requiring pretty regular stoking. The real innovation came with heat storage systems. Now modern wood boilers are filled with logs and burn for 3-4 hours using a microchip to control the combustion air (to ensure low emissions and very high efficiencies). The heat produced is stored in large water tanks at high temperatures of around 90°C. The central heating system is run from the heat stores or accumulators via standard pumps and radiators with the addition of a cunning thermostatic valve system that ensures that the hot water in the tank lasts for a full 24 hours-until the boiler is relit.

Other innovations -more suited to larger buildings are woodchip boilers. These are automatically fed with chips from a hopper and behave in a similar way to "conventional" boilers, computer chips are used to control the fuel and air mixture to ensure super clean burning and high efficiencies. These boilers have to be supplied with a consistent woodchip fuel -not wet or contaminated with stones, sticks or sawdust. A large farmhouse might use around 10 tonnes of

chips per year and a secondary school perhaps 500 tonnes per year, not substantial quantities of timber in forestry terms. If you consider the number of similar buildings in the South of Scotland there is the potential for a significant fuel supply business or Energy Supply Company (ESCo) supporting jobs and the environment.

What about the poor city dwellers you may ask- the latest development - already used in the US and on the continent is woodpellets. Similar in appearance to cattle feed or high class cat litter these pellets are highly compressed sawdust and are clean to burn and easy to handle. They may be delivered in bulk using a blower-tanker and take up only around twice the volume of an oil tank for the same energy content. Pellet boilers are only slightly larger than an equivalent oil boiler and have lower emissions (no sulphur dioxide and low nitrogen dioxide emissions). Apart from emptying the ash once a week and a regular clean they are just as easy and convenient to use as well.

Pellet stoves are also available- similar in appearance to a log stove, these room heaters have a small internal hopper that holds around 20kg of pellets. The stoves light at the touch of a button and have a real wood fire that is controllable and may be connected to a time switch and thermostat. Easy to use, controllable and highly efficient these stoves offer the perfect solution to the busy commuter and country dweller alike.

Contact: Gavin Gulliver-Goodall
Tel: 01835 824201 e-mail: Gavin@3genergi.co.uk

COMMUNITY ENERGY INITIATIVE

Community Energy is an initiative, conceived and developed by Re:Solution, which will assist communities to realize the potential of developing local energy resources to produce reliable, environmentally friendly heat and power. The initiative is based on the assumption that communities should benefit from the energy resources in their local area. Community Energy will assist communities to investigate the feasibility of energy resources and set up a community energy company to develop these resources for the communities benefit. Community Energy aims to assist in the Scottish Executive goal for Scotland to secure 18% of its electricity needs from renewable energy sources by 2010 by empowering communities to investigate, develop, own and utilise local energy resources for the benefit of themselves.

The potential energy projects, which could result from a community energy initiative include:-

- A 'district heating system' which will pipe heat to groups of households from a central boiler;
- A power plant which generates heat and power from forestry wastes;
- A wind farm which sells energy to the grid raising revenue for the local community;
- Solar panels and wind turbines for individual households;
- 'Geothermal heating' from underground providing heat to households;
- Using agricultural and forestry waste to provide heat to businesses such as greenhouses and hotels;
- Energy efficiency measures to insulate households.

This list is not exhaustive, and the projects, which will be implemented in each community, will depend upon local resources, available finance and the will of the local community. The cost of installing community energy technologies will be met by a combination of capital grants from the government, renewable energy investors and private borrowings by the community energy company. Local

households will not be expected to contribute to the capital costs of the projects, but will pay fuel bills to a community energy company. Depending upon the policy of the community energy company (set by the community), the fuel bills will be similar or lower than existing fuel bills.

BORTHWICK WATER COMMUNITY ENERGY INITIATIVE

The Borthwick Water Community Energy Association is an unincorporated association set up by a group of people local to the Robertson area near Hawick. The group has been set up to investigate the potential of developing renewable energy resources in the area for the benefit of the local community.

