



Bedfordshire

Green Business Network

NEWS

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Climate Change Event aims to reduce county-wide emissions

A Carbon Reduction conference organised by Bedfordshire County Council entitled **Climate change: let's talk local** aims to provide information, guidance and advice about how everyone in Bedfordshire can cut carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. The conference will take place on **Thursday 5th March 2009 from 9:30 to 14:00 at the Rufus Centre, Flitwick, Bedfordshire.**

Bedfordshire's carbon cutting targets are tough - the aim is to reduce emissions from energy use and transport by 10%. This will only be achieved if everyone works together and makes a contribution.

This conference gives you a chance to find out about the exciting work already

happening to reduce carbon emissions. You'll also be able to share your experiences and ideas with others.

This is an ideal opportunity for you have your say in shaping our plans and to be part of what is done to cut carbon emissions in Bedfordshire.

The event will be supported by an exhibition where you can get practical advice and inspiration to reduce your carbon footprint.

Public service organisations, local authorities, businesses of all sizes, charity and voluntary organisations, community and special interest groups operating in Bedfordshire are all welcome to attend free of charge.

To register for your free place or for

more details, please visit [add web address.](#)



Carbon Trust offers Smaller Businesses interest free loans for energy efficiency improvements

In a bid to help smaller businesses continue to improve energy efficiency, the Carbon Trust has now increased the maximum amount of its interest-free loans to **£200,000.**

Not only has the maximum allowable loan gone up from £100,000 to £200,000, but the overall amount of loan money available has increased by 45% to £31 million.

The loans, which are unsecured, interest-

free and repayable over a period of up to four years, provide a cost effective way for small businesses to upgrade equipment with a more energy efficient version - thereby reducing energy bills and cutting their carbon footprint.

Loans are often offered on a partial basis, but the economic climate has made availability of alternative sources of financing more difficult. Large projects that can deliver the necessary carbon savings will now be eligible for loans that

fund a greater proportion or total project cost.

Hugh Jones, solutions director at the Carbon Trust, said: "We know that SMEs want to play their part in tackling climate change, and reduce their energy costs at the same time. But in the current economic climate, the tighter credit conditions are making it harder for small businesses to find alternative sources of funding."

Regulations - What's New

REACH Regulation changes

The guidance for users, manufacturers and importers of chemical substances is changing: pre-registration is still open, but only for new businesses and businesses that have passed the REACH thresholds for the first time.

The complete list of phase-in substances will be published soon.

Please visit the Netregs website for more details: www.netregs.gov.uk



EA chief urges business to protect itself by adopting green practises

Environment Agency chairman Lord Chris Smith has warned businesses that failing to be greener could damage their business.

He believes that companies that don't look at their waste and utility costs will suffer and those adopting a greener approach would be able to take advantage of financial incentives and possibly tap into new markets.

"In times of economic downturn, businesses cannot afford to put the environment last on the list," he said.

"Consumers are increasingly scrutinising the environmental credentials of their purchases, and more public sector organisations now require environmental policy disclosure when suppliers bid for tenders.

"So failing to have a policy, or having an inadequate one, could affect the ability to win tenders or sell products and services. A record of prosecution for environmental offences can also deter potential investors and raise insurance premiums.

"There are strong correlations between well-run businesses that demonstrate good financial performance and those who measure, manage and reduce their environmental impacts.

"The tough economic climate means some companies will resist environmental investment but it is the companies who continue to put the environment at the heart of their business that will best survive the hard times."

Batteries Regulations now in force - these must now be recovered and recycled



Stricter rules on batteries and accumulators for UK businesses were introduced in September 2008 through the implementation of the Batteries Directive.

The new legal obligations will mean stricter rules on recovery and recycling, and improvements to the environmental performance of all new batteries on the market.

This applies to all batteries, regardless of their shape, weight, use or chemical composition.

Who is affected?

Any business that produces, supplies, or disposes of batteries and accumulators. Specifically the proposals will affect the following businesses:

- manufacturers
- importers
- distributors
- end-users
- businesses involved in treating and recycling waste batteries and accumulators
- vehicle sales and maintenance businesses.

Battery powered products

If you manufacture or design battery

powered products, you will need to ensure that the batteries can be removed from the products and supply instructions on how to remove them.

Even if your business only uses battery-powered equipment, you will still need to dispose of the waste batteries at collection points.

Purpose

The parts of the new legislation that have already been decided are:

- battery producers will be listed on a register
- recycling schemes for batteries to be introduced
- new limits on the use of mercury and cadmium in batteries
- labelling requirements for new batteries to help consumer choice and increase recycling
- a ban on landfill or incineration of untreated waste industrial and vehicle batteries
- improved design requirements so batteries can be easily removed from products
- phased collection targets for portable batteries.

For more information, visit www.netregs.gov.uk



Environmental Products - What's New

Cambridge boffins invent £2 energy saving light bulb that lasts 60 years

Cambridge University scientists have developed an energy saving lightbulb that will cost just £2 and will last for 60 years.

