



BOLLINGTON CARBON REVOLUTION

A summary of activities undertaken to help
our community reduce its carbon footprint

*Our first 18 months
September 2006 - March 2008*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bollington Carbon Revolution group would like to thank the following people:

- The Bollington Carbon Revolution group members, both past and present, for their ongoing contributions
- The Civic Society, and in particular Tim Boddington and Graham Barrow, for their ongoing advice and support
- Sir Nicholas Winterton MP, for recognising the work of our group at such an early stage
- Richard Thoroughgood from KRIV for partnering and running such a successful Tree Planting Scheme
- The Women's Institute for supporting us in the pilot of the Global Action Plan EcoTeams programme
- Michelle Burrow and Peter Bulmer at Cheshire County Council for their ongoing support and advice
- Trevor Bithell, Tony Wright and Alison Woodcock at Macclesfield Borough Council for their support in a range of work including the £200 assisted grant scheme and production of leaflets
- David Ward in the support in reviewing our communications materials
- Tullis Russell in providing stationery for the Tree Planting Scheme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bollington Carbon Revolution (BCR), a sub-group of the Bollington Civic Society, is a small group of local active volunteers who believe that our town can be a part of the new carbon revolution, driven by the voluntary sector at the local level. Forming in September 2008, we have come together with the over-arching aim of reducing the town's carbon footprint, *thinking globally; acting locally*, and the following activities have been achieved during our first 18 months:

1. Research and production of an action plan which included a review of similar schemes and recommendations for the areas of focus in Bollington.
2. Established a relationship with a number of key stakeholders both within Bollington and Cheshire.
3. Provided information to our local community through presentations, displays, articles, leaflets, a newsletter and a film screening.
4. Partnered with Macclesfield Borough Council to provide assisted grants for insulation measures for local residents. 31 grants have been awarded for measures which will equate to total annual savings of 21.22 tonnes of carbon dioxide.
5. Piloted the Global Action Plan EcoTeam scheme with 7 householders to encourage participants to make lifestyle changes in respect to waste, shopping, energy use, water use, chemicals and transport.
6. Commissioned a hydro-feasibility study into the potential for the two rivers running through the town to generate renewable energy.
7. Launched a tree planting scheme in partnership with Kerridge Ridge & Ingersley Vale Countryside & Heritage Landscape Partnership Scheme (KRIV) which has seen over 50 trees purchased by local residents and planted in the area.
8. Providing advice to two local schools on renewable energy generation which has resulted in one of the schools installing photovoltaics.
9. Raising the knowledge of our group members by attending a series of regional and national events or visits.
10. Participating in the review of our Town Plan to incorporate sustainable development principles.

There are a number of key focus areas for 2008 which are summarised in Section 3 of the report, namely building on the work already achieved to reach out to more residents and provide them with the practical advice they need to reduce their impact on the environment, particularly carbon emissions.

In its short existence the BCR has demonstrated that voluntary action at this level can ensure that the message about climate change is communicated, and practical advice is given to help people reduce not only their carbon emissions but also other impacts on the environment. It brings together a breadth of knowledge, skills and passion within the community which in today's increasingly disparate society is a significant side benefit.

It is our aim, that in addition to helping our community reduce its carbon footprint, the operating model created by the BCR will be adopted by other communities to create a national carbon revolution of the same size and scale as that seen by the Industrial Revolution, which will reverse the trend of increasing carbon emissions, and help us all to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Bollington Carbon Revolution (BCR) is a sub-group of the Bollington Civic Society, Registered Charity No. 501544. It is a small group of local active volunteers who believe that our town can be a part of the new carbon revolution, driven by the voluntary sector at the local level. Forming in September 2008, we have come together with the over-arching aim of reducing the town's carbon footprint, *thinking globally, acting locally*, and this report details the activities which have taken place during our first 18 months.

2. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

2.1. Action Plan development

The first six months saw the research and production of a baseline report, which laid out the proposed plan of activities for the Bollington Carbon Revolution. The report summarised the work of similar groups and how the BCR could support the local community in reducing its carbon footprint. A copy of the baseline report can be downloaded from our website, www.happy-valley.org.uk/revolution

2.2. Building relations with key stakeholders

An important first step in establishing the Bollington Carbon Revolution was to formulate relationships with key stakeholders. During the first year contact has been made and relationships developed with the following organisations:

- Similar local carbon reduction groups within Cheshire including Ashton Hayes and Bosley
- Bollington Town Council
- Cheshire and Warrington Economic Alliance
- Macclesfield Borough Council
- Cheshire County Council
- Local charities: the Bridgend Centre, the Discovery Centre and Kerridge Ridge & Ingersley Vale Countryside & Heritage Landscape Partnership Scheme (KRIV)
- Local businesses including Tullis Russell
- Bollington Library
- The organisers of the Bollington Festival

