



## **Ashton Hayes Going Carbon Neutral Project Update 2009**

**Happy New Year to everyone in Ashton Hayes and to our supporters!**

The past 12 months have been a busy time. Here is a short overview of some of our activities.

### **Microgrid feasibility project**

A lot of effort is going into this study which is funded by Carbon Connections at the University of East Anglia. Now at a half way stage, we have successfully installed energy monitoring equipment in properties along Church Road and erected two temporary weather stations – behind the school and on Kelsall Hill. We'd like to thank the numerous residents who are putting in time and effort by contributing to focus groups and helping to collect the energy consumption data and gather the solar and wind data. We should also thank Professor Roy Alexander for the hundreds of volunteer hours he is putting into the project and to Dr Mary Gillie and Jen Carter of EA Technology who are providing valuable technical support and liaising with power companies and network operators.

By summer 2009 we ought to have a good idea of the range of possibilities for generating our own energy for the benefit of our public buildings, school and some residents. The research will also be of use to help communities up and down the UK with similar studies.

We are also being supported in the legal and financial issues surrounding microgrid project development by the newly formed Leapfrog not-for-profit climate change and development support group – made up of volunteer specialists from legal, accounting, engineering and financial firms who provide help on a pro-bono basis.

Local architect, John Tweed, is also looking at various renewable energy/insulation initiatives that could be possible at the school if renewable energy generation appears feasible. We would like to reiterate that this is only a fact-finding feasibility study and any project proposals would need to be subject to consultation and review with the community, Parish Council and planning authorities.

### **University of Chester survey 2009**

We are three years into the project and are pleased to have saved 21% on our average energy use as a village. In May, University of Chester students will again carry out a

door-to-door survey to see if we have managed to cut down our energy use for a third year. The data we have collected to date is proving to be a remarkable record of how our community effort is helping to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We are one of the few places in the UK to have developed such a continuous record which we share with other communities and organisations across the UK and worldwide.

### **Ashton Hayes to lead the ‘Villages without Borders’ project**

In 2009, Ashton Hayes will become the lead community on a new data-sharing initiative being developed by the Canadian-based Zerofootprint™ organisation. The aim of Zerofootprint is to help individuals, communities and business ‘go green’ by facilitating the exchange of best practice. The not-for-profit wing of Zerofootprint has already developed award winning personal carbon calculators that are being used across North America. Ashton Hayes has been invited to become the exemplar village in its ‘Villages without Borders’ project. The idea is that we use the Zerofootprint web application to showcase what we are doing and inspire other villages across the world to follow suit. The project will be part funded by a grant from the University of Chester and by the Zerofootprint organisation. Other villages across the UK will be joining in with the project, including some Transition Town groups. Professor Roy Alexander and Tamara Hunt will join Garry Charnock on a short visit to Toronto in mid January to train on the use of the application and set the ball rolling. Following this, we shall also be contacting residents in Ashton Hayes to ask for permission to upload some energy data to the Zerfootprint website. For more on this have a look at [www.zerofootprint.net](http://www.zerofootprint.net).

### **Over 500 requests for our DVD films**

Communities across the UK continue to invite us to give talks on the Ashton Hayes project – often when they are starting their own ‘kick off’ carbon reduction projects. Our 3 DVD films have been in popular demand and we have now given 500 copies to communities up and down the UK and overseas. Steve Holland, our award winning director, is currently making a new film to capture the progress and learning on the microgrid feasibility study. There are now links to our films on You Tube, from the [www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk](http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk) website.

### **Visitors continue to arrive in Ashton Hayes**

We’ve also had a lot of visitors to the village 2008 – one cabinet minister and several well known politicians who want to learn more about what we are doing. The world’s press have continued to ask us for updates and numerous education establishments bring students along to learn more. We try to ensure that these groups bring benefit to the local economy by having lunches in the pub or spending in the village shop.

### **New footpath completed**

The most obvious spin off from the project has been the completion of the new footpath to Mouldsworth which is now used by many people. We’d like to thank Cheshire County Council for investing in the footpath and providing a safe route for us to use Mouldsworth train station. Many residents now walk down the path and enjoy a drink at the Goshawk and the school tells us that more children are now walking to school.

### **And finally**

We'd like to thank the 60 or so people who are now helping with various aspects of the Going Carbon Neutral Project. All these people say they are 'keen to do their bit' for climate change. We try to make involvement fun and rewarding and welcome anyone to contribute time and effort – no matter how small. There is a regular report on project activities at the monthly Parish Council meeting (see notice board for the agenda) and we keep the website updated ([www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk](http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk))

We'd also like to keep you informed of progress by email – so please send your details to [gcharnock@rsk.co.uk](mailto:gcharnock@rsk.co.uk) if you'd like to be added to the email database.

With best wishes for 2009

**Ashton Hayes Going Carbon Neutral Project.**