



Network

News

April 2007

AECB Listed Member Profiles, The New Way To Find Green Building Professionals

The Listed Member Profiles are now active and allow you to differentiate your business by displaying your green credentials.

Members who have filled in their profile will go to the top of member searches. If you go to www.aecb.net/findmembers.php and click 'find' you will see how this works.

Smaller companies without the resources to maintain a website can use this as a mini website whilst all companies are encouraged to provide hard evidence of environmental performance.

Rather than reading more go to www.aecb.net/profiles.php, where existing profiles can be viewed.

From the main website, go to members area/my account in the menu on the left of the page and click on 'edit your member profile' then set up your own profile which can remain hidden from view until you are happy to click 'publish'.

Or go to www.aecb.net/myaccount.php

You will need to be logged in with your user name and password.

The web team, Tom, Chris and Nick

US Launches Major Solar Support Scheme

Secretary Samuel W. Bodman on February 8 announced the selection of 13 industry-led solar technology development projects for negotiation for up to \$168 million (FY'07-'09) in funding, subject to appropriation from Congress. These projects will help significantly reduce the cost of producing and distributing solar energy.

As part of the cost-shared agreements, the industry-led teams will contribute more than 50 percent of the funding for these projects for a total value of up to \$357 million over three years. These cooperative agreements, to be negotiated, will be the first made available as part of President Bush's Solar America Initiative [SAI], a component of his Advanced Energy Initiative [AEI], announced in his 2006 State of the Union Address.

These projects enable the projected expansion of the annual U.S. manufacturing capacity of PV systems from 240 MW in 2005 to as much as 2,850 MW by 2010, representing more than a ten-fold increase. Such capacity would also put the U.S. industry on track to reduce the cost of electricity produced by PV from current levels of \$0.18-\$0.23 per kWh to \$0.05 - \$0.10 per kWh by 2015 – a price that is competitive in markets nationwide.

For more information go to <http://energy.seekingalpha.com/article/29269>

Meanwhile In The UK

Budget Offers Prospect Of Relief For Household Renewables- But No Grants Until May

The Chancellor has responded to the funding crisis for household renewables by increasing grants for household renewables by £6M, bringing the total funds committed to over £18M. The budget increase should allow the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to remove, with immediate effect, the monthly cap on household grants that is threatening to undermine confidence in the microrenewables market.

Responding to the relief offered in today's Budget, Philip Wolfe, Chief Executive of the Renewable Energy Association, commented: "There is clearly a strong appetite for homeowners to put microrenewables to work in their homes. The new funds announced today should be sufficient to support demand through the next fiscal year and provide the opportunity to lift the monthly funding cap. Many customers and hard-pressed businesses across the industry will welcome the prospect of a return to normality that the new funding offers."

"The Budget sets out the enormous opportunity presented by microrenewables to cut carbon emissions in our homes and businesses, and signals the need to develop a more mature market. This is a vision that the industry shares. But it is vital that new measures to help householders invest in micro-renewables, when the grant

programmes end, provide an enduring and effective stimulus to the market. We will work closely with Government to create the conditions for micro-renewables to realise their considerable potential".

Frustratingly the DTI have decided to close the household renewables grants stream for April 2007, while they rearrange the scheme, to be reopened in May 2007. Read the DTI's press release below.

Source www.r-e-a.net/article_default_view.fcm?articleid=2462

Extra £6m For Green Householders - Darling

A 50% increase in funding for householders to install small scale renewables such as micro wind turbines and solar panels was announced in the Budget today. It will take the total available under the Low Carbon Building Programme to more than £18million. At the same time the scheme is to be re-shaped to make best use of the extra funding. Proposals will be brought forward in May.

While the scheme is re-structured the decision has been taken to suspend it for the April allocation. It's important that this final additional funding for household renewables, due to end in mid 2008, is used to best effect to bring on a microgeneration sector that can stand on its own two feet without further subsidy. DTI Ministers will be meeting with industry to discuss how best to operate the new scheme and will announce the way forward in May.

There were also a number of other ways of encouraging microgeneration in the Budget.

We will be consulting this spring on EEC3 and how microgeneration can be included within the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) as a measure, energy suppliers can provide to their customers to meet their commitments. It also set out the intention that by 2020 all householders will have been offered help to introduce energy efficient measures with the aim that, where practical, all homes will be able to achieve their energy efficiency potential.

