

CONNECTING LOW CARBON GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTY

Low Carbon Warwickshire Network Newsletter

February 2021 Issue 3

The Low Carbon Warwickshire Network aims to connect low carbon groups across the county, sharing ideas and stimulating and supporting new activity. Although primarily rural in focus, we exclude no one.



<https://www.harburyenergy.co.uk/warwickshire-low-carbon-network>

Welcome to the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network (LCWN) Newsletter

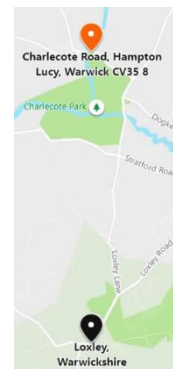
The LCWN aims to create a central hub providing guidance, information and inspiration for new and existing groups, mainly in rural areas. 'Creating Low Carbon Communities' events have been held in Harbury, Napton on the Hill and Henley-in-Arden with other on-line events being planned. The events at Church Lawford, Snitterfield and Kenilworth are on-hold due to the pandemic.

A range of partners are working together to help secure the resources the Network will need to grow and deliver on its vision.

Grapevine Environmental Action Team

Tass's experience of finding community and her GREAT news

The villages of Charlecote, Hampton Lucy and Loxley have just launched a new group called GREAT (Grapevine Environmental Action Team - a nod to their parish newsletter). Starting GREAT in the midst of a global pandemic has been a bit challenging, but we've made it with encouragement from Bob Sherman, Jacky Lawrence and members of the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network. So thank you!



We briefly explored the option of setting ourselves up with a constitution and a steering group but as soon as I mentioned this, everyone ran a mile. So instead, we're going to see how far we can get as a bunch of "ordinary folk making a difference together". So far we've had a couple of Zoom meetings and we're using a Trello board so that we can collaborate easily. While we can't apply for grant funding without formalising the group, we think there's a lot we can achieve through awareness, facilitation with other community groups, our schools/pubs/churches and just doing stuff. Our Parish Council's are very supportive and have already donated a token £50 which is a GREAT start.

If you live in the area and want to find out how you can join them email: hellogreatfuture@gmail.com

Who are we? Introducing.....

This month we get the founder of the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network - **Bob Sherman** from Harbury Energy Initiative and Harbury e-wheels to talk to us about his low carbon journey.



1. What is your first memory of when you realised things needed to change?

I took up gardening as a career in 1976 and began to be interested in environmental issues immediately determining to be organic in my practice. My concerns then were about soil, plants and land management but I was also interested in saving whales and stopping new nuclear power reactor construction and other environmental issues of the day.

In 1986 I joined the staff of Henry Doubleday Research Association (now renamed Garden Organic) and I began to see clearly that peat extraction, the machinery we used, the materials we bought were contributory factors to the problem of climate change and environmental pollution. There was a key moment, however, in the early 2000s, after I had met and had many conversations with Tony McNally (of Climate Change Solutions), when I realised with great clarity that 'sustainability' could not be separated into different categories. It was all connected and the target had to be low carbon living in all its aspects.

2. What made you commit to doing something?

By 2009 my frustration at lack of progress on climate change extended to myself. Instead of just complaining and talking, why didn't I do something? To my surprise a good friend felt the same, so we started Harbury Energy Initiative (HEI). There is a little story attached to this that you can find on our website.



3. What have you done?

In 2010 With 10 or 11 others I created a low carbon group in the village called Harbury Energy Initiative. In the years since then we have much to be proud of. Our funding successes include:

- Internal wall insulation for our community library
- Energy options reports on the church, school, library and Harbury RFC clubhouse
- Cavity wall and roof insulation for our Rugby Club clubhouse
- An electric car club (now no longer operating)
- A new charity providing free transport in electric cars to people in need: Harbury e-Wheels
- LED lighting throughout the school and in the Scout Hut
- 12kWp solar panel installation on the school roof
- 19kW battery energy store for the village hall and a public monitor to show energy generation for the hall's PV panels
- Several surveys in collaboration with the school children, including one on air quality monitoring
- In all we have successfully applied for 29 different grants, mostly quite small
- I have never stopped gardening organically as well, ensuring that I have kept a holistic eco lifestyle connecting all aspects of sustainability in my own living.



