



Newsflash

Winter 2009



CLIMATE QUESTION TIME SUCCESS

A FULL house and sharp, topical discussion combined to make Climate Question Time a night to remember.

An audience of more than 140 people spanning a broad range of ages packed into Fortrose Theatre on 10 December to quiz the panel, deftly chaired by TV journalist Louse Batchelor.

The extent of the threat posed to the Black Isle by rising sea levels, support for a more localised food supply and need for energy efficiency in homes were among the issues tackled.

Tulloch Homes' boss David Sutherland, Green candidate Eleanor Scott, organic farmer Donnie Macleod and Cromarty councillor David Alston were on the panel along with Melanie Macrae of Community Energy Scotland and John Picken of the National Farmers Union.

"Everyone acquitted themselves admirably and the high standard of questions and level of discussion would have given TV 'Question Time' a run for its money," said Wendy Price, convener of Transition Black Isle.

"It really was a tremendously thought-provoking evening and we are delighted so many people came along to take part."

An opening question asked by Penny Edwards from Balblair set the tone, exploring what the Black Isle might look like in 2050.

Panelists agreed that strong, vibrant communities would be vital to overcoming the challenges ahead, and that a more localised economy would be important.

Sea level rises could change the landscape dramatically and locally produced food and community owned gardens and allotments would help people in the face of sharp rises in food prices.

Audience member Alistair Rennie, a coastal advisor with Scottish Natural Heritage, said sea levels in the area were projected to rise by 20 - 30 cms by 2050.

Topics then ranged from local food initiatives and community energy schemes, which drew broad support, to messages for leaders trying to hammer out a climate deal in Copenhagen, and the challenge posed by global population growth.



ENERGY CRUNCH...

OUR first event of 2010 will switch focus to the other side of the energy coin.

Peak oil refers to the point at which global oil production reaches a maximum, after which production declines.

Energy expert Dr Mandy Meikle will be joined by Charles Kennedy MP at Fortrose Town Hall on Saturday January 16 at 11am for a talk and discussion.

"It is not about oil running out as such but we have to prepare for the day when supply fails to meet demand - and that day may be sooner than we think," Dr Meikle said. "We cannot continue to believe that perpetual growth can carry on while vital resources are becoming depleted."

"Energy costs are going to soar. And if energy costs rise, the cost of everything rises - not just heat and electricity but transport, construction and even food."

"We have to prepare for the coming energy crisis now and Transition Towns are one of the few movements to really understand the impacts of peak oil & climate change," she added.

"We have had decades of believing that technology will always save the day. But technology cannot magic energy out of thin air."

"We have to understand energy and how to use it in a sustainable manner".



Dr Mandy Meikle



The Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP