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Committee Regional Sustainability Committee
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World Environment Day

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on Greater Wellington initiatives to celebrate World Environment Day, June 5th, 2008.

2. Background

New Zealand will be the international home for World Environment Day this year with Wellington being the host city. The event is held annually in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme to raise awareness and promote action on environmental issues. This year's theme is climate change with a focus on low carbon economies and lifestyles. "Kick the Habit" (the carbon habit) is the international slogan for the event.

For Greater Wellington, the event is an opportunity to advance our own sustainability activities and messages with communities and businesses, both through the extensive media focus that comes with the event and funding available from the Ministry for the Environment (MFE). Applications have been made to this fund for all of the projects described below.

3. Greening Greytown

The aim of this project is to help one community – Greytown – “kick the carbon habit” and become more sustainable by assisting the people of the town to reduce their personal carbon footprint and adopt more environmentally friendly life styles. The project was initiated by Greytown residents to draw attention to environmental issues with the suggestion that World Environment Day could be connected to Arbor Day on July 2nd by a programme of community events.

A cross-divisional team developed the idea with the intention now being to stage a combination of initiatives and events to encourage people to address all aspects of their personal and household behaviour relating to “carbon”. This will cover everything from home heating to plastic bags to locally produced

food and products. It will involve every household in the town and associated rural postal delivery area (1000 households). The project will help Greytown become “Greentown”, not just for once day, but for a month and for some time thereafter. The proposal will:

- Reduce the amount of energy used in Greytown and promote greater energy efficiency.
- Help reduce household emissions from domestic fires.
- Offset emissions and promote biodiversity through native tree planting.
- Reduce the use of plastic bags and packaging.
- Encourage greater use of public transport.
- Encourage the purchasing and use of local products and food
- Promote the use of common household products that have less environmental impact.

The key components of this project are:

- “Greentown” launch event on World Environment Day and the distribution of a *Kick the Carbon Habit* pack to all households (by horse and cart!). This is a reusable shopping bag (made from recycled materials) and containing energy saver light bulbs, a tree, and environmentally friendly consumer products. Information on the project, household heating, energy efficiency and so on is also included.
- Green Stamps – Each pack will also contain a card enabling the holder to acquire a “green stamp” every time they use their shopping bag or purchase “green” or locally produced goods at participating retail outlets. Completed cards will go into a draw to win a range of “kick the habit” prizes including a heat pump, 10 household energy assessments, and a home energy saving retrofit (from EECA). Local businesses that participate in the scheme will obtain profile and marketing advantages through appropriate advertising. As well as having an environmental benefit, this is intended to assist the businesses and encourage the consumption of locally produced items.
- Displays and information on sustainable living at the Library throughout the month.
- Tangata whenua will celebrate matariki on the weekend following World Environment Day.
- The town supermarket will become the “green grocer” for the month, cutting out all plastic bags and replacing these with branded paper bags, and stocking a range of environmentally friendly products (e.g., worm farms).

- Kurunui College will run a technology challenge for students on “getting rid of plastic”.
- To reduce vehicle fuel use and emissions we are investigating ways to increase the use of public transport in the Wairarapa by Greytown residents. It is hoped local garages will provide engine tune-ups at a reduced price and we are exploring the provision of free bicycles at weekends.
- Daily updates on the town’s air quality from Greater Wellington’s mobile air quality station will be published locally as well as on our web site.
- Events to offset emissions and promote ecosystem health and biodiversity. This will include opportunities to plant the 1000 trees given out to households in public areas (kowhai which are habitat trees for tui and keruru). Greytown primary school and Kurunui College will also hold planting days at the schools or on the Papawai Stream. Greater Wellington biodiversity staff will provide advice and information on the management of pests and looking after native areas. A brochure promoting a walk around the town’s historic trees will be published.
- On Arbor Day South Wairarapa District Council and community members will plant trees in a re-enactment of the original planting in 1890 at the town cemetery. Greytown is the home of Arbor Day.

The Council is currently considering how it should communicate with households and individuals to encourage more environmentally friendly lifestyles. Most efforts to this end, at a central government level and through Be The Difference, have thus far have been aimed at a mass audience. The project provides an excellent opportunity to test the effectiveness of a different approach. Focusing on a manageable number of households and addressing them directly, we can test a more direct approach. It is intended that a number of Greytown residents are interviewed both beforehand and afterwards to measure their experiences and changes in opinion or awareness as a result of the project. Students from Victoria University will be offered the opportunity to devise and implement this. We will also follow up over subsequent months to assess the longevity of changes made. If Greytown is a success, it could be a model for future work of this kind.

The project provides an excellent opportunity to also market the services of Greater Wellington to the Greytown community. Implementation depends on MFE funding although it could continue in a somewhat reduced form were the funds not to eventuate. This would require additional sponsorship from interested businesses.

4. Greater Wellington Green Day

The aim of this project is to reinforce and reinvigorate the sustainability actions occurring within Greater Wellington and to promote the “kick the carbon habit” message of World Environment Day, using Greater Wellington Councillors and staff as the “messengers”. It will also deliver real energy reductions in around 400 homes across the region. The proposal is to provide

Greater Wellington staff with (largely) the same “*Kick the Carbon Habit*” reusable shopping bag and contents as Greytown on World Environment Day. Staff will be encouraged to use public transport to and from work on the day, with the brightly coloured bags being very visible. The use of the contents of the bag at home will lead to reductions in energy use and, ultimately, CO2 emissions.

Greater Wellington is undertaking the Communities for Climate Protection scheme and is working diligently to reduce its energy use and CO2 emissions as an organisation. This proposal will help that enterprise by extending it to the homes and families of Councillors and staff. The Green Day will also include a range of internal events and activities to highlight for staff the actions that Greater Wellington is taking to be more sustainable that arise from our CCP ‘corporate’ targets.

5. Makoura Stream Care Group

The Makoura Stream Care group in Masterton is a new group of residents, landowners, schools and agencies with the common aim of cleaning up the Makoura Stream. The group is not yet officially part of *Take Care* with their funding commencing on July 1st. However, they have got off to a great start by applying for and winning World Environment Day funds for their opening event. Seven thousand dollars has been allocated for planting alongside the stream. This will be lead by the Catchment Management Division and community members associated with this group.

6. Communication

The projects discussed here all have a significant communication aspect to them. Assuming funding is forthcoming from Ministry for the Environment, these aspects will be developed further as the projects are refined. The Greytown project in particular is an opportunity to communicate Greater Wellington’s environmental purpose and brand to a whole community. Our Communications Department, which is an integral part of this project, will be managing this aspect.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

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