4. What's kept you going? What sustains you?

There is a massive stimulus from working on exciting positive projects with others. In addition, the public mood has changed. That needs to be harnessed so that everyone realises that they have a part to play and cannot afford to be passive. Starting the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network has been an uplifting and morale boosting experience. Good company, collaboration and mutual support are a great stimulus.

5. If there was one thing / one solution you wished everyone knew about / did - what would it be ?

Dietary change. Our insatiable appetite for nutritionally inefficient meat products such as beef and lamb is fuelling the crisis and supporting a high carbon agriculture, deforestation and inefficient land use.

Carbon Choices

Neil Kitching on the common sense solutions to our climate and nature crises

Geographer and energy specialist Neil Kitching has published Carbon Choices on the common-sense solutions to our climate and nature crises. He outlines five common-sense principles to tackle climate change and considers the community and social implications of the changes that are required. Neil says:-

In my book, I identify five common sense principles to tackle climate change:

1. Be fair across current and future generations
2. Price carbon pollution
3. Consume carefully, travel wisely
4. Embrace efficiency, avoid waste
5. Nurture nature

Community is a theme that runs across these. Climate change can be tackled by governments, business or individuals; but communities can aggregate individual action to place pressure on, or support, action by government and business.

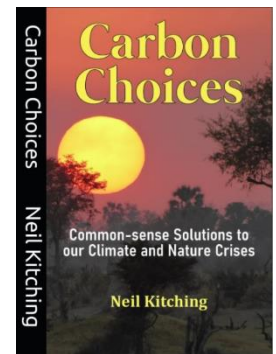
For example, when the rush to erect wind farms was at its peak, Local Energy Scotland helped the village of Fintry to negotiate with the multi-national developer. The community now owns one of the 15 turbines erected. This far sighted decision brings a steady flow of income into the village - to refurbish community owned buildings, give energy advice to householders and to install home insulation. The wind farm developer benefitted from engaging with a supportive community. But community energy requires time, money, effort and patience, and is not always successful. Its growth has been hampered by constant changes in the available subsidies.

Not everyone has the time, skills or inclination to develop community energy. But most schemes also need financial support and one way of raising this is through crowdfunding campaigns. These can be promoted to provide people with a vested interest in local developments. The best schemes also return some of the 'profits' to local communities.

In my local town of Dunblane, a social enterprise has set up Weigh Ahead. Its aim is to eliminate the need for packaging, particularly single-use plastics. The shop weighs the customer's own containers, fills them with goods such as rice or pasta, and then re-weighs them to calculate the amount due. A charity runs the shop and local people contributed to its start-up costs through a crowd funding campaign. Again, the aim is to provide a socially beneficial service.

Amidst all the bad news, these community initiatives demonstrate that there are grounds for hope - this popular science book concludes with a green action plan for government, business and individuals to make better Carbon Choices.

Carbon Choices can be bought on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/1851967000) or direct from the author - further information can be found at www.carbonchoices.uk



News

Warwickshire County Council's Green Shoots Climate Change Fund

The Warwickshire County Council Green Shoots Community Climate Change Fund has been launched. It provides grant funding to community projects to mitigate against, and adapt to, the impact of climate change. The Green Shoots Fund is designed to support community projects and initiatives that aim to achieve the following:

1. Increase the adaptability and resilience of Warwickshire to the effects of climate change.
2. Reduce impacts on the environment, particularly regarding climate change.
3. Ensure funded projects benefit the wider Warwickshire community.

Solar Together Warwickshire

Warwickshire County Council are working in partnership with independent experts iChoosr in a group buying scheme to offer residents a cost effective and as hassle-free as possible opportunity to invest in solar panels for their homes.

Solar Together Warwickshire aims to make it easier for residents to find trustworthy installers providing quality controlled solar panel systems for a competitive price.

The offer will come with the option to add battery storage to the new or existing solar PV installations. EV charge points could also be available. Similar schemes have been delivered through iChoosr by Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Essex County Councils, the Mayor of London and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.



