

GROUNDWORK

Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Today

Progress Report

March 2011

Report produced by Groundwork UK East of England and Suffolk Coastal District Council



GROUNDWORK

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Executive Summary
3. Objective 1 – Engage and support 9 communities and audit 9 community buildings
4. Objective 2 – Hold 5 Community Environmental Action Events
5. Objective 3 – Provide community talks on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies and climate adaptation
6. Objective 4 – Assess Suffolk Coastal LSP members action on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies and climate adaptation
7. Objective 5 – Share Local Best Practice, develop case studies and work in partnership with SCCP Community Advisor
8. Objective 6 – Develop mechanism for retrofitting properties to ensure they are climate resilient
9. Objective 7 – Produce 4 Community Life Chests
10. Objective 8 – Publicise project
11. Objective 9 – Produce a Community/Useful Organisation database
12. Objective 10 – Seek funding to develop the service
13. Objective 11 – JEPU Event
14. Lessons Learnt
15. Next Steps

APPENDICES

- A. Boyton Community Project Plan
- B. Example LSP Case Study – Flagship Housing
- C. Example LSP Case Study – Halesworth in Transition
- D. Community Environmental Action Fund Postcard
- E. Examples of Press Releases

GROUNDWORK

1. Introduction

Suffolk is on the front line of climate change. It has a low-lying, soft and vulnerable coastline, flood prone areas, nationally and internationally important natural environment and wildlife areas. The best available expert analysis, the UK Climate projections 09, highlights the scale of changes that we may face over the next 70 years: rising sea levels, increased flood risk, altering rainfall patterns and extreme weather events in the absence of, and to a certain extent despite, action to reduce emissions. These changes will challenge our local communities and economy which depend on container shipping, ICT, nuclear power, agriculture, culture and tourism where the effects of change may well be very significant.

The focus nationally and locally is on the need for community-led initiatives to create embedded behavioural change across several strands of sustainability (i.e. resource use, zero waste to landfill, high quality low environmental impact and affordable food, tackling climate change, and supporting nature).

This two year partnership project hones in on that need and builds on the successes and lessons learnt from the 2009/10 Suffolk Coastal District Council C-Change Coastal Project. This provided support to businesses within the AONB by identifying resource efficiency improvements and inspired and helped community leaders to seek to engage and maintain engagement within their 'communities'. The Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor is employed for two days a week for two years from July 2010 to June 2012.

It has been made possible by the kind support of Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB SDF Fund, The Environment Agency, the Suffolk Coastal Greenprint Forum, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Groundwork UK and Groundwork East of England. Many others have also provided their invaluable advice including the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, Suffolk Acre and SAVO.



Walk through Portal woods following the Community Woodland event 20 March 2011



A 15kW biomass boiler installed at the Wardens Trust, Sizewell.

GROUNDWORK

2. Executive Summary

Since July 2010, the Suffolk Community Environmental Action Advisor has carried out a Local Strategic Partnership assessment, organised events and training and engaged communities. A summary of which can be seen detailed below:

Main Outcome 1: Engage and support 9 communities and audit 9 community buildings

Two communities have been successful in applying for the Community Environmental Action Fund (CEAF) and support has been given to them to help them develop detailed action plans, which they will deliver with the Community Environmental Action Advisor providing advice when needed. The Community Environmental Action Advisor is actively supporting two further communities through the application process. Expressions of interest have been received by additional communities: some are not yet established enough to apply for it but have asked to be kept informed of events and opportunities; others have set projects which are not suitable, these community groups have been signposted to other potential sources for funding.

Main Outcome 2: Hold 3 Community Practical Action Sessions and 2 Community Training Events.

3 community environmental action events and two community training events have been organised and held by the Community Environmental Action Advisor in partnership with others.

Main Outcome 3: Provide community talks on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies and climate adaptation

6 Community talks have been given covering energy/water efficiency, carbon footprinting, the community environmental action fund and renewable technologies. A total of 84 people have attended these talks.

In addition the Community Environmental Action Advisor has attended 12 partnership/community events providing information, facilitation support and answers to queries. A total of 456 people have had the opportunity to obtain advice and support in these areas.

Main Outcome 4: Assess Suffolk Coastal LSP members action on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies and climate adaptation

An online survey for members was developed in consultation with key partners as a pilot on behalf of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership to:

- Assess what the organisations and communities in the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership are currently doing to reduce energy and water consumption.
- Assess whether they are preparing for future challenges in the changing Climate.
- Establish what support needs there are to increase action on the two priorities (energy and water consumption);
- And enable a rapid development of case studies demonstrating good practice from within the district to inspire others.

