

Climate challenge now!

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CarbonSense has today formally completed work on *Climate Challenge now!* and made available two reports on the programme of fifty workshops conducted in and around West Suffolk. These reports set out the approach and results of a year-long project, part-funded by DEFRA, to raise awareness and understanding of climate change.

CarbonSense was lead delivery partner, in conjunction with The Carbon Coach, for fifty workshops exploring the issues and potential consequences of climate change in a defined geographical area. The workshops were offered throughout West Suffolk and nearby areas, with coordination provided by Constructing Excellence.

Further support was provided by St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and Baberg District Councils, local organisations such as the Suffolk CRED, and national bodies such as the Energy Saving Trust and the Environment Agency. The programme was part-funded by the DEFRA Climate Challenge Fund, with considerable further support from Constructing Excellence, CarbonSense and The Carbon Coach.

Workshops were delivered to ten companies and business groups including Delphi, Copella, Genzyme, Brecks Partnership and Suffolk Tourism Partnership, as well as forty other organisations and community groups in both urban and rural settings in East Anglia. These included schools and colleges, women's groups, parish councils, green groups and others. The groups ranged in size from four people to over sixty.

Peter Martin, Research Director at CarbonSense, said: "We've been helping companies and communities to make sense of climate change for some years, and through this project we have worked directly face-to-face with seven hundred and seventy seven people and reached many thousands more through print, interactive media and practical actions."

The feedback from participants has been very positive - "CarbonSense was fun, intelligent and creative" - and suggests that participation in the workshops was a positive experience and that they have been very helpful for people in the area. By the end of the workshops, 80% of participants felt that they understood climate change and that they were able to make a difference.

Other comments included:

"Very informative, helped to make me think what I can personally do to reduce my energy consumption" (St Edmundsbury Youth Forum)

"I feel better informed and motivated as a result of the presentation/workshop" (St Edmundsbury open business workshop)

"Very interesting- I will go away and take personal action in my home" (Suffolk Tourism Partnership)

"Well done guys, you're making a difference by making people aware, you are helping others help the earth and cut down their contribution to global warming" (Thurston Community College)

"First class effort and my anti carbon view on global warming has been reversed" (Bildeston)

"It has motivated me to lower my carbon footprint in any way I can" (Sudbury Upper School)

"Very interesting. I've learnt LOADS! I know what to do about climate change" (Leavenheath Scouts)

"Extremely informative, came in not knowing much about climate change now know much more." (West Suffolk College)

Of the groups that took part in a follow up survey, 82% felt that the workshops encouraged them to reduce their carbon impact and all groups had begun to take steps to do so, with 30%, to date, having measured their carbon footprint.. 82% had talked to friends and family about climate change in general, showing that the project's overall impact reached beyond those who directly took part in the workshops or read the associated publications. 82% reported that the workshop encouraged them to reduce their carbon impact. All groups reported that they have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprints and

Notes:

The project reports are on the CarbonSense website.

For further information, please call Beverley Wannacott, CarbonSense on 01626 777274 or email Beverley@carbonsense.com

CarbonSense is a climate change think tank and consultancy that aims to help accelerate society's transition towards a low carbon future and helps businesses to contribute solutions to climate change. CarbonSense has worked with many UK and international companies, including BT, TNT and Honda F1, along with government departments and agencies.