

network news

Spring 2002

Training initiative to support local companies



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
European Social Fund

Following the success of last year's Business Environmental Training Initiative (BETI) for local manufacturing companies, GBN hopes that, with new European Social Fund support, a new programme will be available to local companies from all sectors later in the year.

Environmental Awareness & Environmental Management training & support will be available along with basic Health & Safety training.

It's not every day someone offers to train you & your staff to recognised national vocational levels, which is what makes the courses an opportunity not to be missed.

GBN is a partner in the BETI project – so watch this space because for further details.

“Seize the high ground” urges new GBN Chairman

Dick Frampton, the new chair of Bedfordshire Green Business Network, has already expressed the strength of opinion that mark him out as a sound choice to head-up the Network.

GBN is also set to benefit from Dick's wealth of business knowledge and experience gained during his long career with Britannia Airways.

Dick gave us his reaction to the election results. “I am absolutely delighted to be elected chair of GBN,” he said. “Environmental issues are increasingly important to all businesses – regardless of whether they are multi-million pound international companies or local SMEs. Companies will ignore the environment at their peril because issues of resources, energy, waste and transport,

in particular, become relevant to short term business survival.

“Business managers should also remember why they are in business. If it has anything to do with leaving behind a secure future for their children & grandchildren – then they should be thinking hard about how their business impacts now.

“Unless we, as business leaders, act on the environmental impacts of what we do NOW, our children may not be as thankful for our efforts as we might have hoped.”

“I would say to you, instead of whinging that there is no need to act because your competitor doesn't - act because your competitor doesn't. Seize the high ground – make it a competitive issue and reap



Dick Frampton, GBN's new chairman

the rewards with your customers in the knowledge that you are making a difference.”

With a background in providing management advice on health, safety and environmental services, Dick is well-placed to lead GBN into its next phase of growth.

MEPs Call for Mandatory Environmental Reporting

The European Parliament's employment committee has called for binding rules to govern environmental reporting.

The committee proposed that companies should be required to supply information on the social and environmental impact of their operations.

In Denmark, 1200 manufacturing companies have been required to produce an annual 'Green Account' since 1996. They produce two reports. One of these is sent to the Government, which details specific environmental criteria and emissions data. The other

is an accessible public report giving information on the company's environmental performance, including information on energy, water and raw material consumption, and waste and pollution emissions.

At the time of going to print, GBN Network News is waiting

to hear the result of the European Parliament vote.

If you would like to follow this up, or for more information, please call Simon on 01234 881531.



Forget Global Warming: Think climate change, floods, drought and insurance

"In recent years more and more people have accepted that climate change is happening and will affect the lives of our children and grandchildren. I fear we need to start worrying about ourselves as well".

These were the words of Margaret Becket, the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Secretary, speaking at the launch of the UK Climate Impacts Programme 2002 report.

Even though the first three months of this year were the warmest globally since records began in 1860, and probably for the last 1,000 years, climate change isn't just about global warming. While longer, hotter summers may seem to be a welcome consequence of global warming, they will be accompanied by severe droughts, which aren't so welcome.

Summer rainfall to go down by 50%, while winter rainfall occurs in concentration

Change is about change: scientists say that, over the next few years, summer rainfall will be reduced by 50% (leading to droughts), while winter rainfall will tend to occur in concentration (leading to flooding). Relative sea levels will continue to rise – increasing erosion and flooding around coastal areas and tidal estuaries. Climate Change is no longer about if, or even when. Climate Change has already begun. The only questions relate to just how dramatic the changes will be.

But what we should remember is that the changes that we are starting to experience now are the result of pollution pumped into the atmosphere by our parents and grandparents.

Carbon Dioxide levels expected to double within the next 75 years

Carbon dioxide, one of the main greenhouse gases responsible for climate change, can sit in the atmosphere for around 100 years. Already carbon dioxide levels are the highest they have ever been in the history of life on this planet. And they are expected to double within the next 75 years.

