

BEDFORDSHIRE GREEN BUSINESS *network news*

Summer 2003

Task Force calls for government to be clearer on ELV and WEEE

The Better Regulation Task Force's recently published report *Environmental Regulation: getting the message across* urged the government to be clear about how companies should implement the End of Life Vehicles (ELV) and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directives. Regulations based on these Directives are to be introduced as part of a crack-down on waste.

The Directives aim to change the way in which products are made and to influence consumer attitudes and behaviour towards use and disposal of goods.

Study leader for the Task Force Janet Russell said, "The potential for things going wrong is even greater with these Directives than it was for fridges. They cover many more products - from washing machines to electric

toothbrushes; from microwaves to toasters; and of course, old cars. During our research we came across widespread concern and uncertainty about what investment and logistic systems are needed by business and local government. Even at this stage in implementation of the Directive, people still don't know exactly what they are meant to do, or when. Much of the infrastructure is not in place. The clock is ticking."

She went on to urge the government to clarify what it is trying to achieve, where responsibilities lie, when decisions will be made, and what the standards for the waste industry will be. Better communication, project management skills and consistent and fair advice and enforcement were, according to Ms Russell, the key to making the Regulations work.

"If the Government gets it



right, we will all benefit," she said. "These Directives present an opportunity for both the economy and a cleaner environment. The environment will benefit from 'greener' products designed with recycling in mind. The economy will benefit from the significant business opportunity the Directives

bring for entrepreneurs wishing to rise to this new recycling challenge. But, until businesses know clearly the timeframe and implications, they will not be able to respond to the opportunity."

GBN will be covering the likely impact of these Directives in an event in early 2004.

Manufacturers get second shot at environmental training

Manufacturers are to get a second chance to attend an environmental awareness course under the Business Environmental Training Initiative (BETI) on 2nd September. The one-day course will help local companies recognise and act on their environmental responsibilities, which in turn results in cost savings and increased competitiveness.

The decision to repeat the manufacturing course follows the success of several sessions held earlier in the year - each tailored to meet the needs of a different business sector. In particular, demand from manufacturers outstripped supply for the number of places available and so a second session will be run.

The training is available to

small and medium sized businesses in Bedfordshire, and leads to the nationally accredited Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) level 1 certificate in Environmental Awareness. BETI courses are funded by the European Social Fund, which enables local companies to receive a package of training worth up to £5000, for no more than the investment of time into the

project.

In addition to the specialised course for manufacturers, BETI is to run a sector-specific course for service industries on 16 September, and will be running general BETI courses later on in the year. For more information, or to book a place, visit www.beti.info.



Alternative energy sources - is it time you looked again?

If you've not looked at how you produce the energy to run your business, you could be missing a trick. There are a variety of products in the marketplace that are designed to work in most situations – even in small industrial units – and are almost guaranteed to cut costs. With waste reduction targets becoming ever more stringent, it is imperative that companies find new ways of reusing, recycling and disposing of waste. In the first of a series of articles focusing on alternative energy sources, we highlight what two local companies have done using waste to generate energy.

When Rushmere Heath Nursery in Leighton Buzzard was looking for an alternative energy source to heat its extensive number of greenhouses, the answer lay in a Bedfordshire company.

Kempston-based Asgard Systems produces a variety of units that generate heat using baled paper and cardboard packaging waste as fuel. Rushmere Heath installed one of Asgard's waste to energy (WtE) systems, which is now generating enough power to heat all its greenhouses and to provide enough hot water for use in the Nursery.

So how does it work?

In essence, Asgard has installed a machine that is fuelled by baled paper and cardboard packaging waste.

A bale feeder takes the waste to a unit, where it is shredded ready to be fed through to a

main burning unit by conveyor.

This unit is connected to a boiler, where water is heated. Pipes then connect the WtE system boiler into the nursery's existing heating pipework. The system generates enough hot water to provide heat for all the nursery's greenhouses at minimal cost.

The whole system is monitored by remote-controlled sensors, which in turn are computer-controlled. These include many built-in safety features.

Systems on offer are generally 300 kWh, and heat is produced via hot water or hot air or a combination of both.

Applicable to most firms

The beauty of the Asgard system is that it can be used by many companies, both large and smaller. All that's



Rushmere Heath Nursery's WtE system viewed from outside

needed is enough space to house the units and enough waste to power the system.

Firms could find that this system can supply their heating needs from burning benign waste products, and may also be able to fulfill some of their packaging

waste obligations. Because the system converts waste to energy, it counts as reuse under the Packaging Waste Regulations.

Targets for recycling and reuse are about to be increased, putting increased pressure on companies that generate large quantities of packaging waste (see *article on page 3*). It may be the case that companies could take waste packaging from other companies (using organisations such as the Bedfordshire Waste Exchange) in exchange for PRNs (Packaging Recovery Notes).

