



PRESS RELEASE

WI PUTS ITS FOOT DOWN WITH A CHALLENGE!

A new initiative calling on UK consumers to reduce their carbon footprint has been launched by the WI.

The **WI Carbon Challenge**, supported by Marks and Spencer, was launched at the organisation's AGM at the Royal Albert Hall. Delegates representing each WI in Gloucestershire will report back to their members on how they can reduce their carbon emissions by 20%. Participants will measure their carbon footprint using an online calculator and receive tailored tips to help them reduce their impact on the environment.

Gloucestershire Federation Chairman, Gill Thomas, said: "We hope that both WI members and everyone else in the county will take up the WI Carbon Challenge to reduce their carbon footprints. Climate change is the biggest challenge facing society today, and with this campaign we can all play a part in tackling global warming."

The WI are expecting about 50,000 people to take part and this could lead to a potential saving of 100,000 tonnes of carbon. More details about the challenge can be found at www.theWI.org.uk/carbonchallenge and those signing up will use the WWF's footprint calculator designed for use in the WWF One Planet Living campaign.

Stuart Rose, Chief Executive of Marks & Spencer, speaking at the Albert Hall, said "We are proud to be supporting the WI Carbon Challenge. Under Plan A, our new eco-plan, we have committed to helping customers take action to reduce their individual impact on the environment. "

"The WI Carbon Challenge does just that by providing simple and effective solutions and support so that you can make real changes. I would urge everyone to go onto the WI website, or ours, and sign up today. If we all take small steps, we really can make a big difference."

The WI campaigns on issues chosen and voted on by members. At this year's AGM, WI members passed a mandate about Community Hospitals, urging 'HM Government to stop the closure of Community Hospitals, which provide essential services to local people.'

Other speakers at the meeting included Baroness Hayman, the first Speaker of the House of Lords and Alan Cook, Managing Director of Post Office Ltd.

There was also a surprise appearance by Tony Christie, who sang his hit song "Is This The Way to Amarillo" at the end of the meeting and then joined WI members in the traditional singing of Jerusalem.

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Notes for editors;

1. View The WI Carbon Challenge at: www.theWI.org.uk/carbonchallenge.
2. The WI is the largest women's organisation in the UK with 211,000 members in 6,800 WIs. The charity campaigns on issues that matter to women and their communities from children's diet and the environment to excess packaging and dairy farming. Visit www.theWI.org.uk or www.gfwi.org.uk for more information.
3. The NFWI AGM 2007 was sponsored by Marks & Spencer.
4. Marks & Spencer is one of the UK's leading retailers, with 15.8 million people visiting its stores each week. It offers high quality, great value, responsibly sourced clothing, home and food products. M&S employs 75,000 people and has over 520 UK stores, as well 219 stores worldwide in 34 territories. In January 2007, M&S launched Plan A, its five year, £200m eco-plan, which covers 100 commitments, including a pledge to make its UK and Republic of Ireland operations carbon neutral by 2012.
5. The carbon dioxide savings in the WI Carbon Challenge will be calculated using WWF's footprint calculator designed for use in the WWF One Planet Living campaign.
6. The Energy Savings Trust's top ten tips to save energy, money and help prevent climate change are as follows:
 - Turn your thermostat down. Reducing room temperature by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10 percent. You could save around £40 per year.
 - Is your water too hot? Your cylinder thermostat shouldn't need to be set higher than 60°C/140°F.
 - Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
 - Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.
 - Don't leave appliances on standby or leave appliances on charge unnecessarily.
 - If you're not filling up the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher, use the half-load or economy programme.
 - Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
 - A dripping hot water tap wastes energy and in one week wastes enough hot water to fill half a bath, so fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off!
 - Use energy saving light bulbs. Just one can save you £100 over the lifetime of the bulb - and they last up to 12 times longer than ordinary lightbulbs.
 - Use the Energy Savings Trust to do a home energy check. Just answer some simple questions about your home and we'll give you a free, impartial report telling you how you can save up to £300 a year on your house hold energy bills.

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