The initiative will start with a survey of the available energy resources in the Borthwick Water catchment area and a consultation of the local people to measure their attitudes to the potential project. The project is locally controlled and will only implement energy projects which have the support of the community.

Other Projects in your Area

We are also involved in discussions for similar projects in Moniaive, Eskdalemuir and Barrhill. We are currently working with South of Scotland Energy Efficiency Advice Centre to identify funding for these projects.

Contact: Greig Robertson
at Re:solution:
info@re-solution.co.uk



SCOTTISH COMMUNITIES GET A RENEWABLE BOOST

Local community involvement in small scale renewable energy developments has received a boost through the new Scottish Community Renewables Initiative (SCRI) which now has 10 development officers covering the whole of Scotland. The SCRI is an exciting and innovative new programme funded by the Scottish Executive and managed jointly by the Energy Saving Trust and Highland and Islands Enterprise. The initiative aims to encourage and support communities to develop renewable energy projects.

Robin Harper MSP said on introducing the SCRI at the local launch at Our Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, "Scotland has the potential renewable energy resource to meet its peak winter demand for electricity 10 times over. The Scottish Executive has set a target of generating 18% of our electricity from renewable sources by 2010 and is consulting on a proposal to increase this to 40% by 2020. The SCRI aims to support this energy target by working with communities such as local authorities, housing associations, schools, voluntary groups, NGOs and local groups to develop renewable projects."

Richard Witney, the SCRI Development Officer for Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife and the Scottish Borders, said "This is a very exciting initiative designed to help and encourage communities to develop renewable energy in their area and come together to look at more sustainable ways of producing energy. In Scotland, we already generate 14% of our electricity from renewable

sources such as wind and hydro. Community renewable energy projects will be able to make a real contribution to the ambitious and achievable 2020 target and improve Scotland's environment. The benefits from renewables will be improvements to our environment, cost savings in energy bills and better employment opportunities within the community and the renewable energy industry".

Funding is available for community and household renewable energy projects through the SCRI, up to £10,000 for feasibility studies and £100,000 for capital projects. Individual household grants are also available of up to 30% of the installed cost up to a maximum of £4,000. It is hoped the significant new amount of clean, green energy generated from renewable projects will ensure Scotland relies much less on fossil fuel power stations which will mean lower 'greenhouse gas' emissions reducing the threat posed by climate change. Examples of community projects include: wind turbines producing electricity for schools and visitor centres; solar water heating producing hot water for housing and wood fired boilers providing space heating and hot water for community centres.

If you have an idea to use renewable energy or if you would like some further information, contact the SCRI hotline on 0800 138 8858 or visit our website www.est.co.uk/scri

Did You Know? . . . Fresh cut spruce has nearly two thirds of its weight as water whereas fresh cut ash has only about one third of its weight as water.

FUNDING NEWS

Communities can benefit from Windfarms

ScottishPower have trusts set up for the following sites in southern Scotland:		
Dun Law	Soutra Hill on the A68	Output of 17.16 MW
Hare Hill	New Cummnock, East Ayrshire	Output of 13.2 MW
Hagshaw Hill	Douglas, South Lanarkshire	Output of 15.6 MW

The trusts vary from site to site depending on the size of site and community but they all contain both a "Deed of Trust" (a legal document which details the appointment of trustees & office bearers, the trust purpose, estate and administration) and a Contribution Agreement (a legal document which details the amount of money ScottishPower will pay into the trust, at what time period and for how long). An average of £700 per MW per year is paid, meaning that, for example, the Dun Law trust will receive something like £12,000 per annum.

The purposes of the trust shall be wholly charitable within the meaning and for the purposes of Section 505 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1998. The charitable purposes may include any or all of the following.

- Provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation.
- The relief of poverty and need within the said community
- The promotion and encouragement of the environmental improvement or enhancement of the local area
- The provision of financial assistance in any form to any body, corporate or unincorporated, any group, organisation or association established for charitable purposes only and concerned in whatever manner with the conservation and restoration of the heritage of Scotland.

Contact: Sam Anderson of ScottishPower Tel: 0141 568 2876

Grants for Woodheating

The Government has at long last recognised the contribution that wood fuel can make to reduce global warming, develop an indigenous energy resource and support the rural economy. There are now a number of initiatives to help establish wood fuel as a competitive alternative to fossil fuels for heating.

The most interesting scheme is the community and household renewable energy grants scheme. This gives grants to householders towards the cost of renewable energy appliances. For wood fuel this is a grant of up to 30% in Scotland (Maximum £4000) towards the installed cost of a wood fuelled boiler as the main source of central heating and hot water. Communities may also apply for grants and

again 30% is available with the potential for extra should the scheme offer "added value" benefits. Pellet stoves are offered a flat rate grant of £600 toward the installed cost for both communities (they are ideal as space heaters for village halls) and householders.

For application forms and more details please visit the website: www.clear-skies.org.uk or Gavin Gulliver-Goodall's website at www.3genergi.co.uk

Another scheme has been developed to encourage "wood fuel supply clusters" - this scheme is funded through the Lottery. Successful companies bid for funds to subsidise commercial boiler installations within a geographical area to allow them to develop a customer base and commercial fuel supply infrastructure.

Scottish Borders Leader+ Programme

Making Best Use of our Natural and Cultural Resources

Leader+ in the Scottish Borders is providing new support for innovative community based projects that contribute to local rural development. The programme aims to empower and enable rural communities, organisations and businesses to work better together - to take advantage of the many unrealised opportunities relating to the sustainable use of our rich local natural and cultural resources.

Four 'Innovation Areas' have been identified to encourage the development of projects that make good use of our natural and cultural resources in an integrated way. Potential Leader+ projects must fit the aims of one or more of these Innovation Areas:

- Wood: to help realise the potential of Borders woodlands and wood products.
- Water: to help conserve, develop, interpret and access bodies of water in the Borders.
- Land: to add value to the high quality and varied natural environment and land resource in the Borders.
- Culture: to support cultural and creative activity, build community and social enterprise

As well as supporting projects in the Scottish Borders, the Leader+ Programme also aims to support the development of projects in partnership with other rural areas in the UK and the EU. This will encourage the sharing of best practice and expertise between the Scottish Borders and other rural areas. The

Programme is coordinated by a Local Action Group (LAG), which is made up of Scottish Borders Rural Partnership members, representing a balance of social, economic and environmental interests, and is managed by Scottish Borders Council.

For application information, please contact: Sam Smith
Tel: 01835 826539. e-mail: samsmith@scotborders.co.uk

There are also Leader+ schemes in S Lanarkshire and D&G:

For Dumfries and Galloway:
Simone Tyrie
Tel: 01698 455101
e-mail: leaderplus@dumgal.gov.uk

For South Lanarkshire:
Yvonne Howley
Tel: 01556 504906



LOAN ACTION SCOTLAND

Loan Action Scotland is funded by the Scottish Executive through the Scottish Energy Efficiency Office (as well as receiving additional funding through the European Regional Development Fund), and is operated by the Energy Saving Trust. The scheme provides interest free loans of £5,000 to £50,000, so that companies can take action to reduce their energy bills. The loans can have a repayment period of up to five years, and are available to companies based in Scotland, with up to 250 employees. Remember, what you borrow is what you repay (there are no interest or arrangement charges).

