

Monmouthshire Energy Days 2017 Evaluation



monmouthshire
community climate
champions



Background

Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions are a network of community groups, renewable energy companies and Monmouthshire County Council who meet quarterly to work on climate change and energy projects.

From 2012 to 2015, Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions ran an Eco Open Doors weekend, where local homes and properties with renewable energy, energy saving and sustainable living features have very generously opened their doors to visitors looking for inspiration and information about how they can make their own homes more sustainable.

However, government changes to Feed In Tariffs, combined with an increasingly challenging time for renewable energy installers resulting in less funding available for sponsorship means that the group decided not to run a full Eco Open Doors event in 2016. Instead a programme of EU Energy Days in June 2016 was run as part of EU Sustainable Energy Week.

This proved to be a successful model, allowing for a wider range of events, and different groups organised the events, freeing up the Sustainability Policy Officer, Hazel Clatworthy, to concentrate just on pulling the programme together and co-ordinating publicity.

The timing was tight this year, but we managed to pull together an interesting and varied programme of events and activities.

Events and Visitor numbers

On the whole, the Energy Day events attracted good numbers of visitors, and most organisers were pleased with the number of visitors. The total number of visitors was over 500, made up as follows:

Beans Stall - Sat 10th June

Transition Monmouth holds the Beans Stall every second Saturday through the summer in Monmouth Market and encourages people to eat more beans and less meat; it's good for your health, good for the environment, saves money and can be delicious! Around 70 to 80 visitors stopped by and were offered free tasters and around 60 took a free recipe leaflet.

No Dig Gardening Course, Old Lands - Sat 10th and Sun 11th June

This course aimed at teaching people how to produce a larger harvest, using no-dig gardening techniques was based on the organically cultivated walled garden at Old Lands, and was led by Charles Dowding. 13 people attended.



Hanley Landshare Open Day - Sun 11th June

Visitors had a chance to come and learn more about growing your own fruit and veg at Hanley Landshare which was open as part of Hanley Farm Open Day. There were 31 (19 adults, 12 children), and they would have liked to have had more, but recognise that they need to liaise better with the farmer to direct visitors to the Landshare. An excellent bug hotel was completed!



Marcus Perrin @perrin_marcus · Jun 11

Young helpers today at Hanley #Landshare for @OpenFarmSunday. We now have a wonderful bug hotel! #Chepstow @HanleyFarmShop @FCFCGWales



Coed Cefn Open Day - Sun 11th June

This beautiful garden with walled garden, wildlife area, orchard and more, was opened to visitors to raise money for Gwent Wildlife Trust. Local, organic and Fairtrade refreshments were provided by Transition Monmouth who also had a Swap Shop for seeds, plants and produce. Old Lands Community Supported Agriculture Scheme and Tools for Self Reliance Cymru were also there. About 75 visitors came, but the organisers were disappointed and had hoped for more.

Alternative Vehicles Exhibition - Thurs 15th June

Visitors were able to come and have a try of an electric bike, and look at electric vehicles and the Rasa, the new hydrogen power car from Riversimple, which is going to be trialled locally soon.

During the evening a Streetfood and Nightmarket ran in the historic Market Hall and so the event benefited from extra visitors who had come along to the Nightmarket. An estimated 100 people came along and chatted to the exhibitors, which organisers were pleased with, and Riversimple signed up 30 people who are interested in taking part in the trial.



What is it like living in a Zero Carbon Home? One the Orchard - Sat 17th June

This event began with Patrick Hannay of Abergavenny Transition Town interviewing

architect owners Catherine Roberts and Steven Harris on the last ten years of building and living in their award winning zero carbon family home, and then visitors were able to take a tour. Features include super insulated thermally massive construction, lime render and plaster, south facing sunspace, wind assisted heat exchange ventilation, solar thermal and solar electric (PV) panels, smart IoT heat management system, biomass boiler stove and rainwater harvesting. 12 people visited, which was felt to be about the right number.

Claypatch Wood Community Day - Sun 18th June

This woodland in the heart of Wyesham was much neglected but over the last two years much work has been done by Transition Monmouth and the Wyesham Community Woodland Group to make it better for wildlife and a great community asset. The open day included food, games and entertainment, plus stalls from local community and environmental groups, and was enjoyed by around 100 people.

