



Sustainable Development Business News from MEBC

First established in 1992, MEBC is a business network run as a not-for-profit, limited liability company by Midlands regional business people to promote sustainable development as a sensible business proposition.

www.mebconline.com

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The MEBC wishes all its members and friends a splendid Christmas and successful New Year.

MEBC Welcomes New Members

We are delighted to welcome into membership:

Greenwatt Technology Limited
Danjim Limited
New World Solar Installations

Profound Words from Stewart Davies at MEBC Dinner



Considered by many to be one of the best business/economic speeches on sustainable development in recent times in the UK, Dr Stewart Davies, Business Commissioner of the Sustainable Development Commission, said: "Just 25 months ago, Professor Nick Stern published his report on the Economics of Climate Change. He asserted that the costs of urgently taking the steps to mitigate climate change would be a small fraction of the cost to future generations of the impact of rising atmospheric greenhouse gas levels left on its current course. When the Report was launched I described it as the "business case for the next industrial revolution".

But the sheer scale of the figures Nick Stern called for to be invested in this "low carbon industrial revolution" were staggering. So large as to paralyse action.

The report states – *“Ultimately, stabilisation – at whatever level – requires that annual emissions be brought down to more than 80% below current levels. This is a major challenge, but sustained long-term action can achieve it at costs that are low in comparison to the risks of inaction. Central estimates of the annual costs of achieving stabilisation between 500 and 550ppm CO₂e are around 1% of global GDP, if we start to take strong action now.”*

1% of the global GDP is about 30 trillion pounds. That’s £300 billion per annum to bring us onto the track of carbon emissions needed to avoid disastrous climate change. He challenged us to early action – the next 10 years are critical. According to this maths, a mind-boggling 3 trillion pounds - 3 million million pounds has to be spent over the next decade to address this crisis!

The immediate aftermath of the Stern Report’s publication was, frankly, disappointing. At least part of the explanation for the lack-lustre response was this paralysis factor - 3 million million pounds.



And that’s where I have a “Tale of Two Crises”. According to the Bank of England just 5 weeks ago, the world’s financial firms had lost £1.8 trillion as a result of the continuing credit crisis. And 3 million million pounds just happens to be what the USA Government is reported as having just spent to address the consequences of the current Credit Crisis!

Previously unthinkable sums of money have been identified as necessary, funded from past and future taxes and committed, it seems, at just a stroke of a pen. Governments across the world have taken immediate measures to address the Credit Crisis that have been planned and executed with a speed that would simply have been thought impossible in peace-time. In just days, the deals have gone from brainstorm to cash. A truly remarkable rescue exercise and one we all have a massive stake in, so we must hope it is effective.

Three million million pounds spent to address the Credit Crisis! So, now, what is the parallel for the money that Professor Nick Stern identified as needed to address the Climate Change Crisis in the critical next 10 years? Certainly, Stern can no longer be accused of calling for “unrealisable” amounts of rescue funds, or “unprecedented” levels of international cooperation.

So could this be a positive impact of the credit crisis: opening up thinking of world leaders that global crises can be acted on with appropriate urgency and massive resources. Just imagine if that opening of minds, coinciding with the incoming US Administration under President Obama created an historic opportunity to lead international action on Climate Change.

The full transcript can be downloaded from the Document Library of www.mebconline.com.

Ian Aspley, MEBC Member of the Year

Ian Aspley was championed as “Member of the Year” at the MEBC annual dinner where his retirement as Chairman was also announced.



Ian is seen centre of the picture with (left) MEBC CEO David Middleton and guest keynote speaker, Dr Stewart Davies, Business Commissioner of the Sustainable Development Commission.

The citation read by BBC Midlands TV news personality Kay Alexander read “This is a combined note of celebration to honour someone who has given great service to the MEBC for many years – and a sad note because our MEBC member of the Year is standing down from a duty he has fulfilled with great aplomb.

Linked to his retirement at an astonishingly early age from Marley Eternit, Ian Aspley will also be relinquishing his role as Chairman of MEBC but not losing contact or future involvement. Our Award this year recognises the support, guidance, encouragement and time he has given not just this year but throughout his period of office”.