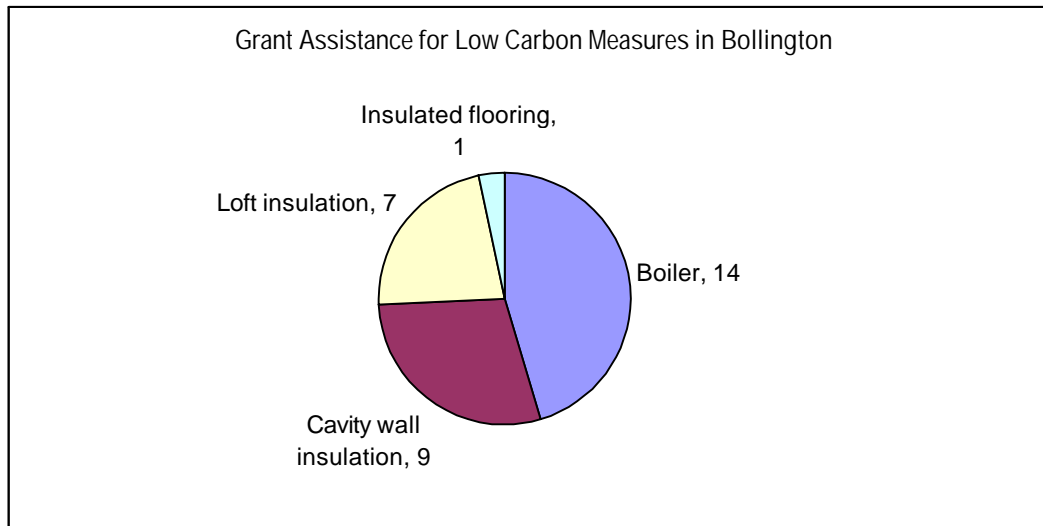
2.3. Raising community awareness

Following the launch of our website a community awareness programme was developed, which included work with local schools, presentations, participation at events, production of a series of leaflets and flyers, and information displays. A summary of communication activities are provided in Figure 1.

	Communication activity	Overview	Benefits
1.	Website	Number of hits in 2007: 9021, average hits per month: 752	Provides information on BCR activities to both local residents and other communities looking to set up similar groups
2.	Schools competition	Poem and art competition with two local primary schools	Raised awareness of climate change and BCR activities with local children. Led to the development of our BCR logo images
3.	Presentations within Bollington	Presentation of activities to the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civic Society (two presentations), ▪ Town Assembly ▪ Wider community at the Arts Centre – number of attendees: 36 	Raised profile of the group and communicated information to local residents on action they can take to reduce their carbon footprint.
4.	Presentations within Cheshire	Presented at <i>21st Century Villages in Cheshire</i> event in Middlewich	Shared information with like minded communities on how they could embark on a similar programme
5.	Film screenings	Screening of <i>Inconvenient Truth</i> – Al Gore’s film. Number of attendees: 60	Raised awareness of climate change
6.	Stalls at events	Exhibited 4 low carbon vehicles at the local Transport Extravaganza	Provided information on low carbon vehicles along with further information on the group
7.	Articles in local publications	Bollington Live x2 Bollingtonian x1 Community News x2	Publications have a wide coverage and are used to communicate information about activities and events
8.	Articles in the local press	Macclesfield Express x4 Manchester Evening News x1	Publications have a wide coverage and are used to communicate information about activities and events
9.	National coverage	Mention in Guardian Online	Raises profile of the BCR and encourages communities to embark on a similar scheme
10.	International coverage	Interviewed by the Norwegian business paper <i>DN Magasinet</i> (weekly business magazine)	Raises profile of the BCR and encourages communities to embark on a similar scheme
11.	Newsletter	Production of the first BCR newsletter	Provides information on BCR activities and events
12.	Displays	Library – 1 month display Discovery Centre – 2 month display	Provides information on BCR activities and how residents can reduce their carbon footprint.

2.4. Grant assistance for insulation measures

In partnership with Macclesfield Borough Council the BCR has introduced grant assistance for energy efficiency improvements. The cash back scheme is available for local residents and up to £200 can be claimed per household. A total of 31 payments have been made to date amounting to £6122.46, covering the following carbon saving measures:



Through the installation of these measures a total annual reduction of 21.22 tonnes of carbon dioxide has been achieved¹.

2.5. EcoTeams

As part of the Women's Institute roll out of the Global Action Plan EcoTeam scheme, two EcoTeams were formed in Bollington and have been running over the past four months. Each month the teams tackle an impact including waste, shopping, energy, transport, water and chemicals, with the aim of developing new green lifestyle habits. The teams benefit from the loan of an Efergy Meter, which shows the consumption of energy at any one time within their home, along with a free bag for life, samples of Ecover products, free low energy light bulb and a *Counting the Carbon diet book*.

Types of lifestyle changes have included:

- Signing up to the mail preference service to reduce the amount of mail
- Composting of kitchen waste rather than sending it to landfill
- Replacing light bulbs with low energy bulbs
- Taking the bus rather than driving
- Choosing a holiday with a short haul flight rather than long haul
- Installing Water Hippos in the toilet cistern to reduce the volume of water used
- Increasing the types of waste which are recycled

¹ Calculations made from Energy Saving Trust data and making the assumption loft insulation was already present and that it was topped up to a depth of 270mm.

