



## Introduction:

This is the second Sustainable Falkirk Newsletter. Very briefly, it gives information on local action which promotes 'Sustainable Development'.

To avoid complex definitions, it can be regarded as promoting development locally which protects and enhances the environment and also contributes to the international effort to address major issues such as climate change.

The actions are set out in a strategy led by Falkirk Council but include contributions from a range of local partners. All of these actions also contribute to the Falkirk Strategic Community Plan.

The key staff contact for information in the Newsletter is Brenda Roddy, Falkirk Council Development Services.

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# Sustainable Falkirk Newsletter

Issue Two

April 2004



[www.everyonecan.org](http://www.everyonecan.org)

Travel in the UK has changed enormously over the last thirty years, a trend that has been blamed for damage to the environment and health. How serious is it?

- 20% increase in the proportion of children travelling to school by car over the last 20 years.
- 70% of all journeys to work are by car. 80% of these are single occupancy.
- By 2025 traffic in the UK is expected to increase by another 150%

Working with Fresh Futures, Falkirk Council has taken the innovative step of creating a Travel Plan Officer post. The officer is working with 5 large employers and their employees to change their travel patterns, and particularly, one-person-one-car journeys. The pilot sites selected so far are the Falkirk Council buildings of Abbotsford House and Municipal Buildings, the Falkirk Royal Infirmary, the Rosebank development at Camelon and one further site to be decided.

A School Travel Officer will shortly be appointed to work with each of the 48 primary and 8 secondary schools in the Falkirk area, aiming to change travel patterns. They will work closely with pupils, teachers, parents and local residents to promote alternative, safe methods of travelling to and from school.

**Sustainable Falkirk: Taking action to address local and global environmental priorities**

# Resource Directory

November of 2003 saw the launch of the Forth Valley Resource Efficiency Directory and Forum.

The Directory and Forum are part of a unique partnership approach by Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Councils, to help improve the local area's economic and environmental performance.



The Directory helps local businesses to improve their profitability and environmental performance by listing companies, particularly those in Forth Valley, that take common 'waste' items and re-use components or materials from them.

The Forum also provides support on resource efficiency and environmental management issues through a series of free lunchtime seminars, open to all organisations and companies in Forth Valley.

For further information on the Forum or the Directory contact Marion Robertson. Tel. 01786 452035

# ACCESS NEWS

## New Path Leaflet

Falkirk Council is printing a new path leaflet showing countryside paths in south Falkirk. Areas covered include the Falkirk Wheel, the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals, Bantaskine and Hallglen out to Sheildhill and Westerglen. The leaflet will be available at libraries, sports centres, tourist information centres, One Stop Shops etc. from April.

## Path Improvements

Following last year's community consultation on access for the Grangemouth and Skinflats areas, improvements to the path network near Skinflats and Glensburgh Old Toun are about to start. Paths have also been improved at Carriden, Lochlands and in Maddiston.

## Community Consultation

A community consultation on access will be carried out in the area of Polmont and the Braes in February and early March. It will cover a range of people living or working in this area, including walkers, cyclists, horse riders and land managers. It aims to discover the priorities of those who use the paths, what access improvements are required and to find out why some people are reluctant to use paths.

Contact Richard Broadley, Countryside Access Officer, Tel. 01324 504950



# Falkirk Real Nappy Pilot Project

Many people think that their only nappy options are disposable nappies or terry squares. Nappies have moved on a great deal in recent years and we now have a third option, known as Real Nappies.

Real Nappies are fitted to the baby's shape, just like disposables, but you can launder them at home and use them again and again. They are soft on the baby's skin, come with stay-dry layers and use Velcro or snap fasteners.

You can buy a Real Nappy kit containing all that you will need for your child from start to finish for under £70. The same amount would buy you just ten to twelve weeks' worth of disposable nappies. That means potential savings for parents of between £500 and £1,250 or even more if you use the nappies on subsequent babies.

Falkirk Council is keen to encourage the use of Real Nappies as part of its bid to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Disposable nappies can make up 50% of the waste produced by a household with a new baby. As the new 3 bin waste collection system is rolled out across the Falkirk Council area, parents are finding that disposable nappies take up a great deal of space in their bins and are seeking solutions.

