

CONNECTING LOW CARBON GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTY

# Low Carbon Warwickshire Network Newsletter

July 2023 – Issue 29

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. 'Low Carbon Communities' events have been held in Harbury, Napton on the Hill, Henley-in-Arden, Church Lawford, Boddington, Kenilworth, Brailes and Cubbington.

**The next event is at Wren Hall, Wroxall, on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 10:00 to 12:30.**

## LCWN Steering Group

We give a warm welcome to a new member of the steering group – Louise Bowlt from Act on Energy. Louise is their Retrofit Advisor. [Our Team - Act on Energy - Energy Advice Charity](#)



Telephone: 0800 988 2881  
E-mail: [louise@actonenergy.org.uk](mailto:louise@actonenergy.org.uk)



**Louise Bowlt**  
Project Officer/ Retrofit  
Advisor

We also say goodbye and thank you for all your support to Keith Sinfield from Community Energy Warwickshire and Philip Mayer from Harbury E-Wheels.

The steering group meet infrequently and only when we have something of significance to discuss, and there is no Treasurer role! Please do think of joining us. **If you can spare just a few hours a year please contact Bob Sherman at [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com)**

There will be a **LCWN social** gathering plus bring and share lunch in Napton, 12:30 on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Contact Jacky Lawrence for further details if you'd like to join us at [jackylawrence31@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jackylawrence31@hotmail.co.uk)

To find out a little more about the steering group members see their 'who are we?' answers:-

Bob Sherman - [LCWN-Newsletter-Issue-3-February-2021.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

Jacky Lawrence - [LCWN-Newsletter-Issue-7-June-2021.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

Ted Dowdeswell - [LCWN-Newsletter-Issue-9-August-2021.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

Ian Wood - [LCWN-Newsletter-Issue-10-September-2021.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

Teresa Buckle - [LCWN-Newsletter-February-2023-issue-24.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

Matt Black - [LCWN-Newsletter-April-2023-issue-26.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)



## LCWN Schools Project Team

### Kenilworth Schools working together. An initiative led by Sam Pater, Headteacher of Clinton Primary School

When I went to meet Sam Pater, Headteacher of Clinton Primary School back in January when schools were beginning to get back to something like normality after the trials of the Pandemic, I was excited by his vision that if Kenilworth Primary Schools worked together, they were in a great position to influence the community in skills for learning sustainable skills for living in a world of Climate Change and helping towards Net Zero.

Sam was brimming with ideas and had already begun gathering the Headteachers together to discuss what pledges they could agree on which they would work towards. Full of admiration I asked him to keep me in the loop as an educational representative on the LCWN Steering Groups as well as a Kenilworth resident and assured him that we were keen to support all groups in the Network as and when we could.

Last week Sam and I had a telephone meeting to catch up and I began by asking him how his plans for the Heads Together (my term) were going. Be amazed by the progress! Despite extra Bank Holidays in an already holiday-packed term, stoppages and spasmodic outbreaks of influenza and Covid:

1. The Kenilworth Schools all have Eco Councils.
2. They all have a staff member who is an Eco Champion.
3. They have pledged to make their schools and the school communities around them as plastic-free as possible by the end of June 2023. The action plan for this being for each child and family to reduce 3 single-use plastic items as much as possible by this date.
4. They have held a combined Trash Mob.
5. They have pledged for pupils to write a letter to promote a plastic-free future to the local M.P and to a Business Company in Kenilworth or elsewhere. Clinton pupils are writing to Cadbury's and Haribo for example.
6. The Heads Together are also gathering a committee from the community with a variety of expertise to help them sort out the organisation of the pledges.

The next moves are to bring the Teacher Champions together. Sam's comment when telling me this was

***"It's all about connecting people with a common aim really and getting them supporting each other."***

This year the focus is Plastic -Free pledges. The next theme will be car-idling and air pollution!

