

Hastings Transition Town- Energy Group Minutes 13/08/2015

Present: Richard Watson, Linda Jeal, Keith Jeal, John Lyon, Steve Thornton, Mike Ryan, Christine Green, Andrew Conway.

Schools Eco Projects <http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/>

Linda Jeal lead a discussion of schools Eco -Projects. The British Council has sponsored global schools initiatives along these lines. We learned about such matters as the range of awards available to participating English schools:(All crucially dependent on the school having at least a few committed staff members) these may be known as transition schools at the higher levels and starting with a 'bronze' award, 'silver' or ultimately 'green flag' schools in terms of the ' Eco Schools' awards if they achieve the higher level award for two years running. Criteria include the school having an eco-committee, having high levels of child and parent participation and a forward momentum. Generally, the concept is working better in primary schools at present. In London there are sustainable schools linkages and crucially these sustainability concepts need to link up with aspects of the school curriculum.

Schools typically will do such things as energy audits that link up with science subject teaching.

Christine was inspired by Ken Davies's recent talk,she encouraged our group to focus on local progress on getting solar panels into schools and Richard is actively engaged on this matter. Linda has experience of this work and has helped her last school to be awarded one of the 'green flags' she mentioned for this type of planning.

Steve commented on his experiences at the recent St Leonards Festival of learning how untutored many local children are on sustainability issues.

Linda introduced a little video called 'A Litre of Light' about LED lights in bottles- which shows how in the Philippines eco groups are helping children and adults create sustainable lights in bottles. She spoke about global projects and the potential of the Hastings/ Hastings Sierra Leone linkage was mentioned. Linda's old school had sustainability and other linkages with Nepal and this kind of development is vital for promoting global awareness. The group 'Practical Action' is helping to promote this awareness. The linkages between geography teaching and climate change are a crucial part of this holistic educational movement.

We discussed 'Energy Saving Week' (https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/campaigns/current_campaigns/recent-campaigns/besw/big-energy-saving-week/) at the end of October and Steve and others wondered if our energy group could play a part in energy saving promotion in schools or elsewhere.

Richard is currently seeking a school curriculum program on energy-saving. He spoke about local school progress on solar panels: Castledown Primary is now 'doing solar ' on its roof.

Castledown now has an 'Eco-School green flag' and other local schools are moving in the same direction.

John talked about how he used to teach energy-studies in schools. He encouraged his students to learn for themselves in theory and practice including the use of modelling; how different shapes of building have heat- energy loss or heat- retention consequences. This included the crucial role of areas of glass in roofs or windows and the light and heat repercussions. He taught the basic heat- energy calculations that underpin such design parameters. This included how buildings have feedback and a homeostasis, always tending to a steady state; in terms of rises and falls of energy, depending on building- characteristics and inside/outside temperatures. Students were also encouraged to consider the acoustic aspects of building design.

Students enjoyed using light meters to measure light energy in school buildings as part of the designs studies. Students modelled different building shapes using Lego and were required to calculate heat losses. They learned how changes of building shape modified heat losses: The optimum designs having the greatest internal volume and least external surface area.

Linda told us that she is now looking to be trained as an Eco Schools assessor. Andrew asked about links and connections between schools. Linda lamented that the development of Academy Schools has tended towards an 'each school for itself' mentality that is fracturing traditional linkages in terms of project work in many areas.

Andrew thought that a few local firms such as 'Marshall Tuflex' or 'Stamco' would be likely sponsors, given our lack of funds, for school demonstrations of energy saving. Steve thought that our group could have an awareness- raising role by commissioning experts to give talks in schools and other venues. He reminded us of Richard's idea of creating a booklet with local green energy information and citing local progress such as solar panel development schools and local buildings: Eg. the solar panel roofing at 'Plastica' and 'Balcombe Dairy'. it should also include our vision for the future in terms of the development of such things as anaerobic digesters. Steve spoke about the potential for doing energy audits of buildings.

We discussed other local buildings actually or potentially going solar given suitable incentives or encouragement, particularly railway and shed sites and the pay back, Richard said, can be well within a decade in terms of the 'feed in tariff'.

See: <http://www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk/worlds-largest-solar-bridge-taking-shape-as-blackfriars-installation-reaches-half-way>

See http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/feed_in_tariffs_38364?gclid=CKWc3Kzxy8cCFSgGwwodqaoM5g

Richard has been in dialogue with local clerics and there is considerably interest by local clergy in some church buildings 'going solar,' if issues of control and bureaucratic obstacles can be overcome.

The group is disappointed by our MP Amber Rudd, the new Energy Secretary, announcing reductions in solar subsidies whilst retaining local powers to obstruct the development of

renewable energy developments. This seems to contrast harshly with the proposals to short - circuit local opposition to fracking explorations and heavy subsidies for the nuclear industry.

John mentioned that he is attending a 'Global Justice' meeting on 11 September with Amber Rudd.

This meeting will be at 2 pm at the Conservative Office in Silverhill: The topic is 'Energy and Climate Change'.

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