

TO: ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1ST APRIL 2003-03-21

SUBJECT: ACTION 21 PROGRESS REPORT

FROM: ACTION 21

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update the committee on Action 21's activities.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Action 21 operates under a service level agreement with Warwick District Council to deliver objectives under Local Agenda 21.
- 2.2 In 1996, Action 21 was created as a network of volunteers affiliated to Warwick District Council with the aim to deliver sustainable development objectives at community level. Over the last 6 years we have built up a multi-skilled network of volunteers.
- 2.3 Until last year, factors holding back Action 21's development have been lack of officer support and volunteer time and projects have been mainly awareness-raising initiatives due to lack of funding. The respective roles of Action 21 and the Council regarding sustainability have not been clearly defined, and there has been a lack of understanding as to how Action 21 priorities would fit into the Council's agenda.
- 2.4 In order to overcome historic difficulties we have now:
- Recruited a new management committee of ten people with expertise in a range of areas.
 - Registered Action 21 as a limited company from 2001. We are now a separate organisation from the council, although we maintain strong links with them.
 - Negotiated a Council-funded member of staff and a budget for a 3-year initial period operating under a Service Level Agreement.
 - Appointed an officer on secondment from Warwick District Council with a good knowledge of sustainability and community involvement who is responsible directly to the Action 21 board.
- 2.5 The headings Action 21 is required to deliver under for the SLA are as follows:
- To raise awareness within the Warwick District of sustainable development issues
 - To promote good practice amongst householders, businesses and other organisations within the District
 - To undertake practical projects which contribute to sustainable development
 - To expand membership of Action 21 and make every effort to ensure the membership is representative of the Community of Warwick District and is active
 - To participate in relevant consultations including the Community Plan and Planning Policy

- To achieve the above, to work in partnership with others including the District Council

3 ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE JUNE 2002

3.1 To raise awareness within the Warwick District of sustainable development issues

- Car Free Day - 22nd September 2002

High profile public event involving a road closure to make way for a street party event which celebrated sustainable transport. Attractions included a full musical and dance line up on the main stage plus activities going on in the street. Many activities were on the theme of sustainable transport e.g. slow bike race, cycle route quiz, the making of a big walking bus and stalls from travelwise, living streets and Friends of the Earth. Thousands attended.

- Pumpkin Day, Bath Place Community Venture

A celebration event to mark pumpkin harvest encouraged people to grow, cook and eat local, fresh, GM free food. Lots of activities on offer e.g. cookery, food tasting, pumpkin carving and jewellery making and pumpkin competition - this followed on from pumpkin planting workshops with children earlier in the year. Approx 70 people attended. The event had three positive media stories including one front page headline.

- Energy Event – An evening seminar on February 10th with speakers on Climate Change and Energy Saving
- Green Library –Action 21 energy group have set up this public resource at Gaia on Regent Place.
- Transaction - our quarterly newsletter keeps members in touch with our activities and disseminates information on sustainability.
- '2003 and Beyond'
In June 2003 we will repeat a last year's successful education event at Coombe Country Park. Education for Sustainable Development activities will be taught over 3 days to 1500 primary school children from across Coventry and Warwickshire. External funding of £9 737 has recently been confirmed from the Landfill operator ONYX.
- Other initiatives detailed below which also raise awareness include: Recycling Roadshow, Recycling Directory, allotments projects, Kenilworth Train Station campaign and 2003 and Beyond.

3.2 To promote good practice amongst householders, businesses and other organisations within the District

- www.action21.co.uk is continually being developed with information about our activities plus information to promote sustainable lifestyles.
- Action 21 has recently produced a leaflet promoting our theme groups and a number of simple ways to make your lifestyle greener.
- All our three allotment projects are promoting growing your own produce which is excellent sustainable development practice. (see below)

3.2 To undertake practical projects which contribute to sustainable development

- Spring is the ideal season for promoting uptake of allotments which is one of Action 21's key aims. We currently are running three projects on allotments:

Peel Road - Action 21 is involving local residents in the regeneration of this derelict site in Warwick. We have received a small grant from WDC Housing department towards this.

Black Lane - This allotment site is currently suffering from lack of tenants and the resulting lack of funds for investment. Action is running a project to encourage new tenants by rotovating overgrown plots and helping with promotion in the press and around the local area. In April we will be running two short courses on Gardening for beginners to encourage new people.

St Mary's Allotment – Weekly workshops are being run at St Mary's allotment in partnership with Bath Place Community Venture. These are highly supported sessions aimed at encouraging more people to grow their own.

All these practical projects give Action 21 a link into local communities in Lillington, Leamington and Warwick. These communities are easier to reach with practical projects than awareness raising.

- **Local to Global** – A volunteer has been recruited to maintain an e-mail discussion group for groups and individuals in Warwick District with an international focus. A database has been compiled for this and the group has recently been launched. It is hoped that this easier communication link will help facilitate more joint working within the area.
- **Recycling Roadshow** is play on recycling for school assemblies aimed at all primary schools in the District. Run by volunteers, the project will commence in the summer term.
- **Directory of Recycling** – This will be a directory available to the public throughout the District. It will contain the reasons why we need to recycle, what services are available in our area, where to take our recyclables. It will also list all the retailers which sell recycled products and thereby stimulate the market for these. A questionnaire has been sent to all the retailers in the district and the timescale for completion is expected to be end of April.
- **New Kenilworth Train Station** – This is an issue which the Action 21 transport group have decided to take forward as a campaign via a series of stalls in Kenilworth Town Centre.
- **Creative Recycling Centre** - Action 21 is part of a newly formed working group for a Creative Recycling Centre in Leamington Spa. In partnership with CAW we will be running a series of art from rubbish workshops in May and June aimed at young people. This will culminate with a big display at the Peace Festival.

3.3 To expand membership of Action 21 and make every effort to ensure the membership is representative of the Community of Warwick District and is active

- A survey was done on how different geographical areas are represented within Action 21 membership. The break down of membership is as follows:

Warwick	20
Leamington Spa	96
Kenilworth	7
Other	14
Total	137

In response to this we intend to do more outreach work over the course of the summer in areas outside Leamington.

3.4 To participate in relevant consultations including the Community Plan and Planning Policy

- Action 21 committee have contributed to a sustainability review of the Local Plan
- Action 21 will be a key player in the Warwick District Community Plan and play a role in the newly developing Local Strategic Partnership. We intend to input into the consultation on the Community Plan, we would like to have an A21 representative on the LSP itself.

3.5 To achieve the above, to work in partnership with others including the District Council

- Project partners to date have included Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Warwick District Council, Regenesi, The Chain, The Gap, Warwickshire County Council, Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, Community Arts Workshop, Cycleways, Bath Place Community Venture, Black Lane Allotments Association, St Mary's Allotments Association, Sikh Community Centre and Local Agenda 21 workers from Coventry City Council, Rugby Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

4 Outcomes required

That the committee notes the progress being made by Action 21 in relation to the SLA.

For further information about this report please contact:

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