



# SUSWOT QUARTERLY

*SusWot Using less living more*

Winter Solstice

December 2010

## Finding more about Sustainability

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### Every Action Counts

Often people want to lead a more sustainable life style but only have a hazy idea of where to start. The previous government funded a programme 'Every Action Counts' aimed at communities and individuals. One of the legacies of the programme was a series of a readable fact sheets on a wide range of sustainable themes. Each theme is supported by detailed back-up information and practical ideas. Although some of the topics are quite brief each have web addresses for further information. All the pages may be freely

down-loaded from the web site [www.e-c-a.ac.uk/every-action-counts-fact-sheets](http://www.e-c-a.ac.uk/every-action-counts-fact-sheets)

The headline themes are: General; Save Energy; Travel Wisely; Save Our Resources and, Care for Your Area. Examples of the over 50 or more detailed sheets: Organising 'Greener' Events; Encouraging Walking, Cycling and Public Transport; Promoting and Supporting Fair Trade, and Understanding Green Labels

## The 7 Deadly sins of Green Washing

**The act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service.'**

### Sin of the Hidden Trade-off

A claim suggesting that a product is 'green' based on a narrow set of features without attention to other important environmental issues. Paper, for example, is not necessarily preferable environmentally just because it comes from a sustainably-harvested forest. Other important environmental issues in the paper-making process, such as greenhouse gas emissions, or chlorine use in bleaching may be equally important.

### Sin of No Proof

An environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information or by a reliable third-party certification. Common examples are facial tissues or toilet tissue products that claim various percentages of post-consumer recycled content without providing evidence.

### Sin of Fibbing

Environmental claims that are simply false. The most common examples in the USA were products falsely claiming to be Energy certified or registered

### Sin of Vagueness

A claim that is so poorly defined or broad that its real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the consumer. 'All-natural' is an example. Arsenic, uranium, mercury, and formaldehyde are all naturally occurring, and poisonous. 'All natural' isn't necessarily 'green'.

### Sin of Worshipping False Labels

A product that, through either words or images, gives the impression of third-party endorsement where no such endorsement exists; fake labels, in other words.

### Sin of Irrelevance

An environmental claim that may be truthful but is unimportant or unhelpful for consumers seeking environmentally preferable products. 'CFC-free' is a common example, since it is a frequent claim despite the fact that CFCs are banned by law.

### Sin of Lesser of Two Evils

A claim that may be true within the product category, but that risks distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole. Organic cigarettes could be an example of this Sin, as might the fuel-efficient sport-utility vehicle.

*TerraChoice, North America's premiere environmental marketing agency, 2010*



### ecojam.org

Your local, green and ethical scene  
Green Directory, Green Jobs, Free Stuff, Interaction

### SUSWOT Christmas Social

Thursday  
16 December

Post Office Tavern.

7.30pm  
All Welcome

## The Green Deal

Unless sourced from renewable sources, reductions in energy consumption result in lower carbon emissions. Improving home insulation and using less energy are the two drivers for the public sector housing stock. In the future the intention is to increase the number of solar energy systems installed in council controlled properties. However, the major challenge is how to get the private owner occupiers to install double glazing, loft insulation, and where possible, cavity wall insulation. A quarter of a home's heat can be lost through a loft and walls are even worse, losing a third. So, the sooner home improvements are carried out, such as insulation, the sooner fuel bills are reduced and also a cosier home.

Now there is bad news and possibly some good news. The government has decided to remove the grants for loft insulation and money for this will run out by December. The feed-in-tariff payments for solar energy will be reviewed in 2012/2013, quite possibly downwards, with the result that photo voltaic systems become less financially attractive for the home owner.

The possible good news is the government's 'Green Deal', although the operational details have yet to emerge. New legislation will enable energy efficient measures in the home to be financed by the Green Deal from autumn 2012. The payment for installing insulation and similar measures will come from the savings on your energy bill. All the work will be undertaken and quality-assured through accredited high-street retailers and no upfront payment required.

