

Low Carbon Warwickshire Network

November 2024 – Issue – 44

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, Cubbington, Wroxall, Wellesbourne and Lillington. There will be another event in Wellesbourne in January 2025 and we hope Sustainable Binley Woods will host an event in Feb 2025.

Tomorrow's Wellesbourne 2025 event, St. Peter's Church Hall, Saturday 25th January 2025, 10 a.m. till 1.30 p.m.

Sustainable Wellesbourne will be holding a LCWN-RSA supported event in January. The working title of the event is 'Tomorrow's Wellesbourne 2025'. It is 10 – 1.30 on Saturday 25th January 2025 at St Peter's Church Hall in Wellesbourne. We'll have a local resident talking about his retrofitted, low carbon home, Anne Marie Lambert on low waste cooking (having seen her at the SWEAT event!) and one other on reduced fuel driving – but the latter is to be confirmed at the time of writing. There will also be tables and information about Wellesbourne based, related groups.

Lucy Hartley, Sustainable Wellesbourne, November 2024

Recycling Visit – Sherbourne Resource Park

Why bother recycling?

Every item we throw away has the potential to become part of the solution to the growing waste problem. Recycling conserves precious resources, reduces the strain on landfills and helps combat climate change by cutting down on energy use and emissions. But how much of what we put into our household recycling bins gets recycled? Does any of it end up in landfill or get shipped off overseas?

To find out, I went to visit the Sherbourne Resource Park in Coventry to see what happens to the contents of our red-lidded waste recycling bin after they're collected. The site, which began operations in August 2023, is a state-of-the-art materials recycling facility, using advanced technology and automation to process 47.5 tonnes of waste every hour! The aim of the site is to separate materials and compact them into 1-tonne cubes of metal, paper, plastic or glass, known as 'recyclate'. Sherbourne achieves a world-leading 99% purity of recyclate, which is then sold exclusively to UK-based companies. The waste separation process includes advanced robotics, AI technology and optical sorters that distinguish between different items. It was amazing to see this technology in action.



Unfortunately, some of the items people put into recycling bins cannot be recycled – these are called residue. During our visit, we saw an unusual assortment of non-recyclable items, from microwaves to large rocks! These items get sifted out early in the process to prevent damage to the rest of the machinery. The remaining residue is then sent to Nottingham, where it is processed at a cement kiln.

The facility is co-owned by eight local authorities in the Midlands, with North Warwickshire Borough Council as one of the founding partners, alongside Coventry City Council, making this £65M investment happen. Impressively the site uses solar panels on the roof with other local power sources, so it doesn't rely on energy from the grid - a great example of its commitment to sustainability.

Recycling Tips

We are good recyclers, but we could do better!

Here are tips from what I learned about your kerbside collection service:

- **Always put lids back on** items like milk cartons and wine bottles; they will be dealt with by the automated separation process.
- **Recycling plastics is complex** due to the difficulty of breaking them down. Brown plant pots can be recycled at Sherbourne, provided the soil has been cleaned off. However, hard plastics, like toys, cannot be recycled.
- **Foil should be kept flat not scrunched**; otherwise, it won't be recognised by the optical sorters.
- **Items smaller than 5cm in diameter** (about the size of a beer mat) cannot be recycled, including small pieces of paper. These get filtered out as residue.
- **Drinking glasses are not recyclable** as they are made from a different type of glass to beer and wine bottles.
- **Disposable vapes are non-recyclable and dangerous** in recycling bins because they contain lithium-ion batteries, which can easily catch fire.
- **Large items, like metal brake discs, saws or catering tins** should be taken to the **Judkins Recycling Centre**.

Ready, set, recycle, 4 simple steps



EMPTY

Ensure all tins, bottles and containers are completely empty. Any leftover food or liquid can contaminate other recyclables like paper and cardboard.



DRY

Allow containers to dry before placing them in the recycling bin. Wet items can spoil other recyclables or clog the sorting machinery.



CLEAN

Rinse out containers. If you hand-wash dishes, use the leftover water at the end, or quick rinse under the tap.



UNCRUSHED

Keep items whole - don't rip, scrunch or crush them. Optical sorters are designed to recognise whole items for accurate sorting.

