

# AWARD: INDIVIDUAL CHAMPION FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Howard Lee

## 'Dr. Lee in his role as Sustainability Champion for Hadlow College'



### Notable Features

Setting up and running courses up to degree level in Sustainable Land Management, creating the sustainable community website and involving Hadlow village in the local scheme, championing initiatives within the College and representing the College at events and seminars, providing the scientific input to the UK CCX carbon sequestration protocols.

### Setting the scene

It now seems likely that in Britain and elsewhere, societies will face problems accessing sufficient food, water and energy for basic needs, whilst trying to live with the adverse effects of climate change. The inspiration is to empower Hadlow citizens and College students and staff with the awareness, knowledge and confidence to mitigate against further environmental damage and learn to adapt to the changes that will soon occur. This will require active co-operation and mutual support, and the emphasis is therefore upon (i) the development of a Hadlow village/College sustainable community which starts to reduce their use of resources, minimises environmental impact and begins adapting to impending changes; (ii) education within the College, to ensure that students become qualified to develop this agenda more widely; (iii) seeking collaborative links regionally and nationally at meetings and conferences, and participating in international projects (currently CCX and a European College biofuels teaching programme).

### Beating the odds

Convincing Hadlow College: staff had to be persuaded that sustainable development was right for student learning and the wider community, and are now fully supportive.

Convincing village residents: local people have many other life-pressures and commitments. Meetings, personal contacts, and an appeal to personal emotions have been needed to energise residents and give them the courage to embrace change.

Local legislative barriers: meetings with local councils had to emphasise sustainability against other competing agendas and has led to pledges of support. However, barriers still exist when planning new projects within current legislation: patience and persistence continue to be needed.

### Reaping the benefits

Positive outcomes – economic, environmental and social.

Economic – reduced utility bills across the sustainable community (village and College) as buildings are better insulated, renewable energy accessed, rainwater harvested, and more food grown locally on the College Farm by villagers and students/staff.

Environmental – reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by the College and wider community as we incorporate more biomass heating systems, develop biogas digesters, construct a 'carbon-neutral' Visitor Centre, share more cars and encourage carbon-sequestering woodlands as part of our CCX commitment.

Social – a large increase in mutual trust and support within the sustainable community as jointly beneficial projects are undertaken between residents and the College; better support for local groups such as children, the elderly and disabled, who can participate in our projects; much better social links between residents and College students and staff; better outward social links to other groups; improved College educational opportunities for students (courses) and village residents (life long learning) to support ongoing projects.

### Contact details

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