

create a better place

update

our staff
magazine
May 2007



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Changing climate: changing planet

The pressure is increasing on us all to adapt to climate change. And now that it's top of the political agenda, we're leading the way forward

Spring has arrived, but for many of us winter never really came. In fact, the last 12 months have been the warmest on record, and 2007 is forecast to be even warmer.

Responding to these changes and integrating them into our planning is challenging, but not impossible. The Environment Agency is one of the UK's foremost public bodies with a responsibility for adapting to climate change, and we are taking the lead in England and Wales in a number of key areas.

We're investing more in flood risk management in the medium and long term because of the increasing likelihood of winter flooding. We're adopting a more tactical approach to coastal strategy because our decisions about future risk will require a careful calculation. Chief Executive Barbara Young said: 'Our present efforts to reduce emissions will limit climate change during the second half of the century, but now we need to adapt

to changes that are, for all practical purposes unavoidable.'

The earlier onset of spring is one of the key findings of the most recent assessment report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a team of over 2,000 scientists from all over the world. It examines the global impacts of climate change and how we can best adapt to its unavoidable consequences.

The report, launched on 6 April, found that 99 per cent of observed changes in physical and biological systems were consistent with changes in temperature. Some of these are now familiar reading – reducing ice-caps, retreating glaciers, rising sea levels, warming oceans and increasing drought.

In Europe, up to 2.5 million people could be directly affected by coastal flooding by 2080 and half of Europe's flora could become vulnerable, endangered or extinct



by the end of the century. Heat waves are likely to become more frequent and severe, while lowest river flows could decrease by up to 50 per cent. In winter, flooding will be more common with an increased chance of flash flooding.

As part of our drive to adapt to climate change, we're making 4-8 June Climate Change Week. Tying in with World Environment Day on 5 June, the week will focus on how you can reduce your carbon footprint by changing at work, whether it's recycling more or driving less. 'What we need now is real, practical work on the ground,' said Barbara Young.

[Find out more at the Climate Change Channel on Easinet](#)

Do you know a climate change hero?

We're looking for Environment Agency staff who really think of climate change when making everyday work decisions. You may know someone who's started a green initiative, or deserves some recognition.

Keep a look out during Climate Change Week on 4-8 June, when we'll reveal the first round of climate change heroes in a series of short films. After this, you'll have the chance to nominate yourself or your colleagues to become the next set of heroes. So, start thinking who your heroes may be!

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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY
05.06.07

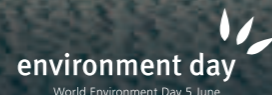
THE MEND OF THE WORLD IS NOW

WHAT WILL YOU DO TODAY?



BIKE IT. DRY YOUR WASHING OUTDOORS.
TURN APPLIANCES RIGHT OFF. USE REUSABLE BAGS.

TELL US HOW YOU'RE TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AT
WWW.MENDOFTHETHEWORLD.ORG



in brief

Bridgwater harnesses solar power

Rivers House in Bridgwater has become the first office in the South West Region to use green energy to meet its electricity needs. The building now has 54 photovoltaic cells installed on its roof, which will generate power for office appliances like computers and photocopiers, as well as office lighting. The cells will convert the solar rays into nearly 7,500kWh of electricity, and save on the release of 3.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, helping us to reduce our organisation's carbon footprint.

NetRegs sets off web campaign

The advisory service to small and medium businesses NetRegs has launched a campaign to promote its Waste Directory. The website allows businesses to check where the nearest licensed waste site is to them, and find out what they can safely dispose of there. It's focused on the agriculture, construction and manufacturing sectors, and is part of a wider plan to help businesses find out about environmental legislation.

Make money, not waste

Some of the country's biggest names in business recently attended a sell-out symposium on waste reduction. The South West England Food and Drink Conference was attended by over 80 delegates, including representatives from Cadbury Trebor Bassett, Heinz and Yeo Valley. The main aim of the meeting was to help companies access the funding available for minimising waste. People were also able to network and share their experiences of money-saving waste reduction projects.

news and views



Working wonders with WaterAid

Through our fundraising for WaterAid, we're helping to improve the lives of some of the world's poorest people. Annabelle Foot found out where the money is being used on her recent trip to India



In the rural villages and urban slums of the world's poorest places, getting clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene education saves people's lives and offers a sustainable long-term future.

Through a network of regional committees and representatives, we're working together with the international charity WaterAid to raise funds for its projects. This enables the charity to help people escape the stranglehold of poverty and disease caused by living without safe water and sanitation.

As part of the WaterAid Overseas Supporters Visit 2007, Anglian Region Strategic and Development Planning Officer Annabelle Foot was selected to visit some of the charity's projects in India recently. Annabelle travelled through three Indian states meeting community leaders, government officials and local villagers.

