

# MESS news

Marple, Mellor & Marple Bridge Energy Saving Strategy

No.1 June 2011

## Strawberries for tea.



For nearly two years I have been composting all my food waste and all the soft vegetation waste from my garden, some of it is now ready for use. Early this year I used some of the compost to create a small raised bed in which I have planted some strawberries. They have taken off, I have never seen so many or such large strawberries, they put the plants I put into ordinary soil to shame. The first one is nearly ripe - I'm not sure I can wait for Wimbledon or the cream!

CB

*"An opportunity to face and plan, together as a community, the challenges that Climate Change will bring."*

Following a workshop day on the environment and climate change organised by Marple Churches Together Justice & Peace Group in October 2009 MESS was formed and now includes people of all faiths and none.

MARPLE, MELLOR & MARPLE BRIDGE ENERGY SAVING STRATEGY is a local community project which aims to promote carbon reduction, raise awareness of climate change issues and find local solutions to some of the resulting problems.

In its first year MESS concentrated on promoting loft and cavity wall insulation. Working with the Energy Saving Trust and Stockport Borough Council 246 homes in the locality have benefited from the **discounted scheme** with a contribution of £10,500 from Stockport MBC. In February MESS held its first **Energy Efficient SHOWCASE**. This gave suppliers an opportunity to show off their products and answer questions from the large number of people who braved the freezing weather to find out how to save energy, save money and save the environment. Stall holders were delighted with the contacts made and many have already booked for next year's event. The Showcase allowed MESS to fulfil one of its aims—to support and promote local businesses.

**The need and desire for allotments** is a problem faced in most areas. In the Marple area the waiting list can be 7 years long. MESS is looking for land in the area that could be used even if only for 2 or 3 allotment spaces. We are trying to be imaginative in finding solutions for this need. Do you know of land that, with negotiation could be used? The Shared Garden Scheme is also being investigated. A petition to the council is being drawn up.

Mess members are enthusiastic local people who are trying to offer ideas, knowledge and solutions to the challenges that we all face in these changing times. **Call on us if you think we can help or you have ideas to share.**

## Going Solar

After much careful consideration I decided to have solar electric panels installed on my roof earlier this year. Unfortunately my roof is a strange shape and only six panels could be mounted, which gives a maximum generating capacity of 1.2 kilowatts. As a result it is not going to have as good a financial return as a larger unit. However I have been keeping a careful watch on the amount of electricity generated and the amount I have used. There have been a few sunny days (unfortunately it wasn't running during the glorious April weather!) where the income from the generated electricity has exceeded the cost of what I used. On average the system has reduced what I need to get from the utility supplier by about 25 - 30% and provides an income that covers well over half of the remaining electricity costs.

To get the best from solar electricity I made a few simple changes to when I

use electrical items: Turning off things that don't need to run during the night and could run during the day, such as dehumidifiers, immersion heaters, ventilation fans, items on standby etc. (Plug in timers can make it automatic)

CB



Another MESS member has installed an 18 panel system with a generating capacity of 3.9 kilowatts, the maximum for domestic installations. It is early days to see how much electricity is being fed back into the National Grid. On a dull rainy day the input was still 7.58 kwh which could return £3.41. On a hot sunny day the takings could reach

£11.61. In the last 4 months the feed back totalled £716.83. It will take a number of years to recoup the layout but a good start has already been made.

MM

To keep track of the power being generated by solar panels it is possible to have a monitor, which can be linked into your computer, or function separately, to follow the input, the level of power, the daily and monthly stats. and the conversion to revenue.

The unit is normally used to check one's consumption of electricity but it can equally check the generation. A small clip on sensor is attached to the generator cable and this sends a radio signal to a base receiver connected by a USB cable to a PC. The computer can display live data or download historic data for examination.

FT

**MESS members are very willing to share their experience of PV generation.**

## St Mary's Garden

St Mary's School Gardening Club is flourishing due to a group of dedicated parents and a granddad who meet every Wednesday morning in the school grounds. Since the group started a few years ago, they have planted trees and shrubs in the school grounds and looked after the flower beds and tubs which surround the school.



The group decided two years ago that they would like to get the children involved in the gardening project, so with the support of the Headteacher, Fionuala Boucher, they decided to use some spare land at the school to build eight raised beds for growing vegetables using recycled wood from broken school tables. The land is on a slope so they have used an old method of 'terracing' so that each bed is level.

