

Suffolk Woodfuel Cluster

Creating a sustainable woodfuel market



In support of the Government's commitment to combating climate change Suffolk County Council has embraced the concept of renewable energy and woodfuel in particular. It has made a commitment to install or replace boilers in its school buildings whenever the opportunity arises. The Council's commitment to woodfuel is being rolled out county-wide but the East Suffolk cluster provides a prime example of the possibilities, cost effectiveness and future potential of woodfuel in both the public and private sectors. The total number of schools now using woodfuel boilers in the area is now 11.

objectives

- To develop the woodfuel supply chain in Suffolk.
- To promote the use of woodfuel and provide advice to potential users.
- To advise woodfuel producers and suppliers on technical issues relating to production, quality, delivery and storage, including chip size, moisture content and logistics.
- To provide marketing support to woodfuel companies and woodfuel boiler installers.
- To advise members of Anglia Woodfuels – a company set up with a Defra Bio-Energy Infrastructure Scheme grant.
- To research woodfuel production and logistics.

actions

- A reliable source of quality woodfuel and a viable supply chain have been established.
- Establishment of renewable energy networks by Suffolk County Council including Renewables East, Wood Energy Ltd, Anglia Woodfuels and CLA.
- Six woodfuel boilers installed in East Suffolk schools including two new builds – Rendlesham and Cedars Park.
- Five more schools have had boilers installed as part of the East Suffolk cluster in 2007.
- Woodfuel display at Suffolk Agricultural Association's Fuels of the Future exhibition.

achievements

- The profile of woodfuel has been raised. Numbers of enquiries from landowners and rural businesses wanting woodfuel advice and to replace oil-fired boilers with wood burning alternatives is now running at 2-3 a day.
- The sharing of expertise between the woodfuel industry and potential customers has led to a greater understanding and confidence in the product.
- A woodfuel supply chain has been established to meet the need for high quality wood chip and pellets.

background

Woodfuel is a renewable source of energy that can make a contribution to achieving the UK Government's commitment to combating climate change by reducing carbon emissions. The East Suffolk Cluster contributes to Forestry Commission England's Woodfuel Strategy, which aims to bring an additional two million tonnes of wood into the market each year by 2020, saving 400,000 tonnes of carbon annually – enough to supply 250,000 homes with energy.

An increase in the use of woodfuel has the potential to enhance woodland biodiversity and to create economic opportunity in rural areas.

It is hoped that the success of the East Suffolk Cluster will enable expansion of the scheme into other areas of Suffolk.

quotes

"The East Suffolk cluster has been massively successful. The time is right for renewable woodfuel. It makes both environmental and economic sense. This has been a case of true partnership working and all partners should be congratulated for their roles in setting up this cluster. They have proved it will only work if every sector of the industry is fully supported."

Gary Battell, Woodland Advisory Officer at Suffolk County Council.

partners

Anglia Woodfuels
CLA
The Deer Initiative
Forestry Commission
FWAG
National Trust
Renewables East
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
Boiler installers: Ecoenergy, Energy Innovations, Wood Energy Ltd
Woodfuel suppliers: Eastern Woodfuel Ltd; Metal Fix Ltd; Priden Engineering Ltd

funding

Anglia Woodfuels
Bentwaters Parks / Eastern
Debach Enterprises Ltd
King Timber
Suffolk County Council
Woodfuel Ltd

lessons learnt

The need for more research and development became apparent in the areas of woodfuel delivery, storage and quality control. There was a need for integrated support to achieve a reliable, efficient and economically viable market. Until a critical mass of boiler installations is reached, woodfuel supply companies will struggle to operate economically.