The British Cleaning Council (BCC) held their annual Conference at Kings Place, London on the 11th of October 2011, as 200 delegates from across the cleaning and facilities management industries met to debate sustainability and social responsibility within a business context.

The day was opened by BCC Chairman, Mark Woodhead, who invited each of the speakers to help define what sustainability could mean for the cleaning industry, and asked them to use examples of innovation and best practice from their own sectors that were applicable to cleaning and facilities management.

Woodhead was followed by a number of speakers- Danny Finkelstein, Executive-Editor of the Times, discussing coalition policy and the economy; Channel Four News presenter Jon Snow, giving insights into his career in journalism; Dr. Peter Redfern, focusing on environmental management systems and implementing sustainability-focused projects into large organisations; Philip Malpass, addressing sustainable cleaning agents, and Guy Stallard of KPMG, who analysed how the Living Wage campaign for fair pay have affected his business.

The day then closed with a health and safety panel discussion, followed by a debate on migrant workers featuring Sir. Andrew Green of MigrationWatch UK and Neil Jameson of London Citizens.

Each segment ended with question and answer sessions, where delegates quizzed the guest speakers on their respective subjects. During each break, attendees networked in the main exhibition hall with each other and the conference sponsorship partners; TECcare, Kimberly-Clarke Professional, Selden Research, HSS Hire, the UKCPI, Activeion, Renault Retail, Diversey, C & M Magazine and South Thames College, as they showcased sustainability focused products and services.

The Conference venue, Kings Place, is an award winning convert and exhibition hall located along the canals of Kings Cross in central London. Since its opening in 2008, the venue has won a number of architectural and hospitality awards, establishing itself as one of the leading destinations of its kind in Europe.

The British Cleaning Council have confirmed that the Conference 2012 will take place in October next year, with further details on the event due to be released in the near future.

A full summary of all the speakers continues on pages 4-7.
Hello and welcome to the autumn edition of the voice. During the past few months, the BCC’s calendar has been dominated by our annual conference, which this year took place at Kings Place in central London. After the response to last year’s event, we moved to Kings Place, one of the most impressive buildings of its kind in the country. Despite the tough economic climate the delegate numbers were good and I feel that the event made a real contribution to the current thinking on sustainability within our sector. Furthermore, one of the original motivations behind the conference was that we felt there was a real dearth of serious content and networking opportunities within the cleaning sector, and the event definitely fulfilled this function.

There is a full review of the event on pages 4-7 so I won’t give any more away, but I will add that we are already looking forward to next year and giving the direction and content for the day some serious consideration so that it returns stronger and more relevant to all of the events stakeholders.

In other sections of this edition, we bring news of the BTA’s annual conference, which took place in Stratford-upon-Avon in mid-September. The event had a much more outward looking approach in terms of revenue sources and potential partnerships for public facilities, and it’s great to see the sector looking at innovative ways to self-sustain in what is likely to be a challenging few years in prospect for everyone.

Meanwhile, we bring news of the Golden Service Awards which are once again just around the corner. Record numbers of entrants and huge interest in the Lancaster Hotel awards ceremony on 4th November have show that the event goes from strength to strength, and the BCC is proud of its long association; look out for a full report of all the winners in the next edition.

Enjoy the read,
Mark Woodhead
Woodhead then welcomed Executive Editor of the Times Danny Finkelstein to the stage, who came to offer his analysis of the current political climate and a prediction on the health of the UK when a general election is called in May 2015. After comparing they have seen their poll ratings slump and membership fall to the humiliating hazing process endured by prospective fraternity members at American Universities, he explained that they would endure their ordeals.

Finkelstein added that he believed a unifying idea for government and opposition in the coming years will be “something for something”; a theme that was used by both David Cameron and Ed Miliband in their leader’s speeches during the recent party conferences: “Society works on the basis that we both contribute and take out; this is the basis of any arrangement within communities or groups, and when people start to think that certain groups are not contributing or abusing the system, whether they are immigrants, the long-term unemployed, bankers or even MP’s, then resentment builds and people begin to look at ways of punishing the offending parties or excluding them from the mainstream.”