BUYING SOLAR PANELS
& STORAGE MADE EASY



To take part, residents are invited to register an interest when the scheme launches on 15 February 2020. The dates for WCC's first "Collective Solar System" Scheme are:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Registration opens | 15/02/21 |
| • Reverse auction | 23/03/21 |
| • Decision phase and acceptance period | 12/04/21-24/05/21 |
| • Installation phase | 31/06/21-31/10/21 |

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Carbon Plan

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) commissioned the company WSP to produce a draft five-year plan. The plan outlines the action needed to drive a cut in carbon of around 25% by 2026, the reduction needed to keep the region on course to meet the net zero carbon by 2041 target. The research found that more than 21,000 new jobs could be created over the next five years, and 92,000 by 2041, mostly in new carbon cutting green industries and technologies. The plan admits that the target reduction can only be reached if councils, businesses, government and members of the public all play their part. Significant investment will be required to achieve the target, approximately £4.7bn in the first five years and £15.4bn by 2041. The proposed Five-Year Plan will go before the WMCA board on March 19th.

Garden Organic

Garden Organic are encouraging everyone to start [building a garden pond](#). February is the ideal time to encourage biodiversity into the garden.

Events

Transition Town Rugby Climate Café, Saturday March 20th from 14:00 to 16:00 [Transition Town Rugby - Climate Cafe \(google.com\)](https://www.transitiontownrugby.co.uk/transition-town-rugby-climate-cafe)



TTR presented the findings of their initial survey to Rugby Borough Council's Climate Emergency Group. The Council are keen to engage with local people on ways to work towards effective solutions to the climate emergency. The next Climate Café event will involve Rugby Borough Council's Climate Emergency Working Group. Transition Town TTR will have some interesting speakers from local climate action groups to kick off the discussion and there will be opportunities for all to talk and share ideas.

Useful links

Funding

-  <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/greenshootsfund>
-  <https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/available-grants/>
-  Community Energy Warwickshire Fund
<https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CEW-2020.pdf>
-  <https://semble.org/>
-  <https://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx>
-  <https://www.energyredress.org.uk/announcements/new-carbon-emissions-reduction-fund-available>



FUND:
Community Energy Warwickshire Fund
AREA:
Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull
STATUS: **OPEN**
MAXIMUM: £2,000
DEADLINE: Rolling Programme

Wildlife ponds

-  https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/creating-pond?utm_campaign=12088605_enews%20February%202021&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Garden%20Organic&dm_i=4UO,773ML,W7SQXO,T5RJS,1
-  https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/What-to-do-in-February?utm_campaign=12088605_enews%20February%202021&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Garden%20Organic&dm_i=4UO,773ML,W7SQXO,T5RJS,1

Local Groups

-  Transition Town Rugby climate change survey report
https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQce-klyMLkhY0iD7GhQdMIJwqc6qluvjlW0hfqZ1z0bdgPaEn4Plu5jWckonSOkf_mJhHEu7JaWBHh/pub
-  <https://www.climate-change-solutions.co.uk/>

West Midlands Combined Authority draft net zero plan

-  <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/3638/wm2041-one-pager.pdf>
-  <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s4200/WM2041%20Appendix.pdf>

School resources

-  <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage>
-  <https://betterenergyschoolawards.org.uk/>
-  <https://yppte.org.uk/>

Interesting projects from elsewhere

-  <https://heatingswaffhamprior.co.uk/>



Have your say— What do you want to see in future editions?

This is your newsletter and only as good as you make it – it is your opportunity to :

- publicise any on-line events you are holding
- let other community groups know what you are currently up to and other news
- share your experiences

Ideas, requests, offers, Q & A, hints & tips

How do you communicate in your community groups? GREAT have started to use a Trello Board so they can collaborate easily. It might be worth checking out to see if you can use it too. <https://trello.com/> You can sign up for a free account.

Please send all copy (by 5th of each month), news items, case studies, details of events, comments, suggestions and enquiries about this newsletter to: **lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com** referring to the issue date and number for queries or phone Jacky Lawrence on 07906 440496.