These systems represent a real chance for companies to save money, both on waste disposal costs and on energy bills.

For information about Asgard Systems' WtE systems, contact Ross Donovan on 01234 855314 or visit www.asgardsystems.co.uk.

Major UK Companies and UK Government named and shamed in Indonesian illegal timber import row

Travis Perkins, Jewson, Tesco and the UK Government have recently been accused of using or importing timber logged illegally from Indonesian rainforests.

These accusations are even more shocking in light of the fact that both Jewson and Tesco are members of the prestigious WWF 1995+ Group, which is committed to obtaining an increasing amount of timber supplies from sources certified as sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council.

Pressure groups Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth have

conducted investigations into the activities of these organisations and claim that they have proof that all are either using or importing Indonesian timber.

Friends of the Earth revealed that garden furniture on sale in Tesco is made from Indonesian timber. Although the furniture is manufactured in Vietnam, it is made from logs imported from Indonesia, whose government introduced an export ban on logs in October 2001 in a vain attempt to control increasing levels of illegal logging.

The Government has launched an inquiry into

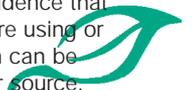
claims by Greenpeace that timber logged illegally was used in building a new Home Office building in London. The inquiry is the second in a year, and highlights the Government's inadequate and ineffective policies on procurement of timber.

Greenpeace has also produced a report that alleges builders' merchants Travis Perkins and Jewson both buy plywood from Barito Pacific, which is an Indonesian forestry company well-known for its involvement in illegal logging. Jewson has since issued a statement admitting that 20% of its plywood came

from Indonesia, but has now said it will not place any new contracts with Indonesian timber suppliers.

It is staggering that none of these multi-million pound companies, and the UK Government, seems to be capable of putting in place basic policies and procedures that check the credentials of contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

Perhaps there are lessons for all companies to learn from these incidents; always look for documented evidence that the materials you are using or being supplied with can be traced back to their source.



Up to 6000 East Anglian companies could be breaking duty of care and waste laws

The Anglian Region of the Environment Agency has identified around 6000 businesses across the region who could be breaking Duty of Care and Waste Regulations. These companies may need to register or reregister with the Agency as waste carriers or they could face prosecution.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes a duty of care on all businesses that produce, import, keep, transport, treat or dispose of waste. Breach of this is an offence, which can result in an unlimited fine if convicted on indictment.

In general, companies can transport the waste they produce without the need to register as a waste carrier. Notable exceptions, however, is if the waste is from construction or demolition. In these cases, it is an offence under duty of care and the snappily titled Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations 1991.

Construction includes improvement, repair or alteration and includes plumbers, kitchen fitters, double-glazing and a raft of allied building trades. Even if companies carry a small quantity of waste infrequently they should be registered and must ensure that the waste is disposed of appropriately.

Regulations state that waste must be described in sufficient detail to ensure that anyone handling the waste

further down the line is aware of any hazardous properties that might require special management, for example rags that have been used with solvent may retain their highly flammable property. The description of the waste is usually contained in a Waste Transfer Note and should include the following information:

- Quantity and type of waste
- Type of containers
- Time and date of transfer
- Name and addresses of both parties
- Whether the person transferring the waste is the importer or producer of the waste
- Carrier registration number or waste management number of either or both parties.
- The reason if either party is exempt from the need to register or hold a waste management licence

Both parties should sign the transfer note.

Before companies hand over the waste to another person they must be satisfied that he/she is authorised to take it. In practice this usually means that they must hold a valid carrier registration certificate.

The Environment Agency can tell you if you need to be registered as a Waste Carrier, so don't risk your livelihood by breaking the law. For advice, contact your local Agency office on 08459 333111.

Businesses flock to "green" supplier event



GBN's executive officer Simon James explains what GBN can offer to local companies

The Business Environmental Training Initiative (BETI) attracted a packed audience for its recent half-day event, which was aimed at helping existing and potential contractors and sub-contractors to deal with the implementation of greener purchasing policies by Local Authorities throughout Bedfordshire.

The event encouraged businesses to use sound environmental management techniques as part of good management, and highlighted the support available.

Speakers from the various authorities explained what the local authority requirements are; why they are so important and the support available to help implement improvements. GBN, partner in the BETI project, came under the spotlight as a source of sound support to businesses looking to take their first steps towards long-term sustainability.

Event co-ordinator Sarah Williams, said: "What was most encouraging was the number of local companies who took time out to attend this event and the enthusiasm with which they have embraced the environmental support on offer to them. Environmental efficiency is expected to become a critical factor for business and it is vital that companies realise this before it is too late for them".

