

Transition Black Isle – Climate Challenge Fund Project

To: TBI main group

From: Richard Robinson

Date: 11 July 2010

Climate Challenge Fund Project – Co-ordinator's monthly update

As the last full TBI meeting took place only 3 weeks ago and was followed by an end of June progress report to the CCF there seemed little point in making demands on peoples' time by asking for further updates from the subprojects for this meeting. Instead I am attaching some excerpts from the CCF progress report. This is the first one for the 2010-11 project and it will be repeated at two monthly intervals from now on. We have not had any feedback about the June progress report yet, which is probably good news.

You will notice the type of activity and outcome reporting that CCF are looking for. At this stage we argued that we could not update the predicted outcomes (in CO₂ terms) that went into the application. Instead we reported on whether the project was on course to achieve its objectives and we reiterated the predictions. In future we will have to provide more real data and this why we have recently put a lot of emphasis on ways in which we can assess changes: in participants' behaviour and in physical things such as reduced energy use and new approaches to food production/consumption.

From a co-ordination point of view the various elements of the project are mostly progressing well. Financially the project is reassuringly easy to manage because CCF pays upfront on estimates of expenditure and this gives TBI enough in the bank to pay the bills. We are beginning to review the budget and cashflow expectations for the rest of the year. We expect to be able to identify areas of under and overspend, plus new possibilities, in time to discuss these with CCF around the end of August. At present the project's overall financial needs appear to match the budget.

Grow North has been the most active sub-project so far. Over the next couple of months Greening Homes and Gardens, Smart Meters, and the Highland Food Challenge will also take off. Community Gardens is developing well though there have been delays at Netherton. With Tommy working here this garden should now progress more rapidly. On the whole the infrastructure (tunnels, water, fencing, etc.) is in place or nearly finished at both gardens and this should stimulate more interest from potential gardeners. The Community Gardens project also includes a significant amount of work over the rest of the year in researching and organising new gardens as well as confirming leases, insurance, etc. at the existing ones. We will need to keep a close eye on how well these elements progress.

All the contract positions have now been filled and it is becoming clear that despite this there may be difficulties in achieving the level of volunteer input needed across all the sub-projects. This is most acute in the Highland Food Challenge and Community Gardens and we particularly need to identify additional helpers for them. At the same time we will review project plans and timescales to check how feasible they are, across all the sub-projects.

The CCF progress report excerpts (30/6/10) are as follows (with the CCF explanation of what is required).

3. Progress

3.1 Project Activities – Please tell us about the activities which your project has been working on since your last report. We would like to know about any of the milestones in your application form that your project has achieved during this period. Please also tell us about other activities which you have delivered with the support of CCF funding. This could include events run, how many people attended, visits made, staff appointed, contracts awarded, partnerships developed, awareness raising campaigns, surveys you have undertaken, plans developed, etc.

Grow North: Contract organiser and trainer appointed. 67 participants recruited. Risk assessments completed for 2 training sites. 2 specialist tutors and 2 assistant tutors identified. 6 training days delivered. Training programme to December agreed and publicised.

Community Gardens: One polytunnel bought and erected at each of two community gardens. One garden organiser/ community engagement person appointed on contract. Outreach meeting with one local gardeners' club, and leafleting in one local village and at primary school. Hand tools purchased at both gardens.

Black Isle Diet: Contract markets and events organiser appointed. Attendance and catering at Fortrose Green Fair. One cookery demonstration organised. Local markets attended monthly.

Greening Homes and Gardens: Exhibitors invited to September event and hall booked.

Smart Meters: 45 Smart meters bought. 32 issued to school, 13 to community. Carbon Detox books bought to accompany each meter. 20 single appliance meters bought. Exhibition of related books agreed with Fortrose Library.

Website: New website designed and published. In first month 287 unique visitors made 719 visits to the site.

PR Support: PR consultant appointed.

Core project: Project Co-ordinator appointed. Updated budget figures integrated with bookkeeping system. Project roles and management document agreed. Child protection policy put in place. Health and Safety models developed for project use. Monitoring and evaluation procedures agreed. Three CCF financial claims submitted.

