

THE GREEN PAGE

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What on Earth is...?

Bio Diesel

Bio Diesel is a diesel fuel that is made from plants instead of crude oil. It can be derived from specific crops or made directly from recycled vegetable oil. When made from recycled vegetable oil the manufacture of Bio Diesel turns a waste disposal problem into a non-polluting fuel source.

There's nothing new about it – when Rudolf Diesel invented his first diesel engine he ran it on peanut oil. Bio Diesel can be used unmixed or as a blend instead of fossil diesel, without modification, in most modern diesel engines.

Bio-diesel is arguably the easiest, cleanest, most sustainable and renewable form of vehicle fuel commonly available to the general public. The greenhouse gases produced from bio-

diesel are 55% lower than fossil diesel. Emissions of Carbon Monoxide (a poisonous gas) are about 40% lower; particulates (soot) are 20 to 39% lower than low sulphur fossil diesel, and sulphur emissions a staggering 80% lower. On top of all this Bio Diesel is also much less toxic, more biodegradable and altogether safer than equivalent fossil fuels.

Perhaps most remarkably Bio Diesel is carbon neutral. The amount of Carbon Dioxide it produces when used is the same amount that is absorbed from the atmosphere by its plant source when it is growing.

Bio Diesel is currently available from some petrol forecourts in East Yorkshire at a similar cost to ordinary diesel. For more information contact Rix Bio Diesel at www.rixbiodiesel.co.uk

BEYOND THE VALLEY

– News of Car Clubs from outside the Calder Valley.

Slathwaite

Our nearest Car Club neighbour was the first, and remains the most successful rural car club in Britain. Growth has been slow but constant and after a year they now have 20 members. They operate 2 Vauxhall Corsas, an Astra and a Zafira from 2 sites and have enjoyed national publicity including a feature on BBC1's The Politics Show. The club is managed by a not for profit company which actively promotes sustainable rural transport projects.

Zed Cars

Zed Cars is the car club based at BEDZED, Beddington Zero Energy Development, in the London Borough of Sutton. This car-sharing scheme was an integral part in the design of this ground breaking and state of the art sustainable housing development and helped to reduce its parking provision by around 50%!

Edinburgh

This is the largest car club in the UK with over 300 members sharing 17 mainly small cars for city use. The club is currently growing at a phenomenal 40 members a month and is the UK's flagship car club. Its aims are to tackle traffic congestion, pollution, and parking pressures within the city whilst recognising the importance of the car.

Switzerland

The first car sharing co-operatives in Switzerland were set up back in 1987. There is now a countrywide scheme that was created in May 1997. By January 2002 car club membership had risen to 43,000 people sharing 1,700 vehicles at 850 locations in 350 communities, and membership is still steadily increasing. Research by the Swiss Department of Energy has demonstrated that members who previously owned a car have cut their overall travel by 17%, reduced car mileage by 72%, increased their use of public transport by 35%, and their walking and cycling by 70%!

America

The car dependent United States is the latest success story for car clubs with more than 8,000 members recruited in the last three years. French speaking Canada has been operating car clubs since the mid 1990s, progressing at a similar rate to some European countries, but it is only recently that the United States has come onto the scene. 37 North American cities now have large car clubs and City CarShare in San Francisco, which only began operating in March 2001, had 35 cars and over 1000 members by the end of its first year.



Former Mayor Of Hebden Royd Town Council, Les Siddall, and local green activist Jamie Johnson sign up for the Hour Car Scheme.

Hour Car Your Car!

Car sharing makes sense! It happens all the time in families and sometimes between friends and neighbours.

Just over 2 months ago a Hebden Bridge based car share scheme, Hour Car, which had been developed by the Ground Floor Project, began offering its members the chance to enjoy the benefits of car sharing. The scheme's members run this car share club as a not-for-profit business through a steering committee, with all surplus funds re-invested into the scheme.

Members of Hour Car access the scheme's vehicles by using a simple booking system that is available on

the internet, by telephone, or at Salem Community Centre, where the cars are based

Annual membership of Hour Car costs £100, or £10 a month, with a one of service charge of £25 when you first join. The charges for car use are £2.50 per hour for the first 3 hours, then £1.50 for each hour after that. Use between midnight and 6am is free, so night owls can get a real bargain. You will also pay for all fuel used (currently 10p per mile).

Car clubs can help to improve our environment by reducing the amount of cars and car journeys made on our roads. The first 5

memberships of Hour Car have already resulted in two less cars in Hebden Bridge.

Research has shown that when a car is stood outside someone's house it tends to get used at every opportunity. With so much money invested in a car it seems only natural to attempt to get the maximum return from it. As a member of a Car Club however you're much more likely to use public transport, or even walk, and of course there is a vehicle available for all those essential trips that need a car.

Sometimes Car Club membership may replace the need for a second car. Many second cars get very little

use and provide a very poor investment on the money they cost. Car club membership can also offer social and environmental benefits for people who are beginning to use a car less, or people who could not afford a car. One woman uses a Car Club vehicle to visit her sick mother - a trip that would otherwise take a nightmare 3 and a half hours, each way, by public transport.

The Hour Car Scheme will also be more sustainable than car ownership by using Bio Diesel in all its vehicles. Bio Diesel is a much more environmentally friendly fuel that is becoming more commonly used throughout the UK.

Any questions?

Can I get a car when I want one?

Usually, yes. Car bookings are on a first-come first-served basis, but experience in other Car Clubs through the country shows that there is little problem with availability, and no Car Club maintains a better member to car ratio than Hour Car - at least one car per 10 members.

How do the hire costs work out for a weekend?

Unlike Car Hire companies Hour Car charges by the half hour so it will depend when you are taking the car and bringing it back. 9am Saturday to 6pm Sunday works out at £43; 7pm Friday to 6pm Sunday will cost £55.50. Unlike many car hire companies you will not have to pay an excess insurance fee on top of your hire

costs every time you use a car.

What about transporting pets?

Hour Car allows dogs in the back of our Astra Estate, so long as there is a boot liner in place and a dog guad (which we will supply). We supply a pet basket for cats and other small animals.

And children?

A range of car seats and booster seats is available to suit children of all ages.

What happens if I run low on Bio Diesel?

Simply fill up with ordinary diesel at any petrol station. The fuels will mix without any problem.



From the Bremen Car Club this symbol of an "egg-laying woolmilksoy" supposedly shows that a car club fulfils many needs! That German sense of humour again!

I don't need a car very often. Is it still worth joining?

Yes! It probably is. If you are paying £10 a month for membership it does not take more than one or two journeys a month to save this amount. Sit down with our figures and work out how worthwhile it is.

Doesn't Car Share just mean giving lifts?

No, that's a RIDESHARE scheme (which we also run for the benefit of our members), car share is where the vehicles are jointly owned and shared. When you want to go somewhere you book one of the scheme vehicles, collect the keys and drive off!