

Issue 40
Autumn 2011

Environmental Education News

The newsletter of Cambridgeshire Environmental Education Service
Supporting Sustainable Schools

Inspirational Learning in the Environment for healthy, sustainable schools

Those who are interested in new ideas for taking learning outside the classroom door will find a wealth of inspiration at CEES' Annual Conference. The comprehensive programme of presentations, workshops, "not to be missed" locations and market place should ensure that delegates take away plenty of ideas that will help them develop learning experiences outside the classroom and contribute to work on healthy, sustainable schools.

The conference, which is to be held at **Girton College, Cambridge on Friday 2 December**, will be opened by Cllr Nick Clarke, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council. Presentations will include: Food for life and outdoor learning; Grow it, cook it, eat it; and Cutting carbon, cutting costs, with a range of practical "hands-on" workshops to follow, ranging from learning in the school grounds to environmental art, junk sculpture and team building outdoors.

Full details and a booking form are available at www.cees.org.uk.

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STOP PRESS NEWS

New residential accommodation at Stibbington Olympics Village set to open ahead of schedule. Read all about it on page 3.



CEES News - 1

Leading lights: Cambridgeshire Schools tackle carbon emissions

During the current Autumn Term, nine Cambridgeshire schools are taking part in the Carbon Trust's Collaborative Schools Project. The schools (below) are being supported to reduce carbon emissions by the Carbon Trust, Cambridgeshire County Council and CEES.

- Cottenham Community College
- Cottenham Primary School
- Elm Primary School
- Histon & Impington Infant and Junior Schools
- Murrow Primary School
- Payne Primary School
- Ramnoth Junior School
- Waterbeach Primary School

In Birmingham, pilot project schools saved an average of 11% of their energy consumption, a total annual saving of £1.1 million and 7235 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Under the government's new Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), which anticipates charging councils at least £12 for every tonne of carbon produced, this equates to another £86,000 saving.

The Cambridgeshire schools have already started to implement no cost and low cost strategies to reduce energy

consumption. One simple idea is to identify which lights are not needed and to mark these switches with a red sticker. Stewart Cuthbertson, Head of Murrow Primary has already calculated that the savings from this alone will be greater than the planned installation of light sensors in his school, and saves the capital cost of the sensors. Stewart commented,

"This is an exciting opportunity for our school to change our approach to how we use electricity. We hope that our involvement in the project, working with Mr Clarke our Site Manager and the children, will help us to save money and educate our school community about their part in reducing our carbon footprint."

As part of the project, pupils are learning about energy saving and renewable energy through whole school assemblies and visits to the CEES centre at Coldham Wind Farm. The schools will also have a professional energy audit to indicate where further savings can be made following the project.

The initial 6 week project ends on 22 November and the results will be announced at the annual CEES conference on 2 December at Girton College.

Roman invasion well under way at Burwell

CEES' new, improved Roman Day course at its new base at Burwell House has now been very successfully tried and tested. Trainee Roman soldiers from Burrough Green Primary, Burwell Village College and Leverington Academy have spent the day being put through their paces by CEES teachers in the role of trainers.

The children began their day by being kitted out with tunics and joining their cohorts: ruber, caelum, viridis or croceus. Led by their elected standard bearer, each cohort then followed a

trail that involved marching from one challenge to the next, testing their aptitude, application and stamina.

The final challenge, chariot racing at the Circus Maximus was a highlight for most. Others commented on how they enjoyed learning Latin words, singing Latin songs and trying their hand at Roman craft activities.

The Roman day is one of several new programmes now offered by CEES as day courses at Burwell House.



Other subjects offered by CEES at Burwell House include Rivers, Rocks, Habitats, Minibeasts and Art through the environment.

Details from CEES on tel 01780 782386, or www.cees.org.uk.

CEES News - 2

Stibbington Olympics Village open

CEES is pleased to announce the opening of its new residential block for the Stibbington Olympics, and staff were delighted to note that prospective residents were checking out the prestigious facilities even before the last turf was laid.