Contact - Allan Mackie. Tel: 0141 242 5814
e-mail allan.mackie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND - RURAL HOME OWNERSHIP GRANTS

Communities Scotland, a housing and regeneration agency is now performing most of the functions of Scottish Homes. The Rural Home Ownership Grants aim to help sustain rural communities by making it easier for local people on low or modest incomes to own their own home and meet their housing needs or aspirations within their own community. The grants are available throughout rural Scotland and are specifically aimed at local people in employment who are first time buyers. Previous home owners may be eligible, but capital gain from the sale of previous property will be taken into consideration when deciding on eligibility.

For more information visit:
www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk

GREEN ENERGY GRANTS FOR COMMUNITIES & HOUSEHOLDERS

Community groups and householders throughout Scotland can now apply for grants from a new £3.7million fund to plan and install new green energy systems to heat or power their buildings and homes. The funds are offered by the Scottish Executive through the Scottish Community Renewables Initiative (see article above). The grant scheme was launched in South West Scotland in January by Dumfries MSP, Dr Elaine Murray.

As well as wind turbines, the SCRI grants are also available for solar heating, small hydro generators, automated wood-burning boilers and heaters, heatpumps and biomass and biogas power generating systems. An existing DTI grant also covers solar electricity (photovoltaic) systems.

If you or your group are interested in a grant to help install a system to provide green heating or electricity, or if you would like other advice or assistance to reduce your energy costs, call Joe Fergusson at the Energy Advice Centre on 0800 512012 or e-mail joe.fergusson@south-ayrshire.gov.uk. The website for the new grant scheme is www.est.co.uk/scri.

RURAL HOUSING

Shelter Housing Action with Rural Communities

This Shelter Scotland project is now in its second year. Funded by the Community Fund, S.H.A.R.C aims to help rural communities tackle issues of inadequate levels of affordable housing supply in the villages of Dumfries & Galloway. Community Councils, Residents Associations, Community Initiative Groups and Landowners have been in contact with Karen Lewis, Rural Housing Enabler with the project, and up to date 13 detailed housing needs surveys have been carried out involving community based volunteers.

Several themes are emerging:

- People in rural areas in housing need are not registering on waiting lists. This means that social landlord data does not fully reflect rural housing need. This includes potential emerging households who could maintain the sustainability of rural communities.
- There are people with health related housing needs who are unaware of the various grant schemes available
- There are more holiday homes/second homes and empty homes than the local authority has recorded
- Right to Buy legislation has disproportionately affected rural communities & is skewing community profiles undermining the balance of communities
- There is little housing investment in terms of new development in rural areas
- House prices in rural areas are now pricing those in low paid employment out of the housing market. House prices have risen by 22% in the last 12 months

in Dumfries & Galloway. Sales are regularly achieving 10%–25% above the advertised 'offers over' figure. This means that there are real issues about the lack of affordable housing for incoming workers and adds to the continuing outward migration from rural villages as housing is becoming too expensive for many local first time buyers.

- Outward migration was a negative choice in many cases i.e. households had former members who would return to rural communities if affordable housing was available
- Strategic players in Dumfries & Galloway have not pro-actively pursued options made available in other rural areas of Scotland i.e. Rural Home Ownership Grants, Rural Empty Property Grant, Lead Tenancy Schemes, NPPG 3 (s.75) & planning gain, Gro-grants, Community Self Build etc

S.H.A.R.C is currently investigating the possibility of establishing a Rural Housing Trust for Dumfries & Galloway using the model developed by the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust. This will lever in additional funding allowing the Rural Housing Trust to landbank & purchase properties for sale in rural areas on behalf of its community members.

S.H.A.R.C plans to hold an open meeting in April to discuss the benefits of establishing a Rural Housing Trust (date & venue yet to be determined) and the Director of the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust will make a short presentation about their work to date.

If you would like to attend this meeting or would like further information about the work of S.H.A.R.C please contact Karen on 01644 430571 or email karenl@shelter.org.uk

Low Impact Rural Housing

Re:Solution is a development consultancy which assists local communities to initiate and deliver sustainable development projects. Over the past three years, Re:Solution has been involved in supporting several rural community groups which are interested in developing affordable green housing in the countryside.

