

Being Irish-born, Sam Burns has always been keen to be green. And now, as a member of Guernsey Electricity's new Environmental Champions Group, he is totally committed to keeping waste and energy efficiency in check, with measurable benefits.

The Environmental Champions Group has fifteen members representing different departments and levels within the Company. The Group's mandate is to implement new energy saving and recycling initiatives. The initiative was launched with an environmental audit and several challenging targets were set. Further audits will be conducted to monitor progress.

'Although we look at every aspect of energy consumption and waste management, my main role is to get staff to recycle as much as possible' explains Sam.

We have already seen savings simply by switching off all the computers and printers at night.

'To get this to work we need everyone's co-operation. It's about helping people realise that on a small island like ours, with limited landfill, they can make a huge difference with a little thought and effort. We are hoping to do a half-day course with all staff, explaining the value of adopting our policies, not just expecting people to tow the line.

'It's just good working practice. Like most companies, we have been recycling paper and sending toner cartridges to be refilled for a long time. But in a company as large and diverse as ours we felt that there were many more opportunities to be green.'



Paper usage down by 20%



'I make it my business to look at the bigger picture. At the moment we're on a big drive to replace all our dispenser cups to recyclable types of paper and plastic. Unfortunately only plastic grades 1 and 2 are accepted at the recycling bins in Guernsey, whereas a lot of things are grades 5, 6 and 10. If it comes to it, we'll import our own cups instead. We are also currently assessing the feasibility of 'rainwater harvesting' as a natural source for cleaning our fleet of vehicles.

It's an urban myth that turning a light on and off uses more electricity than leaving it on. Turn it off while you are out of the room. You'll be surprised how much you'll save.

'Drinks cans, paper and magazine banks are positioned near every desk throughout our buildings, plus bottle and can banks in every workshop. There's even a compost bin for things like coffee filters, tea bags and paper towels. Battery, light bulb and mobile phone bins have also been placed in our South Side retail showroom.



Batteries collected are recycled locally. We recently invested in a bulb crusher to separate the glass and metal content. Both are then recycled. Mobile phones are collected and either given to island schools or sent to third world countries. Nothing's wasted.'

We've reached a point where 90% of recyclable materials from our offices is sent to be recycled.

With recent supermarket moves to minimise use of plastic bags, our retail department are actively encouraging customers to carry purchases away in the box instead. Biodegradable bags, paper bags, hessian bags and even carry handles are all being researched as alternatives. When delivering new white or brown goods, an offer is always made to remove the old appliances from customer's homes.

'For a small charge, customers know their unwanted items will be recycled in the proper manner, and not just sent to landfill' explains Sam.

'The commercial contract division is doing its bit too. Wooden cable drums are recycled and old or surplus wire cables are stripped and recycled for their copper content.

'It pays to be proactive. If an unwanted magazine turns up we ask the recipient to leave it unopened. The magazine is then returned to the





**INCREASE
PLASTIC
RECYCLING
BY 10%**

The idea behind Environmental Champions is that it is a structured programme which involves the whole organisation in achieving measurable improvements by reducing energy use and cutting waste. The programme is supported by Global Action Plan. The plan started with an environmental audit and at the end of the programme in September 2008, a second audit will be carried out in order to measure our successes.

publisher with a request to stop sending them. It's worked very well up to now.'

If there's something in the bin that shouldn't be there, I can't leave it! I either point it out or pick it out.

The Environmental Champions Group have had to work hard to get to this point, but it's been worth it according to Sam. 'It takes time to gather momentum, but the staff have been very accommodating in embracing ideas. Of course, people need a gentle reminder sometimes. As I'm roaming through our buildings and I catch sight of something in a bin that shouldn't be there, I can't ignore it. I either point it out or pick it out.'

So is Sam as conscientious about recycling and energy saving at home too? 'You bet I am. I live right next door to the power station too. So look out if someone leaves the lights on overnight!'

The Guernsey Electricity Environmental Champions Group are: Hermione Surcombe, Jane Bougourd, Steven Clark, Sam Burns, Sally-Ann David, Steve Holford, Annette Langlois, Allan Le Feuvre, Matt Le Patourel, Vincent Smith, Stuart Tucker, Robert Uttley, Robert Yeates, Roy Glass and David Friend.

'Our green commitment is to minimise the environmental impact of our business, to be pro-active in providing energy efficient solutions for the community, and to investigate alternative sources of energy that could make a viable contribution to the island's electricity needs'

**ENERGY
REDUCTION 20%**

