

Brent Sustainability Forum

Issue 1 January 2008



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Special points of interest

A sustainability forum is launched in Brent
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A new vision of sustainability in Brent

Councillor Irwin Van Colle, the Lead Member for the Environment, introduced the Brent Sustainability Forum (BSF) on 14 November at the Bridge Park Community Centre. Here he stressed the “immense challenge as well as the opportunity that we face to work together towards a sustainable Brent”.

“Sustainability represents the continuous effort to balance and integrate the three pillars of social well-being, economic prosperity and environmental protection for the benefit of present and future generations” – International Council for Science

A lot of work is being done by many individuals and organisations in Brent to take sustainability forward, but these efforts need to be integrated if their full benefit and impact is to be felt. Brent Council launched the BSF precisely to coordinate these actions and to identify the opportunities that lie ahead.



The launch event was attended by 50 representatives of the public, private, voluntary and social sectors in Brent Council.

Robin Stott, one of the London Sustainable Development Commissioners, described the work being developed in London and encouraged Brent to take advantage of the London Leaders Programme to promote the work being developed in the borough.

This was followed by a number of updates as to what is being done in Brent Council – where a number of projects and initiatives were highlighted to give a flavour of the diversity of projects being undertaken in the name of sustainability. An introduction to the potential and possibilities of the BSF was presented by Jeff Bartley, the newly appointed Environmental Projects and Policy Manager in Brent Council.

BSF launch working session

During the launch event of the BSF, four workshops were carried out by four interdisciplinary teams. The purpose of this exercise was to gather information about what is happening in Brent in terms of ongoing and potential sustainability projects. The workshops also concentrated on identifying shortcomings and opportunities in different areas and according to different themes across the borough.

The outputs of these workshops were presented and discussed and will be used as a basis for the forum to work on.

This first exercise provided an example of how BSF intends to work, namely in an open and dynamic way in order for everyone to share their stories and experiences.

Please do contact us and let us know what you are doing and what your views are on the subject Contact Ines Carvalho on Tel: **020 8937 5326**.

What you said – workshop results

The workshops delivered responses along the following guiding questions:

1. How does sustainability impact on you, your community and/or organisation?
2. How could this forum assist you, your community and/or organisation?
3. How could you contribute to the development and shaping of this forum?

According to all the working groups sustainability is often undermined by its own broad definition. Participants agreed on the potential of working together for overcoming such an obstacle. They identified **partnerships** as a good resource for undertaking sustainability projects and initiatives and stressed the need for **more resources**, in particular **funding**.

With regards to ongoing projects, the groups agreed on the idea of making better use of their examples by applying

for **awards** and **increasing promotion** through the media.

The general outputs of this work session have been grouped in the following five core themes that will guide BSF.

1. **The Institutional Realm:** BSF will feed into statutory and non statutory plans and will advocate for the promotion of public and private partnerships.
2. **Education and Training:** BSF will promote education and training as main resources for the understanding and implementation of sustainable practices.
3. **Environmental Realm:** The above assets will direct their strategies towards the safeguard of the environment, promotion of conservation and biodiversity.
4. **Communication Strategy:** BSF will use effective ways of communicating to different audiences with consistent and practical language.



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What you said – key messages

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A number of recommendations and ways forward were proposed for the BSF by all who attended the launch event. Key messages that were recorded include:

- to focus on intersection of social, environmental and economic issues
- to provide a one stop shop of information and support to individuals and organisations involved in sustainability in the borough
- to provide strong leadership and guidance
- not to be a talking shop but to provide practical and measurable outputs and targets

- to report to partners for Brent (Local Strategic Partnership) to raise its profile
- to work with all sectors of Brent's community
- to address major policy issues
- to take into account regional and global scale – e.g. Fairtrade and impacts around the world
- to address effectively Brent's diverse community – e.g. refugee community in Brent
- to be used as a marketing opportunity

- to report and monitor regularly on its outcomes and opportunities
- participants to demonstrate commitment and to invest time and effort
- to develop interactive means of communication such as exhibitions and leisure events in general
- to involve active initiatives – e.g. Streetwatchers Programme and Safer Neighbourhood teams
- to get involved in regeneration projects all across Brent.

“Thank you very much for a great idea and a well run meeting.”

– Peter Moore
Brent Fairtrade Network

Projects for the forum – short, medium and long term

Short term (0-6 months) ●
 Medium term (6-12 months) ●●
 Long term (12-18 months) ●●●

Establish the ground rules of the forum in the form of a constitution or terms of reference.	●		
Produce a directory with biographies of members and “get to know” events promoting the formation of relationships and team-building.	●		
Develop a PR and communications strategy and issue articles.	●		
Investigate sources of funding – produce funding directory for members.	●	●	
Apply and support applications for awards.		●	●
Apply and support applications for funding.		●	●
Research, develop and produce information packs to support members’ work (e.g. sustainable events, fairtrade, waste and recycling, sustainable business).		●	●
Link with other local groups that have developed projects and initiatives in order to foster knowledge share.		●	●
Provide in house or on-site training sessions to develop expertise, explore sustainability issues, brainstorm project ideas and partnership possibilities; this could be in the format of an “away day” session.	●	●	●
Commission baseline work to measure sustainability in Brent Council.	●	●	●
Develop a sustainability strategy to integrate into the community strategy once it is completed.		●	●
Link with volunteering opportunities for members to tap into.	●	●	●
Establish a link with London Leaders Programme – invite some of these to speak or get to know what they are developing.	●	●	●

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Member’s Profile Energy Solutions North West London

Introduction

Energy Solutions (ES) works within Brent and the surrounding North West London area to promote the sustainable use of energy in buildings, industry and transport. With over ten years experience in this field, ES are able to offer an impartial and geographically specific range of services to residents, businesses and the community on all aspects of sustainable energy use.

