

The Forum 21 Flier



Dear Forum 21 member,

It has been a very busy year for Forum 21 and we are looking forward to continuing the hard work in the new year ahead. Thanks to everyone who has supported us by attending events or volunteering time to help. It does require a community effort to keep us going and every contribution is gratefully received!

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DECEMBER 2009

Forum 21 joined The Wave in London

Forum 21 joined more than 50,000 people to demand action on climate change on Saturday 5th Dec at The Wave, the **biggest climate change march in the world ever!**

People from all over the country arrived dressed in blue to march from Grosvenor Square to Downing Street and on to encircle the Houses of Parliament.

The Wave called on the UK government to settle for nothing less than a climate deal in Copenhagen that avoids dangerous climate change and protects the world's poorest who are already feeling its effects.

According to the organisers of the wave, Stop Climate Chaos Coalition, not only did

Ed Miliband (Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change) come along to see

the wave, but Gordon Brown invited 24 Wave supporters to

10 Downing Street after the event to hear their demands.

Let's hope that the people were heard and that we helped to influence the decisions being made at the Copenhagen summit.



Bill Butcher, Lorna Scott and Louise Evans are pictured at the start of the march alongside the 'wave'. Photo: Bruce Scott

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We welcome you to a Forum 21 public meeting

Thursday 21st January, 7.30 pm

Methodist Church Hall, The Avenue, Minehead

"HINKLEY POINT - WHAT'S GOING ON?"

Presentations by Crispin Aubrey, F21 Steering Group and environmental journalist &

Jon Freeman, West Somerset District Councillor.

Followed by discussion

Free admission

Refreshments provided

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **Weds 6th January** - Stop Hinkley Public Meeting. 'Nuclear Power: Do we need it?' Prof. Tom Burke CBE.. Town Hall, High Street, Bridgwater 7.30pm
- **Thurs 21st January** - Forum 21 Public Meeting. 'Hinkley Point-What's going on?' Minehead Methodish Church Hall. The Avenue. 7.30pm



FEATURE: Hinkley C; Not in My Back Yard?

The debate over nuclear power is all the more personal to West Somerset now that EDF wants to build two huge nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point.

Anyone reading the West Somerset Free Press will have noticed that it now has a regular front page column dedicated to the Hinkley development!



The current government policy is based on the central argument that nuclear power is low carbon and that the UK cannot meet its carbon reduction targets without it. But what about renewable energy and energy saving? Research shows that due to the recession and energy saving measures, demand for electricity has already dropped. With the introduction of the feed-in-tariff next year, more people will have an incentive to generate electricity at home. If the £8M (and rising) that is proposed for Hinkley was spent on alternative, sustainable forms of electricity generation, how would the amount of

electricity produced compare?

There are many other issues at play here. From the construction of hostels in quiet villages ruining community spirit; to fears of leaked radiation and terrorism scares.

Our say may not matter but it is important to know what really is going on and what evidence there is to suggest that we really

need this Power Station before we accept our fate.

Whatever your view we would like to invite you to join the debate at our next public meeting on **Thursday January 21st, 7.30 pm at Minehead Methodist Church Hall.**

If you feel strongly against nuclear power then you can find out more about the campaign against the proposed "Hinkley C" power station from Stop Hinkley - www.stophinkley.org

Sustainable New Year Resolutions!

Most New Years Resolutions seem to be completely unsustainable. Come February you have realised this and torn them up and put them in the recycling! This year, I have made some sustainable resolutions:

1. Grow more vegetables.
2. Don't buy anything containing Palm Oil (new palm plantations are a major reason for deforestation).
3. Use an Owl electricity monitor at home - it really does make you think twice before turning on lights.
4. Get milk from the milkman to cut down on plastic.
5. Stop junk mail- (ask Royal Mail about 'opt-out' option and visit Mailing Preference Service: www.mpsonline.org.uk or www.mydm.co.uk or call 0845 703 4599)
6. Insulate the house properly before next winter!
7. Use public transport or cycle whenever possible.
8. Don't buy new clothes for Spring-hunt out old ones forgotten about or transform old clothes into something new.
9. Make your voice heard –sign petitions, march for what you believe- people power is coming back!
10. Tell people what you are doing-be inspirational!



Member's Feature: BIOCHAR

Among the many 'Green' things we can do is to grow some of our own food. The smaller the patch the greater the incentive to enhance output. To that end we apply all the compost that we can lay our hands on.

There is another means by which the soil may be permanently improved. Pre Columbian Indians in South America, among others, added Charcoal to their gardens. This had benefits that are still evident today. Charcoal attracts and holds nutrients until plants are ready to take them up, and it retains moisture. A further important element is that the carbon is permanently stored underground.

See www.biochar-international.org and www.carbon-gold.com for further information.

Jon Dubery of Avill Charcoal at Dunster (01643 821845 evenings) can supply what he calls "seconds".

Thanks to Charles Birch for submitting this article. If you have a subject you would care to share, please get in touch.

Editor's note:

Biochar is produced by the combustion of organic materials e.g. forest thinnings, sawdust, agricultural wastes, sewage solids. Some Climate Scientists believe that Biochar provides a powerful solution: it allows us to address food security, the fuel crisis and the climate predicament (it stores carbon underground and it is even claimed to convert carbon from the atmosphere into stored carbon). There is still much research to be done but Biochar may become a common component of our soils in the future.

