



Cambridge Carbon Footprint

April Newsletter 2009

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I. CCF NEWS & EVENTS

Carbon Footprint groups

Carbon Footprint groups are back – six friendly, practical meetings to help you halve your carbon footprint. Four new groups start after Easter – if you haven't yet done one, you are in for a treat. The groups use our beautiful new 'Carbon Conversations' handbook, are led by volunteer facilitators who have completed the course themselves, and are a source of inspiration, practical help and support.

Group A: Mondays 1-3pm, Hills Rd area, with Bev Sedley & Andy Brown: starting April 27th and running May 18th, June 1st, June 15th, and June 29th.

Group B: Mondays 7:30-9:30pm, Ross Street, with Jane Frank and Kirsty Wayland: starting April 27th and running May 11th, June 1st, June 15th and June 29th.

Group C: Thursdays, 7.30-9.30, Victoria Rd area, with Ro Randall & Mark Skipper: starting April 30th and running fortnightly thereafter.

Group D: Interfaith group. Tuesdays at Ross St Community Centre, with Siobhan Mellon & Yogaratna, starting April 28th and running May 12, June 2, June 16, and June 30th.

For more details or to enrol, contact Karin in the office –
Karin@cambridgecarbonfootprint.org 01223 460475

Castle St area comfort zone

Do you live in any of the streets between Castle St, Victoria Rd and Chesterton Rd? They are currently being targeted as part of the City Council's Comfort Zone project to upgrade the energy efficiency of homes there. Cambridge Carbon Footprint is looking for a group of residents to help us organise some activities in support of this. Think you might be able to help? Interested? Want to know more? Contact Ro in the office:

rorandall@cambridgecarbonfootprint.org 01223 460475

(The streets are: Albert Street, Alpha Road, Arthur Street, Carlyle Road, Clare Street, East Hertford Street, Fisher Street, Grasmere Gardens, Hale Street, Hertford Street, Hilda Street, Holland Street, Magrath Avenue, St Lukes Street, Searle Street.)

Blocks, resistances & creative solutions – Wed April 1st 7.30-9pm

Communication workshop with Anne Miller, author of 'How to get your ideas adopted (and change the world) and board member of Stop Climate Chaos on how to work creatively on climate change.

Wed April 1st 7.30-9pm, Lower Hall, Centre at St Paul's, Hills Rd.

Grow your own – Tues April 7th 7:30-9:30pm

Find out what to do in your garden now spring is here. Local gardener Keith Jordan is on hand with timely advice and tips.

Tuesday April 7th 7.30, Ross St Community Centre.

New Members Meeting – Mon April 20th 7:30pm

New to CCF? Not sure how to get involved? Come to this meeting and find out what you can do for us and what we can offer you.

Monday 20th April, 7.30 pm at our office, c/o CAR, Unit 6, 25 Gwydir St, CB1 2LG.

House Doctor session – Wed April 22nd 8:00-9:30pm

Housing experts Katie Thornburrow, Swati Ogale (architects) Andy Brown, Jason Palmer (engineers) will be available to discuss your home & help you plan some carbon reductions. Look at the lightbulb library, browse books on eco-housing & share tea and cakes.

Wed April 22nd 8-9:30pm, Friends Meeting House, Jesus Lane.

It's helpful to know numbers for these events – please let Karin (Karin@cambridgecarbonfootprint.org) know if you hope to come.

Tour of Donarbon Waste Facility – Thurs June 25th

Getting rid of waste accounts for about 3% of your CO₂, and we have a rare opportunity to learn about this firsthand at Donarbon. As a part of environment week, Cambridge Sustainable City and the Donarbon Waste Facility are offering a tour to CCF members beginning 10am on June 25th. It should prove very enlightening. Places are very limited, so please email Karin to book. If you are able to drive and can offer a lift to four others, please let us know as well.

II. LOCAL NEWS & EVENTS

Renewable energy survey

Cambridgeshire Horizons and Renewables East have launched a new website to ask Cambridgeshire residents for their opinions on renewable energy via an online survey. The website, www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/energysurvey, contains a wealth of easy-to-understand information about renewable energy options and how these could be installed and operated in new homes and new communities, as well as a questionnaire to find out more about the local communities view on renewable energy. Please spread the word to other Cambridge residents as well!