These initiatives, along with the waiving of income tax on any surplus electricity sold back to the grid by microgenerators, add up to a major focus on reducing carbon emissions from our homes.

www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=273009&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=False

New Bill And Strategy Lay Foundations For Tackling Climate Change - Miliband

The Government's blueprint for tackling climate change has been set out by Environment Secretary David Miliband. The draft Climate Change Bill, the first of its kind in any country, and accompanying strategy, set out a framework for moving the UK to a low-carbon economy, demonstrating the UK's leadership as progress continues towards establishing a post-2012 global emissions agreement.

Key points of the draft bill, include:

- A series of clear targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions - including making the UK's targets for a 60 per cent reduction by 2050 and a 26 to 32 per cent reduction by 2020 legally binding.
- A new system of legally binding five year "carbon budgets", set at least 15 years ahead, to provide clarity on the UK's pathway towards its key targets and increase the certainty that businesses and individuals need to invest in low-carbon technologies.
- A new statutory body, the Committee on Climate Change, to provide independent expert advice and guidance to Government on achieving its targets and staying within its carbon budgets.
- New powers to enable the Government to more easily implement policies to cut emissions.
- A new system of annual open and transparent reporting to Parliament. The Committee on Climate Change will provide an independent progress report to which the Government must respond. This will ensure the Government is held to account every year on its progress towards each five year carbon budget and the 2020 and 2050 targets.
- A requirement for Government to report at least every five years on current and predicted impacts of climate change and on its proposals and policy for adapting to climate change.

The draft bill will be subject to a full public consultation alongside pre-legislative scrutiny in Parliament.

The strategy paper sets out how the Climate Change Bill fits into the Government's wider international strategy and a range of future domestic policies to achieve its aims.

It argues that all sectors of society will have to contribute to the transition to a low-carbon economy, but that this does not mean a reduction in standards of living.

It sets out a vision for how the UK can move to a low carbon economy including:

- Investment in low-carbon fuels and technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, wind, wave and solar power.
- Significantly more efficient use of energy.

- A step change in the way energy suppliers operate so that they focus on reducing demand rather than just supplying as much energy as possible.
- Consumers becoming producers as well as consumers of energy.

The draft Climate Change Bill is at : www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/climatechange-bill.

Responses to the consultation on the draft bill should be sent to: climatechangeconsultation@defra.gsi.gov.uk or to:

Patrick Erwin / James Hardy, Climate Change Legislation Team, Area 4/F5, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6DE. The closing date for comments is 12 June 2007.

Cooper Goes Large With Zero Carbon

Housing minister Yvette Cooper has hitched the government's New Growth Points programme for housing expansion in areas under housing pressure to its drive for zero and low carbon housing. Local authority bids for new settlements will now be considered as part of this housing growth scheme, Cooper announced, but with her department insisting on zero or low carbon designs that also make the best use of brownfield land. The aim is to generate low carbon settlements of 5,000-10,000 homes each.

The New Growth Points scheme took a major step forward in October last year when bids from 45 towns and cities around the country were confirmed as being under consideration by the DCLG. Taken together those proposals add up to around 100,000 new homes and were seen as a response to the Barker report calling for an acceleration of housing delivery. Details of the scheme, under the banner Partnership for Growth, together with a list of locations involving some 70 local authorities, is at www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503854

This development appears to put the New Growth Points drive on a similar course to the new settlement proposals that are being invited under the recently announced Carbon Challenge competition, to be run by English Heritage. The difference is that the eco-towns will be dramatically larger and will have to be put forward by local authorities keen to rise to the zero carbon challenge.

Cooper's announcement included £2m funding to develop the eco-towns concept. She also announced the appointment of Professor David Lock, chair of the Town and Country Planning Association, to report to the government on further development of the planning criteria for the eco-towns model.

Source: RIBA Practice Bulletin - No. 388 (8 March 2007)

Social Housing Target Gets Closer

The deadline for zero carbon homes continues to creep ever closer. Last month the Welsh Assembly took the industry by surprise with the announcement that it wants all new buildings to eliminate emissions by 2011, five years ahead of the UK government's own target for zero carbon homes.

Now Trevor Beattie, southern director of English Partnerships and a member of the transitional committee setting up the new Communities England super agency, has gone on record to say that publicly-funded housing will have to satisfy the highest level of the Code for Sustainable Homes – the zero carbon Level 6 – by 2013. That's a slightly less ambitious three years advance on the target.

The Housing Corporation (which combines with English Partnerships in 2009) has already confirmed that social housing will be at the forefront of the drive towards low energy homes; all bids for its 2008-2010 funding round will have to reach Level 3 of the code, which requires a 25% improvement on current Part L energy standards.

