

## Welcome to the ninth issue of Check this from the CommunityCheck team!

The next few pages brings you the latest on the CommunityCheck Project, LocalCheck Centre, a green Christmas and who's new and who's off!

## Tis the season to be Green!

Can you believe it is that time of year again, Christmas is almost here and the next few weeks will be taken up with purchasing gifts, decorating our homes and buying enough food to feed an army! Christmas time is an extravagant time of year and whilst it is great to enjoy the festivities it is important to remember the environmental impact of Christmas.

### Did you know?

The UK throws out three million tonnes of extra waste over the Christmas period, much of this could be reduced by taking a few simple steps:

- When shopping, avoid goods which involve unnecessary packaging or complicated mixed material packaging which can make recycling difficult.
- Try to buy food and drink packaged in materials that can be recycled e.g. paper and glass. Avoid using paper plates, cups and serviettes if you are planning a party.
- SNUB - Say No to Unwanted Bags! Always use a reusable shopping bag or reuse plastic bags. Don't accept bags that you don't need.
- Buy gifts which are durable and that do not rely on disposable parts. Things which break easily will just end up in the bin and cannot be reused by anybody. Buy Recycled! Check out [www.recycledproducts.org.uk](http://www.recycledproducts.org.uk) for gifts made from recycled materials.
- Choose decorations which can be reused, rather than flimsy ones which will be used once and thrown away. You can also have fun making decorations from scrap materials.
- Gift tags can be made from old greetings cards. Any kind of unusual paper can be used to wrap gifts.
- Buy recycled wrapping paper and use string, ribbon or wool for wrapping gifts, rather than using sticky tape. The string and paper can then be reused.
- Instead of sending a card, why not send a message or electronic Christmas card to friends and family on the internet.
- Buy a UK-grown real tree with roots that can be planted in your garden or kept in a pot for next year.



Check out: [www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/ChristmasRecycling.htm](http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/ChristmasRecycling.htm) for more info.

Everyone in the CommunityCheck team would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

## All change for the CommunityCheck Project!



After working on the CommunityCheck Project for the last 18 months I am leaving for pastures new! I am moving on to work for a not-for-profit environmental consultancy which aims to raise environmental awareness across London. Like the CommunityCheck Project I will be working with businesses and organisations to raise environmental awareness and promote sustainable practices. I am very much looking forward to the new challenge.

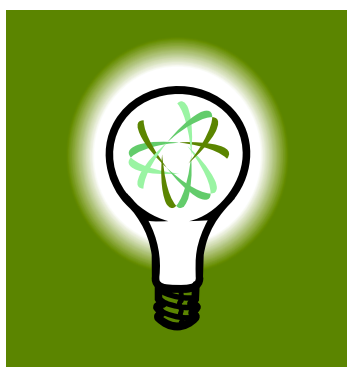
I have greatly enjoyed my time at StudentForce working on the project and would like to thank everyone for all their help and support – especially to the volunteers, without which the project wouldn't be half the success that it is.

This does mean that there will be a new CommunityCheck coordinator – Sam Sharpe. Sam recently graduated from Leeds University with a BSc in Geography and has spent the last two months working on the LocalCheck Project; check out page 3 for more information!



Simone Brander from Switzerland will also be joining the project to volunteer for 6 months. Simone holds a MSc in Environmental Sciences and is studying further in order to obtain a certificate in teaching higher education. I wish both Sam and Simone all the best with the CommunityCheck Project and everyone all the best in the future!!

## Anna Willett, Energy Adviser Severn Wye Energy Agency



Did you know that changing one of your conventional light bulbs to an energy saving bulb could save you £5 a year on your electricity bill? Now think about how many light bulbs you have in your home– it can start adding up!

This is just one of the many interesting facts I'm learning in my new job as an energy adviser at Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre. I am finding out how we can do our bit to save some energy, save some money and help the environment.

At present I am spending my time learning about the schemes we offer and being trained to give the advice. The information ranges from making sure peoples homes are well insulated with cavity and loft insulation to identifying behaviour changes. But these are things that don't have to be kept at home, you can take them to work and do even more for the environment!

Did you know that on average offices waste £6,000 each year by leaving equipment on over weekends and bank holidays (the Carbon Trust)?

Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (EEAC) is one of the many national EEACs supported by the Energy Saving Trust. There is a small team of friendly dedicated staff who are on hand to offer energy saving advice to Gloucestershire residents to help them keep warm, use less energy and save money. You can contact your local EEAC by calling 0800 512 012 and see what you can do!

