

Event report: Waste and Recycling

On the 23rd of April at the Foundry House, Pembroke, TENP members were treated to an inspirational and informative set of presentations which collectively provided the audience with no doubt as to the urgent need and potential for local action to respond to the increasing levels of domestic and commercial waste in the County. Regrettably the funding for several of the presented projects will finish with the end of the Strategic Recycling Scheme (SRS).

Dave Harries, Environment Manager at Pembrokeshire County Council gave a comprehensive account of the pressures facing local authorities, particularly the imminent fines from the EU if land fill is not reduced, and the practical options available to them.

Dave gave an impressive and detailed account of the current waste management practices and explained the severe pressures that all local authorities are under. In Pembrokeshire waste is increasing at 20,000 tons per annum, EU fines of £200 per ton for exceeding land fill targets, EU targets are of 25% of waste to be recycled /composted.

The current strategies for managing domestic waste were presented; current civic amenities sites divert 65% of waste away from land -fill, composting diverts 3,000 tons from land-fill, and there will be 100% coverage of kerbside collection by July 2008. However 20% of orange bags collected are contaminated and the new WAG targets for green waste, which are too high, will undermine the local composting scheme which minimises waste.

The pressure is on to recycle more but without a market for the material, e.g. plastic, there are no outlets. Dave estimated

that only 30% of waste is recycled per annum. The result is that current recycling levels are insufficient to meet WAG targets. Waste Incineration which also produces energy is the option preferred by Pembrokeshire County Council, at a cost of £ 30-35m, to get economies of scale.

Questions about pollution, and particularly dioxins were raised and Dave clarified that current data indicates that dioxin levels will be low. The option of an Anaerobic Digester is limited to food waste only, but the gas can be used to generate electricity and a market has to be found for the 'product'.

It became clear that all local authorities are placed in an invidious position; financial pressures to manage waste more effectively to avoid fines, pressures to increase waste collection to meet targets set by WAG, and waste increasing.

The remainder of the evening focussed on practical actions of three local recycling initiatives, all funded under the Strategic Recycling Scheme (SRS).

The Pembrokeshire Real Nappy Network: Katy Lawrence and Gayle Lister, who set up the project to reduce land fill, provided the bare facts; 1320 babies born per annum in the County, each child producing 1.26 tons of disposable nappies over 2.5 years, which costs the County Council 96K per annum to dispose. Disposable nappies also cost the consumer 5 times more than washable nappies.

As well as health benefits for the children and financial savings for the parents, the project has diverted 326 tons of waste from landfill over 3 years.

With the end of SRS funding the project will have to continue on a volunteer basis and charge for demonstration and trial packs.

For more details: www.pembsrealnappies.org.uk

PLANED: Tracy Whistance explained that PLANED had promoted recycling, including plastics and textiles, to local community groups over a 2 year period. They visited 41 groups supported 20 and set up a network, contacting 6000 people in total. Tracy explained that the message is that waste is a resource.

PLANED also lobbied PCC and PCNP for more recycling facilities. PLANED hope to continue the project after the end of SRS funding.

The Newport Plastic Recycling Project:

Lesley Davey explained that the Newport initiative developed due to local demand and the failure of the PCC orange bag scheme to be 'rolled out' quickly to the North of the County. A few local people organised a group of volunteers and arranged with a local retailer to provide a base for waste to be stored. AJ recycling of Boncath agreed to collect and recycle the waste.

This was a short three month project which has now overtaken by events with the extension of the orange bag scheme throughout the county by August.

Conclusion: It is obvious that EU directives as well as consumer and retailer habits will continue to make waste management and recycling topical issues. In response two key concerns arise: the limited capacity of the 'market' to constructively recycle 'waste', and the limited funds and resources available to support local initiatives which therefore depend upon the good will and commitment of volunteers. It appears that without a rapid and significant change in human behaviour incineration of waste is unavoidable.

For more information on Waste Management Planning in Wales go on to the WAG web site, Department of Environment, Sustainability and Housing, for the report: 'Future Directions

for Municipal Waste Management in Wales - A paper for Discussion', October 2007.

