

GreenWorkplaces News

- UK's leading greenworkplaces at climate conference
- UCU green reps
- Unite for People and Planet
- Glastonbury
- Emissions control
- Killing off solar
- Events



June 2011

Organising

UK's leading green workplaces to share secrets of success at

TUC Climate Conference: Wed 6 July 2011

This year's GreenWorkplaces workshop at the TUC annual climate change conference promises to showcase two of the UK's leading GreenWorkplace projects.

Tony Bates, Unite Chair at Magor brewery in South Wales will be speaking at the event. Tony was instrumental in setting up a union led energy saving project which has cut carbon emissions at the ABInBev brewery near Newport by a massive 40% within two years. Tony will be joined by Alex Manson, UK Director at ABInbev for a further insight into how the project has saved a staggering £2 million pounds in running costs. Tony is much in demand these days, with politicians beating a path to his door to find out how he's managed to successfully engage the entire workforce in green activism at work.

On the public sector side, we are delighted to be joined by Frank Martyn, PCS branch secretary at HM Prison Guys Marsh in Dorset. Frank will be sharing with us the union's experience of setting up a truly groundbreaking project - what is thought to be the first anaerobic digestion plant operating in the civil service. The plant is turning all the prison's food waste into energy and has had energy companies visiting the prison to find out more. Along with vegetable growing, rainwater harvesting and maintaining an onsite wildlife conservation area there seems no end

of green innovations sparking off within the prison walls.

Tony and Frank will be explaining how they got their projects off the ground and the key to their success. The session will provide a rare opportunity for union green reps to quiz both union and employer sides on what approaches have worked and how they've managed to keep momentum going in a current climate of cuts, cuts and cuts.

So come along and join us. It's never easy to get time off but here's a chance to be able to put your questions to the speakers face to face. Hope to see you there!

Sign up for this free conference and download the full programme at:

www.tuc.org.uk/social/tuc-19596-f0.cfm

UCU: A hundred green reps.....and counting

Here at GreenWorkplaces, we aim to push green issues right to the heart of trade union negotiating agendas. It's crucial to prioritise environmental issues at work, but in the current climate of job losses it's a massive task.

So congratulations to UCU which has seen a huge increase in the number of green reps now logged into its own green reps network in recent months. More than 100 reps have now joined. UCU's own environmental courses are also up and running with three or four popular courses a year backed by a new range of materials.

Graham Peterson, UCU Environment

GreenWorkplaces News

Co-ordinator, puts this success down to the recent initiative to deliver a Green Rep Pledge. “Having at least one green rep in the branch provides an opportunity for the union to raise its profile. It’s a chance to be proactive rather than just react to the employer-driven agenda of cuts and casework.”

The pledge was launched at UCU’s Congress held in Harrogate in May and the target is to have a green rep in every branch by their next Congress in 2012.

If you are a UCU green rep, you can also join the TUC’s GreenWorkplaces Network where you can access the latest case studies, training materials and resources. Being registered to the network means that you help the national TUC GreenWorkplaces Project get a more accurate picture of where all our union green reps are active and of the facilities and training they do - or do not - have access to.

Our Network is a crucial element in our campaign for rights for green reps, so please take the time to sign up and share some of that UCU momentum!

Join at:

www.tuc.org.uk/green_workplaces_network

Unite for People and Planet

The TUC, unions, third sector organisations and employers joined forces this week with teachers, college leaders, educationists, students and employers to oppose plans for dropping the study of climate change from the national curriculum in England. In an unparalleled display of unity, organisations

representing over 14.5 million people have all signed People and Planet’s letter urging the government to keep climate change in the curriculum.

In the letter signatories set out how it “appears to us entirely contradictory for a government that aspires to be the “greenest ever” and sees climate change as “one of the gravest threats we face” to remove from the national science curriculum the issue of climate change.” To read the letter in full and to sign People and Planet’s petition visit:

<http://peopleandplanet.org/>

Heading off to Glastonbury?

Be sure to get over to the Leftfield on Saturday for the debate on Green Jobs and Sustainable Futures at 1.30 p.m. featuring speakers from Friends of the Earth and the East London Green Jobs Alliance, a coalition of trade unions, NGOs, community based organisations and green businesses working together to create green and decent jobs for East London citizens. The East London Green Jobs Alliance is anchored by the Otesha Project UK and Unionlearn SERTUC.

Thanks go to Leftfield, the Greener Job’s Alliance and UCU, FOE, Greenpeace and the East London GJA for organizing this year’s Glasto debate.

Policy

Emission control: we have a problem

By Philip Pearson

Will Defra require companies to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions? With a consultation now underway

GreenWorkplaces News

(www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/05/11/ghg-emissions) the sorry state of corporate responsibility is revealed in a new Carbon Trust report: 40 of the FTSE top 100 companies don't publish environmental targets. For the rest, there are "significant differences in the rigour and quality of those targets which have been publicly set and reported." Defra's somewhat flawed consultation - undervaluing the benefits and over-egging the costs carbon disclosure - points to more of the same.

At stake is the company-level contributions to our mandatory climate change targets. Odd for the greenest government etc to adopt binding CO2 targets, but then leave it to companies to volunteer to take part. One unintended consequence is the excessive focus on those big energy players, in sectors like steel and power supply, that must monitor and report their energy and carbon usage as participants in the EU emissions trading scheme. There is growing concern over burden sharing, or the lack of it, among the rest of corporate Britain, putting excessive pressure on our core manufacturing industries.