I thanked Sam for taking time in his busy day to share all this positive news with us and put the phone down with a smile knowing that the future would be in good hands.

**Teresa Buckle, LCWN, July 2023**

**We would love to know the areas in which you feel we would be most useful** and if you have any school initiatives which you would like to share with us. Do email me, **Teresa Buckle** at:

[teresabuckle2@gmail.com](mailto:teresabuckle2@gmail.com)



## Diary Date - Shrewley and Wroxall Environment event, Wren Hall, Wroxall, on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2023, 10:00 to 12:30. Inspiring Ideas for Local Community Action

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October will be the launch of the Shrewley and Wroxall\* Environment Action Team (SWEAT). You will be able to find out more about a host of inspiring ideas for local community action to improve our environment. Not just for our benefit but for future generations. Speakers from local organisations and the community will share ideas for discussion on a range of hot topics – food, sustainable buildings, nature matters etc. There will be time for discussion and for exchange of ideas.

\*Includes Beausale, Haseley and Honiley

### Do you want to host a LCWN event in your community?

If you would like to host a funded “Low Carbon Community” event where you live, please email: [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com) and let us know where and when and we will support you in planning it. You will not be on your own.

The LCWN Steering Group have started to develop an event resource library including action, pledge and creativity ideas. NEAT was able to borrow a few of these resources for their Eco Fair.



### Napton Eco Fair, Napton Village Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> July

Warwickshire & West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC) produced a write up of Napton's Eco Fair which was organised by Napton Environmental Action Team (NEAT). [Napton Parish Eco-Fair - Warwickshire & West Midlands ALC Ltd. \(walc.org.uk\)](#) To get a flavour of the event there is an 11-minute-long video. [Napton N.E.A.T. Eco Fair 2023 - YouTube](#)



**Welcome to  
NAPTON ECO-FAIR**  
Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 - 10.30am to 4pm

**HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING**

**SPEAKERS and CONVERSATIONS**  
Ask Questions – Explore Ideas  
WATER RESOURCES – CLEAN ENERGY  
LOW ENERGY COOKING + FERMENTATION  
RECYCLING – ‘ENVIRO CLINIC’

**ELECTRIC CARS  
SCOOTERS BIKES**  
Dr Bike - Bike  
Health Checks  
10.30 to 1.30pm

**GROWING YOUR  
OWN FOOD  
KEEPING BEES  
and CHICKENS**

**GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES**  
**REPAIR CAFE**  
2pm to 4pm

**MORE THAN  
30 EXHIBITORS**

**‘FROCK SWAP’**  
Exchange one of yours  
for a different one

Napton Village Hall, The Crescent. CV478LS

**NAPTON ECO FAIR**  
Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July

**SPEAKERS + CONVERSATIONS**

**Come and listen – Plan your day – Ask Questions – Explore Ideas**

**11.15am Our Wonderful Water**  
A fun session aimed at Primary age children - but enjoyable at any age.  
Presented by Phil Pearce, Education Officer, Severn Trent Water

**12.00 Kilowatts or Calories – What are Fields For?**  
Tom Heap explores the issues involved in the debate between climate friendly renewable energy and feeding the nation

**12.45pm Energy-saving Cooking** - How to get to love a pressure cooker and other money saving ideas from Jo Ingleby, Director of The Children's Kitchen with - tasters

**1.15pm Introduction to Fermentation** - Erica Moody from Leamington will show you how easy it is to ferment vegetables - with tasters

**1.45pm Hybrid Heating Systems with Air Source Heat Pumps**  
Dr Stephen Kelly, MD of OYA Energy UK, carbon reduction specialists (Southam)

**2.15pm Waste Minimisation - Recycling and Waste Collections in Stratford-on-Avon District**, Caroline Faulkner, Waste Projects Officer, Warwickshire CC

**3.00pm Enviro Clinic** - Chat with Tom Heap about green issues on your mind.

**10.30 to 4pm, Napton Village Hall, The Crescent CV47 8LS**



## Who are we? Introducing. . . . .

This month we get **Tom Heap**, broadcaster, author, and journalist from **Countryfile, Costing the Earth, the Sky news climate show, 39 ways to save the planet and Napton Environmental Action Team** to tell us something about his low carbon journey.