The high rise apartment block, located in the Centre's very attractive orchard area, boasts quality accommodation suitable for minibeasts of all shapes and sizes. Some of the flats are fully carpeted, some are fitted out with plants, sculptures and other interior decor, whilst others enjoy views of the nearby pond. The roof garden is open to residents and visitors alike.

During 2012, residents of the new accommodation will be taking part in the **Stibbington Minibeast Olympics** and teachers are invited to bring their classes along to enjoy and learn from events such as: high jump; long jump; bungee jump; sprint; rowing; crawl; butterfly stroke and even (re-)cycling.

Stibbington Centre's Minibeast Olympics day courses are designed to support Science and Maths, with differentiated programmes for year 1 and 2, year 3 and 4, and year 5 and 6. Similar day course programmes will also be offered at CEES' bases at Burwell House and Wisbech Castle.



The new accommodation block has yet to be named and children are invited to submit ideas by the closing date, 8 January. A prize for the best suggestion will be awarded and a sign board bearing the winning name will be installed ahead of the first Stibbington Minibeast Olympics event.

For further details and availability tel 01780 782386 or email cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Pupil Premium reaps rich rewards outdoors

and bursaries, lottery funding and partnerships help too

Amongst the many ways in which Headteachers might choose to allocate Pupil Premium funding, supporting educational visits for children from disadvantaged homes must be one of the most valuable in terms of both improved educational outcomes and improved well-being outcomes.

Sadly, all too often the children who attend educational visits, especially residential ones, are those from more affluent backgrounds, whilst those who cannot afford to pay stay at school. Indeed those schools with higher proportions of children from disadvantaged homes tend to be the

ones that offer fewer educational visits because of the difficulty of securing payment from parents. It is their children whose life experiences are much more restricted who would benefit most from educational visits.

Pupil Premium funding could make a very significant contribution to redressing the balance and making it possible for those children who qualify for funding to attend and benefit from educational visits.

Other sources of funding can also help, for example CEES currently has three funding opportunities available:

- Bursaries of £30 per child are offered to support residential

experiences at Stibbington thanks to funding from the Centre's Charitable Trust.

- Upstairs Downstairs day course programmes are available free of charge at Wisbech Castle, see page 4, thanks to Lottery funding, and
- The Energy Works programme based at Coldham Wind Farm, see page 4, continues to be available at no charge to schools thanks to sponsorship by CEES' partners.

The Minibeast Olympics day course above offers a good example of the contribution that an educational visit can make to raising attainment: The children who take part in the day are likely to improve their knowledge and understanding in science and maths!

CEES News - 3

Upstairs, Downstairs: Bringing Victorian times to life in Wisbech

Children from Elm Road Primary School were the first to take part in a fascinating day of discovery about Victorian Wisbech. Their educational visit was part of the Heritage Lottery-funded Wisbech Heritage Education Project, which is being coordinated by CEES in partnership with Wisbech Library, Wisbech Castle Professional Development Centre and Wisbech and Fenland Museum.



The children's day began in the Museum where they looked at the toys, clothing and life of rich and poor children in Wisbech in Victorian times. Museum staff and volunteers used the collections at the museum to bring their subject to life. This included finding out the heartbreaking stories of children incarcerated in Wisbech Goal and comparing clothes and toys of rich and poor children.

The children then moved on to Wisbech Library where they adopted the identity of a real child from Victorian times and researched their lives using census material, photographs, Trade Directories, maps and newspapers of the time. Again the Library staff were assisted by local volunteers to help the children understand and interpret these resources.



The final activity of the day was at Wisbech Castle. Here the children took part in a role play where they applied for a job as a servant at the Castle. Prospective 'Boot Boys' had to prove their ability in polishing brass and in laying table, whereas aspiring 'Scullery Maids' demonstrated their skills at laundry and pie crust making all under the watchful eyes of Mr Grafton, the Butler, Mr Humble the Under-Butler and Mrs Gibson the Housekeeper, played by CEES teacher and project leader, Richard Green and Wisbech Castle Staff.

