



MEDIA RELEASE:
Thursday 05 June 2008

Green energy trailblazers show practical solutions to climate change

Despite escalating fuel prices and widespread concern over climate change, today less than three percent of the UK's energy needs are supplied by renewable energy technologies. Currently around 40 percent of the UK's carbon dioxide emissions come from heating, lighting and powering buildings and around 4.5 million people are living in fuel poverty, a figure that is growing. This year's UK finalists for the Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy are addressing these challenges head-on by rolling out energy efficiency schemes for homes and workplaces, boosting the market for renewable energy and making their schools sustainable.

The Ashden Awards showcase practical solutions to climate change and reward outstanding and innovative projects in the UK and developing countries. Winners will be announced on Thursday 19 June at a prestigious awards ceremony to be hosted by respected journalist Anna Ford and addressed by Sir David King, former chief scientific advisor to the government, and Wangari Maathai, founder of the Greenbelt Movement in Kenya and winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize.

Achievements by the 2008 UK finalists include: designing DIY kits for installing heat pumps; insulating 99 percent of a local council's social housing stock; insulating 37,000 properties in a local authority's poorest areas; training workplace teams to get energy-saving messages across to over 86,000 employees; saving over £14,000 a year in a school through green energy initiatives; and designing solar-powered fridges to store vaccines in developing countries.

Sarah Butler-Sloss, Executive Chair of the Awards said "These amazing finalists embrace a sense of urgency that needs to be reflected more widely in energy policy and practices — before it's too late. With stronger financial incentives and streamlined planning processes, we would see a lot more initiatives like these in the UK. Our role is to use these impressive finalists as exemplars to show what can be achieved."

The 2008 finalists are:

Sandhills Primary School, Oxfordshire, uses a pupils' watchdog energy team to help the school caretaker minimise energy consumption for heat and light. Pupils organise competitions and they helped raise funds for the wind turbine that is going to supply up to a quarter of the school's electricity needs. As pupil Joseph Jenkinson, 11 years, explains: "The Energy Team has an 'energy spies' rota to check everyone turns off lights, computer monitors and check that doors and windows are closed so we don't waste energy."

Ringmer Community College, East Sussex, has 200 of its secondary pupils opting to be badge-wearing 'eco reps'. Departments who waste or consume too much energy are named and shamed and their budgets are charged for each offence. Eco-coordinator, Steve Green, said: "The energy-saving agenda is pushed by everyone and applies to all areas of school life. We save thousands of pounds simply by switching off out-of-use lights and appliances, and our wind turbine and solar panels are very visible marks of our commitment to the green agenda."

The two local authorities that have reached this final stage are **Leeds City Council** and **Arun District Council, West Sussex**. Leeds is the second largest LA in the UK and has a long and impressive record of energy efficiency housing initiatives, particularly cavity wall and loft insulation, and efficient gas boiler installation. The council is over two-thirds along the way to the 2011 target of 30 per cent savings in household energy use. Arun's 15-year programme has upgraded 99 per cent of its social housing stock with insulation and double glazing, despite a limited budget for sustainable energy work. Staff in the authority's offices are using posters, quizzes, car pools and office bikes to reduce energy use.

In the commercial sector, an old **Cornish** tin mine is the setting for a thriving business producing ground source heat pumps. **Kensa Engineering** supplies kits for small-scale heat pumps that a DIY enthusiast or local plumber can install, with a 'slinky' pipe collecting heat from the ground that an electrical compressor pumps into an indoor space. "What could be more satisfying than turning on the heating and knowing that three quarters of the energy is not costing you a penny?" said satisfied customer and self-builder, Richard Lea.

Dulas, an employee-owned company in **mid-Wales**, has been pioneering renewable energy technology for over a quarter of a century. They design and install small hydro-power schemes, solar photovoltaic systems, wind turbines, and wood-fired heating. They have also designed a life-saving solar-powered refrigerator for storing vaccines in developing countries, and boast around 75 percent of the market, supplying the World Health Organisation and others.

In **Ayrshire**, the **Energy Agency** is using the part of the profits from a wind farm to help those on low income in rural areas to insulate their houses – draught proofing, lofts and cavity walls – and

help reduce crippling winter fuel bills. Mrs Gracie (Barr, Girvan) said: "The house is so much warmer now. Even my daughter says that, and she is the coldest person in the house! The energy saving tips were helpful and we now make sure the computer is switched off and only fill the kettle with as much water as we need."

Global Action Plan is a charity that works with teams of 'Environment Champions' in workplaces to help them reduce their carbon emissions through behaviour change. "Our programmes prove that small groups of people working together can create big change," the charity's CEO Trewin Restorick said. "Environment Champions get everyone in their business on board and the brilliant results speak for themselves." The programme is so far saving over 3,000 tonnes/year of CO₂ in direct energy savings and a further 9,300 tonnes/year from waste reduction (enough to fill about 45,000 bendy buses each year). These good habits adopted in the workplace are taken home, with up to three-quarters of employees changing their behaviour both at work and at home.

UK categories: **Local Authority:** Arun District Council; and Leeds City Council. **School:** Ringmer Community College, Lewes, East Sussex; and Sandhills Primary School, Oxfordshire. **Business:** Dulas, Powys, Wales; and Kensa Engineering, Truro, Cornwall. **Charity and Community:** Energy Agency, South Ayrshire; and Global Action Plan, London HQ.

-ends-

For further information on the 2008 Ashden Awards UK finalists (including case studies) and to schedule interviews, contact:

Monica M Hicks t: 020 84 59 60 12 m: 077 59 51 96 97 email: monica.hicks@ashdenawards.org
or Juliet Heller t: 01621 86 80 83 m: 079 46 61 61 50 Juliet.heller@ashdenawards.org

Photos online: http://www.ashdenawards.org/media/uk_photos/2008 Film footage of projects on request. A film of each project, including B-track ambient sound-only footage, will be available the day before the final ceremony.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- 1 The Ashden Awards are a UK-based charity that work to increase the use of local sustainable energy worldwide. They find, reward, and publicise the work of leading sustainable energy programmes working in the UK and across the developing world. For further information, including details on past winners, funders and supporters go to: www.ashdenawards.org The 2008 winners will be announced at the Ashden Awards on Thursday 19 June at the Royal Geographical Society.
- 2 First prize winners receive £30,000 and second prize winners receive between £10,000 and £15,000 to expand their sustainable energy programmes. The School prizes are £15,000 and £7,500.
- 3 Project summaries, case studies, and brief notes on each are available from the Ashden Awards Press Office, also at http://www.ashdenawards.org/UK_finalists_2008. Photographs for each project are available on the Ashden Awards website http://www.ashdenawards.org/media/uk_photos/2008
- 4 All international finalists from Brazil, China, Ethiopia, India, Tanzania, and Uganda will be in the UK for the ceremony and will be available for interview during that week by arrangement. International media, please contact: Ilana Cravitz tel: + 44 (0) 20 89 85 37 24 mob: + 44 (0)78 25 51 08 81 ilana.cravitz@ashdenawards.org Press release on the international finalists is at: http://www.ashdenawards.org/media/international_press_release_2008
- 5 Entries for the 2009 Ashden Awards open on 19 June 2008. Initially, expressions of interest should be lodged by 21 October 2008 for UK Awards, 28 October 2008 for International Awards and 2 December 2008 for UK Schools Award.