



Media Release

16th December 2010

Plastic Bag Petition to be Presented to the House

For Immediate Release

Penrith and the Border MP Rory Stewart is to present a petition to the House of Commons, calling for the introduction of a compulsory charge on the issuing of single use carrier bags. The petition, which was prepared by the Transition Town group; Penrith Action for Community Transition (PACT) urges Government to exercise the power it has under section 77 (and Schedule 6) of the Climate Change Act to make shoppers pay retailers for their carrier bags.

Six hundred signatures were collected in support of the petition, most of which were obtained at PACT's Bag Swap in Penrith town centre in October, when reusable cotton bags were given away in exchange for shoppers' plastic carriers (which were later recycled).

Around 8 billion lightweight single-use plastic carrier bags are issued annually in the UK, working out at 166 bags per adult per year. On average, they are in use for only 12-20 minutes before being discarded. Chris Cant, of PACT's Resources & Waste Action Group said: 'discarded plastic carrier bags are not only an unsightly blight on the appearance of towns and the countryside, they pose a real threat to animals which can ingest them and die as a result.'

Wales is to introduce a 5p compulsory charge on single-use carrier bags in October 2011. A compulsory charge on carrier bags introduced in Ireland of 15 euro-cents per bag in 2002 resulted in a reduction in the issuing of single use carrier bags of 90% . 'The onus is largely on shoppers to remember to take their own bags with them' continued Chris Cant. 'It was common practice just 30 years ago in this country. If we managed it then, I'm sure we can learn to do it again.'

Anybody wanting further information on the 'Plastic-Bag-Free Penrith' campaign should Email: plastic-bag-free@penrithact.org.uk or go to the PACT website: www.penrithact.org.uk

ends

Photocall:

12.55 pm, Friday 17th December 2010

At the front of The George Hotel, Penrith.

To be attended by Rory Stewart MP and representatives from PACT's Resources & Waste Action Group.

Notes to Editors:

1. For further information on PACT please contact Peter Ward on Tel: (01768) 840153 or by email at: info@penrithact.org.uk
2. PACT (Penrith Action for Community Transition) is an environmental and community group made up of individuals who share a common purpose; to respond to the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change through strengthening local resilience.
3. The Transition movement was founded in Totnes in 2006 as a community based response to the twin challenges of climate change and peak oil. It is now the fastest growing environmental movement in the world. The term 'Transition' relates to the way in which the movement explores active ways for local communities to make the transition from a life based on oil dependency to one where oil is no longer affordable or even readily available.