Responses were used to develop the successful LSP workshop, produce 5 case studies (with a further few in production) and develop a Suffolk wide survey based on findings, this has now been carried out across Suffolk and results are currently being analysed.

GROUNDWORK

Main Outcome 5: Carry out 6 business Energy Audits within the AONB

A requirement of the Suffolk Coastal AONB funding towards the Community Advisor role was for 6 energy reviews to be carried out within the AONB area of the Suffolk Coastal District. To date, 16 SMEs within the AONB have been provided with an energy audit, a detailed tailored Energy Report and Action Plan and on going advice and support via email, telephone and site visits from the Suffolk Coastal Business Energy Advisor. From the 14 reports completed potential cumulative annual savings of over £124,011 and 336 tonnes of carbon dioxide were identified.

This progress report also summarises the progress made against other objectives within the project which can be found in Sections 7 to 11. These objectives required the development of case studies, sharing of local best practice, developing mechanisms for retrofitting properties, producing community life chests and marketing of the service.

The project is currently three quarters of its way through the first year. As expected, with 3 months left until the completion of the first year, not all objectives have been met but, as this report outlines, significant progress has been made. The Community Environmental Action Advisor Service is in demand and proving to be both popular and effective with communities across the District.

GROUNDWORK

3. Objective 1 – Engage and support 9 communities and audit 9 community buildings

The Community Environmental Action Advisor was recruited in July 2010 for two years to build on the work of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Community Advisor and the Suffolk Coastal Environmental Sustainability Officer in the provision of general environmental support and advice via the phone, talks and internet to communities within Suffolk Coastal. It was recognised that some community representatives would require additional more focused support to enable them to form groups, access funding and run events that would lead to behavioural change. Based on the previous project outcomes it was decided that 9 communities, not previously engaged, (these could be geographical or interest based) should be given this more in depth support.

Over 9 communities have shown an interest in this opportunity. Of these, two have been successful in applying for the Community Environmental Action Fund and the in-depth support. Greener Sax was the first community group to be successful and to date the Community Environmental Action Advisor has provided 76 hours of support for them. He has: attended their Winter Fayre, with his information stand, which 200 people of all ages attended; helped them develop their project plan; and take delivery of the Greener Homes DIY bulk buy of £7405.78 insulation/draught proofing materials and 13 water butts. The Suffolk Coastal Business Energy Advisor has audited 2 businesses and 2 community buildings within this community this year.



Boyton Community Group, which sits within the Suffolk Coast and Heath's AONB, is the second to be awarded the bespoke support and £1000 fund to get them started. The Community Advisor has spent 4 hours supporting this community to date, facilitating a community meeting which 40 attended and helping them with the Greener Homes DIY application and delivery of 94 rolls/packs of insulation, 18 draught excluding items and 6 water butts. The Boyton Community Project Plan can be seen in Appendix A. Following news that Boyton had been successful in receiving the CEAF grant, Andrew Cassey from Boyton said, 'Many Thanks for the excellent news. Especially to Dan too for helping us through the process and the wider support'. The Suffolk Coastal Business Energy Advisor has audited 1 community building within this small community this year.

Other less formal support has been provided to Leiston, Kingsfleet School in Felixstowe, Coastal Futures, Friston and Shingle Street amongst other community contacts.

To date the Suffolk Coastal Business Energy Advisor has audited 11 community buildings in Suffolk Coastal since July 2010.

GROUNDWORK

4. Objective 2 – Hold 5 Community Environmental Action Events



The Eco Inspirations Roadshow was held as part of the Woodrose Festival in the Pelican Café in Aldeburgh on 19th October 2010. The child friendly pilot 'drop in road show' with exhibitions and demonstration items such as a flood box was on display to generate discussion about the challenges facing the local communities. Display boards recorded green issues and green solutions on maps of the Suffolk Coastal District identified by visitors. These included erosion, flooding, affordable access to fuels, pollution, litter and transport. 30 people attended the event and although no new community or business leads were developed it had value as an awareness raising event and test of the road show. It was also a good opportunity for Greener Sax to view the displays which were to be used at their event.



Two days of Transition Training were hosted on Saturday, February 19th and Sunday, February 20th 2011 from 9.30am to 4pm at the National Trust education centre in Dunwich Heath. This was an intensive two day introduction to the concepts of Peak Oil, Transition initiatives and group dynamics led by two trained facilitators. 23 adults attended this event and it is anticipated that at least one new community group requiring additional support will emerge out of this training, with many more inspired for future action.