Though retiring from the Chairmanship, Ian will retain his active involvement with the MEBC.

Pat Laughlin, New MEBC Chairman



A staunch supporter of the MEBC for many years and a Director for the last eight, Pat Laughlin was recently unanimously voted into the role of Chairman at a recent meeting of the Directors.

Now a specialist freelance consultant, Pat was previously a Director of Advantage West Midlands and prior to that held senior management roles at Toyota UK and the BBC at Pebble Mill. She is seen at the 2006 MEBC Annual Dinner when she was voted MEBC Member of the Year. With Pat are (left to right) Ian Aspley (retiring MEBC Chairman); Kay Alexander (BBC TV News Personality); Gregory Barker (Shadow Minister for the Environment); David Middleton (MEBC CEO).

In a statement, Pat said: “I have been a member of the MEBC network for over 8 years and during that time I (and my business) have been able to take advantage of the range of networking events visits, seminars and workshops arranged and sponsored by MEBC. These events and activities provide a wonderful opportunity to keep up to date and to make sure that I can make my views known (and know that they count).

MEBC remains one of the best known independent business networks in the UK and I feel very privileged to have been invited to take over as Chair in 2009. Ian Aspley our current Chair will be a hard act to follow as he brought much knowledge and experience from his role in a major business.

My own business experience has been wide-ranging. A biochemist and Information Scientist by training, I have held senior management roles in publishing, mining, the automotive industry with Toyota at Burnaston, and broadcasting with the BBC at Pebble Mill.

Before setting up my own business in 2003 I also ‘served time’ in the public sector as Business Development Director with the West Midlands RDA. This gave me a good insight into the working of public investment and programmes of business support.

I have been a practical environmentalist for many years. However my key interest in the network has been to find ways in which businesses can both improve their environmental credentials and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the need for and increasing interest and investment in environmental technologies. Too often it would seem that UK businesses have not been able to take advantage of new markets and this has been particularly true of the growing wind energy market which is dominated by businesses from Denmark and Germany.

The uptake and growth in markets for renewables technology in other European countries has been driven by focused Government investment. To date, the level of interest and investment in the UK has been much smaller and somewhat scattergun. MEBC has been at the forefront of introducing new programmes to support the growth of environmental technologies and resource efficiency in the UK. For example MEBC was able to access Government funding to establish NISP, a waste recycling and management programme, WindSupply, a project aimed at establishing a UK supply chain with the German and Danish wind supply industry, and EBOP (Environmental Business Opportunities Programme) which has helped local businesses establish new services and products.

Both NISP and WindSupply became national programmes sponsored by the DTi (BERR) and I am proud to be one of the MEBC members who helped to establish the WindSupply project.

MEBC has also been recognised in an independent evaluation as being the most effective provider of services funded by the Government's BREW (Business Resource Efficiency and Waste) programme.

There is a well held view in the public sector that business to business networking is one of the most effective ways of developing business innovation. As an established and well known network MEBC has a vital role to play. It also has an important role as a business champion, lobbyist and advocate for the business and the environmental technologies sector. For this reason earlier in the year I supported the proposal that we should affiliate to the Business Council for Sustainable Development - United Kingdom (BCSD-UK). BSCD-UK is the UK arm of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development which is supported by a large number of the world's multi-national companies.

MEBC has just held its most successful annual dinner with over 130 attendees and good press coverage. The annual dinner is our public face and recognition that we are a strong regional player.

I hope to be able to build on this success. However MEBC belongs to all its members and should be a resource which can provide services and support which benefit you. We value your view and should like to hear if you have ideas on the future direction the network should take or the types of event or activity which would most benefit you. Please let us know.

One of my first tasks as your Chair will be to support our Chief Executive, David Middleton, to leverage-in additional funding to ensure that we can continue to provide a wide-ranging programme for members and develop innovative project ideas which support business development in the West Midlands.

Dinner 2008 Celebrates Business Successes



Kay Alaxender has become a major feature of the success of the MEBC Dinner ever since her first appearance when she pounced on an unsuspecting Janet Bailey who for a rare moment in her life was speechless! Janet was the first of Kay's now annual line up of "victims" who are unaware until the moment of calling that they are to be interviewed about what contributions they and their companies have made to sustainable development.