Beattie has also signalled a major shift of emphasis for Communities England, which will end its practice of acquiring major housing and regeneration sites, much to the annoyance of house builders, in favour of assisting landowners to bring sites to market.

Source: RIBA Practice Bulletin - No. 388 (8 March 2007)

New Chief Executive Marks Step Change For BRE

Dr Peter Bonfield has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of BRE. The appointment comes as part of a restructuring of the BRE group of companies with Martin Wyatt and members of the current BRE board forming a new holding company to oversee the strategic expansion and development of the group as a whole. Dr Bonfield's fifteen year career in construction has focused on driving innovation and improved sustainability across all construction sectors. He has led major initiatives in the areas of new build and existing housing, as well as in commercial and public sector buildings.

Over the last 10 months he has been on part-time secondment to the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) where he has helped create the sustainable development strategy for the Olympics. His current role is as leader for construction products to be used in the build programme for the games. BRE this year celebrates its 10th year of operating in the private sector and this appointment marks a step change in the development of the organisation.

Dr Bonfield commented "I am delighted to take up this appointment at a time when our industry is in a period of rapid and unprecedented change – for instance there is an urgent and vital need to reduce the carbon footprint of

our new and existing buildings and we must also address the way the industry contributes to our society and the economy as a whole. BRE's extensive expertise and knowledge are needed now more than ever."

USGBC: PVC Is Not A Healthy Building Material

by Bill Walsh and Tom Lent, Healthy Building Network, March 9, 2007

"When we add end-of-life with accidental landfill fires and backyard burning, the additional risk of dioxin emissions puts PVC consistently among the worst materials for human health impacts..." USGBC Technical Science Advisory Committee (TSAC) final report.

The verdict is in. On February 26, 2007, the Technical Science Advisory Committee of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) released the results of its long awaited assessment of the health and environmental impacts of polyvinyl chloride plastic (PVC) building materials. In recommending against a LEED credit for PVC elimination, the TSAC delivered a data rich defence of its rationale that such a credit would not necessarily ensure that LEED users would select an overall environmentally superior material. This is not a new dilemma. Selecting a LEED-accredited low VOC product, for example, has long been recognized as critically important for indoor health, but does not guarantee that the alternative is better for other environmental attributes.

Far more significant is the TSAC finding that when human health impacts are appropriately considered, PVC was consistently worse than alternatives. Equally important, the damning data were associated with PVC production and end-of-life, phases of the material life cycle that are not unique to the materials or product types examined by TSAC. As a result, the TSAC has highlighted concerns that apply to other PVC building materials such as wall coverings or membrane roofs.

The TSAC report runs over 200 pages, and looks at PVC and two to three alternative materials in four product types. They summarized their impact findings in three categories: Cancer, Total Human Health and Environment[and provided a low, average and high estimate for each category. Predictably, the results varied depending upon which estimates were used. It is interesting to note, that even using the low end estimates, PVC is rarely superior in any product type. Low end estimates are not, of course, protective of human health. Taking a Precautionary Principle approach to examine the TSAC data using the average to high estimates of impact for all materials makes the following clear:

- On TSAC's Cancer ranking, PVC is consistently the absolute worst for each of the four product types studied.
- On TSAC's Total Human Health ranking, PVC consistently comes out either tied for worst or absolute worst.
- On TSAC's Environmental ranking, PVC's performance is mixed — still absolute worst in the case of flooring - both VCT and sheet vinyl - but better than one alternative and roughly equal to the alternatives in the other three cases. Within the specific Environment subcategories performance is scattered with only cork flooring consistently outperforming every other alternative in its category in all environment indicators.

So it comes down to this. If you screen out PVC from your materials choices, you always get better human health, but you may (or may not) trade off some or all of the "other" environmental attributes, depending upon which material you pick. Much work lies ahead to develop more useful screening tools, such as HBN's own Pharos Project, to help the designer quickly select materials and push the market on multiple environmental fronts.

In the meantime, the transition away from PVC can continue with another indicator in place that human health will be a winner.

World Habitat Awards 2007

The World Habitat Awards were established in 1985 by the Building and Social Housing Foundation as part of its contribution to the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Two awards are given annually to projects from the global north as well as the south that provide practical and innovative solutions to current housing needs and problems. Every year an award of £10,000 is presented to each of the two winners at the annual United Nations global celebration of World Habitat Day. Travel and accommodation costs are also met for one representative of each winning project to attend the awards ceremony.