Finkelstein reinforced this message by quoting a study of hotel costs hotels a fortune. Many of them, therefore, have taken to placing a sign in each bathroom urging guests to help save the environment by reusing their towels. You’re bound to have seen one — put the towel back on the rack if you want to use it again, guests to believe that if they reused towels they would be helping pay back an environmental donation already made by the hotel, the environment, guests were more likely to respond positively to reciprocate is so strong in human beings that we even respond to intangible things, such as political concessions. We feel, unconsciously, that if someone has taken a step towards us, even a small one that is all words, we ought to return the favour. If someone is being reasonable or generous, so should we.” When applied to politics, he believed that a perennial theme which the public will respond to is transactional effort, which will encourage feelings of solidarity with certain groups, and divisions with others who are deemed to be outside of this societal arrangement, a trend that he predicted will increase as the tough economic climate endures.

Finkelstein closed his address by stating that he was “very pessimistic” about the prospects for economic growth in the UK in the next three years, which will see a decline in living standards, a squeeze on public services and rising unemployment both domestically and internationally. This was a situation which was unavoidable, in Finkelstein’s view, and the new normal of permanent austerity is something we will all have to become more accustomed to in the coming years.
Fairer pay for cleaners

Guy Stallard of KPMG then took to the stage to address delegates on the benefits of paying a living wage, a pledge which employers can sign up to and ensure that their workers are paid a fair wage (in London this is currently set at £8.30 an hour). KPMG were one of the first of the 100 employers in the capital to have joined the campaign, with Stallard explaining the immense benefits his organisation has reaped since its inception in 2006 to the assembled audience. He listed a 50% reduction in staff turnover, an increase in productivity and, with better sickness and holiday pay, absenteeism also saw a dramatic fall with little abuse from staff of the sick-pay privilege and fewer employees coming in when they were unfit to work simply to receive pay, amongst others.

Stallard added that it brought about a different attitude to the security guards and cleaners on its premises: “We regard them in the same way as everyone else who works at KPMG. They might be the first person you see when you come into the building.”

When challenged that the living wage had a detrimental effect on employer’s ability to take on apprentices, Stallard stated that apprentices were exempt from the policy, but conceded that the policy’s proponents needed to improve their communication in order to covey this crucial caveat more effectively. He also emphasised to the audience that the living wage was very much a nationwide campaign, stating that he was against a regionalisation of the policy which could mean that Londoners received most of the benefits.

When questioned on the free market criticism of the living wage, that the market should decide on the value of a service or product rather than governments, and that interventionism by regulators artificially distorts capitalism and leads to excess inflation, Stallard responded that the living wage was calculated every year by a broad committee, and reflects the absolute minimum amount of money a person needs to survive in London; it too was a product of the market place. While the ethical case around living wage was usually deemed to be sound, Stallard concluded that the benefits that the living wage brings to any employer meant that economic justification was just as strong.

Environment Management Systems

Delegates then heard from Dr. Peter Redfern, Principal Lecturer in Environmental Biology at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), who spoke about the environmental management systems he is working on at his respective companies, EcoCampus and Loreus. The organisations, which are affiliated with NTU, offer software solutions which can manage and monitor every aspect of an organisation’s environmental impact. The firms also provide environmental consultancy work within the higher education sector, and additional sustainability training for staff.

He opened his address by sharing some practical examples that have been successfully implemented across the University’s campuses already having a huge impact on efficiency and sustainability, such as affordable and convenient bicycle hire for students and staff, banning cars within the campus grounds, energy saving initiatives which shutdown all inactive computers, and the installation of combined heat and power units wherever possible.

NTU, Redfern proudly noted, came first in the Green League Awards 2011 for the second year in succession, and some of the sustainability initiatives they have implemented are being emulated by facilities management teams across the country. With all educational establishments and companies scrambling to achieve the EU commission mandated carbon reduction targets required by 2020 (34%, relative to 1990 levels, by 2020), NTU’s template and progress on the issue is likely to be of great interest to many organisations.

Charter for Sustainable Cleaning

Succeeding Dr. Redfern was Philip Malpass, Director General of the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association (UKCPI), who outlined his organisations vision of sustainable cleaning in the future. He began by chronicling the association’s track record on sustainability, and its commitment to educating and informing businesses and consumers over the years. The high water-mark for the organisation, in Malpass’ view, was the sustainable cleaning guide produced by BACS and UKCPI in association with Defra and the BCC. The 8 page guide released in 2008 sets out the responsibilities of both businesses and consumers, remaining highly relevant to the industry’s objectives.

