

Conference report

Building for a better future – Conference 2002

Approximately 180 delegates attended The Trust's first ever conference in Taunton on Friday June 28th ... so how did it go?

The programme began with a welcome from Kevin McCloud – Designer, Author and Presenter of Channel 4's *Grand Designs*, who also chaired the day. The keynote speaker was Jonathon Porritt CBE, who discussed local, regional and national policy in the role of achieving sustainable development. As well as a selection of other expert speakers, the event included an exhibition of sustainable construction products and materials, useful advisory organisations and examples of innovative partnerships. A lunch of local produce was provided.

In answer to the question, the day ran extremely smoothly. Delegates that attended represented a wide range of organisations, companies and businesses which provided excellent opportunities for networking. We hope that everyone who attended found it enjoyable and worthwhile and will join us again when we hold our next conference in 2003!

Image conscious!

After much deliberation, we have selected our choice and are now proud to show off our new STSD logo. As you can see, our new newsletter also has a new look. The changes will help to highlight our green motives and provide us with a truly green image.



STSD Project Updates



Artists impression of the Stuckey and Bagehot development in Langport

Langport's first eco development

The trust is getting very close to purchasing its first site for an exemplar sustainable development in Langport. The Silkolene site, as it is known, includes the old Stuckey and Bagehot salt warehouse next to Bow Bridge. We are negotiating with the owners and planners about purchase with permission for housing and restoration of the old warehouse. The opportunity is to build at least eight houses for sale to the market which puts the trust's four rules of sustainable development into practice.

The restoration of the warehouse is

also an opportunity to show sustainable restoration in practice and create a centre for social enterprise and community use at the gateway to the town.

Urgent Request!

We are now seeking a small number of investors to help raise up to £400,000 that we need to buy and develop the site ... Artist impressions have already been drawn up.

If you would like more information, or if you know someone else who may be interested in this new and exciting opportunity, we would love to hear from you.



STSD aims to make sustainable construction the norm rather than the exception in Somerset by 2010. STSD have received Grant Contributions from: Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council, J.A Clark Trust, Wyvern Environmental Trust and Shell Better Britain. The World Wildlife Fund now sponsors The Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development.



STSD Project Updates



Above and right: The Morlands site between Glastonbury and Street.

Below: Aerial plan of the Springmead development in Chard.



Development Agency (SWRDA) on the master plan that is being drawn up for the whole of the former Morlands factory site on the outskirts of Glastonbury. The site is the largest piece of derelict land in the county and SWRDA are going through an extensive consultation to create a regional exemplar of a sustainable commercial and employment development. As a result of our involvement, we are forming a group to create a train and restore project which will restore a group of buildings at the southern end of the site which would otherwise be demolished. The viability of such a project is being researched at the moment and discussions held with the Glastonbury Town Council, a new Development Trust for the Town.

Sustainable Training Centre for the South West

The UK's first centre for sustainable construction training is to be located in Taunton at the Somerset College for Art and Technology. The Trust is an adviser to SCAT on the project. The architectural competition for the training centre is now in progress. The architects for the competition are: Archetype, Gale and Snowdon, and Feilden Clegg and Bradley. The completed designs will be finished in October and the preferred one chosen.

Springmead

The Springmead Social Eco-Housing project is now progressing with Raglan taking a lead as the developer for the whole site. The Trust will now be the advisor for local sourcing of sustainable materials/products. The latest proposals for the project are:

- Grey/rainwater harvesting system for each dwelling
- Submitting the grant aid project for Photovoltaics for the south facing roofs
- Locally sourcing timber from the Blackdown Hills AONB, which is part of a wider project to stimulate the supply of local timber for the construction sector in Somerset

The project should be complete by the autumn of 2003.

Morlands

The trust has been represented on the partnership board which has been advising the South West Regional

Government Office Policy Meeting

A Recent meeting with the Government Office South-West (GOSW) was held in Bristol to discuss why the key Government objectives for sustainability and environmental protection are not being reflected in current planning guidance, and to try and achieve some practical solutions to get the Planning Policy to do more for sustainable construction. Julian Brooks and Steve Charter of STSD attended, with Andy Foyne, Planning Manager at South Somerset District Council.

During the meeting it was agreed that, whilst Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) appear to encourage sustainability and environmental considerations, there is at present no specific Planning Policy Guidance on sustainable design and construction specific enough to substantiate a prescriptive policy for use in the approval of planning applications. However, the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) showed a more positive attitude towards setting out a sustainable design and construction Policy.