'At the villages, I interacted with the women and children, talking about their families and lives,' said Annabelle. 'We listened to how one woman collects water four or five times a day from a hand pump. She hoped WaterAid would start working in the village in the future – this is where our fundraising makes a difference.'

During the trip, Annabelle went to hygiene education sessions, helped to construct a latrine and opened a new sanitation block facility at a school in an urban slum. She said: 'In many villages, WaterAid is able to set up not only basic water supply, but also irrigation systems that allow crops to be grown and sold locally. This gives people pride in their community, the ability to help themselves and the hope of a sustainable future.'

[Find out more on Easinet at People Matters](#)

Four pillars make strong houses

Our report on the infrastructure needed for new homes sets out how Government and regional authorities can avoid damaging the environment

Supporting every home are essential, hidden services. Without clean water, waste handling and flood protection our homes would soon be uninhabitable.

We estimate that an average of £20,000 will be needed for each new home in the South East to provide water, waste water, waste and flood risk management. But by following the 'four pillars' of sustainable housing growth, we may be able to reduce demand for new infrastructure and its cost.

In two recent reports, we bring this often unseen issue into the open. *Hidden Infrastructure: the pressure on environmental infrastructure* provides a snapshot of the state of infrastructure today. And in our policy document, we set out a series of recommendations for the Government, regional assemblies, local authorities and developers. They are: getting the location right; planning for the longer term; reducing demand for new environmental infrastructure; and securing funding early on.

Chief Executive Barbara Young said: 'We all know communities can't function without schools, transport and hospitals, but behind every one lies a network of essential environmental services that are often taken for granted.'

We are already working with the Government to ensure adequate infrastructure for new homes. But we're still pushing for better investment and maintenance of water and sewer systems. 'Last year, nearly 5,000 properties were

flooded by sewers and more than 3.5 billion litres of water a day lost through leaks,' said Barbara Young.

'New growth can be achieved without harming the environment, but early investment and careful planning is critical. If not, we risk seeing our environmental infrastructure beginning to fail.'

[Read Hidden Infrastructure: the pressures on environmental infrastructure on our website or contact Kathryn Ross on 710 8665.](#)



Top honours awarded

Our Water Efficiency Awards celebrate the achievements of outstanding businesses and show that saving water can mean saving pounds

Water conservationists from the world of business were honoured by Environment Minister Ian Pearson and Director of Water Management David King at our Water Efficiency Awards 2007 annual ceremony recently.

There were several excellent commendations in the Agriculture and Horticulture, and Construction and Renovation categories that were too close to call. But there was a clear winner for the top award of 'Outstanding contribution to water conservation' and 'Leisure and tourism'.

The Malvern Hotel and The Blues Grill in Margate won for their commitment to water saving and 'Every Drop Counts' project. The business has seen a 46% drop in water usage and annual savings of more than £840 since July 2005.

'Through their enthusiasm and commitment, the Malvern Hotel and The Blues Grill managed to



The Malvern Hotel and Blues Grill – winners of the 'Outstanding contribution' award

reduce water use by 46% or 320m³ per year,' said Chief Executive Barbara Young. 'This family-run hotel shows how small companies can make big savings that are truly worthwhile.'

Other winners announced included the Broadland Agricultural Water Abstractors Group in East Anglia for training members in water efficiency and saving 190,000 cubic metres of

abstracted water a year. All the businesses that took part impressed the judges with the time and effort they invested in saving water.

Ian Pearson said: 'The projects featured in this year's Water Efficiency Awards demonstrate not only what can be achieved, they remind us that this is an issue on which every one of us has a responsibility to act.'

'The appreciation of water as a precious resource that we need to use wisely is still a challenging idea for many,' he continued. 'But as we face the inevitable changes brought by climate change, population growth and consumer habits, it is one we are increasingly unable to ignore.'

[Find out more about the winners at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater)

Waste criminals watch out

We're trialling an automated phone system that calls waste firms with a reminder to register and stay on the right side of the law

No illegal waste service provider in the Northumberland area will be able to deny knowing about their legal requirement to register with us. The innovative project means that notification is only a phone call away.

Any company operating waste-related services in the area will receive an automated phone call reminding them that they need to comply with the law. The innovative idea followed a report that, out of 1,700 businesses

identified in Northumberland, only 400 were registered with us.

The scheme, which is funded by the Business Resource and Efficiency Project (BREW), is designed to ensure waste is managed lawfully, and to help prevent fly-tipping and illegal dumping. BREW project manager Arwyn Jones said: 'The large-scale illegal dumping of waste is often masterminded by criminals. This type of illegal dumping of waste is not only an

environmental problem, but it costs us all millions each year to clean up.'