Malpass then outlined the UKCPI’s guidance on ingredient selection, with the results of their extensive research on the topic freely available on the association’s website. He also introduced their charter for sustainable cleaning, launched in 2005, with the UKCPI working in close collaboration with the International Association for Soaps, Detergents and Maintenance Products (A.I.SE). The project provides independent verification, key performance indicators reported annually by subscribers via a consolidated report, and, a recognisable logo which allows companies to demonstrate their commitment. The sustainability charter now has 137 members committed, both manufacturers and retailers, with over 80% of cleaning product output in Europe now covered by the arrangement.

Through a mixture of collaboration and business leadership, Malpass stated his belief that both consumers and businesses can make smarter choices about the cleaning products they buy, with an accreditation scheme that was both credible and easy to follow. He closed his address by inviting the audience to support the project by joining them, as they aim to increase the output of cleaning products covered by the agreement from 80% to 100% in the future.
Thatcher, Carter and a clean protest

After a lunch break where delegates networked and met the event sponsors in the exhibition hall, keynote speaker Jon Snow from Channel Four News addressed the conference. During his 40 minute address, Snow reflected on his long and illustrious career in journalism, telling attendees of his experiences from the numerous meetings he has had with political figures over the years, from Margaret Thatcher to Jimmy Carter.

Sharing his theory on why Mrs. Thatcher held such influence over the largely male journalist contingent and her Cabinet colleagues, Snow said: “For many of those who were privately educated and boarded, she reminded us of the Matron figure, strong, powerful and sometimes even slightly desirable. Whenever I met her, I could not stop thinking about this early sexual awakening. She used this trick on all men around her with quite ruthless precision!”

Snow added that Jimmy Carter, who he had interviewed only days before the conference with the former Presidents comments being widely reported in media around the world, was one of the most effective politicians in terms of his achievements in Africa and the Middle East. Despite being relatively uncharismatic, Snow said that Carter had focused his energies on achieving manageable change in areas such as HIV infection rates and curable diseases like tape worm, and was a shining example to retired public figures all over the world.

Snow stated his belief that he owed his entire career to being clean. As a young activist at Liverpool University he was involved in a 12 day sit-in to protest against the University’s alleged investments in apartheid-era South Africa, and it was his good behaviour during the protest which led to him being rusticated for one year rather than expelled permanently like many of his fellow activists: “It was all down to the fact that, even surrounded by the dirt, food and drugs of the protestors, I was cleaner than those around me.” Although Snow was never to return to the University, he claimed that the punishment stopped him from completing his law degree and becoming “a rather half-hearted lawyer”. Closing his address before he dashed away to present the evenings news, Snow opened up on the theme of sustainability, providing anecdotes about his love of cycling around London as he encouraged others to do the same.

“For many of those who were privately educated and boarded, she reminded us of the Matron figure, strong, powerful and sometimes even slightly desirable...”

Jon Snow - on Mrs Thatcher
The day closed with two panel discussions, covering issues of perennial importance to the cleaning industry: health and safety and migrant workers. The health and safety panel featured Paul Thrupp of OCS, Lawrence Waterman of the Olympic Delivery Authority, and David Ashton of the HSE. The debate reached consensus on the issue of the limited effectiveness of risk assessments in preventing accidents, many risk assessments are time consuming and, in some cases as Ashton pointed out, semi-fictitious, often proving of little consequence in improving worker safety. The panel agreed that direct verbal communication and regular meetings have a positive effect on worker wellbeing, and Waterman gave examples from his experiences working at Olympic Park in London, where the Olympic Delivery Authority took a holistic view where worker health and well-being were emphasised. This approach, Waterman added, has been richly rewarded with much lower injury rates than the industry standard. Waterman added with pride that Olympic Park is the only major construction project of its kind that has achieved zero fatalities during the life-cycle of the building project.

battling with Neil Jameson of Citizens UK, as they challenged each other on the benefits of migration and successive government’s policy on the issue. They were split on how to deal with the problem; Jameson favouring earned regularisation, a form of amnesty, for the estimated 750,000 non-UK nationals who currently do not have the right to stay and work in the UK, while Sir. Andrew offered a contrasting opinion by making the case for tougher border controls, more robust deportation procedures and tighter regulations on the number of migrants coming to the UK. Sir Green also offered his full support to the current coalition’s migration policy, which aims to limit the number of non-EU workers allowed to come into the UK to work through a cap—currently set at 21,700 skilled workers from outside the European Economic Area being allowed into the UK per annum.

