

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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www.sustainit.org

VOLUNTEER PROJECT RECOGNISED IN NATIONAL AWARDS

An empowering IT network for disabled people is one of the pioneering projects selected for the shortlist of a national award scheme that identifies and promotes the many benefits obtained from the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

The IT Can Help (ITCH) Network is just one of the 118 entries received and one of the 21 projects short-listed in the 2004 UK eWell-Being Awards developed by SustainIT and sponsored by BT, Vodafone and Brother with The Guardian as national media partner. The awards aim to uncover exciting new projects that use ICT to deliver environmental and/or social benefits.

This worthy project was entered in the Digital Inclusion category, sponsored by BT. For the 2004 programme there was an additional award within the Digital Inclusion category focusing on projects that enhance ICT access and services specifically for disabled people.

The ITCH Network was set up in 1994 as a Project of the British Computer Society's Disability Group. It was devised by Ken Stoner, a disabled person who had found it hard to get help when he had difficulty using his own computer. This experience spurred him on to set up the network. He realised that whilst many disabled people are able to access IT equipment through a variety of sources, support for this equipment is not always readily available, it is often very expensive and does not take account of the often very special needs of disabled users. Since its establishment, ITCH Network has assisted many disabled people and in the past two years alone, ITCH volunteers have made over 2,000 visits, solving many hardware and software problems, as well as helping people to gain confidence using a computer.

Said SustainIT Programme Manager Simon Hills: "Once again, the entries highlight how organisations use ICT creatively to provide tangible environmental and social benefits".

BT has supported the eWell-Being Awards programme since its inception in 2002. Ian Wood of the Corporate Responsibility Unit said: "Digital Inclusion is a key focus for our business and our support for the eWell-Being Awards plays an important role in it. In 2004 the standard of the entries was again exceptionally high, and we are eager to champion those organisations that are leading the way such as the ITCH Network".

Winning projects will be announced at an awards ceremony at 30 St. Mary Axe, London (affectionately referred to as 'The Gherkin'), on Monday 14th March 2005.

For more information on the Awards, or if you would like to attend the awards ceremony please contact Simon Hills or Richard Craven, SustainIT on 01733 312286 or shills@ukceed.org.

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Notes to editors

1. The judging panel for the 2004 Awards included representatives of BT, Vodafone, Brother, IDeA, Local Transport Today, The AA, OFCOM, Oracle, SOCITM, ZDNet, The Guardian, Ability magazine, UK CEED and Netmums (category winner in the 2002 eWell-Being Awards).

2. SustainIT is an initiative of The UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED), an entrepreneurial research and policy centre. It conducts research on, and provides best practice examples of, synergies between ICT and sustainable development. It works in partnership with business, government and the voluntary sector to encourage adoption of ever higher environmental standards in their activities. The Centre undertakes research, develops policy, implements technology demonstration projects and carries out a wide range of engagement and education activities with its partners in the UK and across Europe. For more information visit www.sustainit.org and www.ukceed.org

3. BT Group plc is the holding company for an integrated group of communications businesses and is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York. British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group.

BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions serving customers in Europe, the Americas and Asia Pacific. Its principal activities include IT and networking services, local, national and international telecommunications services, and higher-value broadband and internet products and services.

BT consists principally of three lines of business:

- **BT Retail**, providing fixed and mobile communications services and solutions and IT and networking services to more than 20 million business and residential customers in the UK. It is also a leading UK internet services provider.
- **BT Wholesale**, providing network services and solutions within the UK to more than 600 fixed and mobile operators and service providers including the provision of broadband, private circuits.
- **BT Global Services**, providing IT and networking services internationally to meet the needs of multi-site organisations with European operations. BT Global Services operates in more than 130 countries and also offers international carrier services.

In the year ended 31 March 2004, BT Group's turnover was £18,519 million with profit before goodwill amortisation, exceptional items and taxation of £2,013 million.

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