The bulb is three times more energy efficient than today's best alternative and can cut lighting bills by 75 per cent. Scientists have developed the bulb using Gallium Nitride (GaN), a man-made substance used in LEDs (light emitting diodes), which is also used in lights for bikes mobile phones and camera flashes.

Until recently, the production costs have been too expensive for its widespread use, with a single bulb costing around £20. However, the researchers have found an inexpensive technique to manufacture the bulbs. Manufacturers have begun work on production prototypes and the first bulbs could well be on the shelves within two years.

The bulbs are 12 times more efficient than conventional tungsten and three times more efficient than compact fluorescent "energy efficient" bulbs. They 100,000 hours burn time, light up instantly and can be dimmed – which is something energy efficient bulbs can't do.

There would be the potential to cut the proportion of UK electricity used for lights from 20 per cent to 5 per cent a year if all homes and offices installed them.



i-plas aims to replace concrete with recycled plastic material

A UK manufacturer of composites from waste plastic is targeting the construction industry with its building material, which it believes can replace concrete, steel and wood in any construction project.

i-plas has been manufacturing its building material from recycled polymers from its base in Halifax, North Yorkshire, for the past nine years. The product, which is 100 per cent recycled and recyclable, is already being used in applications as diverse as bridges, footpaths, walls, roofs, fences and flood prevention. i-plas is now looking to make its product the material of choice for the construction industry, as a direct replacement for concrete and steel, as well as wood.

"i-plas is an incredible material and with properties similar to steel, concrete and wood, its applications are extensive," said Howard Waghorn, managing director of i-plas. "We believe the construction industry should now be looking to use i-plas as a direct replacement for concrete in new projects. Not only is it a great material in its own right, the environmental benefits are huge. Why use concrete with its enormous environmental cost, when there is now an alternative that performs better and has no environmental impact?"

According to i-plas, producing a tonne of concrete generates almost a tonne of CO2 emissions, whereas one tonne of its material saves 1.66 tonnes of CO2 emissions and saves more CO2 than fully insulating a house (1.5 tonnes).



Other qualities of the product, according to its makers, is it will not chip or splinter, is vandal resistant, requires no varnish or coating and can be formulated for specific applications. Additionally, the material is extremely hardwearing, non-combustible, is difficult to ignite and will normally self-extinguish.

i-plas, which is now the UK's leading supplier of manufactured composites from recycled plastic, was initially established with support from the European Landfill Tax Scheme. With its sister company, it operates from 160,000 square foot premises devoted to recycling, manufacturing and distribution. Annually it can process up to 6,000 tonnes of mixed waste plastic, which it sorts, grinds and converts to specific formulations based on the eventual use of the recycled material.

It has developed 'closed-loop' recycling schemes with many of its customers, where the plastic waste it collects from them is used in the products its supplies back to them.



Cotton Roots gains new business by offering corporate clothing with moral fibre

Corporate clothing company Cotton Roots and its sister company Impact Trading have taken an ethical approach to business – and it's paying off. The clothing is made only from certified organic cotton from India which carries the Fair Trade guarantee, and both companies have just been awarded ISO 14001 environmental management systems.

Owner Susan Waters set up corporate

clothing and embroidery company Impact Trading (UK) 13 years ago and it has grown to employ eight people. However, the newer business - Cotton Roots – is the one causing a bit of a stir. Interest has been expressed by the diocese of Exeter, the Museum of London and even the CBeebies journalists.

"I am planning to go to Gujarat to meet some of the 120 farmers who grow our cotton," says Susan. "Fair Trade is so important for them, they get a guaranteed

percentage and medical facilities are part of the deal. It's exciting to think that we are contributing to something so worthwhile."

The companies aren't just about sourcing responsibly, the business also sends its shredded paper for use by a local farmer; spare thread and fabric is given to schools; garment "seconds" are sent to Africa; bags are biodegradable, and teabags are used for allotment fertiliser.



Environmental Services - What's New

Another avenue for materials exchange opens up



In addition to the Eastex Materials Exchange – the successful eastern region waste materials exchange for business – Cheltenham has now also funded a similar project. This means that businesses can now benefit from having increased access to other companies either wanting their excess or waste materials or being able to use them as raw materials.

The Cheltenham funded website – scrapshop.co.uk – is also free of charge and open to all businesses. Matthew Roper, project manager for Cheltenham business GreenBuying which is launching the website, said: "ScrapShop.co.uk gives organisations the free and easy facility to trade waste online, reducing still further their environmental impact. Not just that, in these difficult economic times, the site has the potential for reducing landfill tax costs and to raise cash through the trading of waste materials - resulting in a real cash flow benefit."

To register with this scheme and for further information, log on to www.scrapshop.co.uk. To register with the locally-based Eastex Materials Exchange, visit www.eastex.org.uk

Help to cut bills - free on-site visits still available from GBN

GBN is still able to offer free on-site visits to help businesses cut their bills through reducing gas, water, electricity and waste use.

The service, funded by Bedfordshire County Council, will continue until the end of March. SMEs will then be able to take advantage of similar services offered under EEDA and European Funding after March.

GBN will also be able to offer other on-site services after March, but on a less widespread scale.

We will be providing updates on what's on offer to businesses, so watch this space and visit the GBN website.