Any individual, organisation or government who has an innovative and practical solution to housing needs and problems from any country of the world can enter. More than one project may be submitted by the same individual or organisation. Projects must be submitted by the original designer or be accompanied by a letter of permission from the designer agreeing to its entry in the competition and for its publication in the event of winning. Previous entrants can re-submit in subsequent years providing that the project has been further developed in the intervening time period.

The World Habitat Awards has a two-stage entry process: Stage I submissions need only comprise a concise summary of all aspects of the project. From these preliminary submissions, twelve projects are selected by an Assessment Committee to go forward to Stage II of the competition. Stage II submissions are evaluated by an

independent advisory group before being put to a panel of international judges. Evaluation visits are carried out to some of the projects prior to the final judging.

Full details are at www.bshf.org/en/?topselected=World%20Habitat%20Awards

Woodworks Grant Now Available Across The South West

A funding package worth more than 2000 pounds is available to new and existing businesses in the South West region. The new package of funding is particularly focussed on businesses working in the timber in construction, wood fuel and leisure and tourism sectors.

To find out more about the fund please contact the Silvanus Trust, Kyl Cober Parc, Stoke Climsland, Callington, Cornwall, PL17 8PH. Tel. 01579 372100, email general@silvanus.cornwall.ac.uk, or visit www.silvanustrust.org.uk

Low Carbon Accelerator Invests In Living Villages

Low Carbon Accelerator Limited ("LCA") has announced that it has made an investment of £350,000 in Living Villages Holdings Limited ("Living Villages") for a 15% equity stake. LCA has committed to invest a further £650,000 in two tranches, subject to the achievement of certain milestones, which will take LCA's total equity ownership to 25%. In addition, LCA has certain rights in connection with the funding of any future investment rounds.

Living Villages is a specialist residential property developer established to design and build housing developments that are energy efficient, convivial and completed to high environmentally-friendly standards. Living Villages' main development to date is a 40 unit scheme, 'The Wintles', in Shropshire. The final phase is about to start on this development and 80% of the houses in this final phase have been sold off-plan, indicating the potential demand for the Living Villages' product.

The Wintles development has attracted much national interest and over 25,000 visitors since 2002. The buildings range from two-bedroom bungalows to three-storey, six-bedroom houses. All are unique and feature a range of energy-saving and renewable energy generating technologies, such as solar panels and solar water heaters, high-performance triple-glazing, super-insulated timber frames and heat exchange units.

Living Villages is negotiating a number of new development sites around the UK and is seeking to roll out its model on a larger scale. LCA's investment will help bring these projects forward and enable management to take on the additional resources necessary to progress this pipeline. Go to www.livingvillages.com and www.lowcarbonaccelerator.com for more information.

Pearson Launches New Declaration On Climate Change By Trade Association Forum

Climate Change and Environment Minister Ian Pearson today welcomed a move by the Trade Association Forum to launch a voluntary Climate Change Declaration for its 300 members that cover 500,000 companies. Trade associations that choose to sign up to the declaration, pledge to try and reduce the environmental impact of their own operations as well as promoting green house gas reduction and climate adaptation measures amongst their members.

The new Trade Association Forum Declaration on Climate Change acknowledges that human activities are having a significant negative and potentially dangerous influence on global warming. It adds that there are significant economic, social and environmental benefits in taking action to combat and prepare for climate change. The initiative is supported by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) and the Energy Saving Trust (EST).

The Declaration follows work by the UK Climate Impacts Programme, which has been working with trade association organisations to look at climate impacts across sectors and devise a generic tool to assess these impacts.

Defra is working with UKCIP and the Hadley Centre to publish the first set of probabilistic modelling scenarios next year, which will give information on what the UK's climate may be like up until 2100. The development of modelling scenarios will give decision makers a much more detailed measure of certainty associated with predicted climate change.

Go to www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/070308a.htm for more information.

New Company Looking For Pilot Projects To Test LED Lighting.

A small team of us recently set up greenLed Light Ltd specifically to encourage the market to switch from high energy lamps to LEDs. We are not propagating the world of twinkly garden lights, we are interested in getting hotels, bars, and houses to reject halogens and transfer to LED.

There is some suspicion from the architectural market because they have been oversold underperforming LED lights in the past. The light was not bright enough, it was inconsistent and the price simply too high. Although academic opinion does recognise the potential of LEDs and is monitoring progress, the Government here is not yet persuaded and we are needing to make the case clearly.

