

From the Ground Up

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Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter *From the Ground Up*.

We take our theme for this edition from the beautiful weather we have been experiencing (I write this in March!) with policy items on climate change and the benefits of green exercise- so get healthy and enjoy the sunshine, but start planning for what might be in store on the back of our unpredictable weather!

We have another set of interesting projects to review- the range and diversity of work continues to grow as does the number of communities we now support. When I joined Groundwork over seven years ago we helped about 12% of communities 'in need' within the region. Now as I begin retirement

Groundwork is working hard across South Essex and parts of north Essex, Suffolk, Luton and Bedfordshire, as well as Hertfordshire, potentially helping around 60% of communities in need in the region improve the quality of their environment or their impact on it.

Thank you...

It is a fantastic achievement for all Groundwork staff, past and present but would certainly not have been possible without the magnificent support from so many partners and funders who share our vision. My heartfelt 'Thanks', in this my last editorial, to everyone who has helped us along the way.

Judith

Celebrating 1...2...3 wins!

In the space of just two weeks Groundwork in the East of England achieved three great green successes that we are proud to share with you...

Groundwork East of England accepted an award at the fifth 'Creating the Greenest County' Awards on 22nd March at Wherstead Park, winning the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Natural Beauty category. Nineteen projects, organisations and individuals were recognised for their excellent environmental achievements within communities, businesses and schools.

Groundwork South Essex's Low Carbon Business Programme won the New Energy Champion of the Year category at the **New Energy Awards 2012** hosted at the Science Museum in London on 29th March. The judges recognised the wide impact the Low Carbon Business Programme makes to a significant number of SMEs in the South Essex region in effecting lower emissions

through a wide and varied series of business interventions, with measurable results. You can read more about the aims of the programme on page 3.



Finally, on 5th April Groundwork East of England heard that it had been awarded as one of Suffolk's 'Green Business 100', delivered by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Archant. The listing recognises the 'green' credentials of businesses across the county. An exciting celebration lunch for those awarded took place on 27th April at Wherstead Park.



Aimee Clarke & Anna Martin (Groundwork East of England) accepting their Creating the Greenest County Award



[L to R] Monty Halls (Awards Host), Peter Rimmer (Groundwork South Essex), Peter Wognum (Low Carbon Business Programme) & Duane Schulthess (Award Sponsor)

How does it affect us?

'Red Tape Challenge' reviews the environment

The findings of the government's review on the Environment were published on March 19th following 3,500 comments and submissions from organisations, businesses and the general public via the 'Red Tape Challenge'. The focus is on reducing and simplifying regulation, providing better guidance and reducing costs of compliance. Many of the changes will be subject to further stakeholder consultation, with some reported on later in the year.



Covering Waste, Environmental Permits, Chemicals, Air Quality and Emissions, Carbon, Noise and Nuisance, Biodiversity, Wildlife, Landscape, Countryside and Recreation, it is anticipated that 132 regulations will be improved, 70 kept and 53 obsolete regulations removed.

Typical improvements include:

- Removing the need for waste transfer notices.
- Opening up household waste sites to small businesses.
- Streamlining and integrating the relationship between planning and environmental permitting.

- Scrapping outdated and improving environmental protection regulations once the Law Commission review announces its findings in February.

Natural England and the Environment Agency have also identified ways in which their services will be improved, so that government bodies increasingly begin 'to speak with one voice'.

For those interested in the Carbon sector, the results will be announced by DECC in late summer. Much of the newly rationalised guidance is to be made web-based early in 2013. For a full look at the changes see www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13728-red-tape-environment.pdf

East of England Climate Change Adaptation Network

A number of local authority, volunteer and private sector representatives met recently in Cambridge to discuss how good practice on climate change adaptation could be shared across the region to help everyone become ready for a changing climate.

The group had been brought together by Sustainability East, who working with Anglia Ruskin University's Global Sustainability Institute (GSI), are encouraging cross-sector working consistent with the themes of the National Adaptation Programme (NAP) that is being led by Defra, with input from the Environment Agency and Climate UK. These themes are Business and Economy, Health and Wellbeing, Buildings and Infrastructure, Agriculture and Forestry and the

Natural Environment.