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

My dad was a polar scientist and policy maker, so human impact on the environment, especially our wildest places, was part of my upbringing.

### 2. What made you commit to doing something?

The belief that burning fossil fuels is a serious threat to the future welfare of humanity so I should try to reduce their use where possible.

### 3. What have you done?

Lots of rooftop solar power, a battery, an electric car, limited use of the gas central heating, more jumpers and eating less meat.

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

Faith in human ingenuity and optimism that we have the ways to solve the climate and nature crises, but not without some impact on our lives.

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

Buy and use a pressure cooker.

**Tom Heap, June 2023**

## Who are you?

If you have an interesting story to tell which could inspire others to take action, please send your answers to the five 'who are we?' questions to [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com). We'll include your story in a future newsletter.

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

### 2. What made you commit to doing something?

### 3. What have you done?

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

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

## My Heat Pump halved our Energy Bill- by our guest blogger Neil Kitching

Do heat pumps work? Are they noisy? Is my home warm? Is it expensive? How did I halve my bill? I can finally reveal the answers!

I wrote my [previous blog](#) in the post installation excitement. Six months on, is my heat pump working? Let's start with a reminder of my home electrification project.



### **What did I install?**

I installed a 7kw Vaillant Arotherm plus air sourced heat pump with new radiators and pipework. I added extra solar panels, now totalling 4.5kWp, and a 15kWh battery. I got a smart meter fitted and moved to the Octopus 'cosy' tariff which offers 3 different price bands dependent on the time of day.

### **Why did I do it?**

Firstly, to slash my home carbon emissions – a massive 71% reduction from 2.8 tonnes to 0.8 tonnes per year. These will continue to fall as the national grid continues to decarbonise. Note that it is the heat pump that has slashed our emissions, the solar power less so. We all need to stop burning fossil gas.

Secondly, I could afford it. Home Energy Scotland supported us with a grant and a loan. For once I was a trailblazer, demonstrating how we can convert from burning gas to a heat pump.

### **Does it work? Is my home warm? Is it noisy?**

Yes, yes, no.

I was a little concerned whether a 7kW heat pump (that is 7kW output, around 2.5kW electrical input) would be sufficient. We have a 1960's 4-bedroom house in Scotland with mediocre insulation. As soon as we installed the heat pump, we were plunged into a December cold snap, but the heat pump kept the house pleasantly warm. In fact, we now heat the whole of our house. In the past we chose not to warm some rooms. The secret is to warm the house more slowly. We switch the heating off overnight, then switch on at 3 or 4am to take advantage of the cheaper electricity tariff from Octopus.

The heat pump is as quiet as a fridge, and in any case it is outside. Not an issue.

### **Do solar panels help with a heat pump?**

Heat pumps use a lot of electricity so you might think that solar panels will slash their running costs. In fact, this is a bit complicated. Solar panels work best in summer whilst heat pumps chew up electricity in the winter. In the summer our solar panels easily heat all our hot water. However, in the winter the solar panels only make a small dent in our total electricity consumption.

### **So, how did you halve your energy bill?**

By buying a battery. In the summer, any solar electricity we don't immediately consume charges the battery. Then we use this free electricity in the evening and overnight. Our consumption from the grid is minimal. In winter, the trick is to charge the battery during periods of cheap electricity prices then the battery can operate the heat pump throughout the day at 20p per unit rather than the standard 34p per unit [price cap January to June 2023].

### **Running Costs**

These are based on my actual use and costs between January to June, doubled to equate to one year. The comparison with 2022 is at current energy costs for a like for like comparison.