Our approach is to concentrate on situations where we know our LEDs can truly perform. Before we really promote the technology to the world, we are keen to find exemplar sites where the client is truly committed to a sustainable building and where we can test and measure the outputs and benefits. This is part of a plan to establish a dozen case studies over the next eight weeks.

Do you have any colleagues at AECB who may be interested in working with us on this?

Our website: www.greenled.co.uk does illustrate our offer and tells something of our team and our objectives.

I hope that this is of interest and please do get in touch if you feel that you can work with us in this.

GreenLed Light Ltd, 45 Long Street, Tetbury, GL8 8AA. Tel: 0560 1158600 e-mail info@greenled.co.uk or go to www.greenled.co.uk

Events

Natural Building – Materials And Techniques, Leeds, April 10th

Tom Woolley (Professor of Architecture at Queen's University Belfast and Elected Member of the Architects Registration Board) talks on : "Natural Building – Materials And Techniques" Sustainable alternatives to conventional building.

Followed by : "Experience of the Architects Registration Board!"

Both on Tuesday 10 April starting 6:00 PM

Room 101, Leeds School of Architecture, Hepworth Point, Clay Pit Lane, Leeds 2.

For more information contact : Edward Walker Architect 0113 249 3491.

WISE Plans: Working Together For Swansea's Energy Future, 23rd - 24th April 2007, George Hall, Guildhall, Swansea

WISE Plans is a project part funded by the European Commission, to develop action-plans for 'sustainable energy communities' in Wales, Italy, Sweden and Espana (Spain). Here in Swansea we are developing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan or SEAP which will describe actions which we can take to reduce fossil fuel in our community. I am writing to invite you to attend a free seminar on the 23rd and 24th April regarding the project.

The 2 day seminar will include morning sessions devoted to presentations by speakers from key decision-makers in the private and public sectors on their experiences in and the opportunities for countering climate-change and reducing the use of fossil fuels. The afternoons will be devoted to workshop sessions that will allow delegates to explore some of the issues and solutions relating to carbon reduction and the opportunities available for the development of the Green Energy Sector in the Swansea Bay Region.

Findings from the event will be used to identify the best ways to approach the opportunities for the rational use of energy (energy - efficiency and energy saving) and the deployment of energy from renewable sources, and will be used in the development of the final version of the SEAP.

Further information on WISE Plans can be found at www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseawiseplans

The Trouble With Master Planning, Leeds Public Lecture And Discussion, Thursday 26 April, 5pm

Simon Campbell and Alistair Turner are extremely concerned for the future of our towns and cities. In the biggest property boom in history the act of place making is in thrall to a new doctrine: the master plan. Erskine believes master plans are a fatally flawed method of urban generation and have vowed to challenge thinkers, practitioners and the public, private and voluntary sectors to go 'beyond master planning'.

Do you agree with them? They want you to argue with them and challenge their thinking...

The Leeds School of Architecture, Landscape and Design. More information at www.leedsmet.ac.uk/designleeds, all welcome – no need to pre-book. Before you come along take a look at Simon's article at www.erskinecorp.com/simon/article/81/

Renew Tees Valley Workshop - Reusing Building And Construction Waste, And Building With It

Tuesday 24th April 2007 - Winter Suite, Swallow Hotel, Stockton

Quality presentations followed by choice of workshops and lunch. Objectives of day - Explain opportunities and support for firms in reducing, recycling and reusing construction and demolition waste in the North East - Promote building material reuse and investigate potential for a proposed Tees Valley Building Materials Reuse Centre (BMRC) - Identify links to building renovation, regeneration areas, planning and wider agendas - Assess potential for a TV demonstration building made from recycled/reuse materials. For more information email lewis@wastewise.org.uk tel. 01223 411699

Joint AECB/REA Mass Market Renewables 2007 14th – 15th May, Manchester.

This year's Mass Market Renewables conference will be held in Manchester 14th-15th May, at the foot of the CIS tower, which houses the largest building-integrated solar-PV installation in the country.

Day 1 Mass-Market Renewables: "Zero Carbon Development: New Hope for Renewables?" will look at the initiatives and legislation surrounding the zero carbon building agenda. Held in conjunction with AECB, the Sustainable Building Association, the conference will present a wide range of speakers, from Government, and inside and outside the renewables industry, all with an interest in low carbon homes.

The event will examine the vision for sustainable building, along with planning policies, building regulations as well as show-casing case studies. We have speakers confirmed from local authorities as well as BRE, AECB and the Home Builders Federation, the Energy Minister, and numerous respected industry participants.

