

CONNECTING LOW CARBON GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTY

Low Carbon Warwickshire Network Newsletter

March 2021 Issue 4

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.

Radford Semele Church of England Primary School

Installation of Solar Panels

Radford Semele C of E primary school has recently installed 62 solar panels which is set to generate £95,073 in lifetime financial benefits. A third of the school's electricity demand will be powered by cleaner, cheaper electricity. This will save 160 tonnes of carbon and provide the next generations with a renewable energy learning resource.



Government funding was used which meant the school didn't have to pay any upfront capital costs for the system to be installed. The panels were installed by Ineco energy (info@inecoenergy.com) who are based in Warwick. Contact Angus Rose for more information angus.rose@inecoenergy.com. Warwickshire County Council has recently announced grant funding via the green shoots fund which may provide even more incentive for schools to save money and cut carbon.

Who are we? Introducing.....

This month we get **Keith Sinfield** from Community Energy Warwickshire Ltd. to talk to us about his low carbon journey.

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

Unfortunately, I can't recall a particular moment when I decided that we ought to 'change our ways'. I have, however, always hated wasteful behaviour, in any form. My training as an engineer, with its emphasis on the need to maximise performance and efficiency, sits well with that notion. In the early 1970s, with the purchase of our first house, we were motivated to reduce our energy consumption; not with the aim of 'saving the planet', as it was known then, but to reduce costs.



Most of my working life has been spent in the gas turbine industry, both in the electricity generation and prime mover roles – both applications, sadly, use fossil fuels and are, as such, responsible for a proportion of the carbon in our atmosphere. By being part of the movement to secure a greener future, however, I would like to think that I am now atoning for my past sins.

2. What made you commit to doing something?

I have to say that the main motivation for my actions over the years has been to reduce our own, individual, household expenditure on energy. My first chance to commit to making a bigger difference, however, came whilst working for Warwickshire County Council when I was invited to join the Renewable Energy Club (REC) run by Jonathan Horsfield and Derrick Knight. At REC meetings, members were invited to share their experiences and pool knowledge of renewable energy devices plus the steps they had taken to reduce energy consumption. It was hoped that more people would then be inspired to reduce their energy consumption, thus making a bigger difference.

My second chance to make an even bigger difference came when members of Transition Stratford, Barbara Cooper and Roger Matthews, attended a Renewable Energy Club meeting, and brought with them an idea that resulted in the creation of Community Energy Warwickshire Ltd (CEW Ltd).

3. What have you done?

At the purely domestic level I am pleased to say that I have reduced our own household energy consumption by 2/3 compared with the level of consumption in 1990. This we have achieved by insulating external walls, fitting under-floor insulation, enhancing loft insulation and having triple glazing installed. In the interests of 'resource efficiency' we have installed rainwater harvesting, providing water for toilet flushing and for the washing machine. But, so far as making a bigger difference is concerned, I am particularly pleased to have been a part of CEW Ltd from its inception and continued successful operation. CEW Ltd, in its partnership with the South Warwickshire National Health Trust, has installed five separate solar PV arrays at Trust hospitals totalling 170kWp. To the end of 2019 these had secured estimated savings of 325 tonnes of carbon emissions; and, from the revenue generated, enabled CEW Ltd to donate over £56 000 to community groups throughout the region for energy saving projects.



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

I have been privileged to make the acquaintance of many, very capable, hardworking people – all committed to the goal of securing a greener future; they have both inspired and sustained me during the fifteen or so years I have been engaged in this work.

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

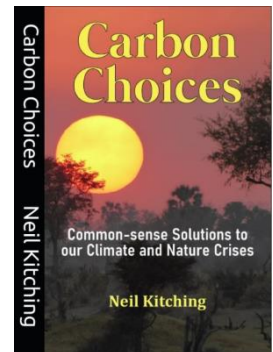
Sadly, I can't think of a single 'magic wand' idea. I do wish, however, that local authority planning departments would be more rigorous in exercising their powers to prevent developers 'getting off the hook' by building houses which are not to the highest energy efficient standards!

Parish Councils - on Sustainability and Net Zero

Neil Kitching continues to talk to us about the common sense solutions to our climate and nature crises

Sustainability and net zero can seem daunting to many of us. This article will help you to be aware of the issues as a first step to taking action. A good place to start is the five common sense principles that I identify in my book, Carbon Choices:

1. Be fair across current and future generations
2. Price carbon pollution (mainly for Government to action)
3. Consume carefully, travel wisely
4. Embrace efficiency, avoid waste
5. Nurture nature



By applying these principles to areas within our control or influence we can begin to address the climate and nature emergencies.

Allotments are a great way to foster community spirit, increase biodiversity and encourage healthy diets. But you want to avoid too many fertilisers, pesticides and other chemicals. Can you encourage organic methods, use peat free compost and manure rather than synthetic fertilisers? If possible maintain some wild land around the allotment to benefit wildlife.

Local markets are a great community asset and help to support local farmers and allotment owners. They can also encourage healthy diets through showcasing local fruit and vegetables. Every town should have a market. We can reduce our carbon footprint if we avoid any foodstuffs that have been air freighted in and move towards a more seasonal diet more based on what can be locally grown.

For **village halls** and other buildings the mantra is insulation, insulation, insulation. Converting to heat pumps will also cut carbon emissions as electricity now emits much less carbon dioxide than burning natural gas. Solar panels can generate electricity to operate the heat pumps and bring in a long-term source of income. There will be a local public sector body (contact the Energy Savings Trust) who will be able to advise you on grants and loans.

