

## COMPANIES ACT 2006

After a consultation process lasting 8 years, the long awaited Companies Bill received Royal assent on 8th November 2006. The 2006 Act itself runs to over 700 pages and includes a number of significant changes. The vast majority of the provisions will come into force by October 2008. This Act consolidates company legislation, updates and clarifies the law in various areas, particularly in relation to directors' duties, which now include a requirement to be aware of the company's social and environmental impacts no matter the size of the company (including private companies). The Act also introduced the requirement for publicly traded companies to write a forward-looking business review, which should include information on environmental matters, employees and social issues to the extent necessary for shareholders to understand the likely future performance of the business. For more information on how the Companies Act 2006 will affect your business please visit [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk).

## PRE TREATMENT

From 30 October 2007, landfills can no longer accept untreated non-hazardous waste. One of the simplest ways to pre-treat your non-hazardous waste is to separately collect your waste as individual waste streams and recycle one of the separated streams, for example your cardboard. This counts as treatment. If you already do this, then there is no need to do more. Alternatively your waste management company can treat the waste for you before it is sent to landfill. This can include simply sorting your waste at a transfer station and recycling part of this waste.

## What do you need to do?

- Find out if your waste is sent to landfill. If it isn't, then these new rules should not affect your business.
- If your waste is sent to landfill, find out how else you could manage your waste, by recycling for example.
- If you decide to keep sending your waste to landfill, find out if it is treated first. Much of the waste that businesses produce is already treated before it is sent to landfill. In these cases no further treatment is necessary.

## Examples of 'treatment'

- A florist decides to keep paper and cardboard for recycling. They also decide to look at whether they can have any old flowers composted.
- A plumbing firm decides to keep any metal separate for recycling by a scrapyards. They might also be able to get any rubble they produce separated for hardcore by a contractor.

## CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY TEAM

For more information about Corporate Responsibility, The BEA's Corporate Responsibility Programme or what your business can do please contact one of the CR team using the details below.

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Dawn Wilson, Tel: 01254 669028, Email: [dwilson@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:dwilson@groundwork.org.uk)

FORTHCOMING  
EVENTS

\* Renewables Workshop - 25th Sept.

\* WEEE Breakfast Workshop - 2nd Oct.

Full details are available online at [www.LancsBEA.co.uk/events](http://www.LancsBEA.co.uk/events).

Alternatively for more information or to request a Training Programme,

please contact Dayna Patterson on 01254 669 034.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY IS PRODUCED BY THE LANCASHIRE BEA, NOVA SCOTIA WHARF, BOLTON ROAD, BLACKBURN, BB2 3GE. TEL: 01254 676 747

CORPORATE  
RESPONSIBILITY

Lancashire  
**Business**  
ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION

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## SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION AT OFFSHOOTS

Sustainability is a term frequently used, but often misunderstood. The generally agreed textbook definition of sustainability is "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

A sustainable approach can be applied to all activities, individually or as an organisation, by carefully considering how an activity affects the environment, the local community or society as a whole. The multi-award winning Permaculture Garden Offshoots is a classic example of sustainability in action.

The Offshoots permaculture garden project started in May 1997 and is housed in the walled garden at Towneley Park in Burnley. Since 1997 the project has successfully transformed the site into a thriving fruit and vegetable garden and training centre. Permaculture is a successful approach to designing sustainable environments which have the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems whilst providing for the needs of the people using them. It is based on the philosophy of co-operating with nature and caring for the earth and its people.

**Fruit and Vegetable Growing**  
At the heart of Offshoots is a one acre organic fruit and vegetable garden. The garden flourishes without the aid of any chemical fertilisers or chemical pest control, only natural techniques and methods. Two beehives aid pollination and supply honey.



## Tree Nursery

The tree nursery grows 63 different species of exotic and native trees from seed. The trees are used by local authorities for landscaping and throughout Lancashire for a major community forestry initiative.

## Composting

A composting barn houses two state of the art vessel composting machines. High quality compost is produced from garden and kitchen waste. (see inside for more details)

## Wildlife

Due to the diverse nature of the site and the growth of native species a wide range of bugs and birds can be spotted throughout the year. A wildlife pond created in conjunction with the reed bed filtration system attracts many amphibians and water insects.