Following the completion of the five month programme the EcoTeam members will be presented with a report showing how much they have reduced their energy and water consumption, and waste generation.

2.6. Hydro-feasibility study

Bollington was at the heart of the industrial revolution because its rivers, particularly the River Dean, were sufficient to provide power to drive the mills. There are a total of eight drops on the River Dean and Harrop Brook which run through the town, and the BCR have recently commissioned the Crichton Centre to undertake a hydro-feasibility study to assess the potential for local low carbon power generation in the town. The output of this study will be a report which details:

- The suitability of the rivers to generate power;
- The cost of installing hydropower technologies;
- An assessment of the most suitable hydropower technologies for installation; and
- The potential energy generation capacity at each defined drop.

2.7. Tree planting

The BCR and Kerridge Ridge & Ingersley Vale Countryside & Heritage Landscape Partnership Scheme (KRIV) project teams joined forces to provide the local community with a tree-planting scheme. For £10 residents can purchase a tree to be planted in one of four areas to be planted within the local conservation area, with the option of planting the tree themselves on an organised tree planting day. Each individual is then presented with a certificate and a map showing the approximate location of the tree.

Over 50 trees have been purchased to date and 15 local residents joined a tree planting day, which brought the added benefit of introducing new residents into volunteering and bringing together the community to enjoy, preserve and enhance our local environment.

2.8. Providing advice on renewable technology

Members of the BCR have provided advice and support to local schools on the installation of low carbon renewables, and the grants available. This has led to Tytherington High School successfully receiving 100% funding for the installation of photovoltaics on their school roof, and Dean Valley School being persuaded that wind power was not suitable for their location, and to consider solar thermal and photovoltaics instead. The benefits of installing such technologies within schools include:

- To allow children to monitor renewable technologies in a real life environment
- To instigate discussion on energy usage
- To instigate discussion on sources of energy
- To instigate discussion on global warming and CO2 emissions and diminishing reserves of fossil fuels
- Provide a significant proportion of the schools energy requirements, reducing the schools running costs and reducing the carbon footprint of the schools.
- Use a renewable technology which will fit in with the schools local environment.

2.9. Reviewing the Town Plan

Bollington Town Plan is currently under review and the BCR are members of the review committee. By being part of the review process we are able to provide valuable knowledge and insight into measures which should be incorporated into the Plan, to ensure that future town developments are carried out in the best interest of the environment.

2.10. Increasing our knowledge

We are fortunate in Bollington to have residents which are both skilled in a wide range of areas relating to the cause of the BCR, and also willing to give up their own time for the success of the group. Over the past year our members have made a number of trips around the country, often at their own expense, to further increase their knowledge of the subject area, and bring this back to advance our thinking. These site visits and attendance at events have included:

- Ashton Hayes Going Carbon Neutral grass roots community project conference
- Sustainable Cities and Communities conference at Birmingham NEC
- Transition Towns workshop in Nailsworth, Stroud
- A number of water powered mills throughout the North of England
- An event on renewables held by the Institute of Engineering and Technologies
- A visit to an anaerobic digester

3. THE FUTURE

3.1. Focus for the next year

The BCR has never been stronger and the enthusiasm and ideas from the group are ever increasing. Key focus areas for 2008 are:

1. Seeking funding to take the BCR to the next level and provide a dedicated part or full time resource to support the work of the group. Part of this work would include providing an EcoAudit service to local residents.
2. Further roll out of the existing programmes: EcoTeams, tree planting, £200 grant assistance scheme.
3. Taking the communications plan to the next level and reaching out to more residents.
4. Research into how to undertake a carbon footprinting exercise for the whole town.
5. Re-construct the website to become a focal point for the community for advice on how to measure and reduce their carbon footprint, including a wealth of local case studies on how this has been achieved.
6. Seeking funding for the installation of a hydro-power scheme.
7. Update of the Town Plan to incorporate sustainable development principles.

3.2. Unlimited potential

In its short existence the BCR has demonstrated that voluntary action at the local level can deliver carbon reductions. In the wake of so much media attention and mixed messages relating to climate change, people can often feel helpless and confused in not only the reality of the situation, but in what they can actually do to make a difference. Action at this level can ensure that the message about climate change is communicated, and practical advice is given to help people reduce not only their carbon emissions, but also other impacts on the environment.

Voluntary groups such as the BCR also bring together a breadth of knowledge, skills and passion, not only relating to climate change and the environment, but also wider skills such as communication, marketing, project management and accounting. In today's disparate society this is a significant side benefit as it helps community cohesion and improves quality of life, empowering a community to come together and take action against a global problem.

It is our aim, that in addition to helping our community reduce its carbon footprint, the operating model created by the BCR will be adopted by other communities to create a national carbon revolution of the same size and scale as that seen by the Industrial Revolution, which will reverse the trend of increasing carbon emissions, and help us all to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

Nicola Riley
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14 March 2008