Research into rural housing has identified that there are opportunities in planning and economic terms to make a link between the need to provide affordable access to land and/or housing to people in need, and the need to restructure uneconomic woodlands. Re:Solution is investigating the implementation of an Action Research Study into this subject in collaboration with Northwoods (Forest Management Consultants).

Re:Solution is seeking to contact rural housing associations, local authorities and other agencies which may be interested in participating in such a Study. Contact us for more information at: initiatives@re-solution.co.uk

Tweed Valley Ecovillage Group

The Tweed Valley Ecovillage Group (TVEG) was formed in 1998 by a group of local families of varying backgrounds, who have a common interest in preserving the environment and a concern over the rapidly rising house prices in the Tweeddale area.

With this in mind the group founded the project on two main objectives. The first is to provide affordable housing, more suited to the average wage in the Borders than some of the more recent housing developments. The second objective is to construct the houses with as little environmental impact as possible using environmentally sound and sustainably sourced materials.

The project aims to build 16 homes in the Tweeddale area, with the preferred location being Thorneylee Forest. The houses will be low environmental impact designs and will be self sufficient in terms of energy generation, water resource management, and sewage treatment.

Currently we are working closely with the Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) who have an excellent track record in providing ecologically sound housing to people who cannot traditionally afford it. With the input and expertise provided by BHA, and the continued backing of the local community councils and Forest Enterprise, the group feel confident that the realisation of the dream is close.

For further details contact:

Andy on 01896 831681 or Juliette on 01896 830177
e-mail tweed.valley@aol.com

New Houses in the Uplands?

The new Smallholdings at Carsphairn are a great example of how Planning Authorities can help encourage sustainable rural housing by relaxing planning guidelines in specific areas. In 1991, the parish of Carsphairn was designated for relaxation of the "housing in the countryside" planning policy. Carsphairn, in upland Galloway, was chosen following a request from the community council, because forestry had largely replaced sheep farming, and the area had depopulated. The new policy allows new houses on smallholdings of 5-10 acres, provided there is careful design, landscaping and a commitment not to subdivide the site.

Economic reliance on the land is not a requirement. To date, twelve new houses have been approved, and seven have been built. Because of the remoteness of the area, the houses are not for commuters but for people who work locally: builders, farmers and fish farmers, and has also attracted a professional systems analyst to the parish: "I think the local plan is good; it's why we decided to settle here. We looked all round Scotland, and ended up in Carsphairn because of their sensible attitude to rural development." The 7 new houses are scattered throughout the parish, either sited on open ground or on the edge of forestry plantations. Most are hardly visible from the road, and are designed using traditional ingredients (white roughcast walls and slate roofs); some look traditional (chimneys at each end); others are more unusual. Carsphairn is small - just 160 people in 100 square miles - so it was important that any population changes should be slow and sustainable. A community councillor explained that Carsphairn needed appropriate re-population, from people who could make a contribution to the parish. The policy has not been widely advertised, depending instead on word-of-mouth. One of the planners involved said: "The idea came from the community. The only people buying the land were the forestry companies, and there was a fear of depopulation. And since it is much too far to commute to Dumfries or Ayr, we didn't expect a rush of people building houses." They were right, and to the satisfaction of the community, the population of the parish has slowly grown by some 10% over ten years, and the village shop, pub and school remain open. Ronnie Irving (planner at D&G Council) tells us that the policy seems popular because, as a result of SUP director George Prentice's suggestions, several other community councils in Galloway have requested that the planning relaxation area be extended southward into their areas. He adds that "last years census information shows a slight increase in the number of people living in Carsphairn parish" - great news! "and illustrates the success of the policy in contributing to sustainable rural development".