Housing Survey

Have your say on what the local authorities should be doing to reduce carbon emissions from homes in Cambridge! CCF member Laurie Smith and is doing a research MPhil at the Centre for Sustainable Development at Cambridge University. His thesis will make recommendations to local authorities on how to cut carbon emissions from existing homes in Cambridge and the surrounding area. He believes that the local authorities need to do more and that it is essential that their actions be informed by the views and concerns of home owners and occupiers. He would be enormously grateful if you could spare 10 minutes to contribute your views and concerns. All information will be treated confidentially and will be used anonymously.

To complete the survey, please follow the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=6m0XelhN08wzzEMhcLF59g_3d_3d

Food survey

Cambridge Food Survey: As a member of Cambridge you have a unique opportunity to participate in this city-wide study to better understand the food we eat and how it impacts the environment. This survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete, asking questions related to where you purchase or harvest food, how you reach these destinations, and which food products you have purchased or grown over the course of this past week. Please follow this

link to complete the survey.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Vj3_2bJubuOHBOju_2fE_2fvQtBQ_3d_3d

III POLITICS & CAMPAIGNING: Tom Bragg

It's good to see RSPB's support for wind-farms in general, providing particularly sensitive sites are protected.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/news/details.asp?id=tcm:9-213213>

Locally, get involved with Friends of the Earth's campaign to support windfarms at Wadlow Farm and Linton Windfarms. Letters of support and attendance at the first day of the planning enquiry on June 9th are two easy steps. Contact Lulu - 01223 411350 or Ian 07811 741163; camfoe@telinco.co.uk <http://www.cam.net.uk/home/camfoe/windpower.htm>

The Christian Aid demo from Coventry Cathedral to E.ON got some great press reports last week. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PybGiO3ubzM>

The G20 meeting has been the major focus for political action, with 35,000 in London and thousands more around the world demonstrating for jobs, justice & climate. By the time you read this, the meeting's outcome may be known. Can our politicians make the massive investment needed in clean energy, efficiency & public transport? It would help avoid a depression and provide new jobs!

IV. ASK ANDY When should I turn my heating off?

Traditionally we turn the central heating off in May, but there may be a number of days in April when the heating is not needed. The better insulated your house, the more such days there will be. You will have to decide for yourself, thinking about your house, your heating system, your family and the way you all live. In April try changing your heating control from coming on automatically to switching it on when you feel it is needed. You can change the programmer to reduce the hours the heating is on as well. We set ours on for an hour in the morning, so it is not too cold when we get up, and then decide if we need more. We have also set it so it does not come on automatically in the evening. In the spring and autumn the house is often warm enough during the day, and we turn it on when it starts to feel cold in the evening.

Spring is also a time to check that your thermostatic valves are working and correctly set. When it is warm outside, they will stop the room overheating when the boiler is on. You can also turn down the boiler thermostat, so the radiators are cooler and less likely to overheat the house.

If you have electric heating, you can turn down the charge control on the night storage heaters, so less heat has to be stored and less is wasted over heating your home.

V. APRIL ACTIVITY IN THE GARDEN - Keith Jordan

If growing plants produced a noise, then April would be deafening with generally warm, moist conditions creating perfect conditions for growth. Weeds will also be emerging and spreading - take action by constantly hoeing between crops. Perennial weeds, like bindweed, with extensive root systems, can be weakened by constantly removing growth appearing above the soil surface. This effectively destroys the plant's 'solar panels' where sunlight (their only energy source) is converted to chemical energy (starch and sugars) in tiny energy-gathering structures in the leaves called chloroplasts. Gradually the plant's energy reserves (stored in their roots) will dwindle, but it may take a few years!

'Mulching' around plants with different materials (cardboard, straw, compost matting, etc.) also suppresses weeds in addition to maintaining soil moisture. A look back through my garden/allotment diary over the last 30 years shows that spring droughts have frequently occurred in April - a reminder to save any rain water run-off from sheds and roofs for future use. A garden diary is worth keeping to record sowing dates, successes, failures, recommendations for next season. Past entries show that night time frosts occur frequently this month - a danger to any early potatoes emerging and even new fresh shoots of raspberries that can get damaged (listen to weather forecasts and cover with fleece or plastic if necessary). Sow tender crops like courgettes, squashes, sweetcorn this month indoors in pots of compost, but DON'T plant outside (without protection) until well into next month.