The Network will meet each quarter and will include an in depth look at how certain sectors are tackling climate change adaptation. Dr Mark Broadmeadow from the Forestry Commission provided this insight for the March meeting, highlighting their priorities and the need to anticipate adaptation measures, rather than wait until the issue is upon us. Trees do take rather a long time to grow!

Other work will involve the preparation of case studies at both a strategic policy and local delivery scale that can be shared with partners. Groundwork and Suffolk Coastal District Council's work with communities on flood risk resilience is a good example of the latter (see Programmes of Work).



For further information on the Climate Change Risks for the East of England see www.sustainabilityeast.org.uk or contact clare.merritt@anglia.ac.uk

For information on Groundwork's projects on climate change mitigation contact [Anna Martin](mailto:Anna.Martin@groundwork.org.uk) on 01394 444257.

Green medicine

The importance of green infrastructure and green space to health and well-being has been given a welcome boost by research from Essex University. Dr Jo Barton updated the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure group of her and her colleagues' findings at a recent meeting at the University. The purpose of the research is to better quantify the evidence of benefit to the public so that comparisons can be made between the prescription of traditional clinical approaches to, for example, depression and mental health and the use of the great outdoors and exercise to make us feel better.

'A Dose of Nature' by Jo Barton and Jules Pretty (2010) is a multi-study



analysis of 1252 participants in 20 studies carried out over the previous 6 years by the University (see reference). This analysis confirmed what many understand as the therapeutic effect of green spaces, but the extent of that benefit is startling- 24% people likely to be more active, 40% less chance of obesity etc. with the biggest effect felt

in the first five minutes of being out in a green space. Views of green space, being out in it and exercising within it were all beneficial. With more than half the UK population living in urban areas, the growing importance of local green space in urban environments is a key factor for regeneration and planning of new neighbourhoods.

Further work is being undertaken by the University and for more details contact [Dr Jo Barton](mailto:jobarton@essex.ac.uk) at jobarton@essex.ac.uk

Reference: Pretty, J., Barton, J. What is the Best Dose of Nature and Green Exercise for Improving Mental Health? A Multi-Study Analysis. Environmental Science and Technology (March 2010).

Programmes of work

What are our priorities?

Low Carbon Business Programme still delivers great results

In July 2010 we told you about the launch of the Low Carbon Business Programme funded by ERDF and delivered by Groundwork South Essex in partnership with Local Authorities in Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock.

This three-year programme helps SMEs in the Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) region to reduce financial and environmental impact.

To date the programme has reached 1,593 SMEs in the TGSE region, 88% of the 1,800 target. It has delivered a minimum of 12 hours of engagement to 679 of them (the target is a minimum of 845). This is achieved by consultancy, one-to-one advice and regional seminars and workshops. 244 businesses out of a target of 415 (59%)

have received a green business audit. Additional direct support will be available through a £1.68 million match funded grants programme. This is specifically designed to support the programme's aim to lower the commercial carbon footprint in the TGSE by 5% over the lifetime of the programme.

Peter Wognum, Programme Manager, stated, *"The Thames Gateway South Essex is a very successful economic region and, as a result, has a higher than average carbon footprint. The challenge is to engage with smaller businesses which are traditionally hard to reach and bring the message to them that taking action on reducing CO₂, waste and water usage means reducing business operating costs. At*

a time when fuel and raw material costs are increasing at regular intervals, there has never been a more appropriate time to create a vehicle to deliver not only the message, but also the means, to effect measurable change, which would not have been possible without the match funding available from the European Regional development Fund".

For more information or to see if your business is eligible please contact **Peter Wognum, Programme Manager** on 01268 758423 or at peter.wognum@lowcarbonbusiness.org.uk



Suffolk Coastal communities preparing to handle emergencies

Our Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor has been working closely with the Environment Agency and Joint Emergency Planning

Unit (JEPU) to help communities in Suffolk Coastal understand and prepare for the effects of climate change in their local areas.

Environment Agency and JEPU to profile this work nationally and to see how these communities develop.

Communities have been guided through the development of their own emergency plans through scenario testing and resilience building work. In addition, nine vital Emergency Grab Kits were disseminated to coastal communities.