Barbara Young, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, also speaking at the 2002 report launch, said, "The combined effects of the latest predictions of climate change will bring more frequent winter flooding and summer drought within current lifetimes.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will pay off. Research shows that the earlier the emission cuts the lower the damages and the costs. But unless we aim for a 60% cut in Carbon Dioxide emissions by 2050, we will not constrain change to low levels – which will still have serious consequences – but commit ourselves to the potentially overwhelming climate impacts predicted under high scenarios. Achieving this aim will require climate change to be given precedence in energy policy".

The Green Business Network can help companies to tackle the impact of their individual business' on the environment. It is vital that we all address these issues. Although we have a shared responsibility for environmental damage, each of us can make a commitment to take individual action.

There is plenty of international, national, Government, local authority and non-governmental support for companies wishing to take responsibility and do their bit to reduce their negative impact on the environment. And there are also plenty of economic reasons for doing so, including competitive advantage, cost savings and customer/supply chain benefits.

The Green Business Network can give companies access to relevant sources of information, as well as providing direct support.

Contact Simon on 01234 881531 or Myles on 01234 754970 to find out more.

The implications of this change are enormous. Consider this:



If carbon dioxide levels continue to rise what effect will that have on people with breathing difficulties?



How will insurance risk decisions be influenced by increasing winds (structural damage) and flooding?



Will businesses in flood areas be able to get insurance?



How will the general public react to polluting companies once they recognise the cost of change to themselves?



What will happen to the landscape of the south & east of England when the crops and trees that define its character now are no longer able to grow?



New Round of EMS Support Seminars Now Launched

Want to save money?

Through the Environmental Support Forum, the Green Business Network is now offering a series of EMS Support Seminars (formerly Breakfast Clubs), which can help you to identify potential savings by improving energy efficiency, reducing water consumption, minimising your waste and running a greener fleet – and that's just for starters.

EMS, or Environmental Management System, is a programme that aids continuous improvement, with the added bonus of profitability, competitiveness and cost savings.

The EMS Support Seminars aim to form a self-supporting group of companies that can network and share EMS issues.

Companies attending the seminars are usually at various stages in the process, from researching, to considering, to implementing, to receiving accreditation, or even working on continuous

improvement measures.

Having an EMS in place helps to reduce liabilities and risk. It may also bring about reduced insurance premiums.

The Support Seminars also give members a chance to meet other people who are working on EMS so they can share bright new ideas or warn others about mistakes they have made.

All types and sizes of organisation can implement an EMS and the systems come in a variety of formats – from self-diagnosis kits to accreditation at international and European-wide levels (ISO14001 and EMAS).

Other management systems, such as Health and Safety and ISO 9000, are currently undergoing change to make them more compatible with ISO14001 so that, ultimately, there will be an holistic approach to management systems within a company.

Amanda Harrison,
environmental development



So what is the GBN doing about this for members?

officer at Mid-Bedfordshire District Council, has attended previous workshops and says, "The workshops are extremely useful, and the information is concise, practical and easy to digest.

"Improving environmental performance is vital for today's business. The consumer expects companies to be greener. Larger companies and local authority

procurement departments look at environmental performance when awarding contracts, and research shows that most employees feel happier working for a company that takes its environmental impacts seriously."

Sessions are held on the last Friday of each month. Call Simon on 01234 881531 for more information.

Anglian Water fined £200,000 after Private Prosecution succeeds

A recent edition of ENDS Report detailed how a private prosecution brought by an Essex man resulted in a record fine of £200,000 for Anglian Water.

Roy Hart notified the Environment Agency after he noticed that there were patches of scum and dead fish on the River Crouch near his home in Battlesbridge.

He also took his own water samples as a precaution.

The Environment Agency confirmed that there had been a sewage leak, but that the amount discharged was

estimated to be only 0.3 tonnes, and they would not be taking any action.

Mr Hart was so incensed that he decided to take matters into his own hands, bringing a private prosecution against Anglian Water.