Taken from: Smyth MA, Gray J and Major D (2000) SCOTTISH HOUSE: HOMEWORK UNITS for the Scottish Executive Central Research Unit and Scottish Homes

COVETED GREEN ENERGY AWARD FOR BERWICKSHIRE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Berwickshire Housing Association ended last year on a high note by picking up the top prize of "Best Community Initiative" at the Scottish Green Energy Awards, held at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh in December. The Association faced stiff competition from the Highlands and Islands, including Isle of Muck Wind Power project, Knoydart Foundation Hydro-electric project and the Western Isles Renewable Energy partnership. The Association though, was

particularly commended for "its innovative work in bringing renewable energy into people's homes, by developing and providing solar heating and photovoltaic (solar-generated) electricity applications for social housing". Alastair Brown, Head of Housing and Building Services with the Association was delighted to win, commenting that "although we've won awards in the past for our sustainability work from organisations within the social housing movement, we are particularly pleased with this one because it means our efforts are now recognised in the much wider context of the whole Scottish Green Energy community."

The Association have in fact been blazing the sustainability trail since 1997, when they included sunspaces (conservatories that put to good use trapped warm air by venting it around a house) in the design for their first new houses at Coldstream. Since then they have fitted solar water heaters, solar ventilation systems, rainwater recycling vats and solar electricity roof panels to both new and existing properties,

providing their tenants with free heat, hot water and electricity. All of these various systems have now also been brought together into one experimental house at Beanburn, Ayton, completed last summer, to see how well they work in harmony with each other and to measure just how much energy can be obtained from the sun for domestic use in the home.

For more information on Berwickshire Housing Association visit www.b-h-a.org.uk or speak to Alastair Brown or Anne Gray on 01361 883115 about their sustainability projects.



Michael Calvert (left) and Alastair Brown (right) receiving the Best Community Initiative Award from Rob Forrest of the Scottish Renewables Forum



Scottish Borders Housing Needs Surveys

The Rural Housing Service is investigating the housing needs of small rural communities in the Scottish Borders. 22 community based housing needs surveys are being carried out to provide crucial information on the housing needs of local households. This information will be used to develop the Scottish Borders Council Local Housing Strategy that will set out the housing needs of the Borders and actions required to tackle these.

The surveys are being conducted by post in communities ranging from Ettrick in the west to Cockburnspath at the end of the Southern Upland Way. Alongside the postal questionnaire, meetings are being held with each community council to gauge local opinion on housing needs and problems. The meetings have raised a number of issues including the problems local households are experiencing with high house prices, the impact of the downturn in agriculture on tied and private rented housing and the effect of restrictive planning policies. The meetings have also helped to raise awareness of housing grants and opportunities available.

The Rural Housing Service is a national charity that helps rural communities and individuals to take practical action to increase affordable housing opportunities and resolve their housing problems. We provide advice, information and support on housing options and are happy to help any rural community in Scotland.

Derek Logie Rural Housing Service, Tel: 0131 477 4506. e-mail: derek@ruralhousingscotland.org.uk



SNIPPETS

The Energy Savings Trust

The Energy Savings Trust runs PowerShift and autogas+ programmes in Scotland which are funded by the Scottish Executive to establish a sustainable market for alternative, clean fuel vehicles. PowerShift offers a grant of up to 75% of the additional cost of converting a vehicle to LPG. LPG vehicles emit 12% less CO₂ than petrol fuelled vehicles and 30% less oxides of nitrogen, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide than diesel engines.

THE SOUTH WEST ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PROJECT ENERGY CHEST

Thanks to funding from the Science Year in Scotland Small Grants Scheme, SWEAP have been able to develop an exciting and practical new resource called the SWEAP Energy Chest. The Chest, which is currently being compiled, will contain resources targeting issues relating to the science, technology, engineering, mathematics and environmental aspects of energy, including renewable energy.

The resource will be of particular help to SWEAP's work in promoting the Eco Schools Award in Dumfries and Galloway with Energy being one of the seven topics targeted in the Award.