Quick Fix Energy Tips

Mon 19th June, Caldicot Library; Wed 21st June, Usk Hub; Fri 23rd June, Monmouth Hub

Visitors were able to find out how to reduce their energy use and bills, get advice on how to switch energy suppliers, use energy more efficiently and access grants for home improvements. About 25 people came to the three events in total, which was reasonable considering that there was a heatwave during this week and as a result there were relatively few visits to the Hubs.



Gilwern Barnstorming - Sat 24th June



Visitors were able to take a tour of this recently completed two-family barn conversion designed to meet the rigorous Passivhaus EnerPHit standard, conducted by the owner-designer Simon Brown. The Barn is super-insulated and airtight and mechanically ventilated, requiring almost no space heating. Around 15+ people visited, which was felt to be about the right number.

Grosmont Cycling Festival - Sat 24th and Sun 25th June

A series of amateur races (The Iron Mountain Sportif) on Saturday passed through Grosmont and on Sunday the Monmouthshire Junior Grand Prix Road Race went through Grosmont three times before climbing to the finish in the centre of the village. Lots of festival activities were held within the Castle grounds including lots of cycling activities. (attendance figures not yet received, but likely to be hundreds)

How to Make Aerobic Microbial Rich Compost Course, Old Lands - Tues 27th June

This course comprised a talk on compost making followed by a practical compost making demonstration and tour of the organically cultivated walled garden. 23 people came, which was felt to be the right amount.

Event Publicity

There was no budget to pay for adverts in the local papers. However, we still got some pre-event newspaper coverage from press releases, and some events were covered in local papers after the event too:

NEWS

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Monmouthshire County Council to focus on green issues as part of EU Sustainable Energy Week

ANNABEL HUGHES
annabel.hughes@abergavennychronicle.com

WITH climate change currently a hot topic, the county council anticipates increased interest in a series of local events this month focusing on energy efficiency, renewables and sustainable living.

The programme is being organised by Monmouthshire County Council in partnership of community groups, renewable energy companies and Monmouthshire County Council who are working to work on climate change and energy projects.

"Having a zero carbon home, for example, may seem aspirational but it puts things in perspective to start to think about what we can do to help our planet," said Hazel Cliftworth, energy officer at Monmouthshire County Council who will be working to work on climate change and energy projects.

Dubbed Energy Days, the events will run in conjunction with EU Sustainable Energy Week which takes place from June 19 to 26.

The focus will be on everything from the future of electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles to learning how to grow your own fruit and vegetables and saving on home energy bills.

Monmouthshire's Sustainability Policy

hydrogen-powered car developed by Llandrindod Wells-based company River Simple. The bus is due to be trialled in Monmouthshire, with twenty vehicles made available for public trials in return for the first four-hundred miles driven on a motorway.

Monmouthshire, of course, will establish a cycling mecca and Greenfest Cycling Festival in the castle grounds on Saturday June 24 and Sunday June 25, will feature a range of cycling activities for children along with music and craft, food, drink and market stalls.

If you're more interested in property projects than alternative modes of transport, the Energy Days programme also sees two eco-homes designed by their architect owners at Llanfihangel and Gilwern - opening their doors to the public to reveal their energy efficient properties.

Abergavenny Town Council will interview the owner of The Orchard in

to get grants for more.

"Our aim is to encourage drivers to come into the town to recharge their vehicles and have a coffee, wander round the shops, visit the museum and so on rather than driving on a motorway," said Cliftworth.

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Abergavenny Town Council will interview the owner of The Orchard in

Llanfihangel about living in his eco-home next Saturday (June 17), 2pm followed by a tour of the house.

Built in 2006, this zero carbon family house includes everything from wind turbines, solar panels, solar thermal and solar electric (PV) panels to a biomass boiler and rainwater harvesting.

Another local event, organised by the host of eco-features is The Long Barn in Gilwern, which will offer tours for visitors at noon, 1pm, 2pm and 3pm on Saturday June 24.

Throughout the month, the South East Wales Energy Agency will hold energy advice surgeries with tips to save on electricity and gas bills - including at Usk Community Hub on Wednesday June 21 (10am to 4pm). People attending the surgeries can pick up an energy-saving lightbulb and find out how to save money by switching supplier.