We anticipate a wide turnout from building developers, planners, architects, surveyors local authorities as well as renewable installers, developers and manufacturers.

Day 1 will also include a tour to the CIS Solar Tower, a drinks reception and conference dinner.

Day 2 has been sponsored by the DTI and is intended to be a very hands-on working day. The focus of the day is to road map the actions needed to ensure the on-site generation industry can achieve its potential by 2016.

The second day has been priced very low, thanks to DTI sponsorship, to ensure a high turnout. This is a key opportunity for the industry to make its views and experiences known to the DTI. We cannot emphasise enough how key it is for companies to attend, to make their views known, and also to ensure the DTI sees the real faces and businesses behind the stories we at the REA present them with. Papers will be sent out to delegates a few days before this event, in order to ensure maximum benefit is gained from the day.

Full details and booking form at www.aecb.net/PDFs/Mass%20Market%20Prog%20V15.pdf

Sustainable Construction: From Margins to Mainstream, Free Event At CAT 2nd May 2007

A one day seminar for green building practitioners, architects, planners, those involved in housing and regeneration, the construction industry and academics.

Topics include: What are the drivers and barriers to widespread adoption of 'best practise' in sustainable construction? How can these barriers be addressed? What role can academic research and teaching play in promoting innovation? What opportunities are presented by developments in planning policy and regeneration such as Community Land Trusts and mutual ownership of housing?

11.00am – 4.00pm, Wednesday 2nd May, Centre for Alternative Technology, Nr. Machynlleth. Free of charge (Includes Lunch). Please book your place by 24th April

For information and bookings, please contact Richard Bickle on 07768 184882 or richardbickle@cooptel.net

Responsible Timber Procurement In Sustainable Construction – Promoting Sustainable Forest Management, Tuesday 8th May 2007 – Free Seminar

At a time when climate change concerns are rising steadily up the news agenda and the two main political parties are vying to demonstrate their green credentials, it seems hardly a day goes by without a company announcing a new sustainability initiative designed to reduce its carbon footprint and improve its corporate environmental performance. Small wonder then that momentum to increase the use of sustainably produced products is gathering pace in the UK. Consumers, public authorities and those charged with corporate procurement decisions are increasingly seeking assurances on the environmental provenance of the products they buy.

PEFC (Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) are pleased to host this seminar devoted to a uniquely sustainable construction material – wood. Wood consumes least energy during the production process thereby creating lower levels of carbon dioxide emissions than most commonly used building materials. As a result, wood products are therefore widely acknowledged to have a better environmental record than competitor construction materials.

This seminar will outline key initiatives driving demand for legal and sustainably sourced timber and the benefits PEFC certification can offer. One of the key drivers within the UK construction sector will undoubtedly be the government's timber procurement policy. The Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement's (CPET) was established to help public sector buyers and their suppliers meet the UK Government's timber procurement policy requirements.

In addition, there will be informative sessions on developing a timber procurement policy from the timber industry's trade body, Timber Trade Federation, PEFC's sustainable forest management certification programme and chain of custody certification which together provide assurances of legal and sustainable sourcing.

The seminar will conclude with a moderated panel discussion with ample time for questions. Participants are also invited to join us for a buffet lunch. The topics covered in this seminar are likely to be of interest to those working in a range of disciplines within the construction sector; corporate social responsibility practitioners, those charged

with developing and implementing corporate environmental policies as well as those with procurement responsibilities.

The Building Centre, 26 Store Street, London WC1

Deadline for registration is Friday 27 April 2007. For a booking form email hilary.khawam@pefc.co.uk or write to PEFC UK Ltd, Jupiter House, High Street, Tattenhall, Cheshire CH3 9PX

Implementing Sustainable Cities: Planning For Climate Change – 4 July 2007

Interpreting Policy To Integrate Sustainable Environmental Strategies And Meet Targets Through Quality Urban Planning And Development.

The onset of climate change and the increasing awareness that we must make changes to our housing and cities strategies for the future ensures that the subject of Sustainable Cities is not only an extremely important issue, but also a topical one.

This exciting, AECB supported conference will focus on essential issues including: Implementing Policies For Climate Change - Moving London Towards A Low Carbon Sustainable City - Planning And Delivering Urban Quality That Lasts - Meeting Targets For Zero Carbon Planning - Translating The Sustainable Construction Agenda Into Practice - Driving Energy Efficiency As A Priority

Covering the most pressing issues that professionals in Planning, Physical Regeneration, Policy, Sustainable Development, Environment, Construction, Economic Regeneration, Housing, House Building, Renewable Energy, Urban Design, Conservation, and many more need to know about, we will focus on how these different areas can effectively work together to deliver truly sustainable cities.

