

CONNECTING LOW CARBON GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTY

Low Carbon Warwickshire Network Newsletter

September 2023 – Issue 31

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 14th October 2023, 10:00 to 12:30.

LCWN Autumn Social - bring and share lunch 2023

A good time was had by all with interesting conversations, mutual encouragement & support and delicious, home grown, food. Groups represented at the social included: Harbury Energy Initiative, Harbury e-wheels, Napton Environmental Action Team, Kenilworth All Together Greener, Grapevine Environmental Action Team, Community Energy Warwickshire, Tachbrook's Residents Action on Climate Change, Sustainable Wellesbourne, Cubbington and Leamington Environment Action Network and Warwick Avon Rotary.



How to have climate conversations - Sustainable Brailes

The evening with Linda Aspey was well attended and gave us much to think about.

Even with all the wildlife documentaries about how humans are destroying habitats, species extinction, regular news of floods, wildfires, extreme weather events and how without pollinators we have no food – Linda explained why so many people carry on with their lives as if nothing was going wrong. Climate activists know we cannot continue business as usual, but need to understand the anxiety, anger, guilt, overwhelm and powerlessness that people can feel with such a big and complex issue. If we appreciate the defence mechanisms people have and are willing to listen, it is possible to engage and communicate effectively, build good relationships and guide them towards positive action.

[With the Earth in Mind — Aspey Associates](#)

An evening with Linda Aspey exploring how to have Climate Conversations

Talking about climate change can be tricky.

Come along and explore why,

and how it needn't be!

Refreshments, Free Entry

Linda is a coach, therapist, writer, editor and climate psychologist supporting individuals, teams and organisations with effective climate change communications and engagement. She also provides psychological and emotional support and resilience-building sessions.



LCWN Steering Group

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 lowcarbonworks@gmail.com**

There will be a **LCWN Spring Social** gathering plus bring and share lunch in Napton, 12:30 till 3 on **Saturday 23rd March 2024**. Contact Jacky Lawrence for further details if you'd like to join us at email: 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 \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

Louise Bowlt - LCWN Newsletter August 2023 issue 30

Bryn Turner -



LCWN Schools Project Team – Useful links

Zero Carbon Schools 2023-24

Zero Carbon Schools is a cross-curricular programme for Years 4 – 8 with links to science, geography, maths, English, PSHE and art. As a result of the programme, pupils will:

- Learn more about climate change and feel empowered to take action in their school community
- Develop leadership, communication, problem solving and teamwork skills
- Calculate an estimate of their school's carbon emissions
- Lead meaningful projects to reduce the school's carbon footprint

Registrations for this academic year's programme are still open. 2023-24 will be the third full year of the Green School Project programme and their target is to work with 150 schools!

[Green Schools Project - Zero Carbon Schools 2023-24 - Expression of Interest \(beaconforms.com\)](#)

Let's Go Zero

Let's Go Zero 2030 unites schools working to become carbon zero by 2030.

That's a huge challenge – but transforming our schools will help safeguard the planet for future generations. Their webinars aim to help schools take action on the climate and biodiversity crisis. The theme of the next webinar is

Sustainability Support for School Operation Managers. It's on Tuesday 10th October 2023, 4 – 5 p.m.

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_x1qf9LfNTI21_wD19biELQ



We would love to hear about any school initiatives which you think could be shared. Do email, **Teresa**

Buckle at: teresabuckle2@gmail.com



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

Join us on Saturday 14th October at Wren Hall in Wroxall for the launch of the Shrewley and Wroxall Environment Action Team (SWEAT)*. *SWEAT includes: Beausale, Haseley and Honiley

There will be time for discussion and for exchange of ideas.

[Shrewley & Wroxall: Inspiring ideas for local community action Tickets, Sat 14 Oct 2023 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)



Join us for the launch of the Shrewley and Wroxall* Environment Action Team (SWEAT). Find out more about a host of inspiring ideas for local community action to improve our environment. Speakers from local organisations will share ideas on a range of hot topics, with time for discussion & exchange of ideas. *SWEAT includes Beausale, Haseley and Honiley.

