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# Community Engagement & Sustainable Development

*1<sup>st</sup> Edition – August 2007*



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# Community Engagement and Sustainable Development

August 2007

Welcome to the first edition of CESD News, the monthly newsletter for participants in the Community Engagement and Sustainable Development (CESD) research project.

We're really pleased to be bringing you this newsletter which aims to keep participants and other interested organisations up to date on the research, and connected with each other. Each issue will have updates on the research project, stories from the organisations involved and opportunities for networking between participants.

Our big news is that we have now 20 organisations signed up to take part providing a research pool of about 40 projects on going to print. Thank you to everyone who has signed up to make this project really worthwhile – we hope you all benefit from being involved.

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### 1. Message from WWF

“WWF doesn't have a 'right' answer as to what 'ought' to happen, but we can help communities to find ways to govern resources. People will benefit from finding ways to manage resources and the way they use them. WWF's unique role is to identify ways in which people can change their behaviour so that their needs for natural resources can be fulfilled in a sustainable way. Our work with communities shows this happening.”

*David Nussbaum, CEO, WWF-UK*

“Research tells us that when people work together on an activity, any resulting behaviour change is likely to be more long-lasting. Community engagement projects are being run by organisations throughout the country, but it's difficult to measure what sort of behaviour change impact they are having. This project is a really exciting step forward in helping us to demonstrate the most effective ways of changing behaviour for a more sustainable future.”

*Rod Sterne, Head of Cities and Communities, WWF-UK*

### Message from BTCV

At BTCV we are delighted to have the opportunity to be part of the CESD Research Project. Both WWF and CAG are excellent organisations to be working with to explore the area of environmental behaviour change. I was really pleased with the response from my colleagues, around the country, who nominated their projects to participate in the research. I now look forward to BTCV fully engaging with the project and the results that this might bring. The Project Team are great to work with and really go out of their way to help. I am confident that being part of the CESD Research Project will lead to further joint working between our organisations.

*Mick Denness, Director Healthy & Sustainable Communities, BTCV*

## 2. How we got here – a quick reminder of the project background

The project began in 2004, when WWF commissioned CAG Consultants to look at community engagement and sustainable development. WWF wanted to know if community engagement contributed to long-term sustainable behaviour change.

CAG Consultants found evidence of community engagement working as a method to get people to live more healthily. They found nothing to show whether community engagement resulted in people acting more sustainably.

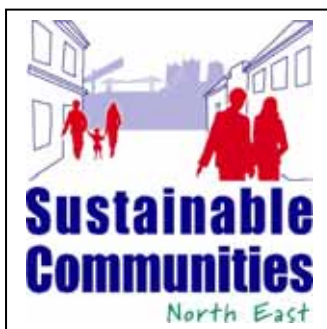
WWF and CAG set up a research project which looked at the relationship between community engagement and sustainable development and developed a tool to test the impact. It was piloted by Surrey County Council, Bristol City Council, Durham County Council, Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council, Lewes District Council and West Devon Environment Network. The tool was refined thanks to the hard work of the pilots and we have now embarked on using the tool to gather data for our research project, which many of you will be assisting with.

This is a really exciting project. We haven't been able to demonstrate the behavioural impacts of community engagement on sustainability before. The results could really help us to get better national support for the type of work we do, and communicate the good practice of participants to others.

A recent Ipsos Mori poll (4<sup>th</sup> July 2007) said that 37 per cent of people in the UK admitted they were doing nothing about climate change while 23 per cent said their main effort was through recycling. There is still a lot that can be done to support people to change, and we hope that we can demonstrate through this research the ways in which community engagement can play its part. The poll also said that 70 per cent agreed that the Government should take the lead in combating climate change even if it means using the law to change people's behaviour and consumers are looking to business to take greater action on climate change. There's a real role for local as well as national government.

## 3. Case study from Durham County Council

We hope to run a regular section of case studies from participants. If you would like your project to be entered in a future edition of the newsletter, please email us an article of up to 350 words and a photo and / or logo about your project. Contact details to submit case studies are at the end of the newsletter.



**The North East Sustainable Communities Initiative - Brighter Futures Together** is a regional project focussing on the production of a community focussed Sustainable Communities Toolkit. The tool kit will provide useful information to help community groups start practical projects which improve local quality of life.

The initiative aims to help communities become more sustainable, and hopes to provide communities with information to enable them to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

The initiative started in Durham in 1999 with the development of a set web based information sheets created by the County Durham Local Agenda 21 Partnership and managed by Durham County Council. Now it is being developed as a region wide initiative, which will build on the successes of the 1999 initiative, but strengthen and broaden the original campaign's remit to provide practical actions that north east communities can undertake. The new initiative is

led by SustainE and funded through a partnership comprising of local authorities and key regional organisations.

The original fact sheets are being developed and added to and there are many contributors helping with this process. The contributors include community representatives and the CESD tool is being used with this group to observe whether their behaviour becomes more sustainable through their contact with this programme.

So far the first set of behaviour change questionnaires have been completed, as well as the other project focused parts of the recording.

For more information please contact [Jacqueline.warren@durham.gov.uk](mailto:Jacqueline.warren@durham.gov.uk)  
Or visit <http://www.durham.gov.uk/durhamcc/usp.nsf/pws/Sust+comms+-+Sustainable+Communities>

#### 4. Map of current project participants

In the next edition of the newsletter, we would like to share everyone's contact details. If you would prefer your details not to be shared, please let us know by email. This map is an illustration of where participants are located – hope it's useful!

#### Contact details

If you have any comments about the newsletter, are interested in finding out more, or would like to submit a case study for a future issue, please email [sheila.colman@virgin.net](mailto:sheila.colman@virgin.net).

We also hope to include all the contact details for the projects, if you don't want us to include you, please let us know. Thanks.

#### Small print

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