The 2008 line up of victims seen with Kay are (left to right) Shameem Kazmi of Danjim Limited, an astute young entrepreneur whose Birmingham based company specialises in highly environmentally friendly products such as their ecofriendly packaging that dissolves in water and his clothing made from bamboo!

Paul Wakefield is from Grant UK which has an award winning Vortex range of oil-fired condensing boilers to the latest renewable technologies. Grant focuses on providing eco-friendly solutions to the problem of rising energy costs and CO2 emissions. Part of the product range is offered by their hosts at the dinner, New World Solar of Chelmsley Wood.

Keith Sexton is from Amey plc which employs over 8,000 people and is a leading integrated support service provider based in Oxford. Amey aims to meet the challenge of sustainable development by managing the social, environmental and wider economic impacts arising from our business activity with the intention of making a meaningful contribution to a more sustainable future. Amey is currently working with Birmingham City Council.

Dan Poulson is from Biogen Greenfinch which is pioneering Integrated Anaerobic Digestion processes and leads the way in green solutions to food waste. Their biogas plant is integrated into the farming environment, enabling a 'closed loop' approach to food waste recycling. They have an AWM funded demonstration project in Ludlow that MEBC members visited during the year.

Reflecting on the Dinner, Mark Pearce, Corporate Director for Economic Regeneration at AWM, said: *"Interesting speeches, conversation and a real desire to get something done"*.

Nick Hillard of the University of Warwick said: *"An enjoyable and enlightening dinner promoting all that is positive about the West Midlands environmental technologies and services sector."*

Andrew Lancaster from Anthony Collins Solicitors commented: *"This was the first MEBC Environmental Award Dinner that I have attended as a guest of Faber Maunsell and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening. It was particularly interesting to me to hear the experiences of a diverse range of companies on environmental matters towards the end of the evening and I am sure that this should be continued and perhaps extended in future events."*

Wolseley Visit a Sell-out

Under its banner of the Midland's branch of the Business Council for Sustainable Development – United Kingdom, MEBC staged a second visit to the excellent Wolseley Sustainable Building Center in Leamington.

This was a sell-out event with a strict maximum number of attendees stipulated by Wolseley. "It was" said MEBC CEO David Middleton "a shame we had one or two "no shows" who denied people we had turned away the chance of being in the group".

Tom Jordan of Lorien Engineering Solutions said: *"An informative and enthusiastic presentation linked to a wide cross-section of sustainable technologies viewable under, and on top of, one roof. An afternoon well spent"*.

Steve Hemmings of Lafarge Plasterboard said: *"It was a rare opportunity to see a wide variety of sustainable building technologies well presented on one site. It is encouraging to see a major player making a substantial business commitment to sustainable construction. It signals strong defiance of any notion that the industry can ill afford such practice in the current economic climate."*

Guest Speaker Reveals Another Regional Gem at General Meeting

MEBC members are offered opportunity at MEBC General Meetings to tell others what their businesses are seeking to achieve in terms of a contribution to sustainable development. Occasionally this process turns up some real surprises and the General Meeting staged in Birmingham and hosted by Eversheds was a classic example when Shameem Kazmi of Birmingham based Danjim Limited spoke.

Shameem's company specialises in finding new solutions to problems and then taking them to market. His dissolvable packaging and clothes made from bamboo fibres fascinated the audience.

Key speaker was MEBC CEO David Middleton who said it was a long time since he had spoken at an MEBC event. His theme was that sustainable development is not "just" about climate change as many currently seem to think but about how we can sustain our life on our planet when we are dealing with a number of challenges which are all converging at roughly the same time. He gave evidence of how climate change, resource depletion, growing populations, the credit crunch, and other issues are creating a unique situation that calls for unique answers.

Mark Clemson of New World Solar said: *"As a new member of the MEBC I am greatly encouraged to find likeminded people who through business, innovation and their passion, are committed to*

understanding the impacts of climate change, and are taking action now. The meeting was great for networking, and an real opportunity to understand what other organisations are doing with regard to the sustainability agenda. An evening well spent".