- Food for thought – enjoy a freshly cooked snack and find out ways of reducing waste and ideas for cooking simple delicious food.
- Confused about recycling? You're not alone...
- Sustainable buildings – learn more about the green features of Wren Hall and hear about ways to save energy, including retrofit, in your own home.
- Nature matters – step into the wonderful world of soil, trees, hedges, wildflowers and an imagined orchard. How can we help protect and enhance this wonderful resource and what can we aim to achieve locally?

We are part of the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network and the event is supported by the RSA.

Booking: <https://bit.ly/Eventbrite-Shrewley-Wroxall>

Contact: martinwood.fiveways@gmail.com

**Saturday 14th Oct
10.00-12.30
Wren Hall
School Lane
Wroxall
CV35 7NF**

**Free event
includes freshly
cooked snack, tea
and coffee**

**Please book if
you can, but
come anyway!**



The RSA – the royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce. Where world-leading ideas are turned into world-changing actions. The RSA is committed to a world where everyone can fulfil their potential and contribute to more resilient, rebalanced, and regenerative futures.

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:

lowcarbonworks@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 also started to develop an **event resource library** including action, pledge and creativity ideas plus posters to support you.

LCWN Resource Library

Napton Environmental Action Team (NEAT) shared their 'Handprints for Action' activity.

Handprints for action

We might not know what our ecological or carbon footprint is (what we take), but we can keep track of our positive contributions to help heal the environment. Actions that cause positive change, including improving energy efficiency, collecting litter, reducing the amount of waste we throw away, planting flowers for pollinators etc. are our 'handprints' (what we give – a helping hand, a healing touch).

Purpose

To engage people in thinking about the environment and how their families interact with it.

Objective

To encourage people to explore what positive actions they and their families are already doing, or could do, to look after our planet.

Task

Draw around your hand or use a template and write upon it a positive action you are already doing – or that you would like your family to do to protect the environment where you live.

Decorate your handprint in bright colours or in different shades of green.

Presentation

The handprints will need to be assembled into a garden collage for display. The coloured handprints will become flowers and the green handprints will become leaves. Paint a background as big as you need. Glue the coloured handprints onto the background with pva glue.



Collage made from the 'handprints for action' of the 'Walking gang arty crafters'.



Collage made from the 'handprints for action' from the Arc School, Napton.

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. 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?

Diary Date: The Nuneaton Big Save Event with the Warwickshire Climate Alliance



**Saturday 23
September 2023
11am - 3pm**

United Reformed Church
2, Chapel Street
Nuneaton CV11 5QH

**Lots of activities
and cost-saving ideas
from local community
groups including:**

- Pop-up repair cafe
- Free refreshments
- Family-friendly activities
- Music & entertainment
- Children's toy swap
- Free seeds and plants
- And much, much more!



**Learn simple actions that can
make a difference to you, your
family and the planet.**



Bold Climate Solutions – mandates on industry - by our guest blogger Neil

Kitching

Ban, legislate, regulate, cajole...which is the best option to tackle the climate emergency?

We need bold action to tackle our climate crisis. In this blog I outline some examples of 'mandates' imposed on industry to transform the products they sell to us.

To reduce emissions quickly we need to think big, bold and be sensible. One method is for government or a regulator to impose 'mandates' on industry to achieve a set target of sales by a particular date, with the target increasing over time. Relevant companies must meet the mandate themselves, pay others to act on their behalf or face the threat of fines. The advantage is that the target or outcome will be achieved, often at lowest cost. The industry affected usually fights such mandates tooth and nail as it passes extra bureaucracy and cost onto them. These costs are usually transferred to the consumer. Once bedded down, industry just 'gets on with their job.'

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles (EV's) are the future. They are inherently more energy efficient, can be powered from renewable energy, are quieter, and eliminate local air pollution. The UK Government has promised to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars from 2035, but how best to go about this? They could ramp up the tax on petrol and diesel (unpopular), adopt a scrappage scheme for old vehicles (expensive), subsidise new EV's (very expensive) or simply impose a ban. But what if the car manufacturers do not act in time and there is a shortage of new cars for sale? What if there are not enough charge points, or enough electricity in the right places? It could be a recipe for chaos. A smooth and planned transition is better for everyone.