3.2 Community progress – now tell us about the changes which these activities are making, the results and effects of your project's activities in the local community – this could include attitude and behaviour shifts taking place, improved understanding and knowledge in your target group, reduction in fuel bills/mileage/carbon emissions in your community, shift in the types of people who are getting involved in your project's activities or any other changes.

Please tell us about information you are gathering to tell you about the changes you are making. This could include surveys, baseline research, interviews, diaries, records, information from other organisations etc.

After only three months activity it is too early in the project to report on changes in the local community. The main project group has agreed the importance of obtaining baseline information on the attitudes and behaviour of participants so that repeat surveys towards the end of the project can provide measures of progress. It was also agreed that feedback forms for individual outreach events should be designed to assess changes in attendees' knowledge and attitudes.

Specific recording in progress and planned within the key projects is as follows.

Smart Meters: Monthly records of electricity use are kept by community participants. At the end of their three month loan they are asked to complete a questionnaire about what they have learnt and how their behaviour has changed. The school project will be launched next academic year as part of the curriculum and plans for monitoring and analysis will be developed over the summer.

Greening Homes and Gardens: The event takes place in September and all visitors are asked to complete a questionnaire. This provides an opportunity to make comparisons with previous years and to assess visitor knowledge and attitudes.

Black Isle Diet: This project is now being marketed as the Highland Food Challenge: participants will be set the task of increasing the proportion of local and low carbon impact food they consume. Incentives will be offered for their recorded progress, comparing a week at the start of the Challenge in August with a week in November and a final assessment in February.

Grow North: Baseline questions for participants have been developed and a survey will shortly be issued. The survey will be repeated at the end of the training period.

Community Gardens: Quantities of vegetables produced will be recorded over the season. Participants' attitudes and behaviour will be recorded when they join the project and at the end of the year.

3.3 – CO₂ Reductions – Use this box to tell us about the CO₂ reductions which your project is delivering. While you can refer back to the assumptions which you made in your application, we would like information about actual CO₂ reductions which your project is delivering now.

Please include:-

- The evidence you are gathering about changes in the communities' activities.
- What conversion factors or data sets you are using.
- Your calculations and formula.
- The length of time you are counting the reductions over.

We would also like to know about anything new you have discovered about measuring and reducing CO₂ as you are running your project.

As the Progress section above indicates, the project is too young for us to have collected data on progress. The monitoring approaches described above will allow us to provide real-life estimates of CO₂ reductions. At present we can only rely on the predictions included in our proposal and the extent to which our projects are on target in terms of activity.

Greening Homes and Gardens: This event is on track for September. Previous events led to an estimated annual saving of 30.4t CO₂ (based on Energy Saving Trust statistics). We will repeat this calculation in 2011.

Smart Meters: The project is on track to issue 25 meters to three successive groups of participants. The predicted CO₂ saving in 2011 based on these numbers is 20t in 2010 and 30t/y thereafter. 180 school students are expected to participate in the schools element although this will not begin until August 2010. Expected savings are 42t CO₂ in 2010 and 72t/y thereafter assuming behaviour is maintained. Figures are based on average electricity consumption on the Black Isle¹ and DEFRA figures for kWh to CO₂ conversion.

Black Isle Diet: This project has not yet reached the stage of recruiting participants but is on track to do so. The original estimate for CO₂ reduction was 60.6t/y. Figures are based on Climate Challenge Fund (2009)².

Grow North: 65 participants have been recruited, exceeding the expected 50. While some attrition can be expected it is reasonable to assume that at least 50 will complete the programme. The CO₂ savings for this number were originally estimated to be 39.25t/y. Figures are based on Climate Challenge Fund (2009).

Community Gardens: CO₂ estimates for this project were annual figures based on gardens in full operation. During the 2010 growing season we are engaged in installing infrastructure and recruiting participants so the full benefits will not be achieved until 2011 and subsequent years. We will review the CO₂ savings in the 2010 season using participation rates and vegetable productivity figures. In the longer term we still expect the gardens to save 4.3t CO₂/y. Figures are based on Climate Challenge Fund (2009).

¹ Department of Energy and Climate Change Statistics
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/regional/mlsoa_llsoa/mlsoa_2007/mlsoa_2007.aspx

² Climate Challenge Fund (2009) A Low Carbon Route Map. Food. http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/food_route_map.pdf