Discount for AECB Members.

Go to www.haymarketevents.com/conferences/?fuseaction=eventIntro&eventID=2920 for details.

Bamboozle - Bridge The Gap, June 11th-22nd 2007, Porthleven, Cornwall

The not-for-profit voluntary organisation 'Basketry and Beyond' is planning this festival to profile the use of bamboo, cane and other materials that can be split and woven. The event will celebrate an engagement with basketry by providing opportunities for the general public to have direct experience of the techniques and materials used in the craft of basket weaving through site specific installations, performance, music and workshops.

We aim to bridge both theoretical and spatial gaps by holding an all-inclusive event, which will connect artists and professionals from diverse disciplines with the general public, through a visual extravaganza of traditional and contemporary aspects of basketry combined with structural bamboo work.

We have initial funding from the Arts Council to research and develop the individual proposals that comprise the event.

Through early publicity we are offering interested individuals and groups, nationally and internationally, the time and the opportunity to consider how they could participate in the event, alongside the fishing village community of Porthleven and schools from the locality.

Full details are at www.basketryandbeyond.org.uk

Courses

CPD Modules – The Genesis Project

The Genesis Project's primary objectives are to explore, explain and evaluate cutting edge thinking in sustainable construction and to provide a wide range of resources and learning opportunities for school pupils, college students, the public and those professionally engaged in the commissioning and construction of buildings and their associated infrastructure.

As part of our overall strategy for delivering these objectives, the Genesis team have forged collaborative working relationships with like-minded organisations such as Dorset Centre for Rural Skills and The Eden Project to develop and deliver high quality, accredited, sustainable construction CPD

This first set of nine CPD events seeks to pass on some of what we have learnt about the materials and technologies used, the skills needed to work with them, the knowledge gaps that exist and the research and development that is currently taking place around them.

Each individual event has been designed to explore what place the methods of construction and materials used on the Genesis Centre have in mainstream construction practice, including relevant legislation.

At Genesis we prefer, wherever possible, to ensure that visitors, delegates and students enjoy the benefits of a unique and more personal approach from the members of our team. For this reason, these CPD events are restricted to a maximum of 20 places on any one day. We believe this format helps promote discussion and ensures maximum benefit for all attendees.

Full details of the courses on offer are at www.genesisproject.com/quickstart/index.php?id=246. For more information email lmw@somerset.ac.uk or phone 01823 252934

Renewable Energy for Advisors

A one day training course providing an introduction to renewable energy technologies for homes and community buildings. Milton Keynes - 17th May 2007, Newcastle - 28th June 2007

This course is appropriate for anyone providing advice to homeowners and community groups about their renewable energy options. It will also be useful for organisations and individuals aspiring to move into this field.

The course will highlight some of the key questions to ask clients when assessing their renewable energy options. The objective of the course is to enable participants to provide basic guidance to homeowners and community groups on the following: which renewable energy technologies are likely to be the most appropriate for different applications - advantages and disadvantages of the different renewable energy options - how systems work and some of the main design options - energy generation and system sizing - typical capital and running costs - key factors to be considered when assessing feasibility - applying for grants, dealing with suppliers and making planning applications

Cost £250 plus VAT per person (includes course notes, information pack, lunch and refreshments) £10 discount is available for participants travelling by 'sustainable' transport (i.e. bike, train, bus or bio-fuelled / electric / hybrid vehicle). £50 discount for bookings received before 6th April 2007.

For more information please visit www.greendimension.co.uk/courses/course_seha.html email course@greendimension.co.uk or phone 01908 565250

Publications And Websites

Heat – How To Stop The Planet Burning, George Monbiot, £17.99

"We all know that climate change is the greatest problem facing our world - it's being rammed home by new evidence every day. But does that mean the problem is now too big to deal with? Or can we solve it? In HEAT, George Monbiot, one of the world's leading environmental activists proves, with passion and rigorous analysis, that there is a way. It now seems certain that we need a 90% cut in our emissions within 25 years if we are to stop ourselves reaching the point where the "climate feedback" becomes unstoppable, and our world becomes largely uninhabitable.