Although some commercial income is generated, Offshoots relies on volunteers and charitable donations to remain active. The site is used for training, community groups, schools and the general public to experience sustainable living in a hands-on, practical and entertaining manner. Offshoots is a valuable asset to Lancashire and there are plans to start a 'Friends of Offshoots' scheme to allow businesses to sponsor the project and get involved. More information will be available in future publications.



## Eco-buildings

There are a number of eco-buildings at Offshoots. The classroom is a Walter Segal design 'solar cabin' that was built by community volunteers using green building materials and techniques. Solar panels and wind turbines generate renewable energy and a greywater reed bed filtration system purifies the waste water. A compost toilet has been constructed with straw bales. A 'cob' cooking shelter has been created with an inbuilt bread oven. A green woodworkers cabin was recently built using wood harvested from the surrounding woodlands and reclaimed slate from demolished local houses.

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## OUR FUNDERS

**ENWORKS**  
MAKING ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE PROFITABLE

sustainability northwest

**Northwest**  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

  
European Regional  
Development Fund

**CSR JARGON BUSTER**

**Carbon Calculator**  
Tool for calculating the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere. Can be calculated for an individual activity such as a plane flight to a holiday destination or could be used to combine all activities and calculate your carbon footprint.

**Climate Change**  
The theory that pollution caused by humans, especially CO2 emissions is altering the earth's climate.

**Community**  
A group of individuals (bound by geographic proximity, historical relationship, shared experience or common characteristic) who affect or are affected by the business.

**Ethical**  
Conforming to accepted standards of social or professional behaviour.

**Green Electricity**  
Green electricity comes from renewable sources and has low environmental impact. Sources include wind, solar and biomass.

**Greenhouse Gases**  
The main greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide (CO2). This accounts for about two thirds of the human induced warming effect. Methane, nitrous oxide and other gases account for the remaining third.

**Human Rights**  
A civilised society recognises the right of every individual to liberty, freedom of association and personal safety.

**Social Impact**  
Any change to society, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organisations activities, services or products

**RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING**

Under the banner of Corporate Responsibility the term responsible purchasing refers to the purchasing practices of a business which promotes more socially and/or environmentally responsible trade. This includes local product sourcing to support local economies and reduce transport miles, the purchase of ethical products for example, products which have been or could be recycled, the purchase of materials from sustainable sources or items with a high energy efficiency rating and the purchase of fairtrade products. In addition, another increasingly important element of responsible purchasing is the responsibility that a business takes for the labour and human rights practices within its supply chain.

During the 1990's, a number of non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and trade union campaigns raised consumers' awareness of poor working conditions, child labour and low rates of pay in factories and farms that produced goods for companies in Europe and North America. Environmental concerns such as global warming and climate change has also received an increasing amount of media attention, raising the profile of these environmental challenges significantly. As a result, consumers are now more aware of 'ethical' and 'green' issues and are demanding more responsible behaviour from the companies that supply their needs. The same can also be said of other key stakeholders such as employees, customers, shareholders and investors and as a result of this, businesses are coming under increased pressure to demonstrate their environmental and social credentials and how they manage their supply chains.

Responsible purchasing makes business sense .....

- Improving communication with suppliers can build trust and help increase efficiency in the supply chain
- Companies can attract investment as ethically motivated investors grow in number
- Helping to meet your customers needs
- Market differentiation – as ethical consumers grow in number, marketing yourself as an ethical business can help you retain and increase market share
- Sustainable businesses need good long-term suppliers
- Unfair sourcing increases reputational risk.

If you are interested in taking a more responsible approach to purchasing or require help or assistance on any CR issue, contact a member of the CR team.

**BROCKHOLES CONSERVATION DAY  
MERSEY BASIN WEEK**

As part of Mersey Basin Week (Friday 28 September - Sunday 7 October) there will be a Conservation Day on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at Brockholes (next to J31, M6), a site recently acquired by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Local businesses are being invited to take part in the event which will provide an opportunity to participate in a practical environmental project.