There are a variety of additional events in the programme:

On Sunday June 18, the Wye Valley Community Woodland Group community day (10am to 4pm) will open its beautiful organic gardens and orchards to visitors while sustainable energy groups (Chopshop Transperth Chopshop) will demonstrate sustainable gardening and growing fruit

and vegetables at its landshare at the organic Hanley Farm (10am to 4pm).

To encourage the use of sustainable gardening methods, Usk Community Woodland Group community day (Saturday June 24, 10am to 4pm) will also demonstrate how volunteers have improved Clayporth Wood for wildlife.

MCC's Chief Executive Paul Matthews said: "Monmouthshire has a thriving and active environmental voluntary sector which has worked very hard to create a fascinating programme of events raising awareness of issues such as renewable energy and sustainable living."

"It is great to be able to join in with this international

programmes of events which we hope will have a lasting impact on people's attitudes to environmental issues," he added.

For further information visit monmouthshire.gov.uk or contact Hazel Cliftworth - email hazel.cliftworth@monmouthshire.gov.uk or telephone 01633 644848.

Wednesday 21st June 2017

Woodland project comes together for lunch

ON Sunday 18th June 2017, Wye-sham Community Woodland Project held its annual Big Lunch. The Big Lunch is the UK's annual get-together for neighbours - a day where neighbours and members of communities can stop what they're doing and come together for the simple act of sharing a meal.

It is part of the Great Get Together, inspired by Jo Cox, who was killed on 16th June last year, and whose 'more in common' values resonated throughout her work.

The event was a great success, with local residents of all ages

coming along to join in with the activities, which included face painting, thanks to Monmouthshire Youth Service; pioneering, thanks to 1st Wyesham Cubs; willow weaving, and other crafts, and delicious homemade cakes. Dens were built, trees were climbed and hammocks were lounged in.

Transition Monmouth and the Eden Project were also involved in making the lunch happen.

The lunch is just part of the work the Wyesham Community Woodland Project has done.

It has been given a \$106 grant to resurface the paths, a pond,

benches and badge management

benches and hedge management. A brief for these works have been put together and now agreed by all parties and can be put out to tender, once a satisfactory quote is received the funds will be released, by Monmouthshire County Council.

If any local contractors wish to

provide a quote they should get in touch with the project on communitywoodlandproject@gmail.com

The group holds working party days on the Sunday of every month, for more information visit www.wyeshamcommunitywood-



Events for energy saving

A SERIES of events throughout June in Monmouthshire will raise awareness about environmental issues.

Organised by Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions - a partnership of community groups, renewable energy companies and the county council - the

programme will focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable living.

The events - dubbed energy days - will run in conjunction with EU sustainable energy week which takes place from June 19 to June 25.

Abergavenny's Brewery

Yard will host an energy day devoted to sustainable transport from 2pm to 6pm on Thursday, June 15, with demonstrations of electric bikes and cars and the Rasa hydrogen-powered car.

Monmouthshire's chief executive Paul Matthews said: "Monmouthshire has

a thriving and active environmental voluntary sector which has worked very hard to create a fascinating programme of events raising awareness of energy saving, renewable energy and sustainable living.

"It is great to be able to join in with this international

Stamp out hate crime

HATE crime will not be tol-

Grosmont stops for cyclists

by Desmond Pugh

des.p@monmouthshirebeacon.co.uk

THE pretty village of Grosmont became the centre of the cycling world last weekend as the village hosted the Iron Mountain Sportif 70k and 100k and the Monmouthshire 40 Sportif on Saturday 24th June.

The following day, the Monmouthshire Junior Grand Prix took in three laps of Grosmont for the sixth round of the British Cycling Junior Road Series.

The British Cycling

Junior Road Series event featured 100 of the best riders aged 16 to 18 from all over the UK.

The series has seen the likes of Team Sky's Geraint Thomas, Luke Rowe and Owain Doull as well as Team Wiggins' Scott Davies compete before breaking into the elite ranks.

Saturday saw riders in three of the Sportif races stopping at Grosmont for a refreshment break, welcomed by the

Cross Ash School samba band who sent the riders off in style.