For the first time, this book explains how this cut could be achieved. Combining his unique knowledge of political campaigning and environmental science, Monbiot analyses the possibilities and pitfalls of energy efficiency, nuclear power, renewable resources and new technologies, and applies them to our everyday lives, measuring the cuts that can be made. Is individual abstinence and care futile when others are lighting their houses with a million bulbs every Christmas? And internationally, how much can ever be done when there is still a powerful lobby of climate change deniers influencing governments and businesses around the world? HEAT shows us that real change can be effected now by putting pressure on those in a position to really make a difference. Radical, pragmatic and totally surprising, this book reveals how we can reconcile our demands for comfort, prosperity and peace with the increasingly pressing need to prevent us destroying our future."

The above quote comes from the description of the book on the Penguin web site. Having read the book, I would like to add that this is not over egging the pudding. It is a well written and researched book, set in plain English. Monbiot does not pull his punches, there are no sacred cows; he investigates the subject fully and is as willing to attack the climate change deniers as he is the environmentalists who use doubtful science to make their arguments. In addition his book is very readable suitable for both someone with knowledge of the subject and for one who knows nothing about it, but wants to learn more. All the facts he states are referenced giving those wishing to find out more the source material for further study and research. It is in some ways a depressing read, but of most significance is that it shows it is not too late to tackle the problems, showing what we can do either individually or collectively. I would go so far as to say it should be required reading and commend it to all. (Ed)

Grow Your Own Energy

Grow Your Own Energy is a brilliant new place to find an independent opinion on whether making your own energy can actually save you money.

Over 100,000 home owners across the UK are already using Grow Your Own Energy technologies. These innovators are already enjoying returns that can only increase as energy prices escalate. They are also gaining a high level of personal satisfaction from reducing their impact on climate change.

Use the on-line calculator and questionnaire to find out if you can make financial savings and help the environment at the same time. Grow Your Own Energy works with suppliers and installers who comply with a comprehensive Consumer Assurance Code so you can be confident of their delivery of high quality installation and excellent service.

Grow Your Own Energy is the brainchild of Hestia, providers of high quality consumer advice on energy efficiency for over 12 years.

Go to www.growyourownenergy.co.uk for more information.

The Renewable Energy Centre

A website launched earlier this year is a source of information and reference for renewable energy.

The website is targeted at homeowners who want save money on energy bills and for commercial companies looking to improve cash flow and reduce their carbon footprint. It provides an invaluable source of new business for companies supplying products and services in this emerging sector. The website also contains links and contact details to associations and organisations promoting the use of environmentally conscious products and processes.

The website pulls a wealth of information into one central online location and gives its visitors: - a practical introduction to renewable technologies - local and national directories of contractors and suppliers - advice on technology choices and installation - links to community organisations, lobbyists and government contacts - information on sources of funding

In addition The Renewable Energy Centre website holds a comprehensive diary of UK and international renewable energy conferences and exhibitions, a directory of links to educational resources for schools and details of universities offering specialist courses.

Go to www.therenewableenergycentre.co.uk

The Green Shopping Guide

Set-up to provide a free, impartial guide to businesses, organisations and charities who provide products and services that are green and ethical, The Green Shopping Guide was founded in November 2006.

Today, in the 21st century, we face many difficult choices and questions. The money we spend, the decisions we make, all have a part to play in shaping our future. Many of the products and services we use everyday have numerous harmful effects, both on the environment and on people like you and me. From simple products like soaps and detergents, to banking and internet providers. By choosing who you shop with carefully, and by ensuring the products you use are sourced correctly, all of these things can be reduced.

However, this is easier said than done. The hectic lifestyles we lead today, leave little time to search for alternatives, grabbing what you want from the nearest supermarket is often the easiest and quickest option. The Green Shopping Guide is designed to change that. By bringing together all the businesses, organisations and charities that provide alternatives like ethical banking, non-toxic soaps and non-harmful detergents, instead of spending hours searching, anyone can come straight to The Green Shopping Guide and be able to evaluate the different options they have in one place, at any time.

If you have recently acquired a new member to your family and are searching for organic baby foods or biodegradable nappies, The Green Shopping Guide can help. Or are you searching for cosmetics that do not contain the harmful chemicals that many high street brands do today? Or maybe you would like to start a career in a green and ethically minded job?

Whatever it is you need, The Green Shopping Guide will help you to make those little changes in life that together make such a big and positive difference. Go to www.thegreenshoppingguide.co.uk

If you have any news, events or courses you would like to publicise in Network then please email details to network@aecb.net, phone 0845 456 1290, or post to Chris Lord-Smith, y Graig, Llidiart-y-Waen, Llanidloes, SY18 6JT.