

PRESS NOTICE



Date: 21 December 2009

BLACON IS NATIONAL LEADER

Blacon in Chester is one of ten UK communities to be supported by the Department of Energy and Climate Change leading the way to a low carbon future. Over 300 communities applied to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge, and Sustainable Blacon will help local people to cut a fifth off their heating and electricity bills.

The programme includes refurbishing two demonstration houses so people can see what they can do to cut their bills and have access to advice and practical support for its 16,000 residents. Over the year local people will help one another to cut bills and spread ideas through their local contacts. In an additional programme involving 150 households from across Blacon, people will have some of the latest technology installed in their homes to help cut bills.

Energy and Climate Change Minister Joan Ruddock MP said:

“There’s a real appetite out there to save energy to help tackle global warming and save money on fuel bills. Blacon will help to develop the policies we need in the future to make the successful transition to a low carbon economy.”

Ged Edwards: Chief Executive of Sustainable Blacon Ltd. said:

“The Government has seen the strength of Blacon’s community. We want to make the most of its many community groups, its faith communities and schools to enable people to cut their bills. The Government described

our work as inspirational and we are delighted that Blacon has been chosen. This is a chance to help shape the future. We want to hear from people Blacon interested in taking part.

"The Challenge builds on Sustainable Blacon's work on four "greens" – open spaces, energy, transport and social enterprises. This is a testament to the visionary work undertaken over the last few years by Blacon Community Trust, its partners and local residents. We hope our experience will encourage and help other communities in the vital task of cutting carbon emissions for a more sustainable future."

Christine Russell MP who has supported the bid throughout said:

"Sustainable Blacon Ltd. should be congratulated for all of their hard work in leading Blacon to being a Low Carbon Community. I hope that their example will inspire communities throughout the country to work together to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions."

Partners include Cheshire West and Chester Council, Chester and District Housing Trust and British Gas. Cllr Neil Ritchie, Environment Portfolio Holder for Cheshire West and Chester Council said:

"This is a most significant opportunity. This investment in the community of Blacon will help show how we can all adapt our buildings and our lifestyle to reduce our carbon footprint. I hope it will be an example to learn from and to follow elsewhere. We can be justly proud that the work of Sustainable Blacon Ltd has received such a mark of approval."

Blacon Councillor Reggie Jones said:

"I am absolutely delighted at the decision by DECC to invest in Blacon. It is recognition of the hard work and commitment by a range of partners led by the Blacon Community Trust and will have a significant impact in

helping Blacon residents to improve our fuel efficiency, reduce our carbon footprint and save money through reductions in fuel bills. This puts Blacon in the national spotlight and I believe Blacon is ready to lead the way".

Rosemary Burns: local resident said:

"Blacon has always been a strong community not frightened to have a go and make a difference. We are deeply concerned about the environment in all of its aspects here and there are many people here who are struggling with their energy bills. We want residents to come on board so we can get everyone in Blacon involved. We'll be having meetings early in the new year and will keep people informed."

In ten years time, the average yearly household energy bill is estimated to be £5,000. Around a quarter of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions come from heating, lighting and powering electrical appliances in homes. By 2050 this needs to be almost zero if the UK is to cut its emissions by 80%, highlighting the importance of local action.

In return for technical and financial assistance, people in Blacon will work alongside government and contribute to finding low carbon solutions from which the whole country will benefit. Successful outcomes from the project will pave the way for a national roll-out of proven measures.

In this vein, Councillor Adrian Walmsley who represents Cheshire West and Chester Council on the Management Board of Sustainable Blacon Ltd. said:

"I am delighted with the news of this success. My aim is to roll out successful initiatives on the green agenda from Blacon for the benefit of other communities across Cheshire West and Chester."

Notes to editors:

1. For more information about Sustainable Blacon: Ged Edwards – 01244 390344, 07961 077299 ged@sustainableblacon.org.uk. See video *Blacon is Ready*: www.sustainableblacon.org.uk
2. Low Carbon Communities Challenge covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For more details, see <http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn109/pn109.aspx>
3. By joining up support from across government and beyond, the Low Carbon Communities Challenge will provide easy access to a comprehensive range of services to help communities curb their carbon emissions and promote economic investment. The support will be delivered through a consortium of partners with funding from inside and outside government including:

Global Action Plan

Groundwork

Carbon Leapfrog

Energy Saving Trust

The Carbon Trust

WRAP

Salix