## More national recognition for our younger Volunteers

**Stephen Passmore, CommunityCheck Project Manager**



We are pleased to announce a new type of accreditation that is now available to our volunteer Checkers and Champions. This offers recognition for volunteering contributions to CommunityCheck from a nationally recognised organisation called v who are working hard to encourage more young people to volunteer. This is in addition to our own CommunityCheck certificates and presents something more to show our appreciation to volunteers early on in their involvement with the project. So even if you can't complete lots of Checks or attend our visits we can still recognise your contribution and you can use these certificates to demonstrate your volunteering activities. Also even better news, for everyone that does receive one of our new v certificates they are also contributing to the long-term sustainability of the CommunityCheck project through matched funding.

The v certificate is available to anyone who is between 16 and 25 and who has given just 6 hours of their time to the project since August this year. I will be contacting those of you who are eligible for this accreditation but if you are interested, or want some more information, please call me on 01572 725843 or email [communitycheck@studentforce.org.uk](mailto:communitycheck@studentforce.org.uk). More information about the charity v can be found on the website <http://www.wearev.com/>

## The LocalCheck Centre!

**Samantha Sharpe, CommunityCheck Coordinator**

The StudentForce move to Oakham has given us a range of opportunities, one being the development of LocalCheck project and centre. The renovation of the old parcel office at Oakham Station has provided an ideal space to run the project from. The LocalCheck centre aims to inform and educate locals and visitors about the importance and value of local heritage and how it can be integrated with sustainability to support the local economy.

The space will be used to present a series of displays on a range of themes including sustainable transport, natural, built and cultural heritage, trade, welcomes, the local economy and local produce. Each poster will address why these issues are important and what we can do to help make our communities more sustainable. For example, we can support our natural heritage by planting native species, putting up bird boxes or digging a pond. This is sustainable in terms of our local economy as it retains and enhances local distinctiveness and so increases the aesthetic appeal of the area to visitors.



Ospreys at Rutland Water



Rutland Water

We are planning for the LocalCheck centre to be open 3 mornings a week from January, so if you're passing make sure you come in and have a look! We are currently recruiting volunteers to run the LocalCheck centre, it will involve guiding visitors around and dealing with any enquires they may have about the display or area. If you like the sound of this and you have an interest in local heritage, sustainability and want to make a difference in your community please don't hesitate to contact me at [SamanthaSharpe@studentforce.org.uk](mailto:SamanthaSharpe@studentforce.org.uk) or on 01572 725841.

## Where would you like to go??

So far this year the CommunityCheck Project has held learning visits to the EcoHouse in Leicester, Brocks Hill Environment Centre, Beacon Energy in Loughborough and the Velux building in Kettering.

We would like to hear from you where you would like the next learning visit to be, below are some ideas...

### Hill Holt Wood



Hill Holt Wood is 14 hectares of deciduous woodland situated on the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire border. It is a social enterprise that currently employs

fourteen people including the owners themselves.

The woodland is managed sustainably, with flora and fauna being monitored to increase biodiversity and developing and applying alternative building, energy generation and manufacturing technology.

For more information check out [www.hillholtwood.com/index.php](http://www.hillholtwood.com/index.php).

If you are interested in visiting one of the places mentioned above, or have anywhere else in mind then we would love to hear from you! Remember all expenses are paid for however if you do sign up for a learning visit then please do come along!!

For more information or to let us know which of the above you are interested in, e-mail Sam Sharpe at [samanthasharpe@studentforce.org.uk](mailto:samanthasharpe@studentforce.org.uk) or call 01572 725841.

### Hockerton Housing project

The Hockerton Housing Project is the UK's first earth sheltered, self-sufficient ecological housing development. Project members live a holistic way of life in harmony with the environment, in which all ecological impacts have been considered and accounted for. The residents of the five houses generate their own clean energy, harvest their own water and recycle waste materials causing no pollution or carbon dioxide emissions. The houses are amongst the most energy efficient, purpose built dwellings in Europe. For more information check out the website at [www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk](http://www.hockertonhousingproject.org.uk).

### Penny Poyzers house in Nottingham

This Victorian villa in West Bridgford, Nottingham has been refurbished in a low energy and ecological way. Penny Poyzer from BBC 2's 'No Waste Like Home' programme looks at getting people to reduce the amount of waste, water and energy that they produce.

It is the architect's family home, a showcase of green features and an example of best practice. Features include super-insulation solutions, rainwater recovery, low flush loos and foul waste composting, solar hot water and wood burning boiler and a variety of natural / non toxic finishes.

## Feedback from celebration event – Volunteer training needs

At the celebration event held in Las Iguanas in Leicester we asked volunteers to identify their training needs so we could adapt our training for volunteers and make more specific training sessions available.