The full text of the presentations will be posted on the TENP website.

TENP business update

Following the presentations on waste & recycling a brief TENP business meeting was held. Highlights were:

- The launch of the TENP website www.tenp.org.uk - with a list of member organisations, documents, a gallery...
- Endorsement of the TENP Business Plan, which is available on the website.

TENP Represents You

In recent months TENP has accepted a number of opportunities, via PAVS, to represent the voluntary sector in discussions with public agencies. Whilst these invitations are welcome the trustees recognise that the Network has yet to develop a protocol for systematic consultation with its members. This we now need to do as a matter of urgency.

TENP has been involved in discussion with the County Council on the Local Development Plan, and on the Environment Sub-group of the Local Service Board (LSB) Task and Finish Group. Two TENP trustees have also been involved in the Stakeholders group for the National Parks LDP and Management Plan, although not as TENP representatives. Details and feedback from these meetings will be posted on the TENP website.

The consultations on the Local Development Plans and the PCNP Management Plan is an ongoing process, and it is important to make

regular checks on the PCC and PCNP websites for the consultation timetable.

The LSB is a new structure for the county and is intended to complement the Community Plan which will provide the strategic direction for policy making in Pembrokeshire. The LSB will identify bottlenecks in the delivery of the Community Plan and propose appropriate courses of action. The Environment sub-group was one of a number of groups set up to consider key environmental issues that required a partnership approach; e.g. biodiversity, climate stability, etc.

The Chair of TENP submitted a paper to the Environment Sub Group, after discussion with the trustees, providing 10 possible priorities. This paper was used as a discussion paper at the meeting of the 3rd April. A formal response to this list was provided by PCC and PCNP and is available on the TENP web site under 'LSB Environment'. These discussions were then fed back to the main LSB Task and Finish group on the 17th April.

It is fair to say that our suggestions were welcomed but received a mixed response; climate change adaptation and waste were supported as high priorities whilst sustainable development and renewable energy were given a lower priority, although still considered important.

TENP was also represented at an event organised by WAG focusing on community involvement in climate change issues, held on the 19th of April in Carmarthen. We met the Minister, Jane Davidson, and put to her the need for more resources to support the voluntary sector. Jane directed us to Convergence funding.

Funding update

TENP has received continued funding from CHEVRON for 2008 (£2500).

A bid for funding to the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has met a positive response. Once finalised, this funding will enable TENP to contract a coordinator. We will let you know the details of this opportunity as soon as possible.

TENP position statements

The TENP trustees have drafted position statements on a range of issues such as the environment, energy and waste and recycling. The draft is sent out with this newsletter. Please let us know any comments or changes that you suggest by email to Bettina.becker@pavs.org.uk or mail Bettina Becker at PAVS (see address below) by the 15th of July.

Future events

What events would you like TENP to put on?

Suggestions so far:

- Chevron's environmental policies globally and locally
- Representation training
- Training on energy and resource use provided by the Energy Savings Trust

Please get in touch if you support the above ideas or if you'd like something else!

Research report now available

The final report of the survey of environmental groups in Pembrokeshire which was conducted before TENP was established is now available. You can download the full report or a summary from www.tenp.org.uk or contact Bettina Becker on 01437 769422 or Bettina.becker@pavs.org.uk if you would like a print copy.

'Technotrash Recycling', at SPAN ARTS Narberth, Recycle Centre for Music and Data Media, discs, printer cartridges, old mobiles, etc. CDs and Vinyl are rescued and sold; 01834 869323, or email info@span-arts.org.uk



TENP trustees

- Martin Bell (Company Secretary)
mjandjbell@tiscali.co.uk
Secretary of the Pembrokeshire Historic Buildings Trust
- Charlie Mason (Chair)
Member of Pembrokeshire Friends of the Earth
- Madeleine Bland
Chairperson of Pembrokeshire Ramblers
- Brian Powdrill
Secretary of the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Contact

Bettina Becker
Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS)
36/40 High Street
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 2DA
Tel: 01437 769422
Email: Bettina.becker@pavs.org.uk