

PRESS RELEASE 4th May 2007

Totnes Businesses Bang the Drum for the Environment

On Tuesday 1st of May an unusual crowd gathered in Rock-Solid Guitars & Drums on Babbage Road, Totnes. The aim was not to create a new band (although several attendees were itching to have a go on the fabulous drum kits on display) but to initiate the sharing of waste and resources between residents on the Totnes Industrial Estate through a 'business swapshop'.

Organised by Fiona Ward (Envision/TTT) and Jane Laffan (NISP), with support from SHDC and Transition Town Totnes (TTT), there were three main aims to the session. Firstly, to find out where one business's waste could be used by another. Cardboard was the most popular rubbish, with many companies having a ready supply of unwanted boxes, matched immediately with an apparently limitless demand by Pedrick's Removals (for packing) and PLUS (for shredding for horse bedding). This not only saves waste removal and new cardboard costs but also reduces landfill. Also, those that recycle their waste cardboard were surprised to find it often ends up being shipped to China for pulping, then back again as new boxes. Obviously local re-use is the best solution.

Besides waste, there was a wide range of spare resources on offer which included unused storage capacity, 20,000 biodegradable carrier bags, wooden pallets, manual labour, technical web expertise, delivery van capacity, engineering and injection moulding capacity, a fork lift truck and large, waterproof metal storage drums. Peter from Greenlife even brought along a brand new ink jet cartridge that was the wrong size for him and which was snapped up by Terry from NHBS Ltd. Trading was fierce and overall a match was found for 38 of the 55 items that were available or wanted – a fantastic outcome for the 10 businesses present.

Finally, the swapshop was a great way to find out who else was on the estate and what they did, with many business cards exchanged and sales opportunities discussed. The success of this session shows that businesses on the estate, and elsewhere in Totnes, are keen to reduce their environmental impacts and promote cross-business efficiency and trade. As Allen Legg from Ketta Ltd says *"I'm very glad I attended the swapshop, not only did I make some valuable contacts for some desperately needed packaging material but also found out who else I was sharing the industrial estate with! A very useful exercise, not only to help us all recycle our waste, but also to make some savings at the same time"*.

The sentiments are shared by Alan Johnson of Pedricks Removals & Logistics *"it was great to meet other business people during the swapshop, many of whom I pass on a daily basis without*

knowing who they are. To be able to pool resources and to utilise waste, labour & many other commodities together is invaluable. To find that cardboard boxes are being thrown out, when I drive 50 mile to purchase boxes for my business, seems madness - however I now have agreements in place to take boxes form businesses that throw theirs away - and are also charged for the privilege. I urge other business people to attend the next swapshop - you never know how you are going to save money!"

A number of other swapshops will be organised in Totnes in the coming months as part of the Transition Town Totnes initiative, and will be supported by a simple, internet-based swapshop tool.

Notes for Editors

1. For further information on the Swapshops please contact Fiona Ward on 07922 165 564 or FionaWardTTT@googlemail.com
2. For further information on NISP National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) see <http://www.nisp.org.uk/> or contact Jane Laffan on 07920 205 831.
3. Transition Town Totnes is a community initiative that is developing an Energy Descent Plan for Totnes to mitigate the impact of 'Peak Oil'. Further information can be found at www.transitiontowns.org/totnes or contact Fiona Ward on 07922 165 564 or at FionaWardTTT@googlemail.com .
4. For further information on 'Greening the Totnes Industrial Estate' please contact Carol Trant at South Hams District Council on 01803 861 267.