For **playing fields and parks** the aim is to maximise public amenity and biodiversity at the same time. Speak to local wildlife groups and experts. What is the optimum time and frequency to cut grass; leave some areas uncut. Can wildflower meadows (for insects) and some areas of wetland be restored? Can you plant trees, or create a community orchard? Is all waste composted?

For **street lights** energy efficiency is key. Invest in LEDs and ensure that timers are operating correctly. You might have limited influence over **public transport** but you could set up local lift sharing (post covid) and campaign for more public electric charge points. Hire schemes are a good way for people to try out electric bikes before committing to buying one. Campaign for better facilities and road space for cyclists. Are there safe routes to cycle to school?

When offering **grants** to voluntary and other local bodies, consider if you can encourage applications that will benefit the environment and consider placing environmental conditions on any grants awarded. This way you can spread good practice to others.

You might also organise, or work in partnership on activities for community benefit. Examples include litter picking or monitoring and tackling *invasive species*. Rhododendron ponticum, giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed are the most problematic but there are many more. Organisations like Plantlife - the wild plant conservation charity - will be able to provide advice.

You can also have a wider influence through inputting to **consultations on planning** applications. In some cases this might be to block developments, but often it is more useful to campaign for better quality and sustainable developments. For example, no new houses should be built with gas boilers - in most cases heat pumps are a more sustainable solution. If developers build detached houses with large driveways without access to good public transport then they are effectively locking-in long-term car dependency. Consider discussions with local solar and wind developments as you might be able to negotiate a community benefit clause to provide a steady income stream for community benefit.

Often you will not have the expertise within your Parish Council to address all these issues. It is good to collaborate with others. Many experts will help you free of charge and there are many organisations and campaigning groups that can also offer support.

Carbon Choices is about the common-sense solutions to our climate and nature crises. Available on [Amazon](#) or further information at www.carbonchoices.uk

News

Parish Council – Impact carbon footprinting tool

The Impact tool for community carbon footprinting was developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), as part of their Climate Emergency Support Programme, working jointly with the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy & the Environment (CEE), as part of their South West Environment and Climate Action Network (SWeCAN) project.

The tool was part funded through CSE's charitable reserve, the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, via the Midlands Energy Hub, and the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund.

This tool has been developed in response to a demand from smaller settlements to have robust and accurate data on their carbon footprint, so that they can best direct their efforts to tackle the climate emergency.

The aim of the tool is to give small communities data on their carbon emissions that is easy to interpret, easy to share, and which gives them a clear idea of their main 'impact areas' – those big segments where concerted, community-based action could really make a dent in local emissions. The information is displayed visually via a series of charts. However, for those who do want to access the raw data, you can visit the Downloads page to do so. [Impact | Community carbon calculator \(impact-tool.org.uk\)](#)

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



BUYING SOLAR PANELS
& STORAGE MADE EASY



installations. EV charge points could also be available. To take part, residents are invited to register an interest before 24th March 2021.

NextGen – The Refill Station

Not Warwickshire – but close to parts of it – there's a new shop in Market Bosworth who sell eco-friendly household, body care and dry food essential products all with zero waste. It's been set up by two local ladies with a passion for the environment who want to make a difference and make it easy for you to do your bit for the environment too. You can take your plastic containers and they will fill them for you, or they have spare bottles, they also do home delivery if you're nearby. For more information call Jeanette on 07873 366131 or Marianne on 07538 326512 or check them out on Facebook [NextGen - The Refill Station | Facebook](#)

Events

Kenilworth All Together Greener, Wednesday 10th March 7:30 p.m.

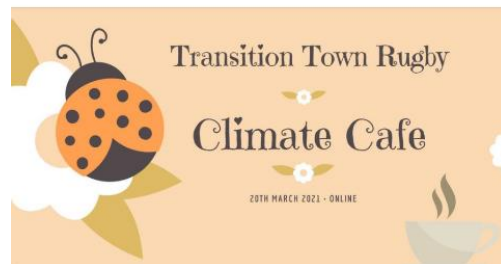
Please join us for our next Kenilworth All Together Greener meeting online at 7.30pm on Wednesday 10th March. Our speaker, George Martin will be telling us about giving a low carbon retrofit to his modern detached brick and block house.

After a professional career pursuing sustainability in the construction industry, George remains active in the field as executive chair of the Building Performance Network, an independent not for profit organisation seeking to improve building performance-in-use in the UK.

All welcome. To attend, please email katg@gmx.co.uk requesting a Zoom link.

Transition Town Rugby Climate Café, Saturday March 20th from 14:00 to 16:00 [Transition Town Rugby - Climate Cafe \(google.com\)](#)

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>
- [Welcome | My Funding Central](#)

Warwickshire Solar Together

- <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/solartogether>

Local Groups

- [Harbury E-Wheels – Harbury Energy Initiative](#)
- <http://www.jimsleight.com/napton/neat>
- <http://www.cew.coop/>
- <https://warwickshireclimatealliance.org/about/>
- <https://covcan.uk/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/transitiontownrugby>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Kenilworth-All-Together-Greener-331940026990994/>
- <https://bishopstachbrook.com/tracc-news-february-2021/>
- <https://www.climate-change-solutions.co.uk/>

Warwickshire Councils

- <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/strategies-policies-legislation/facing-challenge-climate-change-warwickshire/2>
- https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20468/sustainability_and_climate_change/1636/warwick_district_people_s_climate_change_inquiry
- https://www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk/downloads/download/51/climate_change

School resources

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

Interesting projects from elsewhere

- <https://ecobirmingham.com/blog/environmental-community-learning-programme/>



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

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.



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Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull

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