

A Carbon CLEVER 2014

As Christmas approaches and we ready ourselves to say goodbye to another year, it is interesting to look back on what has been achieved in 2014. It's easy to forget much of what goes on in a 12 month period, without taking the time to properly reflect, so the purpose of this note is to provide a snapshot (which is by no means comprehensive!) of a year in the life of Carbon CLEVER and the team.

January

2014 got off to a busy start, with the Climate Change team growing by 50% when Keith joined Stephen and Daniel. January saw planning for Earth Hour begin in earnest and the team helped out the Energy Saving Trust with a Green Homes Network tour, to promote energy saving options for the home. They also organised a Dr Bike session for staff at HQ, and through the Climate Change Declaration working group, started the process of refreshing and rebranding it as the Carbon CLEVER Declaration. January also saw the launch of the Carbon CLEVER newsletter, with the first edition attracting 577 unique clicks from the Council intranet alone – not bad!

February

Following a £40k commitment from SSE at the 2013 Carbon CLEVER Conference, February saw us hold the first public event to scope out public appetite for an electric bike hire scheme in Inverness. The event at the Town House was a resounding success, and gave the Climate Change team, SSE and Co-wheels plenty of ideas to help develop the scope and scale of the project. The sustainability e-learning module was refreshed in February, and promotional activity ahead of the inaugural Etape Loch Ness began.

March

The Highland Youth Voice's Chunky Jumper Day on Friday 7th March encouraged young people to make a small change to their behaviour (such as wearing a chunky jumper and turning the heating down) to help promote Carbon CLEVER actions. Daniel and Keith attended an insightful area- wide emissions training session at Aberdeen City Council, as well as the Highland Environment Forum at Great Glen House. March also saw the initial concepts for a Carbon CLEVER Commuting microsite being developed thanks to Transport Scotland's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places funding, and work began on refreshing the procurement guidance on environmental sustainability and community benefits (much more exciting than it sounds!). The team also welcomed Barry the Panda for Earth Hour 2014. Barry got to meet several Members and staff, and was photographed in various locations across Inverness. Earth Hour 2014 was another great success, with various events taking place across the region emphasising Highland's commitment to protecting our planet.



April

The Carbon CLEVER Declaration was launched, which now forms a key part of the Carbon CLEVER initiative. The Declaration invites Highland businesses to commit to the aims of Carbon CLEVER, and by the end of 2014, 57 organisations had signed up. April also saw the team host a workshop to help develop Members' knowledge of carbon management issues. This was well attended and provided food for thought, with Members having to work out what they could afford at the tea break (from a sustainability perspective) using their "Carbon Credits". The team began presenting Carbon CLEVER updates to Area Committees and Community Councils, ensuring that Members were fully aware of the reach of the initiative across Highland. These items gave Members the opportunity to raise area-specific concerns and ideas with the team, helping to further develop the initiative.

May

Star Wars Day (May the 4th) saw the Highlands host the inaugural Etape Loch Ness. Carbon CLEVER sponsored the 67 mile closed road race, with Stephen and Daniel on hand at the start and finish lines to talk to competitors and spectators about Carbon CLEVER, and let them have a go on one of the e bikes which would later form part of Carbon CLEVER Cycles. Continuing with the biking theme, European Cycling Week saw Inverness compete against the likes of Warsaw, London and Barcelona to determine which city could clock up the most mileage. This provided a great opportunity to promote active travel and whilst Inverness didn't quite win, (despite being ahead of Barcelona for a few days!) the week was a great success.



June

The Climate Change team started using the Scottish Government's ISM behavioural change model in June, which recognises that in order to implement positive behaviour change interventions you need to look at the Individual, Social & Material factors which shape how people act. A workshop involving various officers from across the Council was held by Dr Alex Hilliam of Changeworks, and looked at the issue of why staff do (and do not) engage with energy efficiency. Alex is currently mentoring four officers with a view to them being able to utilise ISM effectively across the Council. Co-wheels Car Club delivered a demo electric bike to whet appetites ahead of the launch of Carbon CLEVER Cycles in August, and the team organised various sessions for officers and the public to have a go and learn more about the scheme. Members also agreed to a Carbon CLEVER contribution of £25k towards the installation of shower facilities and an improved bike shed as part of the Dingwall Office Rationalisation project, which will help encourage more active travel and healthy lifestyles.

July

All hands were on deck in July to finalise the Carbon CLEVER Cycles e-bike hire scheme. Various meetings were held with SSE, Co-wheels, and the Inverness Access Panel, among others, to ensure that the project got off on the front foot. The team also started pulling together ideas for the Carbon CLEVER Community Grant fund, which is to be used by communities across Highland to develop capital projects supporting the aims of Carbon CLEVER. We welcomed Daniel O'Connor from WARPit (the Waste Action Reuse Portal) who gave a fantastic presentation on the benefits his portal could provide the Council and other partners across the region, from cost-saving and carbon reduction perspectives, and it

was agreed to develop a proposal to procure the portal and start saving some serious money.