Volunteers were interested in training in a wide range of areas; skills included communication and marketing whilst topics ranged from environmental legislation to current affairs to environmental management systems.

All this information has been recorded and we are looking at holding training sessions in the New Year so watch this space!!



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## EcoDiary

### December

### January

#### National Tree Week

The Tree Councils Festival to mark the start of the tree planting season. Events nationwide.

22 November to 3 December.

Interested? Visit [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

#### Smart Life Green Day

2<sup>nd</sup> December @ Cambridge Regional College Campus.

A day of lectures and demonstrations plus information on grants available for environmental schemes and renewable technologies

Interested? Contact 01223 712238

#### Volunteer Day- Coppicing

Thin the trees so that the native specimens can shine!

10 December @ Beacon Hill Country Park Loughborough

Interested? Contact 01509 890048

#### WaterAid Christmas Tree Festival

The church is filled with illuminated and decorated trees. Water Aid and Traidcraft stalls.

7 December @ Uppingham Parish Church

Interested? Contact 01572 820322

#### Rutland Local Group- Wildflower Talk

Wildflowers in cultivated places

11 December @ Anglian Bird Watching Centre

Interested? Contact [ncossa@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:ncossa@lrwt.org.uk)

#### Oakham Farmers Market

Stalls selling locally produced food and drink.

16 December @ Gaol Street Oakham

**Project Management / Assertive Communication / Marketing Sustainability** Volunteers – Free Training and Lunch!

To be held over the next 3 months

Date, time and Location tbc

Interested? Contact [training@studentforce.org.uk](mailto:training@studentforce.org.uk)

#### Bird Watching Walks

Watch and Identify birds around Rutland Water

26 January @ Anglian Bird Watching Centre

Interested? Contact [Julia@rutlandwater.org.uk](mailto:Julia@rutlandwater.org.uk)

#### Friends Lecture: Heritage Protection

This talk concerns the listing of buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

12 January @ Charnwood Museum, Loughborough

Interested? Contact 01509 233754

#### Guided Wildlife Walks

Held every Wednesday looking at a different parts of the Rutland Water nature reserve.

26 January @ Anglian Bird Watching Centre

Interested? Contact [Julia@rutlandwater.org.uk](mailto:Julia@rutlandwater.org.uk)

#### Wildlife Watch: Winter Warmer

See what birds are out and about in the park this New Year.

7 January @ Melton Mowbray Wildlife Watch Group

Interested? Visit <http://www.lrwt.org.uk/ww>

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## **The CommunityCheck Project would like to welcome the following volunteers:**

**Ali Hines.** Ali is a recycling officer at Peterborough City Council. She has been trained as a Champion and is looking forward to getting out and about in Rutland and Leicestershire.

**Claire Mansfield.** Claire is a recycling officer at Peterborough City Council. She too has been trained as a Champion and looks forward to helping others implement environmental management systems.

**Emma Tebbs.** Emma is a student at Leicester University and looks forward to volunteering with the CommunityCheck Project.

**Hannah Robson.** Hannah is studying Sustainable Management at Leicester University; she is looking forward to putting her knowledge into practice as a Community Checker!!

**Darshna Solanki.** Darshna works at De Montfort University and hopes to become more involved with the community and promote environmental awareness.

## **Unfortunately we have to say goodbye to some of our volunteers:**

We have no volunteers to say goodbye to this month, however we do have to say goodbye to our fantastic Leicestershire CommunityCheck Coordinator – **Caroline Shannon!!** Caroline has been a great asset to the project, and will be missed very much. We would like to wish Caroline all the best in her new job in London where we are sure she will add as much to the team there as she has here.

## **Next Edition...**

We want to hear from you! 'Check this' is a bimonthly newsletter and we would like your involvement. So if you have any news articles, comments, stories, or events etc. please email or send to the address below. We look forward to hearing from you.

## **Don't forget our contact details have changed!!**

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Station Approach  
Oakham  
LE15 6QT

Telephone:  
Sam: 01572 725841  
Caroline: 01572 725842  
Stephen: 01572 725843  
Fax: 01572 725830

General Enquiries Email: [communitycheck@studentforce.org.uk](mailto:communitycheck@studentforce.org.uk) Website: [www.studentforce.org.uk](http://www.studentforce.org.uk)

**CommunityCheck** is one of 37 pilot projects across the UK that focuses on Sustainable Communities; and it is the only one in the East Midlands. CommunityCheck is funded by DEFRA through the Environmental Action Fund.

**CommunityCheck** training volunteers to work with small organisations to improve their sustainable consumption and enhance their communities.