In 2022 our electricity bill was £800 plus gas of £1,200, total £2,000. Despite our larger than average house, our energy bill was less than the 'average price cap' of £2,500 - because we don't overheat our home, we have energy efficient appliances, and we already had some solar panels. Without the solar panels our bill would have been approximately £2,500.



In 2023 we will have no gas bill or standing charge as we disconnected the gas meter. Based on extrapolating from the first six months of the year our electricity bill, including standing charges, for heating, hot water, lighting and appliances will be £1,100 (3,750 units).

### **Implications**

Public bodies are still telling the public that it will cost about the same to run a heat pump as to heat a home from fossil gas. But, they are missing the potential flexibility of electricity. A heat pump combined with a (free) smart meter can enable you to access cheaper electricity tariffs. And that is before you start making bigger savings if you invest in solar or a battery.

Electricity tariffs are far more flexible than gas. Octopus Energy paid us a small amount to take part in the 'demand management' trials to provide flexibility to the National Grid. We can also claim an export tariff for exporting surplus solar power to the grid. The future is electrification.

### **Conclusions**

The running costs of a heat pump versus fossil gas in the UK are comparable (but you will slash your carbon emissions). This is because the high price of electricity cancels out the inherent efficiency of a heat pump [we should shift energy taxes from electricity to gas].

If you have a smart meter, and switch to a more favourable electricity tariff, then you can make a small saving with a heat pump, say 10%.

If you have solar pv then you could make a further saving, say 20%.

If you have a battery, that you can charge at off-peak rates, then you can make more significant savings, say 30%.

If you combine them all, as I did, then you can cut your heating bill in half.

Please note that although these are all estimates they are based on my experience.

### **Carbon Choices**

If you like my blogs, you might also enjoy my book, Carbon Choices on the common-sense solutions to our climate and nature crises. Available direct from me or <http://www.carbonchoices.uk/index.php/buy> I am donating one third of profits to rewilding projects.

Follow me at carbonchoicesuk (twitter), carbonchoices (Facebook), carbonchoices (Instagram).

[My Heat Pump halved our Energy Bill \(carbonchoices.uk\)](http://www.carbonchoices.uk)

**Neil Kitching, Carbon Choices, June 2023**

### **Thoughts from an Organic Farmer - Woodland restoration: Diversity at every level**

Britain's woods were once part of a dynamic and diverse landscape, managed by keystone species such as the now-extinct cattle ancestor aurochs, boars, beavers, horses, large carnivores and humans. Later, humans alone managed woods in a similar, nature-friendly way. Today, it's not economically viable to manage most woods so sensitively.



Many woods, including ours, have become dark, uniform blocks, with little disturbance besides overgrazing by deer and squirrels. There are few 'veteran' (old and usefully damaged) trees with holes for creatures to nest in. In short, woods don't support the biodiversity they used to, and need some love.

Since our farm ecologist, Robbie Phillips, pointed this out, we've started restoring our woods. We've begun rotational coppicing: cutting trees down to stumps that will grow back, rotating in sections through the woods. This provides a rich variety of habitats from the different-aged, growing coppice. We've thinned other areas and widened glades to let light in. To make the woods artificially old, we've 'veteranised' young trees (creating holes) and built 260 wildlife boxes in varying designs: cracks for bats, big cavities for owls, and small boxes for dormice and birds. We're also leaving deadwood, to feed the ecosystem rather than our fires.

The understory is already springing to life with flowers and elder. Finches pick through piles of deadwood, and hawks hunt in the thinner canopy. Winter moth caterpillars offer ample food for small birds and their chicks. We hope to attract pied flycatchers – a bird that migrates over sub-Saharan Africa for winter and, like the swallow, is having a hard time. Their population is growing 20-30 per cent annually in restored woods close to ours, proving that this work is effective and worthwhile.