Every year Falkirk Council spends about £180,000 collecting and sending nappies to landfill. In a bid to address this, the Council is preparing to launch a pilot project to trial the use of Real

Nappies. Soon to be or recent parents have been asked to take part in a 12 month long project where they would use Real Nappies on their child and feed their experience back to the Council.

Five successful volunteers will trial a Mother Ease kit worth £200, containing everything that they will need. Participants will also receive a full support service from the Snuggles Centre. The experience of the volunteers will be tracked over the next twelve months.

To find out more, contact Brenda Roddy, Sustainable Development Officer. Tel. 01324 504712.



## Putting Our House in Order



It is becoming increasingly important for organisations such as Falkirk Council to demonstrate to the outside world that their philosophies and day-to-day operations are 'sustainable'. Falkirk Council is committed to this and has agreed to introduce an Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Starting with a pilot project at Abbotsford House, Falkirk will be one of the first Scottish local authorities to do this.

The process will take about two years and will involve a complete review of all

of the Council's systems and procedures, looking closely at their environmental impacts. This process will provide us with an exhaustive list of steps needed to take to optimise our environmental performance.

Once this process is complete, we will apply for an accolade called ISO 14001. To achieve and maintain it, the Council will have to undergo a stringent assessment every year and prove that there is a continuous effort to improve its environmental performance.

# Litter Update

## Litter Patrol Officers

'Litter Patrol Officers' have been introduced to tackle the problem of litter. In partnership with Central Scotland Police, they are carrying out about 4 joint patrols per week along a series of litter 'hot-spots' and heavily littered school routes. Although the officers can issue on the spot fines, their main aim is to advise and bring about voluntary change in behaviour.

## Litter Campaign

The end of February saw the launch of a new campaign to raise the profile of litter as a key local problem. The message will be displayed on the sides of some of the larger Council vehicles, litter and dog bins initially, with a further series to follow throughout the year.



Keep Scotland Beautiful

## Dog Fouling Legislation

New legislation for tackling dog fouling came into force in October of last year. The new legislation introduced a fixed penalty scheme for dog fouling offences, making it an offence for the person responsible for a dog not to clean up after it. In response to public demand, 50 new dog bins have been installed and 1 million biodegradable 'poop-scoop' bags have been bought which will be available free to the public.

## Polmont Community Litter Pick

Falkirk Council is keen to provide support for community groups wishing to carry out litter picks. One of the best regular local litter picks, run by volunteers in Polmont, is scheduled for March of this year. The litter pick is only one part of the event with the highlight being the after-pick refreshments and local entertainment.

Registration will take place at the Green Park Community Centre, between 9.30 and 10.00 on Saturday the 27th of March.

# What a

Last year Falkirk Council buried around £1.8 million worth of goods in a hole in the ground just beside the M9. What's more, it cost over £4 million to do it and the goods belonged to residents of the Falkirk Council area.

Falkirk's domestic waste has a market value. Last year it comprised paper and card worth almost £1 million, aluminium and metals both worth a quarter of a million pounds and textiles worth around £350,000. 80% of everything that we buy has been binned within 6 months of bringing it home yet much of it is still valuable. We need to realise that our bin is a small gold mine. It's a Scotland-wide issue.

Recycling supports jobs too: household waste that goes to landfill supports the collection and landfill jobs. Household waste that is collected and separated for recycling supports additional jobs including the same staff as before but also people who collect the waste, separate, process and remanufacture it.

## What Is Falkirk Council Doing?

The European Union has set the UK the target of reducing the amount of biodegradable household waste that it landfills by 2010. In addition, the Scottish Executive has set a recycling target of 25% of municipal waste by 2006. This is a summary of Falkirk Council's approach:

- **Collect recyclable materials from households using a 3 bin system:**

in February 2004, the households in Larbert and Stenhousemuir received 2 new bins in addition to their current one. The bins will be used to collect materials for recycling including paper, plastic

# Waste!



bottles and cans with a separate bin for garden waste and the third existing bin will take what is left over.