The Aldersgate Group, a leading voice for mandatory reporting, argues that the pace and scale of GHG emission reductions required under UK law mean that voluntary approaches outlined in the Defra consultation are inadequate. The Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), a not for profit organisation that collects information on carbon disclosure on behalf of 534 institutional investors with assets over US\$64 trillion, reports that under two thirds (59%) of the FTSE 350 disclosed GHG emissions in 2010. Only 36% of the environmental disclosures appear in audited sections of annual reports. A survey by Deloitte of 100 listed companies finds that only 9% disclosed carbon emissions in line with Defra's guidance.

Defra's impact suggests that energy measurement will cost staff £500 a day, an unlikely high salary for the personnel involved. And it does not appear to have recognised the potential for cost savings. Take the case of the Magor Brewery, South Wales, a TUC greenworkplace project. Union members working for the worlds' biggest brewer initiated a project to cut resource use and carbon in a project that has achieved significant results in two years: water usage fell by 46%; electricity usage fell by 49%; heating bills by 23%; and an overall 40% reduction in CO2 emissions. The project has saved £2m in costs and helped increased the level of job security.

With growing stakeholder and investor interest in environmental sustainability, it is likely that many large organisations will come under more pressure to publish targets in the near future.

Chancellor kills off big solar investments

By Philip Pearson

Ignoring a mass appeal from the UK solar industry and its supporters (unions, ngos, consumer groups) the government has decided to go ahead with changes to the feed-in tariff. Andrew Lee, Head of International Sales at Sharp Solar, accused the government of:

"...stifling job creation in an industry which has the potential to flourish in the UK. A limit of 50 kW is extremely low will affect community projects and small businesses, and hamper growth to the UK economy."

It's just the kind of green jobs investment to aid the UK's recovery that we're debating with Chris Huhne at the TUC's climate change

GreenWorkplaces News

conference on 6 July (register at www.tuc.org.uk/social/tuc-19596-f0.cfm)

Coming just a couple of days after the Green Economy Council discussed the need for clearer focus on green jobs growth, the government's decision - like that on the Green Investment Bank - means the Treasury's funding cap trumps all.

This decision will leave the UK solar power sector confined to domestic schemes just as major economies like China, Japan and Germany massively ramp up their solar ambitions, making solar power a massive part of their electricity systems. It's crucial to a sustainable and competitive energy system in the UK too. We simply cannot afford to stifle an exceptionally popular technology that offers the prospect of subsidy-free green power for everyone *if supported today*. Globally solar power is currently being produced at less than \$1/W and the industry is confident that, with investment under a stable policy framework, prices will continue to fall rapidly to below grid electricity prices.

Ray Noble, STA's PV Adviser said;

"the Prime Minister needs to intervene to stop this terrible strategic mistake on solar power. Solar can make a major positive contribution to our urgent green electricity and jobs needs. Even mainstream analysis shows that under a stable investment framework the price of solar power will come down lower than many other energy generation options, including fossil fuels. This letter shows solar has widespread and diverse support that should not be ignored."

The grim news came even though Energy and Climate Change Minister Greg Barker's acknowledged last week that DECC was underestimating the potential for solar. His comments follow the Solar Trade Association's

publication of an alternative Solar Revolution Strategy, which argued for a doubling of investment in solar to deliver strong jobs and manufacturing and subsidy-free green power for everyone by 2017-2019.

Signatories to a letter to the PM included RSPB, Friends of the Earth, TUC, major construction group Kingspan, UK solar manufacturer Romag/Gentoo, NFU, Tony Juniper and Dr Caroline Lucas who all urge the Prime Minister "to require DECC to review the situation and take action to raise UK ambitions for solar power in order to ensure the UK maintains and builds a strong solar industry."

As Dave Snowden, Chief Executive of the Micropower Council, said: "This is bad news for many worthwhile projects - schools, communities, public buildings." Something for the Green Economy Council to look closely at.

Events

For full information on green workplaces events visit: www.tuc.org.uk/green_workplaces_network

TUC Climate Change Conference - What makes a good green government?

6 July 2011. 09.45 to 16.00 (approx)

Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3LS

The highlight of the 2011 TUC climate change conference is a high level panel debate on the topical question: *What makes a good green*

GreenWorkplaces News

government? Our panelists include Environment Secretary Chris Huhne; Shadow Environment Secretary Meg Hillier; and Green Party spokesperson Caroline Lucas MP. The panel will be chaired by Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary, TUC. Panelists will make a few brief opening remarks, followed by a debate between the panelists and delegates, with Q&A from the floor.

The debate will set the scene for a day of discussions on green jobs and growth, including industry roundtables arranged for later in the day. Coalition plans for the Green economy roadmap (due late June 2011), energy market reform, a low carbon skills strategy and the Green Investment Bank should be published by then. Other highlights of the day include three Policy roundtables: Building Visions for a Green economy. And (for the afternoon) five Policy Challenge roundtables: Where do we want to be, and how to get there?

To register and download the full programme go to:

www.tuc.org.uk/social/tuc-19596-f0.cfm

Free training - take the Trade Unions and the Environment Course

Three day accredited courses for union members available at the following locations:

October 6 [Newport](#)

November 14 [North Wales](#)

2011 dates:

January [Bridgend, Poole](#)

March 9 [Bristol](#)

April 23 [Cardiff](#)

June 4 [North Wales](#)

For more information on courses visit:

www.unionlearn.org.uk/courses/index.cfm/sb/14/

Scottish Green Workplaces

For TUC Environmental courses and information in relation to Green Workplaces in Scotland and any general environmental enquiries please contact George Waldron, Trade Union Education Department, Stow College on 0141 332 1786 ex512 or e-mail gwaldron@stow.ac.uk

To find out more about the TUC's GreenWorkplaces Network contact:

Sarah Pearce, TUC project leader:
spearce@tuc.org.uk/0207
 4671230

www.tuc.org.uk/GreenWorkplaces