The HLF funding for the day allowed the school to visit free of charge. The whole experience will be repeated for other schools each month until the project funding ends in 2013. For selected local schools, funding is also available for transport. The Victorian day is one part of the project which will see a new website highlighting Wisbech in Past, Present and Future with plenty of ideas and resources for further study of this fascinating town and its environment.



Energy Works programme opportunities

CEES' well-established Energy Works programme, based at Coldham Wind Farm, will continue to be offered into 2012, though availability will be restricted due to turbine construction works on site in February and March.

Teachers who are interested in arranging class visits to the Wind Farm with follow-up workshops in school should contact CEES as soon as possible.

Thanks to funding from partner

organisations, CEES is able to offer both day visits to the wind farm and associated workshops at no charge to schools.

Enquiries to tel 01780 782386 or email cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

News from other organisations

Green House Learning Environment

Step out of the classroom and venture into the Green House to begin your journey of eco discovery...

The Green House project is a sustainable refurbishment project which not only addresses improving the building fabric but also looks at other ways of reducing carbon emissions by the implementation of an efficient heating system, renewable energy technologies, encouragement of biodiversity and water efficiency measures.

The project is an excellent resource for schools to find out more about how individuals can help to meet the challenges of climate change and rising fuel costs. The properties give visitors an opportunity to see renewable technologies in situ, see how to encourage a wide range of biodiversity into gardens and highlights some of the simpler actions we can all take to save energy.

The St Ives Green House provides an inspirational learning environment for key stage

1, 2 and 3 pupils. A visit gives pupils a chance to see for themselves how the environment may be improved and sustained by making changes within the home. Visits to the property are FREE and groups of up to 30 children are welcomed.

Many primary and secondary schools have visited the property as part of their geography, science and citizenship studies and have found the visit beneficial in meeting their learning outcomes.

More information on the project and the curriculum links can be found at www.greenhouseproject.co.uk/the-houses/school-visits

To arrange a visit contact Heidi Field, Environmental Education & Promotion Office, Huntingdonshire District Council on 01480 388843 or e-mail heidi.field@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Time for change at William Westley

The Pupils, Parents, Staff and Governors at William Westley C of E Primary School decided during 2011 that as a school they would take a more pro-active approach to improving the health and wellbeing of the children. Together in partnership the Pupils, through the School Council with the Staff and Governors are now planning a number of initiatives that will foster a collective understanding of green concepts that will span a diverse set of ages from across the local community.

With support from a successful bid to the Big Lottery Fund the school is aiming to use its green space as the main focal point, creating a hub for virtual green corridors to other key areas within the village (pre-school gardens, allotments and the village "Lawn").

Plans include: raised beds for flowers and vegetable growing; enhancement of the existing pond area for pond dipping activities; covered areas that will enable the use of the garden in all seasons; and the installation of PV solar panels which will have both environmental and educational benefits for the long term.

The school also has a strong belief that a balanced healthy, nutritious diet is important for the development of a child's physical state, as well as helping to fuel the mind to be more receptive to learning new skills. In September 2011 the School appointed Ashlyns (www.ashlyns.co.uk) to provide freshly cooked school lunches on site. Ashlyns have achieved the prestigious bronze Food for Life Catering Mark for serving fresh and healthy meals in William Westley CE Primary School.

In the first three weeks of the autumn term the school has seen the take up of cooked lunches rise from under 40% to over 60%. The children are delighted with their new meals, to quote a year 1 pupil "They are super yummy!"

Ashlyns is the first school caterer in the county to achieve the Soil Association's bronze Food for Life Catering Mark for serving fresh and healthy meals. More and more, people want to know where their food comes from and how it was produced. The Food for Life Catering Mark offers a guarantee that fresh food you can trust is always on the menu. The initiative is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led by the Soil Association, bringing together the practical expertise of the Focus on Food Campaign, Garden Organic and the Health Education Trust.

News from other organisations

Opportunities for Peterborough City schools . . .

City Council offers small grants for environmental projects

Peterborough City Council is again in a position to offer support to schools and other organisations to carry out environmental projects in the city area.