'The automated phone call from the us will remind unregistered firms of the legislation and allow them to register before further action is taken,' he continued. 'We know who these businesses are and this will give them a much-needed jolt. Ignorance is no defence and, if firms continue to flout the law, we will track them down and take them to court.'

in brief



End of life electricals scheme

As part of our drive to recycle waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), we've helped publish 37 compliance schemes for producers. These systems of registration and membership will help businesses across the UK meet their new responsibilities to pay for the treatment and recycling of products when they reach the end of their life.

MEPs open gate to flood debate

Members of the European Parliament attended a recent reception in Brussels we held to influence their opinion on flooding. The get-together came in advance of their vote on amendments to the directive on the assessment and management of floods. Delegates from eight EU countries, including Italy, the Netherlands and Germany, were joined by three UK MEPs.

Quality control for compost

Together with key players in the composting industry, we have developed a new protocol that will reclassify some forms of waste as compost. The Quality Protocol for Compost will make it easier for businesses and industry to produce more compost, and will mean less organic waste is sent to landfill.

Disaster data recovery record

Major disaster recovery for our data systems is better than ever before, enabling us to be up and running in just 66 hours. We simulated a major incident affecting our data centre in Leeds, and showed that it's possible to relocate and back-up our systems in record time. See the business continuity pages on Easinet for more.

the big picture

John Harman, Chairman



Step forward for climate change

Remember the bad old days when neither of the major political parties wanted to tackle climate change and the environment wasn't an election issue? Seems like only a few short months ago,

Wait a minute: it was only a few short months ago.

But how quickly things can change. This year has seen an extraordinary cascade of speakers and announcements on climate change. As I write, the Government has just published the Climate Change Bill, proposing to adopt legally binding targets to reach a 60 per cent reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050. By setting in law an interim 2020 legal target of 26–32 per cent below 1990 levels, the UK is leading European efforts to combat climate change.

This is a genuine watershed moment for the climate change issue in Britain – a move to be embraced and championed. The political debate over the Bill will focus on the Government's proposed five-yearly carbon budgets and the opposition's insistence on annual targets.

The Environment Agency is at the sharp end of adapting to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, so we particularly welcome the Government's introduction of a five-yearly review of how the UK is responding to the challenge. Whatever our success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the future, the next 30-40 years will see an increase in flood risk, water scarcity and coastal erosion in this

'We'll be at the heart of ensuring the country is ready for change'

country. We'll be at the heart of ensuring the country is ready for these changes. And the new statutory focus, if it has all-party support, can only strengthen our hand. It's definitely good news.

But what happens if the target is missed? The draft bill suggests a judicial review, but it's unclear what penalty a court would impose on the Government. We have suggested that the Government should be made to buy carbon credits to balance any deficit in its carbon budget, but it seems to be a bit of a cop-out. After all, we don't want to send out the message that you can buy your way out of carbon reduction.

The real penalty has to be electoral – punishment at the ballot box. And that will only happen if voters trust the reporting of the Committee on Climate Change, which means it must be both independent and transparent, and if there is a real sense of national purpose and partnership. That we're all in this together.

In his speech at the recent Green Alliance event, Gordon Brown said that he and his successors will be 'counting the carbon as well as counting the pounds'. We know the cost of failure to prevent climate change will be paid in serious damage to communities, businesses and may mean the loss of life. Few calculations can be more important to get right.



Keeping it special

The quality of the land, sea and air in the South West is crucial to the region's economy and people's livelihoods. Clare Sturges finds out how we're protecting its treasury of environmental assets

Walking along the pristine coastline of the South West of England on a clear day you can see for miles across some of the cleanest seas in Britain. At the height of summer there are beaches packed full of smiling holidaymakers swimming, sunbathing and surfing. People come from all over the UK to enjoy the region's biggest asset – its natural environment.

With an area of 23,800 km² the South West Region is the largest in England. It has a huge number of nationally and internationally designated areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. But beneath the gently rolling hills, lush forestry and fertile farmland are some serious environmental issues.

Over three-quarters of the land is involved in agriculture, which creates challenges that are central to our work. As South West Regional Environmental Planning Manager Tim de Winton says, 'The region has a lot of rainfall, steep slopes and risky soils.'

Despite the issues associated with agricultural run-off, the region's 191 bathing waters are of the highest standard. Last year, for the first time, all the waters tested off the coasts of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset complied with mandatory standards and 80 per cent passed even tougher tests.