VI. Martin's Memo SECONDARY GLAZING – (Sorry if it is becoming a Pane) Martin Roach

Apologies for talking again about secondary glazing, but the following approach is easy to install, unobtrusive, effective and gives an attractive return on a relatively low cost. It works on both sash and casement windows, or even windows set in outside doors. It is based on the magnetic frame approach talked about last time, but this time can be done by DIY or a local handy man. To obtain the key components:

1. Order a Secondary Double Glazing Kit £49.50 (incl P&P) from Abel Magnets at <http://www.magnetic-paper.com/shop.asp?ID=10#cat101>. This is 30m long so just about enough for about all the windows in a typical Cambridge Victorian terrace. The strips come with an adhesive backing.
2. Measure the area to be glazed window adding 15mm (just over ½ inch) each to top and bottom for the attaching magnetic/steel strip. Now visit Engineering & Design Plastics at 84 High St., Cherry Hinton (01223 249431) who will cut a sheet of 3mm clear extruded acrylic precisely to the required size. Two 800x800mm sheets for a large sash window (covering the top and bottom panes) costs around £35. If ordering several panes you can even get a significant discount

I reckon that it would cost about £250-300 to secondary glaze all windows in a typical semi-detached house by this method if you do it yourself The Energy Savings Trust says that secondary glazing savings around £100 per year on heating bills – so that's a 33-40% annual return on investment. It may cost

around twice this to get it done by a local handy-man but that is still a great return, plus you are reducing your house's carbon footprint.

If you would like an emailed photo of a finished example, to hear more, or to obtain a fact sheet on how to do it yourself, then please just contact me through the CCF office.

VII THIS MONTH'S RECIPE: Nettle & feta cheese pasties: Jacky Sutton-Adam

The humble, if vicious stinging nettle is one of the most abundant, tastiest and nutritious of vegetables available, a bit like spinach but somewhat more earthy and with a hint of sweetness. You can serve them on toast, as a soup or pasta sauce, or why not try this month's recipe, which would keep children occupied if the weather is wet over the Easter holidays? My website www.wildfoodie.com <<http://www.wildfoodie.com>> has more nettle recipes and tips on how and where to pick them. A word of warning though - nettles only lose their sting after applying heat- so handle carefully between washing and cooking them!

Nettle and Feta Cheese Pasties (makes 4)

/Ingredients/

For the pastry: 150g plain flour ,120g block margarine, frozen, pinch of salt

For the filling: A colander of washed young nettle tops, 1 small onion finely chopped, 1 clove garlic, crushed , 100g feta cheese , 50g small button or chestnut mushrooms, sliced , olive oil and a knob of butter for frying, seasoning: pepper .

Method

Preheat oven to 180 C (gas 6). Sieve flour and salt into a mixing bowl, grate the frozen margarine on a coarse blade into the flour, dipping the margarine block frequently into the flour as you go. With a palette knife, cut the grated fat into the flour until the mixture resembles large breadcrumbs. Add a small quantity of very cold water and, using your fingers, work the mixture quickly into a smooth dough. Keep adding splashes of water and mixing until it leaves the side of the bowl clean. Place the dough into a plastic bag and put it in the fridge for 20 minutes to rest.

Heat a little oil in a pan and cook the onion gently over a medium heat until it starts to soften, then add the mushrooms and cook gently for around 3 minutes. Then add the crushed garlic and cook for a further 1 minute.

Remove from the pan and set aside. Melt the butter with a splash of oil in the same pan. Add the nettle tops (use tongs or wear Marigolds!), then cover immediately and cook over a low heat until the nettles are wilted (about 5 minutes) . Turn them over in the pan halfway through. Allow to cool.

Meanwhile roll out the pastry, to 1.5mm and cut out circles of dough to around 18cm diameter (the size of a side plate) The mixture should make about 4 circles. Finely chop the cooled nettles, add to the onion mushrooms and garlic then dice the feta, before adding to the mixture. Mix thoroughly and season with black pepper. (you probably won't need salt as the feta is quite salty enough.) Put a dessertspoon of the mixture slightly off-centre on each of the circles of dough, fold over and seal the edges using a little water or milk.

Place the pasties on a baking tray, prick the tops with a fork, then moisten the tops of the pasties with a little milk and grate a little black pepper over. Bake for around 20 minutes until golden. Serve warm or cold.