- ***Design a tailor made recycling solution for difficult to reach properties:***

10% of households in the district are not suited to the 3 bin system, for example, high rise flats. The Council is working with the Action Recycle organisation to come up with solutions.

- ***Innovative recycling projects:***

a machine has been installed at Kinneil Kerse to screen and crush rubble to produce a useful construction material.

- ***Encourage households to use composting systems:***

decomposing food and garden waste in landfill sites create methane - a potent climate change gas. Garden composters are being made available at an affordable price to encourage the recycling of food and garden waste whilst also creating useful compost.

- ***Work closely with schools and recycling groups:***

today's pupils are tomorrow's householders and also bring messages home to parents. A Waste Education Officer has been appointed to work with school pupils and staff, helping them to recycle as much of their waste as possible.

- ***Lead by example –***

Falkirk Council knows that it has to lead by example, so over the next year it will aim to implement recycling projects at all Council offices, leisure centres and

schools.

- ***Create two high-tech recycling centres:***

£1 million has been invested in the two Council owned civic amenity sites at Kinneil Kerse at Bo'ness and Roughmote by Bonnybridge. During re-development they will remain open and have a target date of June to provide containers for the following:

- \* Paper
- \* Card
- \* Mixed plastics
- \* Glass
- \* Cans
- \* Mobile phones
- \* Printer cartridges
- \* Textiles
- \* Shoes
- \* Books
- \* Bottled gas cylinders
- \* Car batteries
- \* Green garden waste
- \* Scrap metal
- \* White goods
- \* Wood
- \* Soil
- \* Rubble
- \* Car oil



# Where Do We get the Energy?

The Scottish Executive set a target of obtaining 40% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020. Local businesses, Falkirk Council and other organisations have a role to play in addressing this. This is what Falkirk Council is doing:

## Purchasing 'Green Power'

Falkirk Council has struck a deal with its electricity supplier to ensure that at least 30% of all the energy used in its buildings such as schools and council offices comes from renewable sources.

## Local Pilot Projects:

In partnership with the Energy Saving Trust, the Council commissioned a study to investigate the potential for generating electricity at Muiravonside Country Park. The study concluded that the existing redundant hydro scheme could be refurbished to generate a large proportion of the electricity required by the visitor centre and proposed outdoor education centre.

## Renewable Energy Study

Falkirk has become one of the first Scottish local authorities to commission a report to examine the potential for generating renewable energy across its area. The study focused on four of the most established types of renewable energy generation: wind power, hydro power, biomass and geothermal.

The study showed that there was some potential for **wind power** but mainly as smaller scale commercial and domestic developments. This is due to the area's lower level and sheltered topography.

**Hydro power** also showed potential on a modest scale, due to the relatively flat landscape, a lack of large water bodies and fast flowing rivers.

**Biomass** offers some clear potential, with the Falkirk Council area being able to capitalise on large areas of arable land and the woodlands of Central Scotland Forest.

Whilst the report examined the option of **geothermal energy** and noted the potential held by the extensive mine workings in the area, it concluded that a great deal more study would be needed to give a comprehensive assessment.



# Ask the Community

In December 2003, Falkirk Council ran a 2 day community planning event to give local residents and an opportunity to be involved in the future development of the area.



Members of community groups, some Council staff and outside agencies felt that more support was needed to help groups and individuals to take action to improve their surroundings through environmental projects.

In response to this, a sample of community groups with an environmental interest was invited to attend an evening meeting organised by key

Council staff, giving them the opportunity to spell out what resources they need.

26 people attended the meeting and made the following points:

## **Assistance with fundraising:**

to identify funders with an interest in the environment, what their priorities are, application deadlines, help with filling in application forms, designing budgets etc.

## **Professional help:**

access to low cost/free specialist environmental assistance to cost up, design and manage projects.

## **Community involvement:**

it can be difficult to get the community and volunteers involved whether it's for organising or practical work.

## **Who's who in the Council:**

it's difficult to find out who can help you in the Council – could a 'Who's Who Guide' be produced and regularly updated?

## **Follow Up**

Key officers will look at the problems, solutions and issues raised and come up with a series of actions to address them. The information gathered will also be fed back to the Community Planning process.

