



Local Museum takes steps to reduce carbon emissions

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse benefitted from sending staff on the Carbon Change Agents Programme to learn how to identify activities that produce carbon emissions, create a carbon footprint and draw up an action plan to make changes and reduce emissions.



Hannah Jackson, Sustainability Project Officer at the Museum of Rural Life at Gressenhall is part of a team working on energy efficiency and sustainability within Norfolk County Councils' Museums and Archaeology Service. She attended the Carbon Change Agents Programme as part of a regional programme of work with rural life museums. The Carbon Change Agents Programme provided an ideal opportunity to develop greater understanding and knowledge of the museum's issues relating to carbon emissions.

Background:

The Sustainability Project as a whole was developed on the back of some carbon footprinting work conducted by the Rural Museums Network. Although the museum had had some carbon footprinting work carried out they had never truly understood the principles behind this. The Gressenhall carbon change project has focused on issues of environmental sustainability behind the scenes and interpreting the wider agenda to visitors.

Benefits:

Hannah says that the programme has been of immense benefit in terms of developing her understanding and knowledge relating to the issues of carbon emissions.

It enabled her to produce her own carbon footprint of Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and understand the different scopes involved. (Scopes are the categories used to define whether emissions are produced directly from your own activities, produced by others but still under your control or whether they are related to your business as a consequence of your actions but occur at sources that you do not own or control.)

Next steps:

Since attending the course, Hannah has been helping other (non-rural life) museums across the region to become more sustainable. She is using a carbon footprinting tool and step by step guide developed by Groundwork Derby and Derbyshire specifically for museums (<http://bit.ly/greenmuseums>). The step-by step tool encompassed all of usual carbon footprinting approaches whilst also focussing on areas of specific concern for museums.

This easy system measures current energy usage, identifies areas for improvement, prioritises them and sets targets for change. Within a matter of a few hours a museum can be guided through the process and obtain very practical and tangible outcomes suited to their site.

From this work Hannah provided more informed and considered advice to other museums using the pre-formed carbon footprint tool, and also influenced decisions relating to carbon base-lining for museums at a national level. (Base-lining is when you establish the status of your emissions at a fixed point in time, often called a carbon footprint).

What was learnt on the course?

Hannah has enjoyed understanding the principles of carbon footprinting and developing her understanding of the options relating to energy efficiencies and carbon reduction methods. These include:

- Improved understanding of the impact of climate change.
- Learning about the different scopes of emissions.
- Understanding the importance of setting boundaries when measuring carbon footprints.
- Hearing new ideas on how to start implementing changes.
- Realising the benefits of using another online tool, 'SMEasure' to record and analyse weekly energy consumption for Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.

What impacts arising from the organisations activities were identified?

Hannah has greater confidence to assess the impacts of the organisation and identify where the greatest savings could be made.

The Museum has recognised the need to find an alternative to its current heavy reliance upon oil for heating and is endeavouring to reduce its electricity usage.

What changes were made?

Changes were made with the support of the volunteer 'Gressenhall Green Team':

- Working to reduce electricity usage and exploring the feasibility for a biomass boiler on site.
- Installing loft insulation in the grade II listed workhouse and other heated outbuildings.
- Installing draught proofing on windows and doors in office spaces.



What impact did the changes make?

Comments from staff have been positive. The impact of the changes will be monitored over months and years to compare future usage with past readings.

What plans are there for future reduction of carbon emissions?

The Museum has made successful applications to the Carbon and Energy Reduction Fund (CERF). The Cultural Services Department is developing examples of best practice to support improvements in other museums as this is a significant area of work for Norfolk County Council. Individuals and teams are working on energy efficiency work, sharing best practice and offering support through Sustainability groups.

Hannah says 'I was most grateful for the opportunity, not only to understand the principles of carbon footprinting, but also to develop my understanding of the options relating to energy efficiencies and carbon reduction methods.'

And would she recommend the LCIC to other organisations? 'Most certainly!'

Contact Hannah Jackson at hannah.jackson@norfolk.gov.uk

The Carbon Change Agents Programme

The Carbon Change Agents Programme was delivered by the Low Carbon Innovation Centre as part of the Evolve programme. The programme focussed on small businesses that were interested to assess the carbon impact of their activities and make some positive changes. The programme supported organisations and taught them how undertake regular energy use monitoring, calculate their own carbon footprint, identify areas for change and make an action plan.

For more information please visit www.lcic.com

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