Nik Mckiernan, Let's Make Stuff Happen, November 2024

Open Gardens for Wildlife in Wellesbourne and Hunscore 2024

Notes and reflections for anyone else wanting to do a similar thing, by Lucy Hartley.

History

I garden with wildlife in mind and wonderfully, orchids had appeared in our lawn since we started growing it long. I had visited a 'Gardening for Wildlife Trail' run by Sustainable Clevedon on a trip to see a friend in 2022 and was inspired by the idea. Each time I chatted to someone about either of these I mentioned how great it would be if Wellesbourne did an Open Gardens for Wildlife. Once we got to 5 gardens in total, I thought it was enough to make it a thing and we had our first meeting. I advertised for more gardeners through posters, the Sustainable Wellesbourne fb page and mailing list, the Wellesbourne and Walton News, on stalls at the Horticultural Show, Tomorrow's Wellesbourne event and the Community Fayre. Many of the new joiners were from word of mouth too. I asked Chedham's Yard, the Churches, the Bowls Club and other community places and businesses if they would like to get involved. Originally, I hoped that there would be 'Containers for Wildlife' around the Village on the same day, but this was only taken up by one resident and no businesses in the end. Although the idea was popular, I think the time for commitment was too much perhaps?



Key things to sort out – in no particular order

Risk Assessments – we used the ngs guidelines*. I visited each garden with a carbon copy book to look at potential risks. We noted them down together and agreed on any appropriate action or signage necessary. This was written down and a reminder sent a few weeks before the event to check everything had been addressed.

Accessibility – not an easy one as many gardens just aren't. This was looked at during the Risk Assessment visit and notes were taken so that we could mark the garden as 'not accessible', 'limited access' (i.e. width of entrance path over 70cm, bumpy ground but no steps preventing a view of the garden) or 'accessible' (hard, flat paths, entrance over 90cm and nearby parking). For a Start Point it would mean that the venue had a toilet for the Disabled – by their own assessment.

Insurance – again, as the ngs guidelines*. Each gardener was advised to let their home insurers know that they were opening their garden on this day. The responses from the insurers were very varied – some asking for extra payment, some saying the client would not be insured on the day, some indifferent (after all, when you get a tradesperson – who is also an effective stranger – to do some work on your property, you do not need to let them know). This was to make sure that if there was any theft or damage by a visitor, the gardener was covered. We were covered by the Parish Council Public Liability Insurance so that if anyone lodged a complaint against a garden/er then we were covered. The risk assessment serves as evidence that people had been warned of any dangers. We put up a Safety Notice* at each Start Point to cover ourselves too.

Dates – of the original five at the first meeting, one was an artist and suggested that we coincided with the Open Studios weekend. This was great for the summer flowering lawns, but not so great for the earlier spring flowering lawn in one of the gardens, so we have gone for an earlier weekend next year and may choose a different month each time to cover different moments in the wildlife gardening calendar.

Money – we decided to charge (£5/head) to give value to the event and raise money for charity. There was a lot of debate about making it accessible to all and whether to charge per group or per person. We went with the latter and used stickers as proof of payment. Each garden not close to a Start Point was given a small float and some stickers in a brown envelope in case they had incidental passers-by who wanted to buy a ticket. These were signed out and returned at our Post Event Social, again signed. Sorting out these floats was a pain as I didn't realise that you can't just walk into any bank and ask to withdraw a sum of money in fivers! Pre-order your floats! We gratefully used the Wellesbourne Beer Festival bank account and their Treasurer kindly did the accounts summary at the end of the event. She also refunded the float, paid the money to our chosen charities and any expenses receipts. We had two of us collecting money from Start Points at the end of the day and counted it together. We then took it to a third volunteer who counted it all again before passing it to the Treasurer at the Post Event Social, along with monies from resident gardeners. We only had one place which could accept card payments – but there were only a few visitors who didn't use cash.

