



**Press Release September 2007**

## **Voluntary Sector Goes Green**

Almost 50 voluntary and community groups from across Surrey attended last Friday's inaugural Environment Conference and signed up to reduce their organisation's carbon footprint over the next 12 months.

Surrey Community Action, in partnership with local WWF, hosted a conference at Leatherhead Leisure Centre to inform Surrey voluntary and community groups about the variety of different actions they could take within their own organisation to make a difference. Organisers Surrey CA stressed the need to think about the 3 R's – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle and to see what they could do individually.

Each group was encouraged to look at how they worked now and to share ideas on how they could work smarter recognising that cost was a major factor. Many agreed they were keen to use eco-friendly products but limited budgets had prevented them from taking this forward. Surrey CA were able to offer information about suppliers who could offer both recycled paper but at reasonable costs, they were also keen to work with groups who might want to 'bulk purchase' in order to save money.

Groups made commitments which included turning down the heating, recycling paper, composting and double side printing. Everyone could do something. Chair of Surrey Community Action, Tim Prideaux said, "We are delighted that so many people are willing to explore this important issue with us. We are an organisation which likes to practice what it preaches so have taken many steps in-house to reduce our own carbon footprint and see this as part of a journey to reduce it in further over the next year or so."

The conference finished by announcing the launch of the Surrey Environment Award Scheme for Voluntary and Community Groups, sponsored by Surrey County Council. The scheme, run by Surrey Community Action, aims to encourage voluntary and community groups to take steps to Reduce, Reuse or Recycle. It is open to any group operating in Surrey who can show evidence of their impact on the environment. There are 3 levels, each with suggested activities.

- Level 1: Things you can do now which will generally save you money
- Level 2: Things you could do over the next 12 months which may need a greater degree of change and planning
- Level 3: Things you could do which may take a long time and will probably require investment.

Details of the award criteria and suggested activities are available from Anne Barry on 01483 459292 x 216 or [anneb@surreyca.org.uk](mailto:anneb@surreyca.org.uk) or Surrey Community Action's website [www.surreyca.org.uk](http://www.surreyca.org.uk)

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*Surrey Community Action is resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector across Surrey through access to advice, training, funding and advocacy. Surrey Community Action actively promotes volunteering and our website [www.surreyca.org.uk](http://www.surreyca.org.uk) can signpost you to local opportunities at a volunteer centre near you. Help is especially needed in health or as a school governor.*

If you are interested in volunteering the details of local volunteer centres in Surrey are on our website: [www.surreyca.org.uk/vb.htm](http://www.surreyca.org.uk/vb.htm)