On the day, volunteers will have the opportunity to help transform this former gravel pit into a wildlife haven, including removing willow trees from the edge of the lake to open up views and improve the waterside for wading birds. All the activities will be led and supervised by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Mersey Basin Campaign Team. Facilities for changing will be provided along with refreshments throughout the day. Longer-term plans to improve the site include restoration of the wetlands, creation of ponds, seeding of meadows, planting new hedgerows and trees, making access paths and building bird watching hides.

Mersey Basin week is an annual weeklong celebration of the Northwest's environment, rivers and waterways. Now in its fifteenth year, Mersey Basin Week sees thousands of volunteers take part in hundreds of events and activities, from guided walks to bird watching to habitat restoration and maintenance. There are opportunities for individuals, groups and businesses to get involved.

If your business would like to take part in this event or you require more information, please contact Lesley Cryer on 01772 877122 or [Lcryer@merseybasin.org.uk](mailto:Lcryer@merseybasin.org.uk).

**BIODIVERSITY BENCHMARK**

Since its inception in 1962, the Lancashire Wildlife Trust has grown into a significant force for the conservation and enhancement of the environment across the region's urban and rural areas. Key aspects of the Trust's work include land management, strategic conservation, education and community involvement. The Trust is keen to encourage companies to work towards the newly launched Biodiversity Benchmark, which is designed to enable businesses, agencies and others to assess their impact on the natural world, improve their contribution to the environment and demonstrate their commitment to biodiversity.

**What is biodiversity?**

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all living things on our planet and the patterns they form. It includes the differences between species, the difference within species and the range of habitats in which they live. The biodiversity we see today is the fruit of millions of years of evolution; it has been shaped by natural processes and increasingly by the influence of humans.



"The preservation of biodiversity is not just a job for governments. International and non-governmental organisations, the private sector and each and every individual have a role to play in changing entrenched outlooks and ending destructive patterns of behaviour" Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General.

The Biodiversity Benchmark is the first recognised scheme to award an organisation for its continual biodiversity improvement. It is flexible and adaptable so it can be applied to any

organisation with land. Achieving the Biodiversity Benchmark will bring a number of benefits including:

- Integrating biodiversity into your organisation and improving your biodiversity performance as a result
- Demonstrates Corporate Social Responsibility through a validated commitment to biodiversity
- Contributes to environmental reporting
- Helps to satisfy key stakeholder requirements
- Addresses some of the increased expectations of insurance underwriters
- Complement any existing environmental management systems.

For further information contact the Lancashire Wildlife Trust on 01772 324129, email [ckenny@lancswt.org.uk](mailto:ckenny@lancswt.org.uk) or visit [www.biodiversitybenchmark.org](http://www.biodiversitybenchmark.org).

Ever thought about giving staff time to volunteer?

The Lancashire Wildlife Trust are currently working on a number of sites locally that would benefit from some extra pairs of hands including:

- River Darwen Parkway
- The Arran Trail
- Higher Croft Woods
- Pleasington
- Sunnyhurst Woods.

The work carried out is mainly land management i.e. footpath repairs, scrub clearance, litter picking etc. There are also opportunities for people to show off their "green fingers". For further information please contact Rebecca Witcombe on 01282 704605 or email [rwitcombe@lancswt.org.uk](mailto:rwitcombe@lancswt.org.uk).

**SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION AT OFFSHOOTS CONT.**

Offshoots need to generate commercial income to remain economically sustainable and are investigating the feasibility of starting a food and oil waste collection to businesses in East Lancashire.

The food waste would be recycled in their compost vessels for use as a natural fertiliser on site and as a saleable product. Offshoots are currently assessing the volumes and locations of kitchen wastes produced in East Lancashire to plan for an economic and sustainable method of collection.

If you have kitchen food or cooking oil wastes that you can separate from general waste collections and would like

to participate in a new recycling service please contact Richard Garth-Jones on telephone number 01254 265163.

If your business is located outside of East Lancashire and you have a high volume of food wastes the service could be available so please contact us.



Offshoots is open to the public and free of charge to visit, located in Towneley Park, Burnley, Lancashire. Full directions and details of how you can help the Offshoots project can be found on their website at: [www.offshoots.org.uk](http://www.offshoots.org.uk).