The big event on Sunday was a 75 mile challenging course which took the riders from Hilston Park, through Cross Ash, to Abergavenny, then via Llanarath and Newcastle to a tough 20km circuit through Grosmont and Cross Ash.

The riders passed through Grosmont three times before climbing to the race finish in the centre of the village, where Grosmont held its own festival of cycling.



Brian Hughes with Dylan and Owen Hughes and Finlay George from Raglan

Festival organiser, Bill Owen MBE said: "It is pleasing to be awarded and able to

promote a National Series event in these tough financial times with the support of Family Vision, as part of the Abergavenny Cycling Festival".



Burglars target Monmouth shop

CIGARETTES and scratch card holders have been taken after a burglary from a shop in Monmouth.

At approximately 03.33am on Monday (26th June), Gwent Police received reports of a burglary at the McColls

shop on Wyesham Road in Monmouth.

CCTV shows two men wearing masks entering the store after forcing the front door.

They were seen leaving in a small, dark coloured, hatchback which was possibly a Volkswagen Golf.

Sharon Thomas, manageress of McColls said that all the burglars took was scratch cards and cigarettes. "It's less bulky items they go for, that's all they ever take now," she said.

Anyone who has any information about this should contact Gwent Police on 101 quoting log number 52 26/06/17.



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Brewery Yard Energy Day highlighted sustainable transport



THROUGHOUT June a series of local events were organised by Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions - a partnership of community groups, renewable energy companies and the county council - to raise awareness of environmental issues.

Among these were an Energy Day held in Abergavenny's Brewery Yard hosted which was devoted to sustainable transport, with demonstrations of electric bikes and cars and the Rasa

hydrogen-powered car developed by Llandrindod Wells-based designers River Simple, soon to be trialled in the county by volunteers.

Close by, the market hall provided street food and a night market, with crafts and music.

Members of Abergavenny U3A got involved with highlighting the benefits of electric bikes - with two turning up on their own and others trying out models supplied by Gateway Cycles of Abergavenny.

An update to the www.monecoopendoors.org.uk website gave a link to the programme of events. The website, 5000 leaflets and 50 posters all played a part in advertising the events, with the local Transition Town Groups working hard at distributing the leaflets in their towns and publicising the event to their members. If we are to repeat the Energy Days next year, we need to allow more lead in time, because there was not long to distribute the leaflets.

Monmouthshire Eco Open Doors Facebook page also played an important part in advertising the events. Tagging other partners in Facebook messages greatly increased the reach, resulting in the following statistics:

- 34 posts put on Monmouthshire Eco Open Doors Facebook page about Energy Day events
- Total reach of these posts was 4788.
- Total number of shares of these posts was 21.
- Total number of likes of individual posts was 73.
- The number of page likes increased from 67 to 84.

Hazel Clatworthy
@HazelClatworthy

Thanks @lovetheangel for lending us your electric Twizy at Brewery Yard til 8 today
@monmouthshirecc @euenergyweek

6:28 AM - 15 Jun 2017

4 Retweets 9 Likes

Hazel Clatworthy
@HazelClatworthy

Energy saving advice & freebies Wed from 10-2 @UskHub & Friday @MonmouthHub Find out how to save money & the planet! @MonmouthshireCC

Energy Advice Centre @SEWEnergy
We're participating in @monecoopendoors Energy Days for @euenergyweek next week. For more info, visit our website sewenergy.org.uk/events/

2:17 AM - 20 Jun 2017

10 Retweets 2 Likes

Use was made of Twitter, with Hazel Clatworthy, Monmouthshire County Council and others making regular tweets in the run up to and during the events.

As well as the website, the most directly energy related events were also listed on the EU Sustainable Energy Week website <http://eusew.eu/look-energy-days>. Although this may have raised the profile of the events in Wales and Europe, it is unlikely whether any visits were made as a result of seeing it advertised here.

Feedback from visitors

Because the Energy Days were organised separately by different organisations, there was no standard proforma used to get information on how visitors rated the events. However, verbal and anecdotal feedback from the various events was overwhelmingly positive.