The SWEAP Energy Chest will be available towards the end of March and will be continuously available on free loan to all schools and youth groups in the region.

SWEAP are also carrying out research into the delivery of a series of Renewable Energy workshops with a view to establishing a region wide



Energy Club. To allow SWEAP to assess the demand for this please visit www.sweap.org.uk and register your interest through the feedback form. Alternatively you can contact David Graham at sweap.david@solwayheritage.co.uk

STOP PRESS . . . STOP PRESS . . . funding from the Solway Firth Partnership has allowed a second SWEAP Energy Chest to be created, allowing a chest located in the east and west of the region.

"MEDIA SAVVY?"

A new business has been formed by SUP member and farmer Carol Wightman-Carr. From her farm in the Lammermuir Hills Carol has set up "Wightman-Carr Communications" which offers media training, both for the uninitiated and for those more experienced in dealing with journalists.

The Company can arrange tailor-made courses for either individuals or for groups to suit all budgets. Drawing on years of professional experience Wightman-Carr Communications offer skilled, practical training, to help you make better use of the opportunities of radio and television. In addition they offer specialist skills in co-ordinating and promoting rural tourism initiatives.

For further information check out: www.wightman-carr.com tel. 01361 884 622

RURAL COMMUNITY GATEWAY

There is a new, all-singing website designed to support community groups across Scotland. It will act as a source of information, a discussion forum and a consultation mechanism. Visit Rural Community Gateway at www.ruralgateway.org.uk

Did You Know? . . . Around 70% of the organic food eaten in the UK is imported.

This is because the demand for organic food far exceeds the available supply produced in the UK.

PARTNER NEWS

North American/UK Countryside Exchange to Leadhills

A team of experts from the North American/UK Countryside Exchange recently spent a week with the community of Leadhills in South Lanarkshire and have produced a report "Get the Lead Out – Leadhills in the 21st Century". The report suggests that the need now is for an integrated action-based approach to local development.

The report makes a number of recommendations to enable the community to identify and access appropriate support and suggests future action in a number of areas including tourism development, infrastructure improvements and the building of community assets.

Contact: Chris Parkin Small Business Gateway
Tel: 01555 665064 e-mail: chrisp@clydev.co.uk

Glencairn Environment Project Update

The Glencairn Environment Project, now completing its third year, is developing an education resource pack for primary schools throughout Scotland. The pack will use as a case study the Moniaive Primary School Wildlife Garden, which was set up by the Project in the Spring of 2001. The aim of the pack is to help schools establish

areas for wildlife by showing how Moniaive Primary School successfully created and used their wildlife garden. It will also demonstrate many of the benefits of a school garden for both wildlife and people.

"As with all community projects, we continue to owe our thanks to our local community, volunteers and to our funders: Scottish Natural Heritage, Solway Heritage through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, Dumfries and Galloway Council, and Dumfries and Galloway Community Regeneration fund."

Contact for further information: Project Officer: Emma Ahart Tel: 01848 200171



News from the Rural Resource Centre

SPECIALIST FIELDWORKERS

A new specialist fieldworker has been appointed at the Scottish Borders Rural Partnership's Rural Resource Centre. Gillian Barrie joined the team in November as the Waste & Energy Fieldworker. Gillian's role is to help Scottish Borders communities to develop renewable energy and waste minimisation projects. Practical advice and information on developing projects, getting support and applying for funding is available free of charge, so if you are thinking about a wind powered village hall or want advice on how your community room could be more energy efficient, get in touch.

Graeme Wilson is also now in post as Natural Heritage Fieldworker. He can offer specialist advice to community groups for Environmental Projects such as creating wildlife gardens, organising clean up days or tree planting events.