It was agreed that, in order to maximise the impacts of their arguments, The Trust should form a nation wide alliance with other like minded organisations and authorities such as Town and Country Planning, World Wildlife Fund and Environment Agency, to tackle this grey area that lies within Policy Guidance and take it to Central Government to further the chances of achieving a planning system that supports, rather than hinders, progress towards sustainable design and construction.

News from the outside!

The Sustainable Building Company Ltd – Gloucestershire

Steve Rush, a builder from Gloucestershire, tells us how he became inspired in the world of sustainability...

For many years I have worked for builders, big and small, who don't give a damn about the eco footprint of their work or services, even if they are aware that they have one! To compound the problem they appear to have a general apathy towards their work and their clients. Not a pretty picture. So in setting up a new company called The Sustainable Building Company I'm hoping to begin to reverse this trend and build environment conscious, people friendly homes, in a responsible way.

Of course, as with any business, I have to bear in mind its commercial viability in a competitive market. But there's already a growing demand for sustainable building services. And in addition I'm keen to use The Sustainable Building Company as a platform to educate clients in sustainable living and how they can do their bit to reduce their impact on our environment. Hopefully as consciousness increases consumers will want to know that their house, (and its life costing, which includes the building process) is more sustainable than that of their neighbours. A sort of 21st century keeping up with the Jones's!

Currently I have become aware of the skills' shortage in the building industry. Once upon a time life's basic skills were passed from father to son and mother to daughter, but this has virtually gone along with the skills. Now even that crucial initiation into adulthood, the apprenticeship, that saw a youngster put under the wing of a time served, experienced and proud craftsman are few and far between.

Companies now look at short term gain rather than taking responsibility for training new blood. So I can see that one of my biggest hurdles will be to find a well trained, enthusiastic & sympathetic workforce.

If we look at the wider picture, not only are we in an era of change but it seems to me that the UK's building industry is poorly equipped to service this change. To provide a workforce for the future we need to take action now. I believe we need to be teaching our children the message of sustainability. Sadly that cannot be done via the parents who are advocates of the 'more better best' attitude to consumption. It needs to be built into the National Curriculum. Citizenship is beginning to address this need, but this alone will not be enough.

We also need to change the educational system to recognise different types of intelligence, to one that regards the practical abilities of children as highly as the intellectual. Maybe when the skills and wisdom of the past are valued for their intrinsic worth, when sustainable living is taught together with the technological systems of today, maybe then we can provide new craftsmen for tomorrow that can live and work in harmony with the environment. This maybe a long way off but I believe we can all do our bit to move towards a more sustainable society and I hope that The Sustainable Building Company will help in a small way to put our future on more sustainable foundations.

I am keen to keep you informed as to my progress and would like to thank the STSD for this opportunity. I would welcome your thoughts and comments and of course your tenders! Keep up the good work STSD!!

Regards Steve Rush

Who's Who in STSD?

In response to the rapid growth of The Trust and in order to develop the services we offer our members and other stakeholders, The Trust office in Langport has expanded. The staff of the trust are:

Chairperson – Lucy Durnan.
An SSDC Councillor and a Board Member on the Somerset Historic Building Preservation Trust, Lucy has recently been appointed as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

Executive Director – Charles Couzens.
Formerly Chairperson, Charles has now taken up the post of Executive Director. His role is to oversee the development of the trust and manage volunteers, staff, finance, structure and procedures capable of fulfilling The Trusts' mission and aims.

Project Manager – Julian Brooks.
Involved from the embryonic stages of The Trusts development in 2000, Julian's role is to create a programme of exemplar developments in Somerset.

Research and Information Officer – Corina Reay.
Corina's role is to develop the services that can be offered to members of the trust and to undertake specific research for projects and publications.

Office Assistants – Elaine Hegarty and Liz Clark.
Liz and Elaine provide day-to-day office support and general administration. They deal with all The Trust's general enquiries, and both played an enormous part in the successful running of The Trust's first conference.

Planning and Research Director – Steve Charter.
Steve has also been involved with The Trust right from the early stages of its development. His role includes researching best practice in sustainable development and providing training and advice to Local Authorities on establishing effective sustainable construction strategies locally.

Accounts – Sue Ayling.
Sue handles the accounts for The Trust, such as membership fees, funding and payroll and is also the secretary for the Board of Trustees which involves sending out agendas, reports and minutes of meetings.

Membership update

We now have well over 100 members and keeping our existing members is very important to us. Obviously we are also very keen to keep our membership figures rising. Please spread the STSD word to whoever you know and help us achieve our goals.

