

## **BRIGHTON WOOD RECYCLING PROJECT CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY AND RECORD TURNOVER**

**Brighton & Hove's award-winning Wood Recycling Project celebrates 13 years in business today, demonstrating how successful social enterprise can be despite the current rocky economic climate.**

Predicting a turnover exceeding £300,000 for 2010-2011, the Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project (BHWRP) has come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1998, when a group of unpaid environmental enthusiasts took up the challenge of rescuing reusable wood from the waste stream, and bringing it back into reuse.

In fact, in the last two years BHWRP has doubled its turnover – completely bucking the current trend.

The reasons for this outstanding success in the face of apparent adversity must lie with the hard work of the staff and volunteers at the Project, and with their commitment to a triple bottom line – meaning the company's success is measured not only in financial terms but also in environmental and social 'profits'. Turnover is vital to this self-funded social enterprise, but equally important is the huge volume of wood they have rescued from landfill (plus all the related resources saved thereby) and also in the creation of jobs and hundreds of training opportunities for unemployed and marginalised people.

### **New Look**

At their site in Brighton's old Municipal Market, the Wood Recycling Project has recently been shaking off the dusty image of an old used-wood yard, and has redeveloped its shop, The Wood Store, with a green and inviting garden area, a homeware & eco gift shop and a busy, thriving furniture and craft workshop, as well as improving the display and supply of its reusable timber. The Wood Store is now a destination for Brighton's shoppers who love its fascinating and eclectic mix; a treasure trove of local history with all kinds of unique, intriguing and unexpected finds, with new stock arriving daily. The Project's creative carpenters make items to individual design, such as tables, benches, fire surrounds and shelving, all from reclaimed and recycled wood. For gardeners there is plenty to choose from; raised bed and compost bin timber, planters, birdboxes & feeders, and unique garden furniture made to measure from local reclaimed timber.

### **Spring Fair**

The Wood Store will be celebrating with a Spring Fair on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March, from 9am-5.30pm. There will be tea & cake in the garden; a local sausage sizzle; plants, eco gifts and craft items on sale, plus stalls and demonstrations of fun eco-activities for kids and adults to join in, as well as information on the Project and how to become involved as a volunteer.

### **Background story**

Back in 1998, the Project's founder Richard Mehmed had just given up a lucrative sales career, knowing he needed to put his passion as an environmentalist into practice. He realised that wood was the forgotten material in recycling: in Brighton & Hove alone thousands of tonnes of perfectly reusable timber was being sent to landfill every year because - unlike metal, paper, glass and plastic - no organisation existed to collect it. So he started Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project - with little cash and just a handful of volunteers; initially shifting wood from building sites in his wife's tiny car.

Thirteen years on, this once unique social enterprise has gone on to spawn a further 24 wood recycling enterprises across the UK via Mehmed's social 'franchise' business, the National Community Wood Recycling Project

[www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk](http://www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk).

~Ends~



## NOTES FOR EDITORS

- Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project was founded on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1998 by **Richard Mehmed** as a not-for-profit social enterprise; Registered Company Limited by Guarantee (not having a share capital).
- The Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project has been run by managing director **Richard Simpson** since 2003; it currently employs 5 people and provides work and volunteer training opportunities for 10-15 people each week.
- **Aims:** Details of the Project's aims can be found in its Company Mission statement; [http://www.woodrecycling.org.uk/user/mission\\_statement\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.woodrecycling.org.uk/user/mission_statement_1_.pdf)
- **Awards:** In 2002 BHWRP won the Enterprising Solutions Award (for Social Enterprise). See [http://www.woodrecycling.org.uk/news\\_awards.html](http://www.woodrecycling.org.uk/news_awards.html) for more details.
- **NCWRP:** In 2003 Mehmed founded the National Community Wood Recycling Project [www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk](http://www.communitywoodrecycling.org.uk) as a 'social franchise', operating purely to assist new social entrepreneurs who want to start a community wood recycling project. It now has 24 members employing over 100 people, with a group turnover approaching £2.5m.

### The Wood Store

#### Brighton & Hove Wood Recycling Project

Circus Street

Brighton BN2 9QF

01273 570500

[www.woodrecycling.org.uk](http://www.woodrecycling.org.uk)

[info@woodrecycling.org.uk](mailto:info@woodrecycling.org.uk)

#### Communications Contact

Melanie Hickford

Management Consultant for BHWRP

[melhickford@gmail.com](mailto:melhickford@gmail.com)

07779 495 821