GROUNDWORK



Plugging your community into renewable energy

Information evening at Friston Village Hall
Saturday, March 5



Your chance to find out how your community could join together and share renewable energy, or in partnership get your own home greener and warmer

6pm - 7.30pm Informal Chat & Info Stalls
7.30pm - 9pm Talks and Discussion

FRISTON VILLAGE HALL (On A1094, Four miles from Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham)
Please ask for help if travel is an issue- Please state whether you can offer lifts on booking.

FREE EVENT. PLEASE BOOK VIA dan.wheels@groundwork.org.uk 01394 444 218

This has been organised by the Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor as an information event only. There are currently no known renewable energy proposals in this area.



On the 5th March 2011 a community energy action event, supported by two local micro regeneration installers was hosted at Friston Village Hall. 13 people attended this 3 hour evening of drop in slots followed by talks.





Trees & Woodlands A Community Resource



When: Sunday
20 March 2011

Where:
Martlesham
Community Hall,
IP12 4PB

Workshop: 10 am - 1pm
Walk: 2pm to 4pm

Wildlife

Community ownership
& management

Wood Fuel, Forest
Gardens/ Orchards

Leisure & Health

Free entry but please book

book by emailing
environmental.protection@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
or calling 01394 444218

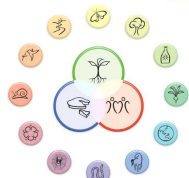







On 20 March 2011 there were 43 attendees at a special community event aimed at Greenprint Forum members, Tree Wardens working with SCDC Countryside team landscape and countryside officers, and local residents keen to find out how local woodlands can be used to benefit both humans and wildlife in these challenging times. Feedback was very positive with all of the 10 completed feedback forms saying it was interesting and helpful. Indeed one attendee said "All Great! Well Done! I am Buzzing!"

GROUNDWORK



SATURDAY 26th MARCH PERMACULTURE DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN YOUR HOME AND GARDEN

Permaculture (Permanent Culture) is a way to make our life's more eco friendly & sustainable. The Permaculture ethics are Earth care, People Care and Fair share. This event will look at designing our land, homes and lives identifying those small steps that make a big difference.

Workshop: 10am – 1pm Woodbridge Shire Hall, IP12 4LP

Dig and learn: 2pm-4pm Woodbridge Growers Garden in Elmhurst Park, IP12 1AL

Free Event, Refreshments provided, but please bring your own lunch.
Please book your place via email dan.wheals@groundwork.org.uk
or call 01394 444 218.

& state if coming to morning, afternoon or both sessions.



Understanding and using permaculture ideas can help to make communities more self-reliant by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, transport, and transported goods, and prepare for climate change. The event held on the 26th March 2011 covered 'Permaculture design principles in your home and garden' was attended by 13 community representatives.

5. Objective 3 – Provide community talks on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies and climate adaptation

The Community Environmental Action advisor is an experienced effective facilitator. His talks are typically brief and to the point followed by a more open discussion/workshop which engages those present and enables social learning. He has presented at 6 events enabling 84 individuals to share learning. These presentations have covered energy/water efficiency, carbon footprinting, renewable technologies and support services available locally. In addition the Community Environmental Action Advisor has attended 12 partnership/community events providing information, facilitation support and answers to queries. A total of 456 people have had the opportunity to obtain advice and support in these areas.

GROUNDWORK

6. Objective 4 – Assess Suffolk Coastal LSP members action on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies and climate adaptation



An online survey was developed and circulated as a pilot for the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership in consultation with key partners. The results have been used in development of a workshop and follow up action for the Community Environmental Action Advisor and in a Suffolk wide roll out. The report that was produced as a result of this work can be found at:

<http://www.onesuffolk.co.uk/SuffolkCoastalLSP/climatechange/Climate+Action+Matters+Survey.htm>.

On the 12th November 2010 a workshop on 'Resilient Communities and Organisations in a Changing Climate' was attended by 76 people. The 50 minute workshop formed part of the larger LSP event and was repeated twice. Each workshop began with 25 minutes worth of presentations relaying results of survey, examples of best practise and promoting the Community Environmental Action Fund. During the later part, groups sat around tables responding to different pre set questions, one per flip chart sheet. Each table addressed a different question and after 4 minutes and the ringing of a bell the flip chart sheets were passed on to the next table. Delegates then reviewed previous comments and added their answers in carousel fashion, so all questions were seen by all delegates.