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## £1 Million for Environmental Projects

Falkirk Environment Trust (FET) is one of the largest local sources of funding for environmental projects in the Falkirk area. To date it has allocated approximately £1 million to projects worth over £4.5 million throughout the area.

Arthur Berg recently replaced Brenda Roddy as FET Development Manager when she left to take over the post as Falkirk Council's Sustainable Development Officer.

FET has secured 2 new funding awards, enabling it to support new types of projects. Fresh Futures and Falkirk Council allocated a total of £40,000 towards a FET led green travel project. Local waste management company, the GR Service Company Ltd. and Shanks Avondale contribute Landfill Tax Credits to support the Trust's work.

The Trust supports a wide range of project types. Forth Valley Food Links was awarded £400 to run a one day community event based at Langlees Community School, encouraging people to use local produce for healthy eating. On a larger scale,



the 3Bs community group was awarded £25,000 to develop a site in Bells Meadow as a multi-use park for use by skateboarders, skaters and BMX users.

**For an informal discussion about FET funds, contact: Arthur Berg, Development Manager, Tel. 01324 504816.**

# Come In Enterprise...

Business has an important part to play in promoting sustainable development. One Falkirk based company recently scooped the Enterprise Scotland Best Performing Business Award 2003 for its highly successful recycling project. Over the last five years, Eurosource has recycled over 200,000 mobile phones and 2 million printer cartridges - a saving of over 2.5 million litres of oil which is used to manufacture components.



Every day, thousands of printer cartridges and mobile phones end up in landfill sites or are incinerated, with the owners usually totally unaware of the damage to the environment. Mobile phones contain a number of toxic substances that if landfilled, could leak into surrounding soil. An estimated 90 million unwanted mobile phones are lying around in UK homes.

Eurosource provides freepost bags and a collection service for redundant mobile phones and printer cartridges. It sells on any re-useable materials and passes any harmful material to specialists for reprocessing. Half of the value of each recycled item is then donated to a charity - the company offers a list of 250 registered charities to choose from.

Falkirk Council is one of Eurosource's regular clients: to date it has donated around 1,500 printer cartridges and 30 mobile phones.

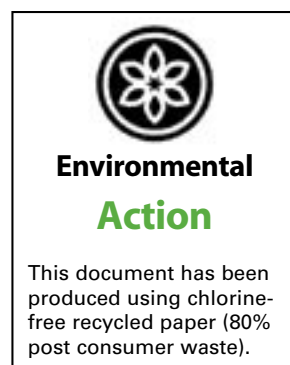
Contact Eurosource:  
01324 678900

# Falkirk Leads on Education

Falkirk is the only council in Scotland to employ a Environmental Education Support Teacher in Scotland. Three years after starting a secondment with Falkirk Council, Helen Winton has helped to deliver a series of initiatives that have by far exceeded their initial expectations.



The Scottish Executive has included Eco Schools in its National Priorities in Education and encourages all schools to participate in this Europe-wide project. This award scheme aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of school life and promotes pupil action in sustainability issues for the environment.



Falkirk Council aims get each of the 48 primary schools and 8 secondary schools in its area to achieve Eco Schools status of bronze, silver or gold. Falkirk currently now ranks second out of all Scottish councils for the proportion of its schools achieving an award.

Last year the Council produced a 'Green School Guide'. This directory provides local support and information to teachers taking on curricular and extra curricular environmental projects. Other councils have praised the guide and since produced their own. Another major success has been the school grounds development project which awarded £5,000 to 15 projects in Falkirk schools.

Schools are benefiting from the appointment of a series of dedicated 'environment-related' staff, including a School Travel Officer, a Waste Education Officer, and Litter Education Support Officer. These officers are working with all of the schools in the Falkirk Council area to provide support and expertise.

There are many other ambitious projects aimed at maintaining the Council's leading role in environmental education. One example is the plan to develop Muiravonside Country Park as an outdoor and environmental education resource over the next two years.

Contact Helen Winton,  
Environmental Education  
Support Teacher,  
01324 503764.

## Contact Details

This newsletter is produced by the Planning and Environment Unit, Development Services, Falkirk Council.

Contact Brenda Roddy on 01324 504712

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