As the old business adage goes, 'Look after the pennies, and the pounds will look after themselves.' Perhaps looking after the small species can pave the way for the reintroduction of the eagles that once nested on these hills; we know the Anglo-Saxon names of some of our fields, Yarner Beacon and Yarner Wood, descended from the Old English 'earna', or eagle.

[Woodland restoration: Diversity at every level - Wicked Leeks \(riverford.co.uk\)](https://riverford.co.uk/)

**Guy Singh-Watson, June 2023, farmer and founder and creator of Riverford organic farm**

## Warwickshire County Council – Sustainable Warwickshire Podcast

### New Energy Episode now available

The latest episode of the Sustainable Warwickshire podcast is all about energy – where it comes from, how we use it, and what the future might look like. It features a conversation between Act on Energy CEO Rachel Jones and Dave Barber, Programme Director for Climate Change at Warwick District Council. Some of the topics they cover include how to make sure new houses are built to the highest energy efficiency standards, what energy security means for us in Warwickshire, and how there's an opportunity for our economy to benefit from the growing demand for skilled contractors to work in the renewable energy industry. They also share practical tips on reducing energy use in our homes, and the extent to which Warwickshire is likely to be used for solar and wind farms in the future.

So, whether you just want to learn a bit more about what you can do to use less energy, or if you are interested to hear the vision for energy in Warwickshire in the future, have a listen! You can find it at <https://sustainablewarwickshire.podbean.com/>, or search for Sustainable Warwickshire on Spotify or Apple.



## Useful Links

- [www.harburyenergy.co.uk](http://www.harburyenergy.co.uk)
  - [Warwickshire Low Carbon Network – Harbury Energy Initiative](#)
  - Community Energy Warwickshire Fund <https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CEW-2020.pdf> The fund aims to:
    - • Support the development and installation of renewable energy projects
    - • Encourage the sustainable use of energy and reductions in carbon emissions
    - • Promote public awareness of environmental issues and support educational initiatives
    - Available Funding - There's grant of up to £2,000. Funding must be spent within 1 year.
- [CEW-2020.pdf \(heartofenglandcf.co.uk\)](#)
1. [\(1\) Repair Cafe Alcester | Alcester | Facebook](#)
  2. [Bar zero Barford | Facebook](#)
  3. [\(1\) Repair Cafe Harbury | Facebook](#)
  4. [Repair Cafe | Repair Cafe Kenilworth | Kenilworth \(repaircafe-kenilworth.org\)](#)
  5. [Repair Café Leamington Spa | Leamington Spa | Facebook](#)
  6. [\(1\) Repair Cafe Rugby | Rugby | Facebook](#)
  7. [Stratford Repair Cafe: A Net Zero and Stratford Town Trust Venture, organised by Stephen Norrie - Co-operate \(coop.co.uk\)](#)
  8. [\(1\) Repair Café Southam | Facebook](#)
  9. [Wellesbourne Repair Café | Facebook](#)

## Want to get involved? – find your local climate action group

Have we got the correct logo for your group or organisation?



For contact names and details see the May 2023 or earlier newsletters.

[LCWN-Newsletter-May-2023-issue-27.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

**FORGE** - [Radford FoRGE \(Friends of Radford Green Environment\) - Radford](#)

[Semele Parish Council \(radfordsemelepc.org.uk\)](#) Email:

[info@radfordforge.co.uk](mailto:info@radfordforge.co.uk) Tel: 07985 647507.





**LCWN Facebook group** set up by Emma Powell for everyone to share useful things. Please like and follow it. Please send any comments to [emma.powell@octoenergy.com](mailto:emma.powell@octoenergy.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/Low-Carbon-Warwickshire-Network-101562702401683/>



## **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, share your experiences, let others know of interesting low carbon news.

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

Please send all copy (by 12<sup>th</sup> of each month), news items, case studies, details of events, comments, suggestions and enquiries about this newsletter to: [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com) referring to the issue date and number for queries or phone Jacky Lawrence on 07906 440496.