



Natural Light
Partnership

Conference held at West Dean Estate

26th October 2004

Report on the final event of the Promoting Renewable Energy in
Hampshire and West Sussex.

For more details on the project or the conference please email:

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EVENT TO PROMOTE RENEWABLE ENERGY IN HAMPSHIRE & WEST SUSSEX

The final event of the Promoting Renewable Energy in Hampshire & West Sussex project was a conference held at West Dean College on 26th October 2004. The aim of the conference was to bring together all the players in renewable energy within the two counties, to disseminate information about the project and the recommendations arising from it. The half day conference was attended by 61 delegates. West Dean College, on the West Dean Estate in West Sussex has a wood fired biomass heating system which has been operational for 23 years and proved to be an ideal location for the conference.

The contacts database, developed throughout the project, along with flyers and advertising on the Natural Light Partnership website, was used to advertise the conference. The diverse mix of delegates came from local government, including councillors from parish, district and county levels, and officers from all levels, as well as regional and local businesses and the general public.

The conference was divided into three parts:

- ✚ Presentations that provided background on the project and showed a range of the renewable energy projects advancing in the region and further a field.
- ✚ The conference then divided into three discussion groups with the following titles:
 - How can we promote renewable energy further and what support is needed?
 - What is the role of local government?
 - Biomass?
- ✚ Visit to the wood fired burner

Presentations:

Promoting Renewable Energy Project, Final Report

Background of Project	Sarah Davidson, IT Power
Progress made by West Sussex and Wind Turbine for St Mary's School	Ernie Timms, WSCC
Progress made by Hampshire	Richard Coles, HCC

Q & A

Community Renewable Energy Projects Lucy Aitchison, Sustainable Energy Installations

Hoathly Hill Community Project Stewart Boyle, Wood Energy Ltd

South East Woodfuel Partnership Matthew Woodcock, Forestry Commission

South East Wood Fuels Stewart Boyle Wood Energy Ltd

Q & A



Richard Coles (HCC) and Ernie Timms (WSCC) representing Local Authorities



Sarah Davidson (IT Power) introducing the RE project



Lucy Aitchison (Sustainable Energy Installations) promoting community renewables



Steward Boyle (Wood Energy Ltd) describing the SE Woodfuel infrastructure initiative

Copies of the presentations are available on the Natural Light Partnership website. All the presentations provoked keen and lively discussions. This high level of interest, debate and questions throughout the conference showed the need for a forum to allow on-going discussion and information exchange. This is to be hosted on the Natural Light Partnership website www.naturallight.org.uk.

Discussion Groups

The conference broke into three discussion groups, each group had a facilitator and a brief, although this was by no means exhaustive or exclusive and meant only to trigger discussion.

The conference reconvened with presentations from each of the facilitators' transcripts of the discussions.

Group 1 How can we promote renewable energy further?

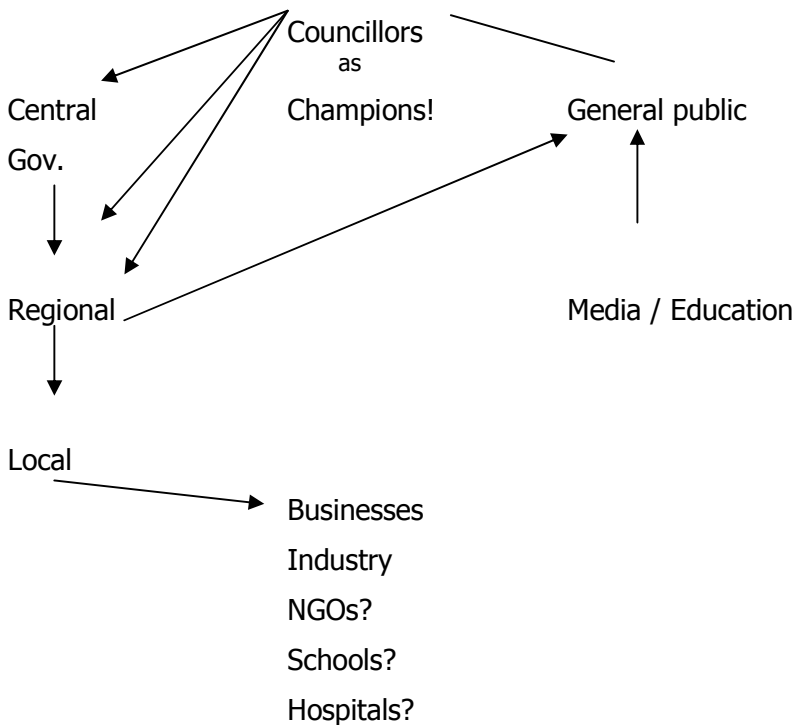
Who are the target audiences?