The grants are intended to support projects such as tree planting or pond creation during the 2011/12 planting season. The city council is able to offer up to 75 per cent of the total cost of a project, however a group's 25% contribution can be their labour in carrying the project out. Project bids are normally expected to be in the region of £225, though larger bids may be considered for projects which are exceptionally valuable.

One of the main aims of the scheme is to provide for long-term improvements in the environment for people and wildlife. A series of action plans for threatened local habitats and species can be viewed on the [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership](#) website. The City Council is particularly keen to encourage applications that help to safeguard or extend habitats in line with its Biodiversity Action Plan.

The deadline for the submission of applications is 31st December 2011, and the project will need be completed by March 2012. Potential applicants should bear in mind that funding is limited so it may be worth checking to see if funding is still available before applying. Applications will be dealt with in the order in which they are received and this will typically take 2 to 4 weeks, depending on the complexity of the project and the thoroughness with which the project bid has been put together.

Information sheets and application forms can be downloaded from the City Council website: <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/page-4482>

Wildlife Trust support for Wild Schools

Schools in Peterborough are invited to join an exciting new project, Wild Schools, being run by the Wildlife Trust. Wild Schools is a fantastic opportunity for schools to get help improving their school grounds as part of their work to become more sustainable.

The aim is to make school grounds better for wildlife and pupils so teachers will have great "wild" resources to help children learn about the natural world right on their doorstep. Wild Schools work will complement the School Grounds and Biodiversity topics of the Eco Schools programme, helping schools to achieve their next award.

The project is part of the Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes scheme to create mosaic of habitats to help wildlife survive and give people wider access to nature. This project will give participating schools the chance to become part of a network for nature in their local community.

Schools participating in the project will be able to take advantage of:

- Free school grounds assessment and advice plus free outdoor activity sessions linked to the curriculum on your site.
- A staff member to work with your school for free throughout the 2011/12 academic year.
- Free help and support to get your wider school community inspired to discover nature in your school grounds.
- Resources and training for teachers.

For more information or to book your free school visit please contact
Marissa Ryland Wild Schools Officer on 01733 294543 or email: marissa.ryland@wildlifebcnp.org

Grain Chain reshoots

Grainchain.com is launching a new and improved educational resource for teachers providing free, curriculum-linked resources and a new families section so that learning can continue outside the classroom. As well as lesson plans, activity sheets and interactive-whiteboard activities, the site also includes games, videos, podcasts and recipes.

Quantum Theatre Tours

Quantum Theatre is currently touring with its comedy musical 'Bin Raider'. With a strong environmental message, this play can be adapted for Infant or Junior audiences.

More information is available on:
www.quantumtheatre.co.uk/binraider

Eco Schools News and Events

Eco Councillors' Convention Successes



To provide an extra boost for green initiatives in schools, the now tried and tested "Eco Councillors' Convention" programmes at Stibbington Centre have proved a great success. Groups of around 8 year 4 to 6 Eco Councillors or School Councillors from 4 different schools, together with a teacher from each school, spend two days together following a programme designed both to inspire eco-action back in school, and to promote teamwork, leadership skills and independence. The next Eco Councillors Conventions on **6—7 February** and **25—26 June** are almost fully booked

Tel 01780 782386 or email cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk for details.

Clare Delderfield of Duxford Primary School wrote to tell us about the outcomes of her school's Eco Councillors' Convention in June:

Following on from the Eco Convention at Stibbington we are now planning to hold a whole school 'Green Day' on Friday 14th October where the children will take part in many activities throughout the day. We have all sorts of things planned, including a talk and recycling game and a litter pick around the village. We will be doing several activities inspired by our course at Stibbington: Mary Howarth (who came to Stibbington with us) will be using natural materials to create 'natural sculptures' on the field with the children; we are also planning to do some work in the school garden and make bird feeders and insect homes; we have been busily collecting lids from plastic bottles to create our own design picture (like yours) which we will mount in the garden.

I thought you would be pleased to see how we are using some of the things we learnt from Stibbington!

Schools Green Days

CEES' Green Days at Stibbington Centre offer opportunities for small groups of "worthy" key stage 2 children from up to 15 different schools to enjoy a day of Eco Inspiration together.