Both the panel and the Chair of the debate, Andrew Large, Secretary General of The British Cleaning Council, agreed that the onus on businesses to verify their workers documentation was too great, and called upon the UK Borders Agency to take steps to reduce both the administrative burden and risk of financial penalty for businesses who are reliant on non-UK nationals within their Labour force. Businesses can face fines of up to £10,000 per illegal worker, despite the increasing sophistication of forged worker documentation, which makes detection and verification by businesses increasingly difficult and costly.

The Conference was sponsored by TECcare, Kimberly Clarke Professional, Selden Research, HSS Hire, the UKCPI, Activeion, Renault, Diversey, C & M Magazine and South Thames College, all of who held exhibition space in the main exhibition room overlooking Regents Canal.

The Cleaning Conference 2012 has been confirmed for autumn next year, with further details on theme and location to be released in the near future.

Please direct any enquiries regarding the BCC Sustainability Conference 2011 to Peter Carrol by telephone: 020 7920 9640 or email: press@britishcleaningcouncil.org
The Golden Service Awards Ceremony 2011:

The countdown is now on for the Kimberly Clarke Professional Golden Service Awards ceremony 2011. Organised in partnership with The Cleaning & Support Services Association (CSSA), the 2011 event will mark the 20th anniversary of the programme in the UK; with 18 lucky winners will be announced during a dazzling awards ceremony to be hosted by a well-known BBC presenter.

“Every Golden Service Awards proves bigger and better than the last,” said Marta Longhurst, Regional Marketing Manager, UK, Ireland & Benelux at Kimberly Clarke Professional. “We were astounded at how quickly and how early we sold tickets to the awards ceremony. So much so that we have had to ask the Lancaster hotel to expand the amount of space available to us which is a first.”

The judging committee was made up of experienced members of BICSc as well as representatives from the CSSA and The British Cleaning Council (BCC) and Cleaning & Maintenance magazine. Whilst KIMBERLY-CLARK PROFESSIONAL® started the Golden Service Awards and has always been a patron, it did not participate in the judging process in order to remain impartial throughout the process.

Diversey is the exclusive Gold sponsor of the Golden Service Awards 2011. Supporters of the programme since the beginning, BICSc, the BCC and C&M continue to be ambassador sponsors. All will be in attendance at the event to hand out Awards for their particular sponsored categories.

If you haven’t already done so, join the movers and shakers of the contract cleaning services industry by purchasing tickets for this prestigious event. To purchase, simply contact the Golden Service Awards 2011 organisers on 08000 192 422. Alternatively e-mail gsa@suzannehowe.com. Tickets cost £150 plus VAT (£180).

Survey to mark Global Handwashing Day reveals the importance of hygiene to the public

A report released to coincide with Global Handwashing Day on October 15 has revealed that almost two thirds of people avoid gatherings or cancel plans due to concerns over poor hygiene levels in public places.

Nearly half of those questioned in the survey said they had refrained from using a public lavatory, while a quarter have avoided swimming or using showers at a health club because of poor cleanliness. Almost 1 in 10 people also admitted they had turned down an invitation for dinner at a friend’s house because they were worried about the levels of hygiene and cleanliness they would encounter.

The report, Hygiene Matters, was conducted for hygiene – UP6&$DQGTXHVWLRQHGSHRSOHLQQLQHFRXQWULHV – UK, Germany, China, France, Australia, Mexico, Russia, Sweden and the United States – about their views on hygiene in society.

Mark Woodhead, Chairman of the British Cleaning Council said: “We are surrounded by hygiene in our daily lives, and this report shows that cleanliness is one of the most important factors when people are making decisions. From the predictable: public toilets, to the more subtle; dinner at a friend’s house, the survey emphasises the importance of good hygiene and clean environments in public and private places.