He arranged to have his water samples analysed to gain his own estimates of the amount of discharged sewage. This turned out to be between 690 and 3,600 tonnes - significantly more than the Environment Agency's estimates. Mr Hart then hired a light aircraft to fly over

Anglian's Shotgate Works, where the leak had come from, and take photographs of faulty equipment.

His positive action was rewarded when a Court awarded him £9,500 in costs for his troubles.

The £200,000 fine is believed to be the largest ever imposed on a water company for a single pollution offence.

In a separate case, Anglian Water were also fined £190,000 for eight offences, which took place during a ten-month period at Stewartby in Bedfordshire.

DID YOU KNOW...?

A car produces its own weight in Carbon Dioxide EVERY 4,500 miles.

Call Myles on 01234 754970 to discuss greener fleet options.



In Brief - Environment Update

Project helps businesses make the most of waste

The Bedfordshire Waste Exchange is a new scheme, which will help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. It works on the premise that one business's waste is another's raw material, and aims to put companies in touch with each other to exchange their waste materials. Companies taking part will benefit from reduced waste disposal costs and cheaper raw materials.

The Exchange is a shanks.first project, supported by EB Bedfordshire Ltd, with funding from Shanks under the landfill tax credit scheme. Linden Consulting Partnership acts as co-ordinator for the Exchange.

To find out more, call project co-ordinator, Joanna Thompson on 01799 524328 or visit: www.bedfordshire-waste-exchange.co.uk

Solar Power: substantial DTI grants available for SME's

The Energy Saving Trust, on behalf of the DTI, can provide SME's with up to 50% fixed grant funding towards the installation of solar (pv) electricity equipment (0.5kWp-5kWp).

Grants will be fairly automatic provided the basic application criteria are met and will be approved on a rolling basis.

Using sunlight to provide energy is an effective way to reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions pumped into the atmosphere from power stations. For example, did you know that, providing the electricity is used efficiently, an average south facing home in the UK could use solar power to provide most of the homes' electricity.

For more information, call 020 7222 0101 or visit: www.est.org.uk/solar.

Have your say on the future of renewable energy in Bedfordshire

The County Council is reviewing ways in which it can help to increase the generation and use of renewable energy in Bedfordshire.

Sources of renewable energy include: the wind, water, the sun and biomass (material from growing plants & trees). These forms of energy don't add to global warming and are less polluting than traditional (fossil fuel) energy generation.

The County Council would welcome input from any interested individual to this consultation.

To find out more visit www.bedfordshire.gov.uk or write to: Alec Edgar, Environmental Strategy, Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, FREEPOST, Bedford, MK42 7YA for a consultation pack.

Disclaimer


"These updates are for guidance only. GBN is not in a position to give definitive advice on matters concerning the law and you should always consult your legal advisors on these matters. GBN does not accept liability for any errors, omissions or misleading information."

Prosecutions


 AAA Supply Ltd has been fined £7,000 plus costs for illegally

burning waste. Company director Barry Hitchen admitted ignoring Environment Agency warnings when he burned packaging waste in the company's yard.

Disposal of controlled waste is tightly controlled because it can cause noxious, polluting fumes and gases to enter the atmosphere .

 Following an anonymous tip-off to the Environment

Agency, St James Haulage Ltd has been fined £10,000 plus costs for dumping 700 tonnes of contaminated soil at its Rainham site. Companies have a duty to ensure that waste produced is disposed of correctly and does not cause pollution.

 Peter Ward Homes Ltd has been fined £7,000 plus £5,500

costs after admitting causing construction waste to be illegally buried at its development in Goole.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said, " Any waste created through building work must be disposed of in a proper manner. The Agency will come down heavily on anyone found to be breaking these rules".

 Magistrates fined J Parker Dutch Bulbs Ltd £6,000 plus costs

for failing to comply with regulations designed to reduce the amount of packaging waste going to landfill. The company should have registered with the Environment Agency.

Useful Websites

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

www.edie.net

www.envirowise.gov.uk

www.detr.gov.uk

www.gbn-bedfordshire.org.uk

www.energy-efficiency.gov.uk

www.envirolinkuk.org

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