Following the popularity of last year's Green Day, a choice of two dates is offered for 2012:

Thursday 8 and Friday 9 March

Further details will be circulated soon and in the meantime expressions of interest are welcome.

Gardening schools sought

The Royal Horticultural Society is looking for 'new to gardening' schools to become **Partner** schools in the East of England. They are also interested in identifying **exemplar gardening schools** that have reached Level 3 and above of their benchmark scheme to become **RHS Flagship** schools and hold training events for schools in their area.

For details contact Alison Findlay, RHS East of England Regional Advisor, Campaign for School Gardening at alisonfindlay@rhs.org.uk

Switch-off fortnight: 21 November—4 December

Following the success of Switch-Off Fortnight in the past two years, teachers from across the UK are invited to register to take part in this year's campaign from 21 November to 4 December.

Last year more than 3700 teachers used Switch-Off Fortnight resources to focus on saving energy in their schools.

Switch-Off Fortnight is a fantastic opportunity to get the whole school learning about energy and thinking about how they can cut down on the amount of energy they use both at school and at home. It's also a great way to inspire parents and the local community to make changes too. Why not encourage some light-hearted competition between classes and year groups to see who can save the most energy. In addition to making learning fun for pupils, the Pod's energy activities fit in with many areas of the National Curriculum including Maths, Numeracy, PHSE, Citizenship, English/literacy, ICT and Geography. For full details of curriculum links take a look at the Curriculum Guide for the [Goodbye Standby](#) and [Switching On to Switching Off](#) activities.

Taking part in Switch-Off Fortnight activities will also help applications for an Eco-Schools award whether starting out and ready for a bronze award or looking for a major project for Green Flag Applications.

For details visit www.jointhepod.org/campaigns/switch-off-fortnight/

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Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate, readers should always obtain independent confirmation of any details upon which they wish to rely.

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CEES is part of Cambridgeshire County Council's Children & Young People's Services.

DIARY DATES		
Date	Event and venue	Contact
21 Nov— 4 Dec	Switch-Off Fortnight	www.jointhepod.org/campaigns/switch-off-fortnight/
2 Dec	CEES' Annual Conference at Girton College, Cambridge, Inspirational Learning in the Environment—for healthy, sustainable schools	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
31 Dec	Closing date for grant applications, Peterborough City Council	Wwww.peterborough.gov.uk/page-4482
8 Jan	Closing date for names for Stibbington Centre's new accommodation block	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
1 Feb	Eco Schools Regional Conference, Leicester	www.keepbritaintidy.org/ecoschools/newsevents
6—7 Feb	Eco Councillors' Convention at Stibbington Centre	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
8 & 9 Mar	Schools Green Days at Stibbington Centre	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
12—25 March	National Science Week and Cambridge Science Festival	comms.group.cam.ac.uk/sciencefestival/
25—26 June	Eco Councillors' Convention at Stibbington Centre	01780 782386 cees.stibbington@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

CEES Evaluation Draw, Summer 11: Congratulations to the following winners of CEES' draw last term. A small token to thank them for returning their comments about the service is en-route to their schools:

- Stibbington Day Centre:** Lorna King's reception and Year 1 class from Friday Bridge Primary School 'Stepped Back in Time' which made a huge impact on pupils' progress for many weeks after the visit.
- Burwell House Day Centre:** Emily Shepherd's children from Lionel Walden learnt about Romans and found their understanding of Roman language improved.
- Coldham Wind Farm:** Caroline Courtney's, Year 4 class, from Great and Little Shelford C of E Primary School were fully engaged and learnt lots of information about the working of wind turbines.
- Wisbech Castle:** Miss Winter's Year 1 class from Thomas Eaton Primary 'Explored Materials' and found that the course reinforced children's understanding of natural and man-made products.
- Stibbington Residential Centre:** Clare Sadler's Year 5 & Year 6 class from Oakington C of E Primary School took part in Victorian activities as well as focusing on to Eco awareness and scientific enquiry during their 3-day course.