SUCCESS FOR RURAL PARTNERSHIPS' COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROJECT

The Scottish Borders Rural Partnerships' Rural Community Transport (RCT) project has secured a further three years funding from the Scottish Executive. The project employs a Rural Community Transport Fieldworker, whose role is to help community groups in the Borders overcome the transport problems they experience by developing local solutions. Community transport projects run in areas where conventional services are either limited or non-existent, because they are not commercially viable. They can provide a lifeline, particularly for people that do not have access to a car. Examples of community transport projects include: a community minibus, voluntary car schemes, wheelchair accessible 'people carriers', or shared taxi schemes. In total, four projects in the Borders were successful through the Rural Community Transport Initiative, bringing over £300,000 into the region.

For more information please contact

Gillian Barrie – Waste & Energy • Graeme Wilson – Natural Heritage • Suzanne Nugent – Rural Transport

Tel: 01835 824125 or email rrc@sbrp.org.uk

Forrest Estate

The Forrest Estate has now been owned by the Olsen family for 50 years. Since it was bought in Sept 1952 it has primarily been managed using traditional agricultural and forestry methods. However, the estate first diversified into renewable energy in 1983 and by 1988 three hydro schemes had been developed which together now produce in the region of 1400kW of electricity. With the maximum estate consumption in the region of 150kW the majority of the power produced is therefore exported via the national grid. There is the potential to further develop hydro generation on the estate in the future.

In the third round of the Scottish Renewables Order the estate was awarded a contract for a 2 MW wind farm comprising two turbines. It plans to develop this scheme by 2005.

Recently the estate has started to diversify into other businesses with a sustainable theme the first of which was the award winning eco-friendly office which houses Natural Power Consultants, a company which specialises in developing renewable energy projects in Europe and the UK. In addition the estate has plans to develop an environmentally friendly tourist complex together with facilities which would be heated using electricity generated from waste wood taken from clear fell sites on the estate.

For further details contact: Margaret Watson, Forrest Estate. Tel: 01644 430230
e-mail: margaret@forrest-estate.demon.co.uk

Membership

The Southern Uplands Partnership is a membership organisation and depends on subscriptions for a significant part of its core funding. Members elect the Directors, receive regular newsletters and play a major role in determining priorities.

If you are not a member, please consider becoming one. If you sign and return the Gift Aid declaration it allows us to get extra support from the Inland Revenue.

To apply for membership either use the form below or visit www.sup.org.uk and complete the form on-line.

Membership category please tick box: Individual member ☐ Group member ☐

Subscription category Rate please tick box:

Individual waged per year £10 ☐ Individual unwaged per year £5 ☐ Individual life £100 ☐

Group(voluntary group/community council) per year £20 ☐ Group (National/corporate body) per year £50 ☐

If you would like to pay by standing order please contact the office for the necessary form.

Please make cheques payable to the SOUTHERN UPLANDS PARTNERSHIP.

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone..... email

GIFT AID You can increase the value of your subscription or donation (by 28p in every pound) if you pay income or capital gains tax in the UK. By signing and dating below, you will enable the Southern Uplands Partnership to claim back the tax on your subscription or donation under the Gift Aid Scheme.

Signature Date

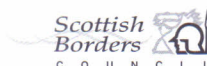
Return to: The Southern Uplands Partnership, Freepost SCO5012, Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 0BR

The Southern Uplands Partnership

The Southern Uplands Partnership was established as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status in 1999, with the aim of promoting sustainable land-use in the Southern Uplands of Scotland and thereby keeping people living and working here.

Company No 200827 Charity SC029475

The Southern Uplands Partnership
Studio 2, Lindean Mill, Galashiels TD1 3PE Tel: 01750 725154 e-mail: piptabor@sup.org.uk



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

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Photo 4 Sam Smith at the launch of Leader+ Borders, S. Smith

Photo 5 The Green Energy Awards, Berwickshire Housing Association
Photo 6 The "Green" House, Berwickshire Housing Association
Photo 7 Moniaive Primary School Wildlife Garden, Glencairn Environmental Project
Map on P.2 Courtesy of Scottish Natural Heritage