For further information about the work of the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit, please contact **Robin Buncombe, Emergency Planning Officer**, Tel: 07920 466338 or email robin.buncombe@suffolk.gov.uk



Emergency grab kits supplied to a Suffolk Coastal community in March

This work is enabling and strengthening community capacity to handle emergencies and is also developing relationships and networks within communities. Case studies of this work are currently being developed by

Bringing warmth to Suffolk's most vulnerable households

The Warm Homes Healthy People Initiative, funded by the Department of Health, was announced during the publication of the Cold Weather Plan for England on 1st November 2011. The project is aimed at addressing poor housing, maximising household income and increasing service uptake to reduce the impact of cold weather on vulnerable households. Since February seven Local Authorities in partnership with a small number of organisations across Suffolk have been delivering a high impact marketing, awareness and intervention campaign.

As part of this initiative Groundwork

East of England's team of trained Assessors have delivered over 100 home based face-to-face visits in the Ipswich borough area leading to rapid interventions to improve the occupant's living conditions. Of these households, 44 have received emergency fuel payments and more than 50 have been referred to partner organisations specialising in insulation installation and boiler repairs.



Elsewhere in Suffolk more than 700 households have benefited from the Warm Homes Healthy People initiative which came to an end on Monday 30th April.

Forthcoming Events...

The Chartered Institute of Housing 2012 Conference & Exhibition

12-14 June 2012
Manchester Central
www.cihhousing.com

Going for Growth: Stimulating Sustainable Local Regeneration

3 July 2012
Manchester Conference Centre
www.publicserviceevents.co.uk

Delivering the Green Deal Initiative

How to build partnerships and create warmer communities
20 June 2012
CIH London Office

28 June 2012
Manchester
www.cih.org/events

Love Parks Week

21 - 29 July 2012
www.loveparksweek.org.uk



Farmers securing their future

Groundwork East of England recently held some **Securing the Future** workshops for the first time to prepare farmers for the risks and opportunities posed by climate change.

The workshops were rated highly amongst the delegates, 98% of them saying that they would recommend them to a colleague. Delegates found the 'practical measures to cut costs and carbon' to be the most useful part of the workshop.

Thank you to those who attended one of these events!



Submit your favourite images to our recently launched **amateur photography competition 'High Woods in Focus!'**

<http://tinyurl.com/7xcbvlw>



Groundwork... 30 years of change

To mark Groundwork's 30 years of changing places and changing lives, new website www.operationgroundwork.org.uk showcases 30 Groundwork projects around the country. Take some time to see how you as an individual or an organisation can make a difference and get involved.

Our Staff

Regional Development Manager	James Edge
Office Manager & PA	Ann Hilsdon
Communications & Programme Administrator	Laura Hayes
Senior Environmental Business Advisor	Anna Martin
Environmental Business Advisor	Aimee Clark
Community Environmental Action Advisor	Dan Wheals
Environmental Advisor	Sian Meech
Community & Environmental Advisor	Amanda Church
Finance & Programme Accountant	Neil Franklin

If you have any comments or you would like us to remove you from the mailing list, please contact laura.hayes@groundwork.org.uk

Pen Portrait: Ned Harrison, ANSWER Project Manager, Suffolk County Council



ANSWER used EU funding to develop simple levers that can deliver significant energy savings. We aim to ensure that everyone is informed, supported and rewarded in their efforts to save energy, cut costs and protect the environment. Our funding has now ended - but the legacy lives on; we're especially excited

to have the Co-op East of England as our first Pathfinder Partner in developing the Suffolk Carbon Charter.

Over the 3-year project Groundwork supported us across a wide range of work, from footprinting tools and audits, through the Suffolk Carbon Charter to a 0% energy efficiency loan. The partnership with Groundwork helped us get the right blend of experience and innovation, in offering a service that will have real, provable benefits, whilst still breaking new ground.

The raw numbers are impressive enough, identifying potential annual savings of over £600,000, equating to around 2,750 tonnes of CO₂ and getting 64 companies accredited to the charter, plus supporting many in a host of important ways. But the real value of their work lies in the cumulative impact; developing a trusted service that supports local SMEs - whatever their stage and needs.

This is the key to what ANSWER is about, and it's something that we want to maintain and enhance after ANSWER's end. To find out more about the ANSWER project - and how we've also been driving energy reduction in schools and communities around the North Sea region, go to www.answerproject.eu.

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