There were also some positive comments on Facebook and Twitter about some of the events, some examples of which are below:

Estelle Clark @estelleclark · Jun 14

Yes, this really is your chance to drive one of these, the world's lightest, most aerodynamic +most fuel efficient car: the delicious Rasa.



riversimple @riversimple

Want to take part in the first local beta-test of our #Welsh #ecocar? Register @ #alternativevehicleevent, #Abergavenny, Thurs, 2-8pm.

9 8

 Aly Dyer
18 June at 19:08

Such an awesome day in the woods 😊



 Like  Share

  11

Seen by 105

 South East Wales Energy Agency
16 June at 11:46 · Ⓜ

Yesterday we visited Brewery Yard in Abergavenny to have a look at some alternative vehicles being displayed as part of EU Sustainable Energy Week.

A wide range of events are taking place throughout June across Monmouthshire. We're also going to be out and about next week offering advice, some freebies and grow-your-own herb starter packs.

Check out our latest blog for more info.... See more



EU Energy Days across Monmouthshire

Throughout June various events have been – and will continue to be – held as part of the EU's Energy Days programme. In Monmouthshire the programme includes gardening courses, tou...

SEWENERGY.ORG.UK

Feedback from Event Organisers

Event organisers were all satisfied with how the events had been organised. Transition Monmouth felt the Welsh text on the leaflet made it harder to read. 5000 leaflets were perhaps too many, and other channels of advertising could be used more. It would also be good to have more local volunteers to help take leaflets and posters around to local communities and a longer lead in time for publicity.

Most of the event organisers said that they would take part in the Energy Days programme again, with a couple saying maybe.

Event organisers were asked for feedback on any other positive outcomes or useful connections made as a result of the event, and it seems that there were some good links made:

Ann Eggleton, Transition Monmouth – “*The Beans Stall appears monthly through the summer at Monmouth Market....there's always lots of interest, and we make a few converts.*”

Colum Pawson, Old Lands – “*I made contact with some local and other people further afield, who will stay involved with my project*”

Marcus Perrin, Hanley Landshare – “*useful discussions with Dean Forest Food Hub & Swansea City Farm volunteers and British Council e-twinning project*”

Phil Powell, Gwent Energy - “*Having multiple attractions in one location worked well.*”

Fiona Spowers, Riversimple – “*We always have long conversations with the public as there is a lot to explain. About 30 people signed up as interested in taking part in our trial of the Rasa in Abergavenny. We will be following up with them.*”

Steven Harris, owner of One the Orchard – “*I had two emails from people/organisations*

who couldn't make the event but would like to visit; one potential client and one professional organisation interested in visiting for training purposes”

Richard Garner, Wyesham Community Woodland Group – “*our first event, lots learned and lots of enthusiasm for doing it again. We also pushed out some of the leaflets with our own event leaflet drop into the community.*”

Sam Hubble, South East Wales Energy Agency – “*We've helped to spread the message about encouraging people to try to secure better value energy by switching suppliers, and have managed to get our name known by new organisations as a result of the events.*”

Funding

We were able to utilise £812 from Monmouthshire County Council's Environment and Sustainable Development Grant from Welsh Government which funded the design and printing of leaflets and posters and Welsh translation. This was match funded by MCC officer time with Hazel Clatworthy pulling together the programme of events and liaison with the graphic designers, volunteer time from volunteers who organised each of the events and helped with publicity, leaflet distribution etc, and insurance cover from MCC.



Next Steps

As mentioned previously the Energy Days were organised by different groups or organisations. The role of MCC was to secure funding, to pull together the programme of events, organised by others, to liaise with the graphic designer to put the publicity in place and co-ordinate publicity and press coverage. Other partners on Community Climate Champions were responsible for organising the actual events or signposting to other events that we could promote as part of the Energy Days programme.

This way of working meant that, in comparison with Eco Open Doors, there was less central organising and liaising to do, which meant that less of Hazel Clatworthy's time was required to pull things together. It also meant that we were able to be more flexible about the type of events on offer, and offer a broader range of activities. Consequently, as long as the appetite of the Community Climate Champion partners to organise events continues, it is suggested that we consider using a similar model next year.

However, if we do make the decision to repeat the Energy Days next year, it is recommended that the decision be made in the new year, in order to allow enough time to distribute publicity.

**Hazel Clatworthy, Sustainability Policy Officer
Monmouthshire County Council
July 2017**