

City & Guilds energy awareness course

As well as employing our Energy Advisor, the project aims to give 4 volunteers from the community the opportunity to achieve qualifications in Energy Awareness. This means when the year long project ends people will remain in the community who can advise others on saving energy and continue making a difference.

The 4 day course has 7 elements:

- 1 Identify heating and hot water systems found in homes
- 2 Identify how temperatures are measured and controlled in homes and recommended guidelines for the best temperatures to suit the needs of the household

- 3 Advise on efficient and safe use of heating and hot water systems
- 4 Interpret gas and electricity bills
- 5 Advice on how to record fuel use and work out costs
- 6 Information on various ways of paying for gas and electricity
- 7 Identify ways to improve energy efficiency in dwellings including grants available

Brid, who has already completed the qualification, said the most useful aspects of the course for her were those to do with the suppliers. "There are various ways bills are set out and even more ways to pay for

gas and electricity, some cheaper than others. A lot of people in Alness know that having a card/key meter is one of the most expensive ways to pay for fuel. It is advantageous in that you can budget easily but there are other ways to achieve this, the course explains all of this."

The course also introduces the numerous bodies that issue grants to assist in energy efficiency. Although the course does not cover these fully, it gives a good grounding in the main ones and how to get started.

If you are interested in doing this course or want more information please contact WASP.

competition

Enter our **FREE competition** to have a chance of winning a new state-of-the-art **ECO KETTLE** worth £40



newsletter 01



february 2008

welcome. . .

to the first WASP Newsletter. The West Alness SAVE (Save And Value Energy) Project is all about saving MONEY, ENERGY and the PLANET. We aim to keep you informed about how you can save energy in your home.

In this issue, you will hear about households already making savings, find out who your energy advisor is and what she can do for you, how the project came about and give you some easy tips on saving energy.

2008 began with an announcement from the energy suppliers that FUEL PRICES were going to continue to RISE. WASP is here to help you minimise the impact of price increases on your household budget.

If you read anything in this newsletter that you want to comment on or find out more about, please contact the project at the addresses given.

Jennifer MacLeod
Chair WASP Group

If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter in larger text please contact Brid McKibben: 07920 437526

Brid started visiting houses the last week of November after completing the energy awareness course. You can read some of the feedback from those visited in the letters section of this newsletter.

The most common assistance given has been the use of the programme timer controls for heating and hot water systems. Some folk have them on constantly and some not enough. Most people do not have the time to sit down to work them out but once shown they are easy to use. It is best to set them to suit your daily and weekly needs and then leave them alone. However, if your daily pattern changes, they are also easy to change once you know how.

Another tip concerns the controls of the storage heaters. These are the opposite of the timers - they look relatively simple but are actually difficult to use correctly and need changed daily.

If changes are made in supplier tariffs, this results in letters from them. The information in these letters is not always easy to understand but in most cases all it takes is a phone call to get clarification. This again is something a visit can help with as changes can be confusing and it is difficult to know the right questions to ask.

energy visits



know where your kids are . . .

tell them about the clubs and activities waiting for them at the Westend Community Centre. Our trained youth workers and volunteers run:

Monday	Youth Café	S1 - S6	4.00pm - 6.30pm
Tuesday	Youth Café	S1 - S6	4.00pm - 6.30pm
	Tuesday Club (Main Hall)	P1 - P3	5.00pm - 6.00pm
Wednesday	Youth Club	P4 - P7	7.00pm - 8.00pm
		S1 - S6	8.30pm - 10.00pm
Thursday	Youth Café	S1 - S6	4.00pm - 6.30pm
Friday	Drop In Centre	S1 - 25yrs	8.00pm - 11.00pm
Saturday	Drop In Centre	S1 - 25yrs	8.00pm - 11.00pm

If you've got an idea or can give a few hours to help organise constructive activities for the children in our neighbourhood contact:

Mandy at the Westend Community Centre on **884896**

email: info@westendcommunitycentre.org.uk

or check out our website: www.westendcommunitycentre.org.uk

Tackling Anti-social behaviour in Communities Together -- Lets build a better community

If you have a problem with anti-social behaviour contact the POLICE, call into your LOCAL HOUSING OFFICE or call the CALL CENTRE on 01349 882366



Play schemes are run in the westend community centre

during Easter, Summer and October holidays for age 12 and under. Contact for further details.

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what Brid can do for you

Brid is a funny name (*pronounced Breeidge*) but I will answer to almost anything that sounds the same. I come from a rural background so am well used to the idea of being energy efficient. My training is in electrical engineering and my role is to help you save money and energy.

- ▶ I can make sure you are being charged the least amount possible for electricity and gas.
- ▶ A lot of houses have heat and hot water controls with no instructions - I can demonstrate how to use these and advise on the best timings for your household.
- ▶ There are many sources of help to make your house energy efficient. I can advise on grant aid for you to increase your insulation to the recommended level.
- ▶ If you have a problem meeting your fuel costs or are unable to heat your home adequately I can help you organise payment plans.
- ▶ Many homes already use energy saving light bulbs but I have more FREE ones to distribute and also devices to use with your PC which will ensure the monitor, printer and any other peripheral devices do not remain on standby after you have switched your PC off.

If you have any queries about saving energy please contact me below:

Brid McKibben
 West End Community Centre
 Alness IV17 ORS
 Telephone:
 07920 437526
 email:
 brid@westalnesssave.org.uk

WASP launch event...

although the idea of WASP started in May 2007, a lot of background work had to happen before we could officially start the year long project. The project was launched to the public on Monday 12th November. Councillor Carolyn Wilson and Russell Ogg from Scottish Hydro Electric spoke about how the project would bring benefits not only to the people of Alness but to people across the Highlands.

