

The Forum 21 Flier



Dear Forum 21 member,

We are excited to appoint Marlene Allinson as our new Admin support assistant who will be sending out notices and information about up-coming events from now on. She is also going to be uploading current information to our website which has been given a face-lift - thanks to Judy Mapledoram for all her work.

Please visit us at: <http://www.forum21.org.uk>

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MAY 2010

Please help us save paper.....

If you receive this newsletter by post but now have access to email and could receive it electronically, please let us know. This will help us keep you up to date on events and useful information too. Alternatively, if you no longer wish to receive newsletters, please let us know.

Email : forum21.carbon@yahoo.co.uk or call Lorna Scott on **01984 634242**.

What does a hung parliament mean for green policies?

In their manifestos, Labour and the Conservatives ranked the environment chapters 8th out of 10 and 4th out of 5 respectively. Liberal Democrats put environment on the cover, then eschewed a separate section in favour of green proposals in every policy area, even defence.

But the environment was not really on the agenda in this election. It was the economic crisis that took the lime-light. The faith in Labour and the Conservatives in reforming the economy won on the night.

With no party ruling outright, it may take considerably longer to make decisions and pass policies. I am not sure that a hung parliament will help to restore faith in the government either. If we are to meet our emissions targets, we need a government to lead us by example and a willing public.

I am hopeful that economic recovery and a 'green new deal' can co-exist with the creation of green-collar jobs, investment in renewables, reducing spending on unnecessary new airport runways etc.!

Let's hope the parties can work together and draw on each of their strong points to lead us into this time of change



We welcome you to a Forum 21 public meeting

Thursday 27th May, 7.30 pm

Methodist Church Hall, The Avenue, Minehead

BIO – CHARCOAL

How to take Carbon from the atmosphere and use it to increase crop yields

Presentation by James Bruges, ex-architect and author on global environmental issues

Free admission, Refreshments provided

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- **Sat 22 nd May** - Transition Minehead and Alcombe, F21 and LETS Plant Swap. Minehead Methodist Church Hall. 10 am-1pm
- **Thurs 27 th May** - Forum 21 Public Meeting. Bio-Char. Minehead Methodist Church Hall. The Avenue. 7.30pm
- **29th & 30th May**.—"Join the queue". Learning from the Land, Milverton. A practical course on composting loos! £120 includes lunches. Call 01823 400696 or email: courses@learningfromtheland.co.uk
- **5th & 6th June**. Footsteps to Resilience SW 2010. Run by the Co-op. At the Eden Project. A range of workshops including Climate Change & Peak Oil, Food Waste, Eco-building. Call Maureen on 01643 709478.

FEATURE: Offshore Wind farms given boost by MoD

For years there has been disagreement between the Ministry of Defence and wind farm companies since the rotating blades of turbines can interfere with air traffic control and defence systems resulting in 'black-out' zones.

It has now been agreed that a consortium of wind power firms will pay for a new radar system to be installed onshore in Norfolk to ensure the East of Britain will be protected when new turbines are erected on The Wash (a large estuary where Norfolk meets Lincolnshire).

The radar will be on land in Norfolk. It will be paid for by the wind farm developers, The Crown Estate on



Petition against Hinkley "C"

We need to show the strength of feeling across Somerset against the EDF proposal for a massive new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point. That means we have just a few months to get thousands of signatures to present to the government when the company puts in its planning application (expected at the beginning of August). Follow this link to either sign the petition online or download a copy to collect signatures from your friends and neighbours -

<http://www.stophinkley.org/PETITION.htm>

If you have an environmental issue you wish to write about and share, please submit an article to us via email or post and it may feature on this page.

whose submerged land the turbines will be built, and the Department of Energy and Climate Change, which is contributing £4M. Towards to £20M total.

As part of the agreement the MoD has lifted planning objections to 5 new offshore wind farms off the coast of Norfolk (with almost 1000 turbines).

This is good news for renewable energy, especially wind farms and a surge in applications is expected to result from this agreement.

(Based on original article from [Owen Bowcott guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), Monday 3 May 2010)

Member's Feature: GDP: An inaccurate measure of welfare

GDP is a measure of a countries overall economic output i.e. the value of the goods and services made within a country in a year.