The event included testimonies from local companies about the benefits they have experienced from increased environmental awareness, training and support, and included an exhibition, which highlighted the help available from local initiatives to ensure companies understand and implement environmentally sound business practices.

For more information about BETI visit www.beti.info.

DEFRA consults on packaging waste recovery and recycling targets

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has recently published proposals to set UK businesses new targets for the recovery and recycling of packaging waste.

A consultation paper proposes revisions to business recovery and recycling targets for packaging waste from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008.

Targets currently stand at 59% overall recovery and 19% material specific recycling, but new targets will be set and will have to be complied with by 31 December 2008.

Elliot Morley, Minister for the Environment, said: "The amount of packaging waste which is recycled in the UK will have to increase.... We are

working towards a more efficient and effective system which can give us greater confidence in our ability to deliver the next Directive targets".

The consultation paper is available on the DEFRA website at: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/packaging-reg/index.htm



In Brief - Environment Update

Spotlight 2002 report

The Environment Agency's annual publication - Spotlight on business environmental performance 2002 - has highlighted a number of areas of increasing concern, as well as good progress made in others.

Poor management of waste was singled out as an area with disappointing results; the waste sector was again responsible for the largest number of pollution incidents, and, despite a significant improvement in overall operator performance of landfill sites, 3.5% still posed unacceptable risks to the environment. In addition, the Pollution Inventory identified landfill sites as releasing substantial quantities of greenhouse gases, methane in particular.

Other waste issues continue to cause problems, with fly-tipping rising from 166 serious incidents in 2001 to 200 in 2002, and one company director being jailed for 12 months for waste offences, including dumping soil polluted with mercury, arsenic and cyanide.

Spotlight reports that serious pollution incidents are down to 1,468 in 2002, which is 21% less than 2001, but it's still 14% more than those occurring in 2000. The major offenders were the water industry and the farming sector, although both areas have shown a decrease in the number of pollution incidents. The chemicals sector, however, has seen an increase in the number it causes - from 19 to 28.

Despite the overall fall in these incidents, Environment Agency chief executive Barbara Young believes that: "There are still far too many serious pollution incidents,

and high-risk pockets of poor performance."

Better news comes from the fact that most air emissions are decreasing, with reductions in pollutants: particulates by 34%, sulphur dioxide by 14% and nitrogen oxides by 6%. Greenhouse gas emissions from processes regulated by the Environment Agency changed very little.

Prosecutions are disappointing, with a significant number of high-street companies being involved in environmental offences, including Tesco, TotalFinaElf, Tiles-R-Us, BT, Stationery Box and Yoplait. Barbara Young had this to say about it: "It is disappointing, yet again, to see so many household names at the top of the enforcement tables, and so many repeat offenders. It seems extraordinary that multi-million pound businesses are still prepared to risk their reputations with careless and avoidable neglect of environmental responsibility."

One of the reasons for the high occurrence of repeat offenders could be the reluctance of the courts to impose heavier fines. While fines are increasing, it is still not enough to encourage some companies to respect the environment. That said, fines are gradually creeping up and, in time, may start to act as a sufficient deterrent.

Spotlight reports that in 2002, there were 34 fines of more than £20,000 compared with 24 in 2001; the average fine per company prosecution in 2002 was £8,744, which represents a rise of 36%.

A full version of the *Spotlight* 2002 report is available on the Environment Agency's website.

GBN EMS Seminar Programme

10 September

EMS Seminar 7 - Emergency Preparedness

Emergency planning should be part of every company's strategy to ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of unexpected and/or accidental incidents. This seminar covers developing practical responses to emergency situations, including scenario planning and testing plans for effectiveness.

8 October

EMS Seminar 8 - Documentation and System Design

This seminar covers Environmental System design, including developing EMS documentation and procedures, and a practical workshop on writing a company Environmental Policy.

12 November

EMS Seminar 9 - Systems Auditing

This seminar looks at the difference between EMS auditing and environmental auditing. It concentrates on developing EMS auditor skills, such as checking and corrective actions using measurement and evaluation techniques.

10 December

EMS Seminar 10 - Communications

In this seminar, we look at internal and external communication and reporting about the environmental activities of an organisation. This enables companies to demonstrate management commitment; raise awareness of policies, objectives, targets and programmes; and inform interested parties (internal and external) about the EMS and its performance.

All seminars take place from 8.00am to 10.00am. For more details and booking, visit the GBN website.

Useful Websites

www.beti.info
www.bedfordshire-waste-exchange.co.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk
www.edie.net
www.envirowise.gov.uk
www.detr.gov.uk
www.gbn-bedfordshire.org.uk
www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk
www.envirolinkuk.org

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