If you would like to share any of your stories, news or views with fellow members, we will gladly publish them in future newsletters. Keep them as brief as possible (to keep editing time to a minimum!) and send to Corina at STSD.

Many thanks for your letter Steve.

Publications

Sustainable Design and Construction for Schools and Education Buildings: A Guide to 21st Century Building

Every school and education building in Britain should really be built to the highest health and environmental standards. This guide aims to help all those involved in commissioning, designing and building school and education buildings to achieve this important objective.

This guide provides a host of valuable information, and its design is

comprehensive, practical and accessible. It includes many examples of sustainable design and construction that show it can be done, and how it has been done – from pre-school to primary, secondary, Universities and environmental education buildings.

Price: only £20.00 including post and packing (20% discount for members)

To order your copy call Liz or Elaine on 01458 259400 or email admin@sustainablehousing.org.uk

More Useful and Interesting Websites

www.aecb.net

Association for Environment Conscious Building.

www.plotfinder.net

Guide to finding and buying building plots and property For renovation and conversion. May be a useful site for those interested in the self build scheme.

Dates for your diary

Self Build Network Meeting

Wednesday July 24th • 6.30-8.30pm

If you have an interest in building your own home and would like some advice and information, or you would just like to know more about and help to develop our self build network scheme, please join us for this informal evening meeting. A finger buffet will be included.

M - £2.00 NM - £2.50. *Please confirm with us if you wish to attend*

Glorious Mud (Non-STSD)

August 4th-7th.

Learn the ancient skill of building in cob (mud and straw).

The course will take place on a beautiful cider farm in Somerset. William Leyshon, is an acknowledged expert on cob, who has taught and built in cob both here and in France for over 20 years. The work, although physical, will teach everyone how to construct a small dwelling from start to finish. There will be talks on turf roof construction and lime painting techniques. The fees include all food and drink (alcoholic and non-alcoholic). All you need is a tent and bedding, for camping next to the site.

Course fee-£200. Phone or e-mail for more information and a map. Tel: 01460 241157 or 01460240782. E-mail: diana@ciderbrandy.co.uk

First Wednesday Club

Wednesday August 7th • 6.30 - 8.00pm

Starting in August and continuing at the same time on the first Wednesday of each month, we will be holding evening meetings to provide an informal opportunity for members of The Trust to meet and discuss ideas and interests. The first of these monthly meetings will include a talk by Stuart Black on the self-built eco-communities in South Africa. Please confirm with us if you wish to attend.

The next meeting will be Wednesday September 4th
Subject to interest.

Eco-renovation

Thursday September 19th • Half day

Sustainable Renovation of Existing Buildings

To talk about sustainable construction for new buildings, deals with only 1% of the stock in any year. Therefore, the renovation of existing buildings in a sustainable way is arguably more important. This seminar will explore how renovation can be sustainable. In order to accommodate all of our members, we will run this seminar twice in the same day (0930-1230 and 1330-1630) – please specify your choice of morning or afternoon, and whether you require a buffet lunch, when booking.

Fee: M - £36. NM - £45. Finger buffet £8

Best Value and Sustainable Construction.

Wednesday November 13th.

Half day - Time TBA

Aimed at Local Authorities and jointly run with the Audit Commission, this seminar will explore how the Best Value process can help to deliver sustainable buildings for the public sector.

Fee: TBA

Sustainable Construction in Schools.

Thursday 27th February 2003 • Half day - Time TBA

This seminar will show how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated into school buildings. Learn how sustainable approaches will lead to substantially lower running costs for the school. This seminar will be held during half-term to allow members of school staff and head-teachers to attend.

Fee: TBA

We reserve the right to cancel a session should attendance figures be inadequate. All STSD events will be held in Langport, unless indicated otherwise. However, if there is considerable interest outside of the county, we will endeavour to hold additional seminars elsewhere. Please let us know.

If you are interested in any of these events and would like to be sent further details nearer the time, please send us your request and mailing details. In order to save on resources, The Trust prefers to make contact via electronic mail so do send us your e-mail address where possible

STSD would like to take the opportunity of thanking Paul Bright, Nick McClean, Somerset County Council and Pearce Construction, for their generosity in donating enough computers to get STSD fully functional! STSD gratefully acknowledges the support of South Somerset District Council and Somerset County Council.

Produced on recycled paper by the Somerset Trust for Sustainable Development, Town Hall, Bow Street, Langport, Somerset TA10 9PR.
Tel: 01458 259400 Fax: 01458 253 401 email: admin@sustainablehousing.org.uk website: www.sustainablehousing.org.uk