Forum 21 News

An energy advice centre in Minehead?

It's possible that Forum 21 will join with the Minehead and Alcombe Transition group (TMA) to use one of the empty shops in Minehead as a temporary energy advice centre and information point for TMA. A government scheme provides local councils with a small grant to find ways of using empty shops for cultural or community use. Although the West Somerset scheme is mainly intended to place artists' work in the shops, it will give us an opportunity to use one of them. So we are investigating the legal and financial implications of taking on one of the shops until it is permanently let. Watch this space.

LARC (Local Action for Rural Communities)

We have now got funding for a Minehead **Anaerobic Digester (AD)** feasibility study from LARC. This should get underway early in the new year. AD involves breaking down waste organic matter using microorganisms. The methane gas (biogas) produced by the organisms can be used to produce power.

If you have ideas of innovative ways to move Western Somerset towards a low carbon economy please contact Lorna Scott, Graham Boswell or Bill Butcher. Alternatively, go to the web-site www.somersetleader.org.uk and contact the project manager Anne-Marie Spalding.

Minehead Car Club

We are very pleased to announce that Minehead Car Club has been awarded a Smarter Travel Management Award by Somerset County Council's Moving Forward Team. The awards go to organizations who have done their bit to deliver smarter travel management. The Car Club was praised for helping people in Somerset travel around without the hassle that is involved in owning a car.

For more information about the car club or to join, visit:

www.mineheadcarclub.com or contact info@mineheadcarclub.com.



Pictured with the Car Club car are Reggie Tricker of the Moving Forward Team and Bill Butcher, founder of the Car Club and member of Climate Action West.

Quote of the Quarter:

"Hope is an orientation, a way of scanning the wall for cracks—or building ladders - rather than staring at its obdurate expanse. It's a worldview, but one informed by experience and the knowledge that people have power; that the power people possess matters; that change has been made by populist movements and dedicated individuals in the past; and that it will be again." -
Rebecca Solnit, The Secret Library of Hope

This month read: **"A Renewable World: Energy, Ecology, Equality"** A report for the World Future Council by Herbert Girardet and Miguel Mendonca.
We have copies available for £10, email us at forum21.carbon@yahoo.co.uk.
I am reading this book at the moment and it is a brilliant and informative study of the history of climate change and how to move forward to a sustainable, energy-secure future.

Thanks to everyone who turned up on Minehead Beach for Forum 21's human '350' sculpture on October 24th, a day of international climate action. In response to the multitude of communities taking part in this event, Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations gave this speech:



"I would like to thank the millions of people in 181 countries who participated in 350.org's Day of Climate Action on 24 October. It was one of the most inspiring examples of grassroots political action on global warming the world has ever witnessed. This Day of Climate Action came at a critical time in the global negotiations, and demonstrated that people around the world -- from Ethiopia to India, Paraguay to the United States -- understand the scientific challenge the world faces. I encourage governments to heed the example set by their citizens, and to take strong action in Copenhagen to address this crisis through bold, visionary leadership."



Forum 21 is an environmental group in West Somerset working with West Somerset District Council and other partners to help avoid climate change and to promote sustainability

Quantock Eco - a new local group

The Bicknoller Eco team has invited other local communities to join them in the new Quantock Eco group. Residents of West Quantoxhead, Sampford Brett, Stogumber and Crowcombe have agreed to work together, with these purposes:

- to raise awareness of environmental issues with special emphasis on climate change, the depletion of finite resources and good waste management
- to encourage villagers to take practical steps to save themselves money while creating a resilient community through a sustainable lifestyle

Bicknoller Eco team has produced a CD of its activities in its first two years, 2007-2009. Forum 21 will be sending a copy to all parish councils in West Somerset but we have a number of other copies to distribute. If you would like one, please let Lorna know on mail@forum21.org.uk or 01984 634 242. A contribution for postage would be welcome.

Useful Forum 21 contacts:

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Transition Town Contacts:

Wiveliscombe:
Deborah J Thorpe
01823 401567

Minehead and Alcombe: (TMA)
Maureen Smith
01643 709 478
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Working Groups explained

There are a number of projects and working groups set up in West Somerset tackling climate change issues as a result of the Climate Change Strategy.

The **Climate Reduction Implementation Board (CRIB)** has been set up to implement the Climate Change Strategy. Various task groups have been set up to stimulate activity and report back to the Board. They are a means of identifying practical ways to move forward the objectives identified in the Climate Change Strategy.

The CRIB sub-groups are looking at biomass fuel, commercial waste, anaerobic digestion, energy use and sustainable transport; Forum 21 is represented on all of these groups.

These groups are also responsible for drawing funding to implement projects such as those reported above.

We have taken this opportunity to draw together the contacts for these projects so you can find out more information

Working Groups at present:

Transport:

Bill Butcher:

bill.butcher@wgbenvironment.net

Energy:

Lorna Scott

mail@forum21.org.uk

Waste (commercial and community):

Graham Boswell

togooutdoors@hotmail.com

Biomass:

Lorna Scott/ Graham Boswell

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Thank you for reading, we hope to see you at some of the up-coming events!