The Highland Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (HEEAC) based in Inverness was on hand to give out free energy saving light bulbs and advice. Scottish Hydro Electric had some clever energy saving devices on show including an eco kettle which boils only the amount of water needed (this is the prize in our competition (see over), a device which measures the energy used in the house and a gadget which switches appliances off standby. The Highland Council had a representative from Money Advice attending to talk to residents regarding money management and budgeting.

Local residents who came to the launch had the chance to enter a **FREE PRIZE DRAW** to win an energy efficient fridge freezer supplied by WASP and £40 of vouchers kindly donated by the Co-op. The lucky winner was **Mr Frank Coupar**, Firhill. Like many others, Frank is currently using our services to help him reduce his energy usage.

We had wind up torches to give away as **PRIZES** to the children whose pictures and word puzzles were entered in a draw. The lucky winners for these were (pictured)

Courtney McClung age 2½, **Tegan McClung** age 4 & **Chelsea Goulding** age 7.

Despite the bad weather, we had a good turnout for the launch and over 20 local folk signed up to receive an Energy Advice Visit.



the history behind WASP

The **West Alness SAVE (Save And Value Energy) Project** also known as **WASP** was born out of a desire by the five Residents Associations in West Alness - Coulpark Residents Association (CRA), Firhill Residents Association (FRA), Kirkside Area Residents (KAR), Westford Action Group (WAG) and West Alness Residents Association (WARA) - to help residents save money by saving energy. This coincided with the Highland Council's drive to reduce fuel poverty in the Highlands and the availability of funding from the main energy supplier in the area - Scottish Hydro Electric - for the promotion of energy efficiency. These seven partners set up WASP in May 2007 under the Alness Initiative umbrella.

Fuel poverty means living in a cold home. It means being afraid to turn on the heating or use the cooker or to have hot water in case you are unable to pay the bill. The results are debt, ill health, misery and discomfort. Statistics show that there is a **higher than average occurrence of fuel poverty in the Highlands** largely due to low incomes, geography and type of housing.

By being clever about using energy (being energy efficient) we can reduce fuel poverty by making sure that the energy you pay for is used efficiently. It's not all about having fancy devices or paying out huge amounts for windmills! It's about seeing where there is help available to make your home energy efficient. Energy suppliers provide help, as do local and national government bodies. **WASP now employs an Energy Advisor** to wade through all these possibilities to see which measures would suit you best.

Scottish Hydro Electric gave money to four year long community projects to work towards ways of reducing fuel usage in their community. There are two in Scotland, one in England and one in Wales. WASP is the only one that decided to employ an Energy Advisor. The five Residents Associations in West Alness wanted to help people help themselves by showing them how to bring costs down and keep them down so, the benefit of having the project would remain in the community after the project ends in October 2008.

The other thing that will remain in the Community after the successful target of a 5% reduction in energy usage is reached over the year is a possible **community bonus of up to £10,000** from Scottish Hydro Electric. So please help us make the best use of this year to reduce energy consumption, save money and **make money for our community**.

ENERGY SAVING

What can I do today to save energy and money that won't cost me anything?

- 1 Switch appliances off standby when not in use. (A device is on standby if you have switched it off using a remote control but not switched the power off at the socket, the device will usually have a small red light indicating it is on standby.)
- 2 Always switch off lights when leaving a room.
- 3 Close the curtains at night to keep heat in (making sure curtains go behind radiators).
- 4 Only boil the amount of water needed - measure by the cupful when filling your kettle. Always use the minimum amount.

How much energy is really saved by switching appliances off standby?

It varies depending on the appliance. Modems and old style answer machines use the same amount of energy when in use or on standby so you could save 100% of the cost by switching them off when not in use. Freeview boxes, DVD and video players also use 60-90% in standby, other devices use less. A rough guide is that you could save almost 10% on your electricity bill by turning all your appliances off at the mains instead of leaving them on standby.

What other things can be done to my house to make it more energy efficient?

The best option is to get insulation. About 35% of heat is lost through the walls and 25% through the roof. If you are a council tenant, your house should already be insulated but some may not be to the required standard. It is important the council knows about this so it can be upgraded.

It costs a lot less to insulate your house than you might think (a few hundred pounds) and it may cost nothing depending on your circumstances. You will recoup the cost in your bills after only a few years.

What temperature should my hot water be?

Water should reach a minimum of 60°C once to kill the legionella bug. Some boilers do not have a temperature scale displayed so seek advice if unsure. If your display shows more than 70°C you can afford to turn it down, this will save energy and money.

How much energy is saved by using low energy light bulbs?

A low energy light bulb uses 80% less energy than normal bulbs and usually lasts 10 times longer.



What rate of low energy light bulbs replaces the standard bulbs?

Normal Bulbs	Energy Saving Bulbs
25W <input type="checkbox"/>	6W <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
40W <input type="checkbox"/>	7-10W <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
60W <input type="checkbox"/>	11-14W <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
100W <input type="checkbox"/>	20-25W <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Energy saving light bulbs don't fit a lot of my light fittings. Where can I get energy saving bulbs?

WASP has standard 15W and 20W bulbs to distribute free or they are available in most supermarkets. More decorative ones can be bought in Pattersons and on some websites:

- www.dots-online.co.uk
- www.lightbulbs-direct.com
- www.BLTdirect.com
- www.efficientlight.co.uk
- www.greenshop.co.uk

Dear Brid

I just wanted to thank you for the help you've been to me regarding my fuel bills.

I was concerned after switching to Scottish Gas that my fuel bills were higher and that they had also increased my direct debits by a huge amount.

Because you noticed errors in the meter readings, Scottish Gas have now reassessed my bills, dropped my direct debit amounts and refunded me over £250! It involved quite a few phone calls and some confusing letters but you helped me understand it all.

Many thanks AR, Firhill