Global Handwashing Day – which was held on October 15 – aims to habitualise hand washing with soap in an attempt to reduce the spread of diseases and illnesses. Events to promote the practice in homes, schools, workplaces and communities were held around the world to mark the day.

ABCD Hold Regional meeting steeped in Imperial Grandeur at Mansion House

That with Christmas approaching, you could be forgiven for thinking that the Mansion House was opening its doors to young children for a learning experience or starting a nursery, however nothing could be further from the truth.

A.B.C.D., who held their North East Region meeting on October 14th at The Mansion House, Doncaster, in the Back Committee Room splendidly furnished with Sheraton Chairs, the bell from HMS Andromeda, the towns adopted ship, and walls adorned with paintings including the 1922 St Ledger winner Royal Lancer.

Before the meeting commenced, members representing Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Walsall, Middlesbrough, Gateshead and Rotherham were treated to a tour of this historic building by Ian Taylor (Interim Metro Clean Manager) and were duly impressed by the magnificence of the building opened in 1749, and its magnificent interior.

The meeting was surprisingly upbeat considering the challenging economic climate, and the swingeing cuts that are affecting the public sector. Members from each area were given the opportunity to pass on news of the changes taking place in their own area. The problems being encountered in Doncaster are being repeated over the whole of the region, and many Council’s are in a far worse situation than we are here in Doncaster.

However instead of allowing the meeting to turn into a depressing one-downmanship, those present were seen to be taking copious notes of the actions being taken in other areas, and many questions were asked and good ideas noted and taken on board for local use.
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Asset Skills, in partnership with Learn Direct, is making it that much easier to expand your knowledge, or that of your workforce, through a huge number of discounted qualifications and courses. These are flexible and designed to fit around an individual learner’s needs. Whatever the reason for learning, we can help you or your staff build your skills through a nationally-recognised qualification. All the courses are available online so learning can take place at home in the evening or at weekends, or in the workplace during lunch breaks or quiet periods.

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If you are interested in a course please click to complete our online form. Alternatively, email us at ukacademy@assetskills.org or call 0844 822 2525.

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News Round-up

Leading environmentalist Jonathon Porritt has predicted that RWM in partnership with CIWM, the waste and resource efficiency industry’s flagship event, will “grow and grow” following this year’s success, which saw visitor numbers up 38%.

Jonathon, who talked about the potential of a sustainable world by 2050 in his keynote address at the exhibition, said in his post-show blog: “The whole place positively bristled with new technologies, innovative ideas and companies, and a sense of dynamism and forward-looking energy that I found incredibly uplifting.” Read the full blog at http://www.jonathonporritt.com/blog/what-waste.

Following the successful merger in late 2010 between the RWM and Futuresource exhibitions, RWM in partnership with CIWM 2011 was the largest ever UK exhibition for the waste industry, with more exhibitors and visitors than ever before.

Show director Gerry Sherwood said: “This year’s show featured over 650 exhibitors and more than 100 speakers in 72 seminar sessions. Our aim was to provide the right environment for business, knowledge sharing and networking and we were very pleased to see over 13,000 visitors across the three days. Representing a 38% increase on 2010, this clearly shows that the waste management and resource efficiency sector is buoyant and expanding.”

Illustrating this, the visitor list featured big corporate names including Allianz, Balfour Beatty, Coca-Cola Enterprises, ExxonMobil, Ford Motor Company, Lafarge, Mars Drinks, Mercedes-Benz, Pfizer, PepsiCo, Pirelli, Shell, Skanska, Tarmac, Tesco, United Utilities, Walkers Snack Foods, Wincanton and Zero Waste Scotland – as well as a strong public sector turnout including Birmingham City Council, Greater London Authority, Westminster City Council, and Zero Waste Scotland. In addition, 30% of the total visitors were employed at chief executive, chief operating officer, managing director, or other senior management levels.

This year’s exhibition also attracted more international visitors than ever before, with around 10% coming from overseas. Over 70 countries were represented including Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, South Korea, the Netherlands, UAE and the USA.

CIWM chief executive Steve Lee added: “These figures are extremely encouraging and tell us that the merger was the right move for our sector. Support from industry leaders and environmentalists like Jonathon Porritt can only help the industry and the show to grow over the coming years.”

Show organisers are now planning for next year’s event with stand sales already well underway for the return to the NEC Birmingham on 11-13 September 2012.