The UK Government is consulting over an EV Mandate. Car manufacturers will have to sell a minimum of 22% EV's by 2024, rising each year to 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2035. Manufacturers will be allocated free allowances, then will buy any deficit, or sell any surplus to other manufacturers. This steady increase in sales will provide the certainty needed for manufacturers, supply chain and charge point operators to invest in the future.

This is a plan that should work. Is it bold and ambitious? Not so bold - the proposed 2024 target has already been achieved! In my view the end point should be brought forward to 2030 to accelerate this change.

Heat Pumps

The switch from gas to heat pumps (and heat networks) is going to be more difficult than the switch to EV's. The public is wedded to burning gas in their homes even although heat pumps are more efficient and far less polluting. My own experience, part-funded by a grant, is that heat pumps are a great solution.

The UK Government has a target of 600,000 heat pumps each year by 2028. The proposed ban on installing gas into new houses will help but will not be sufficient, whilst persuading existing householders to

change is going to be difficult. Subsidies would be very expensive and an outright ban on replacing existing gas boilers could be very unpopular.

The UK Government is proposing a Clean Heat Mechanism. This will create a market incentive for industry to install heat pumps to existing properties. It will provide industry with a clear, long-term policy to invest in growing the heat pump market. The proposed obligation is on the manufacturers of gas and oil heating appliances to install 60,000 heat pumps (4% of their sales) in 2024/25 rising to 400,000 by 2029/30 in properties currently heated by fossil fuels. Again, a trading scheme will be set up to buy deficit or sell surplus allowances.

Interestingly, the Energy and Utilities Alliance (EUA) said that the proposed Clean Heat Market Mechanism is “absurd” and a “Soviet-style production quota.” Industry often opposes the introduction of such mandates!

Now, this is a bold plan. There may be many technical difficulties, but it does seem like a plan that could deliver the required outcomes and allow the industry to invest based on certainty of future demand. It should also lower costs as the manufacturers and installers scale up and learn from experience. Incidentally, another important action needed to support heat pumps is to transfer existing taxes on (low carbon) electricity to (high carbon) gas.

Vehicles

The EU Biofuel directive (2003) stipulated that all EU countries should act to increase the use of biofuels in transport. In response, the UK introduced the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation. Fuel suppliers must supply a proportion of biofuels, currently set at 5%. The original plan was to increase this proportion each year, but this has been abandoned due to environmental and social issues - concern that new palm oil plantations were destroying the rainforest, then the realisation that using farmland to grow biofuel for transport had the effect of increasing food prices. Consequently, the EU introduced sustainability criteria for the supply of biofuels and has watered down the proposed 10% target for 2020.

Given the rapid shift to EVs across the EU, this is one mandate that should not be increased. Land used to grow biofuels could be used for more beneficial purposes such as growing food or restoring nature.

Aviation

Decarbonising aviation is one of the hardest areas to tackle. Electric planes are in their infancy and will only ever service short-haul flights. Alternative fuels such as hydrogen are years from widespread market. One suggestion is to impose a mandate on airlines to purchase an ever-increasing proportion of ‘sustainable aviation fuel’(SAF).

The UK Government plans to introduce such a mandate from 2025, potentially setting a target of 10% SAF by 2030.

To avoid unwelcome competition with growing food, fuel would have to be sourced from “low carbon feedstocks.” SAF can be made from municipal solid waste, from unrecyclable plastic or from waste industrial gases. It is likely that innovation will lead to new sources such as synthetic fuel made from renewable electricity. All these fuels can be blended with conventional jet fuel.

The Government consultation suggests that SAF can reduce lifecycle emissions by over 70%. Given that aviation causes additional climate impacts (e.g. warming from contrails) it can be seen that zero emission aviation is going to be difficult. We also need to be bolder. For example, the French Government has introduced a ban on short-haul flights less than 2.5 hours (watered down from the proposed 4 hours) using the argument that it is just as quick to travel by train.

