

Evaluation report

**CARBON
ARMY**



BTCV Carbon Army

BTCV Carbon Army launched in November 2009 as our practical response to the challenges of climate change.

BTCV's ambition was to inspire a group of people to work together to mitigate the impacts of climate change on our environment. Along the way, they would inform and influence others to encourage more sustainable ways of living and working.

3,000 Days of Action

As 3,000 government delegates headed off to December's UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, we set our new recruits a challenge – one day of practical climate change action for every delegate attending.

BTCV Carbon Army rose to the challenge, with projects running all over the UK from 1-18 December.

The result:

- 6026 Workdays – double our target
- 85km of hedges and trees planted or managed – a distance equal to London to Brighton
- More than 50% of our workdays involved planting or managing trees or hedgerows to lock up carbon. The Carbon Army turned an area the size of 34 Wembley football pitches into urban green space
- Our community allotment and food growing projects accounted for 27% of all our activity and saved over 3 million food miles
- Nearly one quarter of all activity (23.9%) was in London & the South East
- 34% of volunteers were aged 16-25 and 26% were over 55.



Gardener and Chief Recruitment Officer, Charlie Dimmock helped launch the BTCV Carbon Army

Turning words into action

BTCV Carbon Army helped to ensure our message about the importance of grassroots environmental action reached the politicians who were forming climate change policy.

Nick Herbert MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, helped to launch BTCV Carbon Army at a food growing project in London.

“The change that this kind of movement can effect is just as important as the change that can be effected by political leadership through international agreements.”



Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, signed up for the BTCV Carbon Army and made his own contribution to our 3,000 Days of Action by joining volunteers in Doncaster to plant Scots pine and birch trees.

“BTCV Carbon Army gives people a great opportunity to get involved in their community and take local action on climate change.”



Bairbre de Brún MEP joined over 50 people, including school children, local and European volunteers at a tree planting to launch BTCV Carbon Army in Northern Ireland.

“As I travel to the UN climate summit in Copenhagen as part of the official European Parliament delegation, I will bring with me the encouragement of the environmental volunteers involved in BTCV’s Carbon Army here at home.”



Volunteer Anna Ware’s story...

“I used to be too lazy to recycle, loved my long showers and would throw food away rather than reheat it. I knew I was living in a selfish way but I didn’t have the guidance I need to make the change in my lifestyle.

A victim of the much talked about credit crunch, I was made redundant earlier in the year. Fortunately, I came across BTCV, without which I may have fallen through the cracks.

BTCV gave me the opportunity to train as a conservation project leader. I realised that community engagement and creating organisational links was something I truly enjoyed and this helped me to move careers into an outreach role.

Volunteering has given me the opportunity to share and educate my friends and family in how to care for their environment and reduce their carbon footprint.

I’m a firm believer in how small things can make a massive change and I feel like I am now really taking positive steps around climate change.

BTCV allowed me to see the difference I was making by letting me make the difference.”



BTCV Carbon Army in action

Over just 18 days in December, BTCV Carbon Army delivered 6026 days of practical conservation action.

Opposite are a few of the highlights...

Turning cyberspace green

In climate-friendly fashion, a great deal of the communication around Carbon Army has been electronic. We have used Twitter and Facebook to constantly reinforce campaign messages, publicise the Carbon Army website and share photographs. BTCV's Twitter followers increased by 25 per cent in six weeks.

The Carbon Army launch in London received good radio coverage, with interviews appearing on 18 stations around the UK with a total audience reach of over 1.6million. The launch was covered by *The Ecologist* magazine and a video interview with BTCV Chief Executive Tom Flood was broadcast on the Defra blog. It also received coverage through various online blogs, news wires and in international press titles.

Ed Miliband MP's day of action with the Carbon Army was filmed by BBC TV's *Politics Show*, as well as generating considerable local radio and press coverage.

The general Carbon Army campaign has been featured in the *London Evening Standard*, *The Lady* magazine and on regional BBC radio and TV. It has also received a significant amount of regional print coverage, through a feature supplied to the Press Association and syndicated to 80 regional titles across the UK.

Follow BTCV's Carbon Army online:

btcv.org/carbonarmy

twitter.com/btcv

youtube.com/BTCVTV

carbonarmy.blogspot.com



Above: The inaugural Carbon Army project – where BTCV's Carbon Army volunteers in Camden planted a food growing area at Lauderdale House in north London



BTCV Ambassador Sue Hilder waved the BTCV Carbon Army banner during 'The Wave' climate change march in Glasgow



BTCV Chair, Rupert Evenett interviewed by Len Tingle from BBC Politics Show



Charlie Dimmock and Tom Flood with volunteers at the campaign launch in north London

Looking to the future

BTCV Carbon Army will continue its work in 2010, undertaking practical climate change projects across the UK.

It will help us achieve the targets outlined in *Investing in Sustainable Futures**, BTCV's Strategic Plan 2009-13 including:

- Investing in a better environment by improving 75,000 places
- Investing in environmentally active citizens by supporting 1.5million people in environmental action.



Sign up for a better environment

Please can we also rely on your personal help?

By signing up to BTCV Carbon Army, you can pledge to support BTCV's aims of reducing our carbon footprints and mitigating the effects of climate change through practical conservation action.

www.btcv.org/carbonarmy

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* available for download at www.btcv.org/about

inspiring people, improving places