

Pupils in recycling swap shop

Green team swoops into action

Pupils from 10 schools in St.Helens are to run a new recycle swap shop scheme after receiving a slice of a £20,000 fund from Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) and Veolia Environmental Services, as part of their Community Resource Action Fund.

The money has been won by SHRINE (St Helens Recycling Initiative for the Neighbourhood). The funding will help the children to examine concerns with waste and recycling, including organising 20 'swap shops' where people can bring, buy and swap unwanted household items. They will also commission a recycling videogame.

The project has been developed by the Local Area Partnership for Creative Learning in which young people have developed skills for their views to be heard and influence decision makers on the climate change debate.

The schools involved are Allanson Street; Ashurst; Holy Spirit; Merton Bank; Nutgrove Methodist; St.Austin's; St.Marys & St.Thomas; St.Theresas; Thatto Heath primary schools and St.Cuthbert's Catholic Community College for Business & Enterprise.

The children's Climate Change Action Plan has already launched:

- * a new free recycling service for schools to collect paper, cardboard, plastics, cans and glass from 32 schools with plans to extend to the rest of the schools in 2011.
- * a house insulation scheme with support from St.Helens Council which has resulted in 18 cavities and 17 lofts being insulated reducing CO2 emissions by some 30 tonnes annually.
- * a scheme to share ideas with other school pupils at a Merseyside Sustainable Schools Conference held in the St.Helens Town Hall
- * a children's artwork programme depicting their worries and concerns about their future world is currently being displayed outside St.Helens Central train station. (supported and funded by BLISS - Better Lighting in Sustainable Streets Project)

Councillor Joe De Asha, Cabinet Member for Environmental Protection, said: "I am always encouraged by the enthusiasm and innovative ideas of young people when given the opportunity. More importantly they have ceased to be the 'environmentally educated' and have become 'environmental educators and legislators' in their own right. This project has been directed by young people who have developed the skills necessary to influence decision makers by creating a vehicle for their views to be heard on the climate change debate. It has demonstrated clearly how to turn a child's desire to protect the environment into practical actions. More importantly it shows how young people given the opportunity cease to be the 'environmentally educated' but become important 'environmental educators and legislators' in their own right."

The funding was made available to community sector and not-for-profit organisations who wish to undertake projects that demonstrate new and innovative approaches to sustainable waste management.