SMEs can now apply for £1000 vouchers for low carbon projects

i10 – a collaboration of ten East of England universities – is now able to offer East of England SMEs the chance to apply for £1000 low carbon voucher to pay for up to two days' consultancy with an i10 university of their choice. Fifty of these vouchers are available.

The low carbon voucher scheme aims to stimulate low carbon economic growth by offering help to small to medium sized enterprises (turnover of less than £40m or a balance sheet totalling no more than £43m, with 250 employees or fewer) located in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk or Suffolk.

The vouchers can be used for increasing profitability through low carbon efficiency; Developing new low carbon technologies, products and services; Creating sustainable business strategies; Engaging consultancy, technical advice and R&D focusing on low carbon; Bringing ideas to market; Reducing your carbon footprint; Keeping your business lean, mean and green.

To apply for a voucher, you need to submit your project on the form provided at <http://www.i10.org.uk/aski10> or talk to a business development managers on 0845 234 2314 and they will submit the Ask i10 form on your behalf.

Strategies for the Downturn - an invitation to join Cranfield University's High-Potential Business Club 2009

Cranfield University is seeking ambitious, owner-managed businesses run by people who relish a challenging environment and enjoy working with the best of their peers to join its 2009 High-Potential Business Club programme for 2009.

This programme ran very successfully in 2008 and, thanks to generous sponsorship from Bedfordshire County Council, will continue into 2009. The programme is a series of one-day workshops at Cranfield

School of Management.

Topics include Sales, Procurement, Effective Negotiation, People Management, and Crystallising Value. The emphasis will be on practical steps that you can take to enhance and develop your business, learning from expert speakers, practitioners and each other.

The provisional dates for the workshops are 24th February, 19th March, 23rd April, 7th May, 14th May – Cranfield VentureDay, and 2nd June. A limited number of places

are available to businesses from Bedfordshire (excluding Luton) wishing to join the 2009 programme. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Beds CC, the all-in cost is £300 per business for all six events.

Please register your interest as soon as possible. Contact Administrator Heather Fisher [heather.fisher@cranfield.ac.uk] or Programme Director David Molian [d.molian@cranfield.ac.uk].

Events and Training

Environmental Management Seminars

GBN's Environmental Management Seminars are funded by Bedfordshire County Council and are free to GBN members. Guests are welcome to attend one seminar free of charge, and thereafter will be charged £25.00+VAT per delegate, per seminar.

Unless otherwise stated, all seminars are held at The Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine, and start promptly at 08.30 with networking and breakfast available from 08.00. We aim to finish between 10.30 and 11.00. Please fill in the form on the GBN website to book your place.

18 February 2009

Working Out Your Carbon Footprint

No matter what you think about carbon footprinting, it's rapidly becoming a requirement for suppliers and a recognised way of demonstrating your environmental credentials. Many businesses already have measures in place that will easily enable them to calculate their carbon footprint - and it may work out to be something you can shout about.

To find out what you need to count, how to calculate your footprint and what you can do to reduce it, come along to this seminar.

22 April 2009, The Rufus Centre

Internal Auditing

Environmental auditing is an essential part of managing your impact on the environment and also looking at cutting your business costs. In this seminar we will be looking at how to conduct an environmental audit - what to look for and what certification bodies are looking for. A formal presentation will be followed by a walk around on-site at the Rufus Centre to provide hands-on experience of conducting an internal audit.

To book or to find out what other seminars are on offer, visit GBN's website at www.gbn-bedfordshire.org.uk



A free event to help Bedford business beat the credit crunch

Bedford Corn Exchange
3pm to 7pm

12 February 2009

How can I get money?

How can I manage my cash flow?

How can I save money?

Get more help for your business by finding out what free support is available to you. We've got together with the best business support services in the region so we can help you fight the economic downturn.

It's free to anyone managing a business.

One to one advice. Exhibition. Workshops. Talks.

Drop in any time between 3pm and 7pm

Don't let your business flatline. Come along for a check up

Envirowise responds to online 'Greenrush' with new website

UK businesses have never been more interested in improving their green credentials in a bid to save cash, according to sustainable business experts Envirowise, who reported a 22 per cent uplift in visitors to its website.

To cope with a growing appetite for green business advice and ensure the most relevant information is available and accessible to all UK businesses, Envirowise has launched a new, updated website (www.envirowise.gov.uk) with a host of added features and a more user-friendly interface.

For those new to green business and Envirowise, a new 'Get Started' section will assist first time users and direct them to the most relevant sections at the touch of a button.

The new site also includes improved events and news sections, and hosts Envirowise 'pod casts' that give advice on a range of environmental issues for business.

The site hosts over 620 publications containing advice and information to help businesses of all sizes address their environmental impact. Tailored areas deliver specific advice for a range of industry sectors.

Useful Websites

www.gbn-bedfordshire.org.uk
www.blsbp.co.uk
www.bedfordshire-waste-exchange.co.uk
www.carbontrust.co.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk
www.edie.net
www.envirowise.gov.uk
www.detr.gov.uk
www.netregs.gov.uk

GBN Contacts



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