Our work with households focuses on improving the energy efficiency of homes and reducing the number of people living in fuel poverty. Our free phone service offers residents expert advice on reducing fuel bills, accessing grants for heating and insulation improvements and installing appropriate renewable technologies. We can also offer one-to-one home visits and specific guidance on accessing grants and managing fuel debt. ES carry out a lot of work with community groups – giving presentations, attending community events, working with groups who have building projects to ensure they are as energy efficient as possible. ES has also just completed a two year European Union project providing free energy advice to small and medium sized enterprises. Having audited over 200 businesses in West London in the last year alone we are now experts in delivering energy efficiency and renewable energy services tailor made for businesses.

Projects

ES has a history of running innovative projects, exploring new ideas and helping to raise awareness and kick start initiatives within the local community. We currently coordinate BioDieNet, a three year project

which aims to establish a network of localised biodiesel producers producing biodiesel from waste vegetable oil that can be used as a green diesel supplement for vehicles.

We are also a partner in a project called ECHO ACTION which will help households reduce their overall carbon emissions through a “hand– holding” process where a carbon advisor will work with each household for a year to develop a programme of energy efficiency improvements in the home. Our new two year Schools Project is working with several Brent schools to improve energy awareness amongst students with the aim of turning schools into models of energy efficient public buildings.

We have many new projects and services in the pipeline for 2008 however our flagship project is the Welsh Harp Sustainable Energy Centre. This will be North West London’s first truly zero carbon building producing all its energy on site. The centre, scheduled to open this summer, will double as ES’ new office and as a public visitor centre showcasing a range of sustainable and renewable energy technologies. From the centre, ES will host a series of open days and educational courses with a particular focus and linking with our schools to educate children about sustainable energy use.

For more details about any of the services or projects mentioned here as well as many others please contact Energy Solutions directly.

Free Phone Advice Line: **0800 169 5693**
 Main Office: **020 8904 2444**
 Email: Info@energysolutions.org.uk
 Website: www.energysolutions.org.uk

Brent Council is keen to form a proactive and participative sustainability Forum. The purpose of this forum is to bring together the vast array of sustainability based projects, initiatives and efforts that are taking place in the borough of Brent. BSF would provide the support network to assist businesses, community groups and individuals that are either currently taking action, would like to take action or feel they have a role to play in driving sustainability forward in Brent. A sustainable Brent is a more able Brent.....join the forum!

Programme of events and activities

Sustainability forum events

Mid February - First Brent Sustainability Forum meeting

Mid April – Second Brent Sustainability Forum meeting

Other events

29 January – Carbon Café

Come and talk about climate change! This is an opportunity for people to openly express their views and feelings about climate change and figure out how they can take action for a low carbon future. www.coin.gov.uk

14 February – Responsible business Future scenarios (Business in the Community Annual Conference)

A conference on how business organisations can become sustainable and be innovative in today's changing times. These discussions are relevant to all who work in corporate affairs and corporate social responsibility, communications, marketing and PR, finance, business planning, institutional investors, NGO's and government. www.bitc.org.uk/annualconference

24 Feb-9 March - Fairtrade Fortnight

A "Fairtrade Fairground" will be held on the Southbank on Sunday 24 February to kick off this year's Fairtrade Fortnight. It is a series of events that take part all over the city, several events will be held in Brent to introduce fairtrade products and explain the benefits of buying Fairtrade.

Activities

Barn Hill Conservation Group run a variety of activities throughout the year.

Weekly events

Wednesdays (10-14:30) - Get involved in gardening and tree nursery work in the Roe Green Walled Garden.

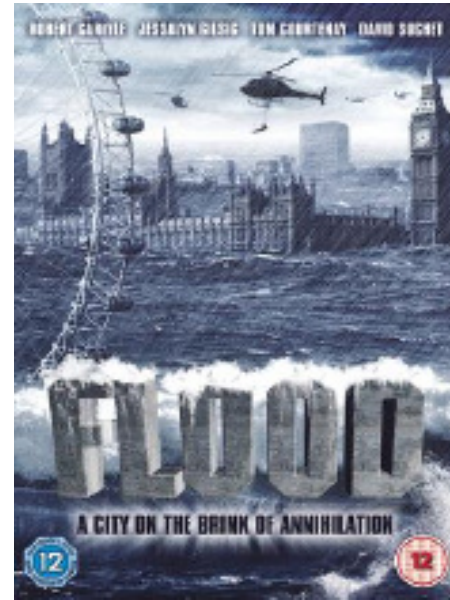
Thursdays (13:55) - Join the friendly Kingsbury Walkers for a gentle stroll in Fryent County Park.

Seasonal surveys

February: Frogspawn Surveys;
April-September: Butterfly Surveys;
Spring-Summer: Newt Survey.

For details of these and many other activities contact the group directly on 020 8206 0589 or 020 8206 0492

Entertainment



Flood

Now out on DVD

A storm and the year's highest tide combine to give London a bath in this soggy film.



Earth

Now in cinemas

A natural history film narrated by Star Trek's captain Jean-Luc Picard.

Working together towards a sustainable Brent

We're on the web!
www.brent.gov.uk/greenbrent.nsf

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