August

The Climate Change team welcomed another new member in August, and even launched an electric-bike hire scheme to celebrate her birthday! Gemma Cassells became the fourth member of the team, and was on hand to help launch Carbon CLEVER Cycles to the public on 18th August. The project was well received by the press and public alike, and the hard work by various parties in bringing it to life was evident. The annual report on Scotland's Climate Change Declaration for 2012/2013, which on the whole detailed positive progress by the Council in meeting its climate change targets and obligations, was submitted in August, and work began in earnest on the SMILEgov project, which has the aim of developing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan for Highland island communities. Colleagues at E.ON delivered an energy saving play to several schools which included the "Carbon CLEVER Rap" – almost certainly a contender for the Christmas number 1 spot in 2015!

September



September proved to be one of the busiest months of the year. The sustainable procurement guidance was finalised and agreed by the Procurement Workstreams group, we supported Sustainable Ardgour with their Green Johannes composting initiative, a car club engagement event was held at the Town House, and we received the fantastic news that the Carbon CLEVER Cycles scheme had been awarded the SCDI SEPA Award for Excellence in Environmental Sustainability – one of the most prestigious awards of the year. Stephen and Daniel thoroughly enjoyed the awards ceremony, and returned to the office with a handsome trophy which has been well admired by our many visitors!

October

Carbon CLEVER Commuting, a microsite supporting sustainable transport in Highland, was launched to staff in October after many months of development. Inverness Caledonian Thistle became the 50th signatory of the Carbon CLEVER Declaration, marking a significant milestone for the initiative, and the Carbon CLEVER-sponsored Energy Saving Expo at Eden Court was a fantastic event for both business and the public. It provided an ideal platform to discuss our work with a wide-ranging audience, while allowing them to try an e-bike, find out how they can be more efficient and support the aims of Carbon CLEVER. Members also agreed to a £400k contribution from Carbon CLEVER towards LED street lighting across the Highlands in October – this is a real spend-to-save initiative which will not only save money and emissions, but reduce maintenance costs too.

November

The major event in November was the second annual Carbon CLEVER Conference, which attracted well over 100 delegates, and was deemed a resounding success. Daniel spent many months planning the event, and the positive feedback from presenters and delegates was a testament to his hard work. Richard Lochhead MSP, George Baxter from SSE



and Leader of the Council, Cllr Drew Hendry were just some of the speakers who discussed progress in Highland to date and encouraged us all to think about how we can better work together for a low carbon Highlands.



The Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund was launched at the Conference and November also saw another ISM workshop being held, this time looking at officer uptake in respect of the Carbon CLEVER Cycles e-bike scheme. The team were all involved to some degree at the annual SSN Conference, which was a great opportunity to find out about some of the fantastic work taking place across Scotland in tackling climate change. Finally, the new Millburn Road cycle lane was officially opened, which received significant financial support from Carbon CLEVER.

Other notable successes in November included work starting on refreshing the Council's Carbon Management Plan, agreements to help fund an electric bus charging point in Inverness and solar powered real time bus stop displays in Badenoch & Strathspey – tangible improvements to the existing network which will benefit many in the coming years.

December

There was no let-up come December, with work accelerating in respect of the development of a car club for Inverness, the installation of a Commonwealth Games 2014 Legacy Cycle Rack at the Town House, another Dr Bike session, and the proposal for procuring WARPit being approved by the Executive Leadership Team. We've also been busy organising FuelGood driver training for staff, to help improve driver efficiency, reduce emissions and save the Council money, whilst planning for stakeholder engagement in respect of developing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan for the Highlands. In amongst all the hard work, we found time to do some baking for the office Christmas lunch, and while the team is looking forward to a well-earned festive break, we are equally excited about what lies ahead in 2015 – onwards and upwards!

Summary

All in all, it's been a very successful year for Carbon CLEVER – the above provides a mere taster of what has taken place, but gives an idea of the scale and range of work undertaken by the team. All of our projects save carbon, and have a variety of other desirable potential outcomes, such as health improvement, reduced congestion, educational benefits, and of course, savings.

The Carbon CLEVER Action Plan has now been drafted, and in 2015 our direction of travel has been further mapped out. The team's social media presence continues to grow and grow, with the Carbon CLEVER Twitter account (@Carbon_CLEVER) having attracted over 500 followers already. So expect lots of new projects and collaborative working with organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals across Highland in 2015 as we continue our work towards a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025.

On that positive note, we'd like to wish you a Carbon CLEVER Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year!