- ✚ General Public need an informed Public who can then input into LSPs and community strategies
- ✚ Decision makers – Councillors, planners
- ✚ Industry – Building
 - Architects
 - Housing Associations
 - Renewable energy industry?

How do we proceed on renewable energy?

- ✚ Local Development Plans
- ✚ Building Regulations
- ✚ More exemplary/flagship projects
- ✚ Education

Who should promote renewable energy?



Who should finance such work?

- + Grants or No Grants?
- + Grants - good for smaller community projects but should be over a reasonable period of time to give financial security.
- + For bigger projects such as large housing developments (new build), no grants may be the way forward, potentially increases commercial viability.

Group 2 What is the Role of Local Government?

How do we get the message across to housing developers?

- + Barrier = cost today compared with oil and gas
- + Involve communities:
 - educate public to gain acceptance of sustainable energy – will pay premium for properties that have sustainable energy advantages
- + More return if offer carrot rather than stick
- + Commercial developers need to be encouraged to look at green issues – encourage through planning mechanisms
- + Need to know what return on investment is
- + Need information and to share it
- + Local Authorities must lead by example

Group 3 Biomass

ACTION NEEDED

- + Government target needed for renewable heat rather than energy LA Targets
- + Co-ordination and development of wood fuel supply chain
- + Forestry/woodland world needs better understanding of Carbon trading
- + Development of websites and connections between them i.e. develop “wood hub”
- + Planning policy could be used to influence development and deployment of biomass installations
- + Biomass industry needs to develop the market
- + Other forms of biomass
- + Be careful with targets must be smart

Grants clear skies
 feasibility
 heat obligation certs



Karen Baker (WSCC) leading a discussion group on the role of LA in promoting RE



Discussion group in progress

After each of the discussion groups had presented to the conference Matthew Woodcock of the Forestry Commission had the pleasurable job of presenting Simon Ward of West Dean Estate with a bound copy of a case study which highlighted their exemplar wood fired heating system. Matthew also presented, on behalf of the Natural Light Partnership, a DVD film of the West Dean system to Simon and a DVD film of the East Meon Sustainability Centre biomass heating system to Terena Plowright, centre manager. Copies of the NLP film combines footage from these two films. The film clearly shows the tie between rural economies, biodiversity and wood fired heating systems are available on the Natural Light Partnership website.

Chairperson, Cllr Andrew Shaxson from Chichester District Council, then drew this part of the event to a close.

Visit to the West Dean Woodfired Boiler

The final, and for many the highlight, of the day was the guided tour of the woodfired boiler. It is impossible to explain such a wood fired heating system here but please look at the film and case study on the Natural Light Partnership site.

Financial support was provided by SEEDA, GOSE & the Forestry Commission which allowed us to offer over half the delegates free places and also to hold a meeting, in the afternoon, of the Regional Wood Fuel Networking Group. This group has representatives from local and regional organisations, including DEFRA and the Environment Agency. Suggestions from the morning sessions were discussed and information disseminated immediately.

Benefits & Actions

- ✚ The conference allowed opportunities for exchange of knowledge and information between delegates. There is a need to encourage further exchange and, so far, the Natural Light Partnership website has been updated to include live news items from Renewable energy magazines and items of interest and information forwarded from the partners.
- ✚ The conference provided a good networking opportunity between delegates. The presence of councillors from both councils boosted the awareness of political support for renewable energy installations. Encompassing partnerships, including public and private sectors, are vital for increased deployment of renewable energy installations. Events such as this conference allow exchange of information and views which aids this partnership development.
- ✚ The visit to the woodfuelled boiler allowed a first-hand experience of how a woodfuel boiler works and an improved understanding of all the different issues associated with running a woodfuelled boiler.
- ✚ Forum software has been purchased to allow continued discussions; this interactive forum will be launched on the Natural Light Partnership's website.
- ✚ Further conferences, seminars and visits to exemplar renewable energy installations were all widely requested by delegates.
- ✚ The data collected through this project on renewable energy installations in the two counties was presented in map form. To help local organisations arrange study tours to some of these installations, an idea arose of producing a map of installations that encouraged visits, with contact details etc. This idea is being pursued by Natural Light Partnership.
- ✚ Conclusions and/or recommendations from the discussion groups have been incorporated into the Natural Light Partnership's business plan, including the need for further promotional work, as started in this project.