

ODEF Forum Meeting: Community Resilience

The first ODEF Forum meeting in 2008 took place on Monday 25th February and focussed on community resilience and the local environment. It was well attended and the guest speaker, Ian Harrison, from Newark & Sherwood District Council gave a very informative and interesting presentation about climate change and emergency planning procedures that are in place locally for major events such as flooding, foot and mouth, pandemic flu and terrorism. The main element of Ian's presentation was about creating community resilience and enabling communities to respond to any emergency and recover quickly.

There were also presentations from Kate Hiseman, Chair of the ODEF Environment Action Team and Brian Smith, Chair of the ODEF Transport Action Team.

Kate told the Forum about a number of projects the Environment Team is working on and these included

- The Eco Shop – a new initiative that has just received funding to create a shop on the high street that will provide a retail outlet and promote environmental and locally produced products as well as provide advice and training around energy use, recycling, water management, etc. It will also offer environmental surgeries once a month and act as a showcase for local projects.
- 'Home Grown' Project – an intergenerational project that will explore the local food heritage of food production in the Dukeries area from the start of WWII through to the present day. The project aim is to bring the local schools and community together to produce a book and DVD that can be used as a community resource. Most of the local primary schools and the Dukeries are on board and hopefully, subject to funding, the project will begin September 2008.
- Feel Good Foods Group – this group began after a feasibility study initiated by the ODEF Environment Action Team and has continued to be supported through its growth. There are 21 families involved at the moment who share ideas, skills and knowledge in order to grow their own fruit and veg either in their own gardens or on the group's allotment. The project works on a LETS basis, sharing surplus fruit and veg grown and the skills/ time of members.

Brian Smith then gave an update on the work of the Transport Action Team. Brian spoke about the transport system and the link with the environment, especially the carbon footprint created by the Ollerton Roundabout. The key areas that are being looked at by the group at the moment are:

- The Rail link – the need for a rail link is being explored and a major feasibility study needs to be undertaken and so funding needs to be found for this. It is clear our local roads are struggling under the pressure of vehicles and a rail service would provide an alternative transport method.

- Ollerton Roundabout – this was constructed over 80 years ago and is no longer fit for purpose with major traffic congestion problems (queuing) and avoidance traffic going through villages not designed to take the volume of traffic they are having to deal with.

The next ODEF Forum meeting will be in the summer and will be publicised closer to the date. If anyone has an idea for a theme for this meeting please contact Carol White at ODEF on 01623 863887.