Conclusion

Mandates are not the only answer, but they can be an effective mechanism to reach targets and they provide more certainty for all concerned. The main thing is to get the technical detail correct by consulting with industry. To minimise any adverse side effects the rules should be kept under review.

When did your community or pressure group last lobby the government to introduce, toughen or enforce existing mandates? Food for thought.

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).

[Bold Climate Solutions – mandates on industry \(carbonchoices.uk\)](http://www.carbonchoices.uk)

Neil Kitching, Carbon Choices, September 2023

Thoughts from an Organic Farmer - A Different Way Forward

The soil is warm and moist, and the air is humid, with rain never far away. With enough sun between the downpours to drive photosynthesis and ripen fruit, it has been a good year for most vegetables (in the UK at least). Winter crops of leeks, cabbage, cauliflower, kale and broccoli are growing fast, with the first plants touching across the rows to close canopy this month; a month ahead of last year, when crops were still withering in a drought.

For organic growers, who cannot use weedkillers, after planting comes weeding. Traditional tractor-drawn hoes uproot the weeds between crop rows – but without a prolonged dry spell to desiccate them, they often just re-root in a different place. In such a wet summer, the more brutal brush hoe (which works like a rotating road brush, with protective tunnels for crop rows) is more effective, bruising the weeds enough to kill them. Most methods of hoeing between rows clear the ground to within, say, 4cm of the crop, potentially leaving a strip of weeds. For crops grown from plants rather than seed, these weeds can often be killed by throwing enough soil into the row to bury them, without smothering the larger, more advanced crop.



Over the last 20 years, GPS-guided tractors, thermal weeders, then camera- and computer-guided hoes (which can recognise crop from weed and move their blades around the crop and between plants in a row) have drastically reduced and often removed the need for hand weeding. Herbicides are still cheaper in most cases, but often not by nearly as much as they used to be. Plus, breaking the surface with hoes can aerate the soil, reduce moisture-loss, and thereby increase yield.

When I started farming organically in the 1980s, older hands, who remembered (with no affection) long days spent manually hoeing weeds, were adamant that I would get no help from them. I have always argued that most organic farmers are not Luddites; we are just looking for a different way forward.

Sometimes the rejection of currently accepted, convenient, and profitable practice, on the grounds that it is taking us in the wrong direction, can seem pig-headed or hopelessly idealistic; and sometimes it is. But sometimes, as in the case of non-chemical weed control, we have to move backwards a little to find a better way forward.

[A different way forward - Wicked Leeks \(riverford.co.uk\)](https://riverford.co.uk)

Guy Singh-Watson, August 2023, farmer and founder and creator of Riverford Organic Farm

Useful Links

- [Linda Aspey executive coach, facilitator, supervisor, therapist and HR strategist — Aspey Associates](#)
 - [Project InsideOut - PIO](#)
 - [I Want A Better Catastrophe](#)
 - [UK Climate Change • Let's Go Zero \(letsgozero.org\)](#)
 - [Join for zero carbon schools • Lets Go Zero](#)
 - [Let's Go Zero Schools Webinars - Lets Go Zero](#)

 - 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 \(heartofenglandcf.co.uk\)](https://www.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?

The LCWN aims to bring people together to share ideas and stimulate new activity in rural areas.

Keen to see real practical change in your community?

Are you part of a local low carbon group? Why not join us and the 33 groups already in the Network?



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

[LCWN-Newsletter-May-2023-issue-27.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](https://www.harburyenergy.co.uk/LCWN-Newsletter-May-2023-issue-27.pdf)

LCWN Facebook group set up by Emma Powell for everyone to share useful things. Please like and follow it. Please send any comments to lowcarbonwarks@gmail.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 12th 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.

Question from Sustainable Wellesbourne

Anyone got any experience of developing a Local Nature Action Plan with links to surrounding villages with wildlife corridors?