'Progress' in terms of human civilisation, means to improve the well-being of society. Therefore, in order for societies to progress we need an accurate measure of welfare to assess how we are doing and create policies accordingly to improve on it. It has long been recognised that GDP cannot be a measure of welfare but has simply been used for this purpose for decades because it is easy to measure and no other alternative has been agreed upon.

The current economic and environmental crises we are experiencing has spurred on research into alternative indicators of welfare that address issues of sustainability and inequality since these will be of paramount importance to the future welfare of societies. Many alternative indicators of welfare exist such as the New Economic Foundation's 'Happy Planet Index' and the United Nation's Development Project's 'Human Development index'. But none has been officially approved by governments. The French President is leading the way in Europe and is commissioning research into suitable models. (see www.beyond-GDP.eu).

Let's hope our new government can do the same and put an end to welfare measured by a figure that assumes economic growth and increased consumption will make us happy!

Submitted by Louise Evans—a summary of her first essay for her MSc at the Centre for Alternative Technology, Wales.

Forum 21 News

Eco-Schools

We have been working with The Field Studies Council, Exmoor National Park and other partners to raise awareness of environmental issues in schools across the Exmoor region and to help them achieve the Eco-schools award. This project is funded by Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund and Forum 21.

A launch event was held for teachers from all the primary schools on Exmoor in February and more recently on 23rd April school children and their teachers spent a day at Nettlecombe Court field study centre taking part in a range of activities and sharing ideas to help them make their own schools greener. The project organiser, Holly Walker said: "It was a very successful day and very rewarding to see so much enthusiasm from young people about the issues facing the next generation". More events are planned throughout the year including a workshop for school bursars and maintenance staff.

Community Supported Agriculture

Forum 21 and TMA are hoping to set up a Community Supported Agriculture scheme (CSA). The aim of CSA is to enable communities to grow their own food and be less reliant on imported goods. We may hold a public meeting in June about the CSA scheme. We will let you know the date via email closer to the time. If you don't receive emails, please check our website for meeting information.

Energy Team work continues

The Forum 21 Energy Team is continuing to provide householders with free energy saving advice this year. We are now advising Taunton Deane council on setting up a similar scheme.

We have also been working with Transition Minehead & Alcombe on an energy pack containing valuable advice, including info about renewables, the feed-in-tariff, grants, recommended products and contact details for local trades—people.

Quote of the Quarter:

"It is not the Earth that's in trouble—the Earth has been through a lot worse than the problems inflicted by us—it is people that are in trouble. The planet has been here for Billions of years, we have only been here for a few hundred thousand. The planet isn't going anywhere, we are. The planet will shake us off and heal itself!"

(from comedian George Carlin 'Saving the Planet' video on YouTube.com)

A Note about Membership

We are currently up-dating our membership database. If you wish to become a formal Forum 21 member which allows you to vote in new Steering Group members at our AGM, please fill in the form attached and return back to Lorna Scott (address on last page). Thanks.



This month read:

"Waste: Uncovering the global food scandal" by Tristram Stuart

With shortages, volatile prices, environmental disasters and nearly one billion people hungry, the world has a food problem - or thinks it does. Combining front-line investigation with startling new data, Waste shows how the way we live now has created a global food crisis - and what we can do to fix it.

"This is one of those books that everybody should read—it may well change your view of the way we treat food forever" - The Independent

Penguin Books £9.95, ISBN 978-0-141-03634-2



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

Useful Forum 21 contacts:

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Louise Evans
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Transition Town Contacts:

Wiveliscombe:
Deborah J Thorpe
01823 401567

**Minehead and Alcombe:
(TMA)**
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tma2009@hotmail.co.uk

If you would like to get involved in Forum 21, or attend Steering Group meetings please let Marlene Allinson know.

We welcome anyone with enthusiasm, initiative or time to help run projects. Or if you have a project you would like advice on, get in touch and we may be able to help or put you in touch with someone.

We would like to act as a source of information for local people to help in achieving a more sustainable, self-sufficient West Somerset.

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!