

PRESS RELEASE

***Cornwall's future – land use, resource depletion & changing climate.***

The current and forecast demands on Cornwall's land are many and varied – how can they be accommodated in a time of depleting resources, demographic shifts and climate change? This was the wide-ranging strategic question posed at Environment Kernow's 2007 conference, funded by Cornwall Sustainable Building Trust and held on November 16<sup>th</sup> at Duchy College, Rosewarne.

The 90 delegates represented NGOs, statutory bodies, business, Transition Towns, local and regional government.

Three prominent guest speakers introduced the key issues of resource depletion, climate change and land use, with each speaker emphasizing the inter-linkage between the issues.

Colin Campbell began with a sobering assessment of oil depletion, concluding that demand is likely to be already outstripping supply, driving oil prices inexorably over \$100 per barrel and ending the era of cheap oil.

David Strahan looked at what sources of energy were available to fill the widening gap between supply and demand, concluding that there was no obvious candidate in the near term and that many alternative sources would exacerbate climate change. He also pointed out that both climate change and peak oil highlight the need to manage our economic and social systems differently.

Patrick Holden, a practising organic farmer, considered how these themes would affect agriculture and food security. This set the scene for lively discussion in which key themes were how to engage people with the issues, re-engage with the land and change lifestyle.

The discussion continued over lunch, with food provided by The Vintage Cook embracing the conference's aspirations by being local, seasonal and organic.

In the afternoon breakout session, delegates were asked to identify key challenges in using land to create a sustainable future for Cornwall:

- How will we generate energy, grow food, create employment, distribute services & goods?
- How will we support young & elderly people?
- How will we build the necessary infrastructure to make our communities sustainable?

It was widely appreciated that the decisions we make now, will shape how our communities can function in the future.

The key speakers helped collate the themes identified in the session while the delegates were shown examples of some of the innovative solutions being developed in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly that integrate people, environment and economy.

After discussion of the themes emerging from the breakout session, the final guest speaker, Rob Hopkins (founder of the transition movement), emphasized the linkage between the issues identified over the day and offered hope for the future. His vision is based on experience of a community (Transition Town Totnes) moving towards re-localization, with lower fossil fuel energy dependency.

The conference closed on an uplifting note with an impromptu tale from Will Coleman of Brave Tales that incorporated elements from the day into a bold hope for Cornwall's future.

To receive further information on the conference talks and outcomes, please contact Emma Richards (erichards@cornwall.gov.uk)

#### Notes for Editors

1. **Environment Kernow (EK)** champions the importance of a quality environment to the present and future well-being and livelihood of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. EK does this by providing strategic advice on opportunities, activities, policies and knowledge & skills requirement affecting the environment at all levels, from local to international. We operate at both strategic & delivery levels and seek to influence & engage other partnerships in environmental matters. EK is the partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's environment; providing a forum for the public, private and community / voluntary sectors. EK works through and on behalf of a network of existing partnerships. EK is a thematic group for the Cornwall Strategic Partnership, who oversees Cornwall's Community Strategy. EK is the partnership lead for the Sustain theme of Cornwall's Local Area Agreement. [www.environmentkernow.org.uk](http://www.environmentkernow.org.uk)
2. **Cornwall Sustainable Building Trust** a charitable company committed to making building design and construction as sustainable as possible, with minimal negative impact on the environment, both locally and globally [www.csbt.org.uk](http://www.csbt.org.uk)
3. **Duchy College, Rosewarne** Duchy College (part of the Cornwall College group) is 'Cornwall's College of the Countryside' and prides itself on being one of the leading land-based colleges in the country. The Rosewarne campus is in the west of the county near Camborne. [www.cornwall.ac.uk/duchy/](http://www.cornwall.ac.uk/duchy/)
4. **Colin Campbell** is a retired petroleum geologist and the founder & honorary chair of ASPO – the Association for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas. ASPO began as an informal grouping in 2000 and has grown to have organizations in 20 countries and has seen the term “peak oil” enter the lexicon [www.peakoil.net/](http://www.peakoil.net/)
5. **David Strahan** is an award-winning investigative journalist and documentary film-maker who has reported and produced for the BBC's Money Programme and Horizon. He is the author of *The Last Oil Shock: A Survival Guide to the Imminent Extinction of Petroleum Man*, published in April this year. [www.davidstrahan.com](http://www.davidstrahan.com) [www.lastoilshock.com](http://www.lastoilshock.com)
6. **Patrick Holden** is Director of the Soil Association; the UK's leading campaigning and certification organisation for organic food and farming. He farms near Aberystwyth. [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)
7. **Rob Hopkins** is founder of the Transition Town initiative and now lives in Totnes. The initiative is growing rapidly, also encompassing cities (Bristol & Nottingham) and is included in the Environment Agency's list of 50 things to do to save the planet. [www.transitiontowns.org/Totnes/](http://www.transitiontowns.org/Totnes/)
8. **Will Coleman** is an author, film maker and educationalist and the leading light of Brave Tales, a Cornish group specializing in using the power of story telling in several contexts. <http://www.bravetales.com>
9. **The Vintage Cook** [www.seriously-good.co.uk](http://www.seriously-good.co.uk)