## Action to help stop the palm-oil fuelled power plant at Avonmouth

**ACSEB - Action for Sustainable Energy for Bristol**

Your help is *urgently* needed!

A planning application was lodged last year with Bristol City Council for a 50mW, palm oil-powered, electricity generating station. This would result in the destruction of tropical forest six times the area of Bristol, with appalling environmental, social, and greenhouse-gas consequences. The planning application was rejected, 6 votes to 2, by the Bristol NW Planning Committee, citing grave doubts about the sustainability of the fuel source and the greenhouse gases associated with its production, distribution, and use.

We are now fighting an appeal by W4B against the decision. The papers have been sent to the Secretary of State for local government Eric Pickles. Political opinion is shifting against this scheme and others like it, *and we need to keep up the pressure*, so please do your bit to help!

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Local Government, will (with his staff) decide on whether to allow the appeal, by 22 December.

For more information on what you can do see the ACSEB web-site [www.acseb.co.uk](http://www.acseb.co.uk)

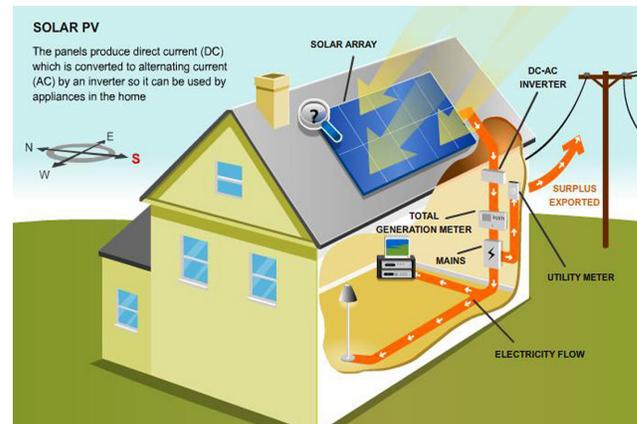
**Did you know?** It takes about 4,776 gallons of water to raise a Christmas tree. *American Water Works Association, 2003*

## Clean Energy Cashback

Since the beginning of this summer there have been an increasing number of commercial organisations promoting the financial benefits of solar panels. For a comparatively low sum of money up-front you can rent your roof and the company will install the panels and give you cash back towards your electricity bills. Since the installers want to rent your roof, this can only be to give them a profitable return. The average system may cost about £10,000 and giving a return on your investment of the order of 8%.

The feed-in-tariff, the price per kilowatt is fixed for the next two years but may well change from the current 41.3p (see the 'Green Deal' opposite). You could decide to borrow the money for your own installation which may be a better long term investment. If you move house then you are free of any complications over contracts with a commercial organisation.

If you are attracted to reducing your electricity bills and reducing carbon emissions, solar panels are an option You should obtain several quotes and do the sums before you commit



Energy Saving Trust

## Diary Dates

- ◆ **Christmas Local Produce Market** pm 18 December 2010
- ◆ **Local Produce Market**-Westbury-on-Trym 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of Every Month, 10 am to 1 pm  
The Car Park, Westbury-on-Trym Primary Care Centre (GP Surgery)
- ◆ **Southmead Hospital Energy Day** 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010
- ◆ **Neighbourhood Partnership** Well-Being grant applications Closing date for next round of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011 .
- ◆ **Sustainability Toolkit Course** - free taster session
- ◆ December 15<sup>th</sup> 2010 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM Bush House, Prince Street, a 12 month, part time programme. The course is designed for people 'in transition'.

*Provisional and at the Planning Stage*

- ◆ Green Door and Open Doors 10-11<sup>th</sup> September 2011
- ◆ Westbury Flower Show Recycle Theme 10<sup>th</sup> September
- ◆ Third SUSWOT Eco Fiesta 18<sup>th</sup> September