The first year the group grew brassicas with some success but there was a lot of problems with visiting wildlife and the hens from a local garden which ate all the produce. This year each class has been involved in sowing, planting and harvesting the produce and the kitchen has already used some early spring onions. Children



from throughout the school enjoyed digging up the produce, washing and chopping it, cooking and eating it — 'we had a feast of homemade vegetable soup and homemade onion bread!' Broad beans will be the next crop to be followed by tomatoes and salads.

They have also planted a wild life hedge and some apple trees and raised sunflowers and pumpkin seedlings so that the classes can compete in the autumn. Next week they will be selling a couple of hundred 'spare' tomato plants at the school gate.

In summer, the group sell planted hanging baskets to parents and each autumn the group appeals for donations of spring bulbs and organise a planting day. Last year over 1000 bulbs were planted in the school grounds. They provided a wonderful show.

St Mary's is twinned with a school in South Africa and has contacted them to exchange tips and views. One difference noted was that while South Africa has three months heavy rain each year Stockport has twelve!

PH

## Ludworth Primary School

have adopted an Eco-Schools Action Plan. It includes focus on Waste minimisation/recycling - Posters around the school. Biodiversity – discover species around the school grounds & create a record of them. Make Bird feeders. Each of these has an expected outcome, timescale and staff responsible for them. The School Council and Governors will be kept posted about this and encourage it along.

## Support Local Shopping

The Marple Health Food shop seem to be increasing their range of Faith in Nature products for anyone who uses them already or would like to try. They are paraban and SLES free, no artificial colours/perfumes, not tested on animals, environmentally friendly and LOCAL!

Their organic flour is comparable in price to supermarkets and if you want stuff in quantity they will bag it up for you in convenient amounts. They also do Ecover refills.

## Drying at no cost

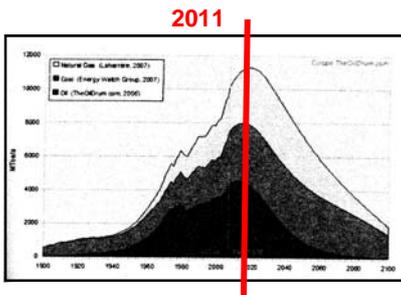


In an effort to save on electricity and make my tumble dryer redundant I have just fitted a ceiling clothes dryer. Should have

done it years ago!

They are available online from £37, mine was recycled from my Dad's house and is about 70 years old! Mine is painted white and blends in well with the bathroom ceiling.

## PEAK OIL (Imposed by Nature)



No the above film, shown on Monday 23rd May in Marple Methodist Church was not about oil from The Peak District. It was an urgent wakeup call to appreciate that the world has reached the peak of its oil reserves. The film, made by Scandinavian scientists, with the aid of investigative reporters and American input, presented a very graphic and deeply challenging picture of the world's principle source of energy, oil. Professor Hubbert, of the USA, coined the phrase "Peak Oil" to emphasise

that when the world reached the point of 50% of the oil resource, then the decline of the rest would likely come in some 50 years. In reality **the peak has been reached** and we are already in the position where "less petroleum is being found".

The film's message made it very clear that we need to discover and advocate alternative forms of energy and conservation in what is a grave situation for the world - and we need to do it now.

We in MESS are conscious of our responsibility to carry on raising awareness of this and encouraging appropriate action.

GH

## The Story of Stuff

"The Story of Stuff" is a clever depiction of the misuse of the resources of our planet from forest cutting to what we deposit in our waste bins. Introduced by Annie Leonard this very simple cartoon entertains but at the same time shocks. It reminds us that we are all involved in ruining our planet for future generations just because of our present addiction to 'stuff'. Lasting about 20 minutes it is a good introduction for discussion for all age. <http://youtube/gLBE5QAYXp8> or Google The Story of Stuff.



MESS meets monthly to discuss the scheme and matters arising and to plan the way ahead. If you would like to be part of the group and / or kept in touch with the group & other issues of Carbon Reduction in the area please complete the form below and send to: Maureen Matthews 116 Longhurst Lane, Mellor SK6 5PG

Email: [maureen.matthews@which.net](mailto:maureen.matthews@which.net)

YOUR DETAILS

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

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Email: .....