Shifting seas

But the sea is at once a gift and a danger to people living on the South West coastline, as Tim points out: 'There's a historical legacy of ports, fishing villages and coastal tourist developments that we protect through flood defences. With the sea-level rises and increased storminess expected

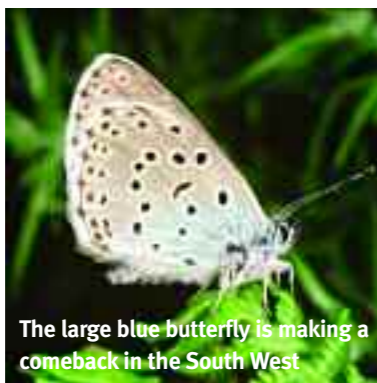
as a result of climate change, we're having to think very strategically about how we manage those high-risk areas.'

The region's popularity as a holiday destination has led to many people buying second homes there, and new developments being built. 'The South West is one of the fastest developing regions in the country,' says Richard Cresswell, South West Regional Director. 'It's a very attractive place for people and businesses to move to. It's also rich in natural resources like wind and sea energy, so environmental technologies are a key sector here.' Our role in

advising Local Authorities and businesses on the best places to plan and sustain developments is key in protecting the region's valuable environmental assets.

All those people and all that development creates a huge amount of waste, and the South West teams are keen to find new ways to deal with it. 'One of the problems with being a peninsula is that you have to deal with your waste close to home,' explains Richard. 'So we're developing alternatives to traditional forms of waste disposal, like recycling more biodegradable material.'

Another approach is to reduce or recycle waste at source. This is where Envision steps in – an Environment Agency-led partnership that aims to support small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to be greener. Many companies in the South West are SMEs, which are difficult to reach and engage in green issues. They also have the least time and funds to direct towards improving their environmental performance.



The large blue butterfly is making a comeback in the South West



River birds like the kingfisher are doing well in the Region

ISTOCK

Envision Project Manager Phil Moore explains, 'Envision provides quality environmental support and advice to SMEs about making their business greener. The business signs up then they get 35 hours of an Envision mentor's time, which involves an audit of their operations followed by support to help them achieve their aims.'

The scheme is working well, as Envision mentor Fiona Ward confirms: 'We're building strong relationships with local companies, who are slowly but surely making progress. In my role as a trusted advisor, I pass on the knowledge that helps them cut costs, improve efficiency and benefit from being greener.'

Being green means business

Among Envision's successes are Tiki International Plastic and Kitley House Hotel and Restaurant. Tiki Director David Aldrich-Smith says, 'By reducing our waste and recycling more, our business is growing and saving thousands of pounds.' Andrew Huckerby, Director and General Manager at Kitley House, is similarly pleased: 'Making environmental changes has saved us £13,000 a year – it makes good business sense.'

Part of Envision's effectiveness lies in the way it's funded: with partner organisations. Among others, it

Success stories for Envision



Kitley House Hotel and Restaurant is situated on a 600-acre estate in South Devon. With the help of an Envision mentor, it was able to reduce annual CO₂ emissions by 115 tonnes and use its green credentials as a unique selling point to attract customers.



Tiki International Plastics supplies high-quality surfboards and surfing gear to outlets in the UK and Republic of Ireland. It set up a scheme to recycle 50 per cent of waste produced on-site, reducing the amount going in to landfill by 20 tonnes each year.

gets money from the EU Regional Development Fund for Objective One and Two areas, and the Regional Development Agency.

'We use the money to help businesses address issues upfront,' says Jon Rattenbury, Principal Officer, Sustainable Business, and Envision project lead. 'It's about introducing measures so they don't pollute the environment in the first place. Although we already do some work on waste minimisation and pollution prevention, outside funding enables us to do much more.'

With increasing pressures on the environment in the South West,

our work in the four key areas of climate change, soil and agricultural run-off, waste and sustainable development is more important than ever. Maintaining the region's distinctive beauty is at the forefront of Richard's vision for the future: 'I want us to help the public at large to understand the fantastic environmental assets we've got and what they can do to protect them.'

As we all become more aware of our carbon footprint and try to reduce our air miles, perhaps the likes of St Ives, Dartmoor and Bath will overtake St Tropez, the Dolomites and Barcelona as our top holiday destinations?

Fact file

- The South West coastline is nearly 1,820km long
- Of the 493 English bathing spots, 190 are in the Region
- Over 1,100 people work for the Environment Agency in the Region
- Over 99 per cent of businesses in the South West are SMEs
- More than 11 million tones of waste are produced each year...
- ...and 30 per cent of it was recycled last year



Envision team: (clockwise from back left) Phil Moore, Marketing Manager Caroline Durowse (based at GAP), Project Officer Jikta Cox-Benakova and Jon Rattenbury



Diamond in the rough: the Site of Special Scientific Interest near Clovelly, Devon, as seen from Marsland