Nick Cummings of Ener-G Plc said he found the meeting to be *"very friendly, welcoming and informative"*.

Birmingham Post Seeks News for New Sustainability Page

MEBC welcomes the new style Birmingham Post's commitment to sustainable development with a regular Thursday series of pages featuring "Sustainable Industries" and how regional businesses are responding to the challenges of sustainable development.

MEBC is committed to helping the Post with this and would welcome any ideas from MEBC members for news items that we can feed through.

Birmingham's First Eco Village Wins National Award!

MEBC member New World Solar Installations is a partner in the Summerfield Eco-village Partnership, winner of the Public Sector category of The National Energy Efficiency Awards 2008. The prestigious Awards ceremony, held on 2nd December at the Globe Theatre in London, showcased the innovative energy efficiency work of 42 finalists across the Award's 10 categories.

Family Housing Association (Birmingham) Ltd received the award in recognition for their £2.3 million Eco Village project in the Summerfield area of the city, working in partnership with Birmingham City Council, Urban Living, New World Solar and local residents.

The Eco Village project evolved when local residents became concerned about their rising fuel bills and desire to tackle climate change at a local level. Between February 2007 to March 2008, solar panels, super insulation, energy efficient heating and lighting were fitted completely free of charge to 329 owner occupier homes to help reduce fuel poverty for people on low incomes.

It is estimated that the eco installations will deliver 60% of each household's hot water per annum and significantly reduce fuel bills. The project also created a number of employment opportunities for local residents.

The Award Judges said: "A fantastic partnership approach, with a high number of innovative communication methods. A worthy winner!" MEBC hopes to stage a location visit there in the New Year.

SMEs urged to take advantage of interest free loans to cut costs and carbon footprint

Leading businessman and Dragons' Den investor, Theo Paphitis is urging small businesses to say "I'm in" to interest free loans of up to £200,000 from the Carbon Trust.

A £31 million pot is now available for businesses to reduce their carbon footprint – helping them to buy the energy-saving equipment that can cut costs as well as help them to take action on climate change.

Theo Paphitis said: "As a Dragon I know a great business opportunity when I see one and think only a fool would say 'I'm out' to the Carbon Trust's offer of an interest free loan to reduce your business's carbon footprint. The current economic climate means making your business more energy efficient is vital for improving your bottom line as well as making your company as environmentally sustainable as possible."

Theo Paphitis is supporting the Carbon Trust by donating his time to appear in adverts to be broadcast across national and regional radio stations as part of its campaign that began on Monday 10th November to raise awareness of the interest free business loans available.

The Carbon Trust loans are unsecured, interest-free and repayable over a period of up to four years and help small businesses upgrade to more energy efficient equipment in the most cost-effective way – reducing energy bills and cutting their carbon footprint.

Minister for Competitiveness and Small Business, Shriti Vadera said: "It is a very testing time for British businesses facing a global downturn. Investing in energy-saving equipment allows businesses to cut costs, reduce energy bills and take action on climate change. This is one way that SMEs can strengthen their businesses to reduce costs now and for the future".

Hugh Jones, Solutions Director at the Carbon Trust, said: "We know that SMEs want to play their part in tackling climate change and reduce their energy costs at the same time, but the current economic climate is making it harder for small businesses to find sources of funding.

"Our loans of up to £200,000 will finance the ambitious projects we know SMEs want to invest in and significantly reduce both their carbon emissions and their energy bills, helping them reduce operational costs and become more competitive. This paves the way for companies to take on projects such as large lighting installations, boilers projects, or multiple equipment purchases such as variable speed drives with compressors and heat recovery equipment."

The £31 million pot is nearly £10 million larger than the £21.5 million allocated in 2007/08. Loans allocated last year will reduce carbon emissions by over 60,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year and result in cost savings of nearly £9 million a year.

To date the Carbon Trust has helped business save around 17 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, with associated financial savings of around £1 billion. To find out more, businesses can call the advice line on 0800 085 2005 or visit the Carbon Trust website at <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/>

Environmental Sector Trade Mission to Romania

See attached flyer.

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CEO
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