Actions were taken away by 25 individuals and follow up information has been requested on resilience planning, the community environmental action fund, and case studies. Feedback was received from 55 individuals of whom 35 felt the pace was spot on and 39 felt the content was spot on. 33 found it useful and 35 found that their understanding of resilience increased as a result. The workshops identified a need for education and up-skilling with regards to community and organisation resilience. This need is an issue that the Community Environmental Action Advisor addresses in his role through his advice and the training provided, for example the Transition Training held in February.

To date, 5 case studies have been developed on organisations that participated in the LSP survey. Examples of these case studies can be found in Appendix B and C for Flagship Housing and Halesworth in Transition.

GROUNDWORK

7. Objective 5 – Share Local Best Practice, develop case studies and work in partnership with SCCP Community Advisor

Both the Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and Groundwork East of England websites have areas dedicated to the Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor. These pages provide details of the service, the CEAF Fund and press releases from recent events. The recently produced case studies will be uploaded in the near future.

Events run by this service are circulated widely through the SCDC press team, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership and Greener Building Network. Where partner events are held in the District our advisor supports these events where he the capacity to do so.

As detailed previously in Section 6, to date 5 case studies have been produced with a further 3 awaiting approval from the organisations/communities involved. These particular case studies were a result of the LSP survey and were designed to demonstrate the best practice in place within LSP partner organisations.

The project intends to produce case studies of each the communities engaged throughout the year showcasing their journey, use of the CEAF Fund and support provided by Dan Wheals. We also intend to produce, where possible, short reports of each of the training and community engagement event held. This will not only publicise the work of the Community Environmental Action Advisor but the detail of the reports will be able to act as tools for other communities to gain ideas and inspiration.

The Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor works closely with the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Community Advisor. Since the inception of this role, the two advisors have attended and delivered events together, shared best practice, knowledge and resources. There is no doubt that resources are strengthened when the two advisors are able to work together in partnership.

8. Objective 6 – Develop mechanism for retrofitting properties to ensure they are climate resilient

The Community Environmental Action Advisor will assess the most appropriate level of retrofitting for any properties identified in the programme and understands that the level of retrofitting needs to be proportionate to the size of the property and the budget available. Although, this objective has not yet had the opportunity to be implemented yet, it is likely that this will come to fruition very shortly as the communities begin to engage.

The Community Environmental Action Advisor has suggested that an event on retrofitting is held in partnership with the Green Building Network, Environment Agency and JEPU. This would offer communities and individuals in the District an opportunity to come and learn about different retrofitting techniques, why they should be implemented and the resources/skills they would require to implement them. This idea will be proposed at the project update meeting set to be held in May 2011.

Dan Wheals will be attending a free one day event entitled 'Retrofit Challenge' at West Suffolk College on 14th April 2011 to develop contacts within the building industry and identify current examples of best practice in retrofitting buildings.

GROUNDWORK

9. Objective 7 – Produce 4 Community Life Chests and a Climate Action Leaflet

A postcard has been designed, produced and circulated detailing the Community Environmental Action Fund available to communities across the Suffolk Coastal District. The postcard has been used successfully, and will continue to be used, in the advisors engagement with identified communities. A copy of this postcard can be found in Appendix C.

A sample life chest has been produced however further work is needed in partnership with the Environment Agency and JEPUs to progress this within communities. Our advisor will be working on this objective over the next few months. There is scope to link the production of the life chests to a community that has shown interest in them within their very recent application to the CEAF Fund.

10. Objective 8 – Publicise Project

Communicating progress on the project and promoting events is an ongoing process. The Community Environmental Action Advisor, with the support of Suffolk Coastal, regularly updates a project webpage: <http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/greenissues/ecoaction/default.htm>. Press releases are issued prior to every event and information is shared through various networks including Suffolk Coastal LSP, The Greenest County, The Greenprint Forum, and Suffolk Coast and Heaths. Examples of the press releases received to date can be seen in Appendix D.

11. Objective 9 – Produce a Community/Useful Organisation database

The Community Environmental Action Advisor has been gathering contact details of community groups, organisations, partners and useful organisations since the inception of the project. These contacts will be compiled into an accessible database with the support of Groundwork UK East of England Graduate Environmental Advisor. The Community Environmental Action Advisor will then regularly update this database throughout the project. This initial input of data is currently set to be completed by the end of April 2011.

12. Objective 10 – Seek funding to develop the service

In February 2011 Groundwork UK East of England was successful in their bid for £5,000 from the Suffolk Foundation Transforming Suffolk Fund. This money is to be specifically spent on the Community Environmental Action Advisor salary costs to enable him to spend additional, vital, time engaging and supporting communities. The success of this funding application pays tribute to the Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor service. Groundwork UK East of England will continue to identify and apply for any relevant sources of funding that would supplement the service.

