



Robert Owen - Founder of the Co-op Movement

Sustainable Communities and Co-operative Action Conference

Thursday 10th July 2008

Elephant and Castle Conference Centre
Newtown, Powys

The Sustainable Communities Act and Practical Approaches

The days of cheap oil and stable food prices are now over. Banking, energy and food security have become major issues over the past year for everyone. The Sustainable Communities Act was passed by Parliament in October 2007 and is being implemented this year in England and Wales, though funding for projects will not be available until 2009-2010. This law began life as a private members bill developed by more than 80 voluntary and community organisations. To implement the act, local authorities have responsibility to consult communities and put forward creative plans to achieve Sustainable Communities outcomes. The Schedule in the new legislation suggests a range of projects and framework indicators, including those to:

- Increase local food production within 30 miles of the boundary of a public body
- Extend the quantity of renewable energy inside a 50 mile radius of a region
- Install insulation and retrofit measures to buildings to decrease greenhouse gas emissions
- Increase local service provision in relation to banks, affordable housing, health and leisure facilities
- Deploy measures to increase mutual aid initiatives within communities
- Increase public procurement to secure a greater volume of goods and services produced within 30 miles of the boundary of a public body.

This conference will focus on rural solutions to achieving Sustainable Communities and include examples of positive and practical ventures in Wales, England and other areas of the EU and North America. Speakers and Workshops will focus on social and local enterprises in the fields of food, energy, finance and much more. The event has been sponsored by ESRC and the Spirit Fund to enable costs to be kept low for attendees from the voluntary and community sector.

'It is the one great and universal interest of the human race to be cordially united and to aid each other to the full extent of their capacities.'

Robert Owen (14 May 1771, Newtown, Montgomeryshire, Wales – 17 November 1858) was a Welsh social reformer and one of the founders of socialism and the cooperative movement. Owen firmly believed that people were the product of their environment, which fueled his support for education and labour reform. His views made Owen a pioneer in the promotion of investment in human capital.

(Abridged extract from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Owen)

Robert Owen, founder of the co-operative movement died 150 years ago. Newtown was his home town. The conference will celebrate his life and practical guidance for fair trade and business development locally and globally.

Sustainable Communities and Co-operative Action: Conference Programme

- 9.30 **Registration and Refreshments**
- 10.00 **Sustainable Communities Act - a new agenda for rural co-operative action**
Chair's Introduction: Simon Harris, Welsh Assembly Social Enterprise Group
Sustainable Communities and Co-operative Action Potential, Mick Brown, Rebuilding Society Network
Community Finance and Rural Regeneration, Rina Clarke, Robert Owen Community Banking
- 10.35 **Questions and answers**
- 10.45 **Sustainable Communities Act - opportunities: new roles for credit unions & community finance**
Leighton Andrews, Deputy Minister for Regeneration
- 11.05 **Question and answers**
- 11.20 **Refreshments and networking**
- 11.40 **Sustainable Community Action Plans - different practices and approaches**
Jeremy Thorp, Newtown Action on Climate Change
Mark Barnes, Buy Local Networks, The Pool Card
Elaine Brook, Greenlinks
- 12.10 **Questions and answers**
- 12.20 **Development banking toolkit for micro-businesses and social enterprise**
Mutuals for Self-employed people, Pat Conaty, *new economics foundation*
Seed capital for rural social enterprises, Colin Feissel, Cigales Network, France
Finance and local intermediaries for social enterprise, Rumbi Tarusenga, London Rebuilding Society
- 13.00 **Questions and answers**
- 13.15 **Lunch**
- 14.00 **Mobilising land, labour and capital for regional self-reliance: workshop task groups**
Group 1: Food Link Case Studies
Group 2: Fuelsaver and Energy Case Studies
Group 3: Community Reinvestment Case Studies
- 15.15 **Refreshments and networking**
- 15.40 **Community Land Trusts - land for affordable housing, energy and farming needs**
Chair's Introduction, John Harrington, Rebuilding Society Network
Nick Salt, Pantdwy'r Community Land Trust, Powys
Bob Paterson, Holsworthy Community Property Company, Devon
- 16.15 **Questions and answers**
- 16.30 **Sustainable Community Action - lessons from international experience**
Mike Lewis, Centre for Community Enterprise, Canada
Nuria del Rio, REAS, Spain
Shann Turnbull, International Institute for Self-governance, Australia
Maurizio Spedaletti, Banca Etica Popolare, Italy
- 17.10 **Questions and answers**
- 17.30 **Close**
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To reserve a place at this conference

- use the on-line booking form at http://www.r-s-n.org.uk/conference_2008
- or post this completed form to: **RSN, c/o ROMCUL, 26 Market Street, Newtown, Powys, SY16 2PD**
- or scan and email this completed form to: **conference2008@r-s-n.org.uk**

We cannot guarantee a place at the Conference unless a booking form is completed, whether by post, email or on-line. Please complete a separate booking form for each delegate.

Please reserve places at the **Sustainable Communities and Co-operative Action Conference** for:

Name

Telephone number

Signed..... Date

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Position/role

I enclosed payment

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Categories and fees:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Full conference fee | £75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESRC Bursary applicants | £15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RSN Bursary applicants | £25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local not-for-profit organisations | £10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel accommodation including breakfast | £45 |

VAT will not be charged to these prices