

Here & Now

Your council, Your community

We're like canaries in a coal mine...



Photo © Glenn Morris (Arctic Voice)

Find out how you can reduce your carbon footprint at www.tmbc.gov.uk or read the Council's draft climate change strategy (see page 3)

In North Canada the ice caps are melting and the whole way of life of the Inuit people is under threat as the devastating effects of climate change begin to take hold. One young Inuit pupil from Inuvik described how she was feeling to a Tonbridge Grammar School student as they chatted over a live internet video link-up: 'We feel like canaries in a coal mine', she said, and there's no doubt that what is happening in North Canada should act as a warning to the rest of the world. The school link up was organised by explorer Glenn Morris who set up a charity called Arctic Voice to raise awareness of the climate change issues he had witnessed around the world.

Back in Tonbridge, a community project is gaining momentum to help raise awareness of global warming and galvanise local people into action to help tackle climate change before it's too late.

Teachers from Tonbridge Grammar School, Hillview School for Girls and Tonbridge School are leading the project, which already has the support of many other local schools, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, businesses and community groups.

Over the next five months, the 'Canaries' team will be launching a variety of creative competitions to show that being 'green' needn't be a chore but a pleasure. Competitions will include art, film making, photography, essay writing, music and poetry and everyone will be able to take part. Many local businesses have already donated some fantastic prizes including a day in a professional recording studio, a digital camcorder, a bicycle and numerous cash prizes.

The project will finish with a two-day festival in March 2008, which the organisers hope will include a host of musical performances at various venues in Tonbridge including an 'unplugged' concert at Tonbridge Castle; eco fairs; a conference on global warming; live internet video interaction with communities threatened by climate change around the world; and a candlelit procession up the High Street.

Tonbridge Grammar School teacher Charlotte Lane says: "We can all do something to help reduce carbon emissions and reduce the threat of climate change. The message we want get across is that the time for excuses was yesterday and that we should all 'start local and think global' in terms of what we need to do to improve our children's future."

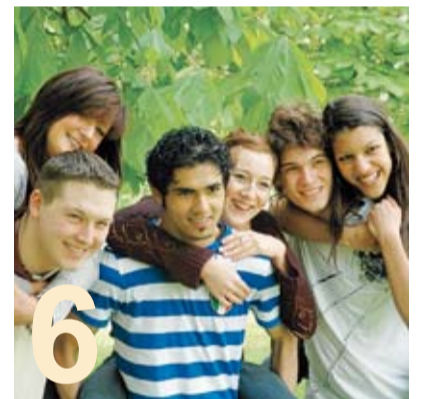
If you'd like to get involved in the Canaries in a coal mine project or you'd like more information about the competitions, please call Charlotte Lane on 01732 365125 or email clane@tgs.kent.sch.uk or visit www.canariesinacoalmine.com or www.arcticvoice.org.

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