13. Objective 11 – Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit Event

At the inception of the project it was planned for a resilience building in the community event to be held in March 2011 with the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit. The Community Environmental Action Advisor had worked with JEPUs to be part of this. However the event was superseded by Exercise Watermark, where there was not an obvious role for the Community Environmental Action Advisor.

The Community Environmental Action Advisor still intends to support JEPUs in attending a relevant event, should one be held.

GROUNDWORK

14. Lessons Learnt

The Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action Advisor continues to be a very positive project and has been useful in building links with partners and communities. It has empowered some real grass route action and enabled communities to access other support services which are available in the District. It is addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation issues amongst communities and providing vital knowledge on water and energy efficiency, renewable technologies, emergency preparedness, flooding and climate change resilience.

There have been barriers to progress. Time capacity of our partner organisations and communities is an issue and it is difficult to meet the demand for the service within 15 hours a week. Sustainable projects rely on a few driven people, typically initiated by one or two individuals who first engage their peers forming a central nucleus of members with an aligned goal. This group then engages other local community groups and political decision makers through visible activity (e.g. film screenings, fetes, coffee mornings, even bulk buys). Initiatives then enter a phase of wider consultation and action planning through carbon footprinting, events and workshops. This is a tricky stage and can be where communities falter, particularly if there are one or two very strong willed individuals with opposing views or no real group interest in the carbon footprinting. This is where the role of external support for the core team can be critical in sourcing and providing resources and inspiration, training opportunities, clarifying objectives, reviewing progress and celebrating achievements, which is exactly what our advisor does. This aftercare needs to be developed with partners and sufficient engagement and training time for the external support allocated.

Each community comes very much with their own priorities and having rigid funding objectives can lead to groups either not applying for the support of the Community Advisor as they feel they are not advanced enough or their aims are misaligned, not fulfilling the criteria or in the worst case, which has not happened, total group fallout around the fund. This is an area to be worked on in the next year of this project. In particular, we would like to review the conditions of the CEAF Fund to determine whether it can be made more inviting and less rigorous for communities to engage with.

Local authority issues such as planning and building control and waste and recycling can become significant blocks or disempowering agents in communities. The issues may be perceived or genuine and not all may be possible to solve within the time however there are plans to explore this further.

A clear project and communications plan drawn up at the start with partners with 6 monthly review meetings is helpful to continued success of projects. Taking time to share achievements and challenges and utilize partners networks for promotion of events and the fund is beneficial.

It is not possible to meet the targets on 15 hours a week, significant support, amounting to approximately 14 hours a week, has been provided by Groundwork East of England and Suffolk Coastal District Council. It is anticipated that this will reduce as experience and contacts grow and the additional funding from the Suffolk Foundation Transforming Suffolk Fund to increase the posts hours between 4th April and 30th June. However to enable all parts of this project to continue successfully post June 2011, it is imperative that we secure the repeated £10,000 currently ring fenced from the Environment Agency and find additional funding on top on this for the second year of work.

Overall the Suffolk Community Environmental Action Advisor Service is making good progress. The Community Advisor builds capacity with communities, helping them address their needs and make plans to ensure that they are climate resilient. The service is needed, welcomed, supported and of use to communities in the District.

GROUNDWORK

15. Next Steps

The Community Environmental Action Advisor will be working to complete the outstanding objectives detailed within this report by July 2011.

The table below outlines the targets in place for the second year of the Community Environmental Action Advisor between July 2011 and June 2012 to be agreed by all partners at a partnership meeting set to be held in May 2011.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Objective 1 | To engage and support at least 6 additional communities during 2011/12, including those identified as deprived or with poor environments, in carrying out a carbon footprint, applying for funding, bulk buying energy and water efficient/renewable goods. |
| Objective 2 | To give talks during 2012/12 and advise on energy/water efficiency, renewable technologies, climate adaptation within the District (Suffolk Coastal) and where time allows beyond to support the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Community Advisor. |
| Objective 3 | During 2011/12 work in partnership with the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Community Advisor to develop case studies of climate resilient, flood resilient, water and energy efficient low carbon properties. |
| Objective 4 | During 2011/12 provide two verbal reports and one final written report on lessons learnt. This report will detail the methods of community engagement, the messages used, the resulting changes in behaviour and an assessment of effectiveness against a range of metrics. |
| Objective 5 | To organise 5 community training/action events for community representatives. |
| Objective 6 | Produce a record of community/useful organisations suitable to share to enable ongoing support from various agencies. |