Start Points – we decided to have four as Wellesbourne and Hunscombe covers quite a large area. Each Start Point had toilets and refreshments to some degree and two had easy parking. They were all mentioned in advertising, but it seems that most people just went to the first one mentioned, this is something we want to address. Each Start Point was given a notice board giving a brief summary of each garden, with other notes such as on parking. We used pale green paper as this is supposed to be easier to read text on (and it looked nice). This was supposed to help people plan their priorities (e.g. gardens with ponds) and route. However, it looked like most people just started at no.1 and worked their way up meaning that visitor numbers varied dramatically depending on what number you were on the list! I did a 'Guide for Start Points'* for the volunteers selling entrance to read, asking them to get people to look at the boards, but I am not sure everyone looked at it. Other information at the Start Points was our Safety Notice and information about our chosen charities. Some places sold hedgehog homes made by one of the participant gardeners. We had a Plant Sale stall at the Bowls Club. The Methodist Church had a display from the Rainbows Group who had planted containers for wildlife.

The Map - We decided not to advise on routes. A couple of us did a pre map timed walk to all the participating gardens and found that it would take over 2 hrs with no time in the gardens! The map had symbols for toilets, refreshments and accessible places. It listed the garden addresses plus one sentence description of each.

Support Volunteers – we had a few extra volunteers who got free entrance in exchange for visiting the gardeners who were opening their garden solo. They went to give the gardener a break for an hour or so during the day and to check if they needed a 'runner' for anything.

Signage – we had an Event poster for each garden gate and a large number to correspond to the number on the map. I asked each garden to create themselves and put up at least three informative signs, drawing visitor attention to something wildlife related which would not have been immediately obvious: e.g. the birds which live in the hedge, how to prune for maximum wildlife benefit, what lives in their pond, composting methods etc. As I had visited each garden, I could advise a little to help to avoid too much repetition and home in on some unique practices. We also had some salvage tiles painted to mark hedgehog homes and hedgehog access for everyone to use; and some pink tags which could be used to tie to great plants such as those popular with bees or birds. The 'Do not Climb' or 'mind the step' etc. signs were hand painted on to scrap pieces of wood and collected prior to the day. Sorting out signage needed a spreadsheet type table as everyone's needs were different.



Miscellaneous Other Things

Meetings – we had three meetings in preparation. I invited everyone to discuss everything – but we have a core organising group now, so will probably only have one, full, in person meeting. We organised a Post Event Social at the Bowls Club which was an opportunity to meet each other and chat about the day. Highly recommended.

Information collecting – resident gardeners took a tally of how many visitors they each had. Some recorded the time of day and other information which we will look at when planning our next event. I will ask people to write down positive comments they hear next time too – for use as quotes later!

Badges – one of our artist gardeners made us each a name badge to wear on the day.

Criteria – if a gardener does not use poison in the form of herbicide or pesticide and has plants, they will have wildlife. There were no restrictions or demands for anyone who wanted to open their garden. We were very lucky in that the variety of gardens we had in Wellesbourne was/is amazing, ranging from the almost Nature Reserve looking, to the beautifully organised and artistic with everything in between. The largest was a few acres and the smallest a roughly 3m x 8m stretch.

Communication – We set up a WhatsApp group for the resident gardeners. Only one was not on WhatsApp. Notes from the meetings and reminders were shared by email. We agreed to sharing our phone numbers on the day, so that each person and Start Point had a list of all participants with contact numbers in case of emergency.

Pre-Event Previews – we grouped all participants into sets of around four. Each group worked out an evening when they would stay at home for two hours and be Open for the rest of the participants to come and see their gardens. This worked fairly well and was fun, but is a bit of a faff to organise and caused some confusion. It meant that we were able to see some or most of each others' gardens (which we would not have been able to do on the day). Next year we are doing two days and may be able to avoid this somehow...?

Advertising – we put up posters in local businesses and noticeboards, used local social media and also other networks: WCC Sustainable Futures web page, WALC newsletter, LCWN, SWAN, Net Zero Hub in Stratford etc. We let the Stratford Herald know in advance and they put a piece in the following week. We put a QR code to our fb feed on the posters at the gates and the maps in the hope that people would share pictures on the day – no one did. We may get some banners for roads into the Village next time.

Photos – we didn't take enough pictures with visitors in our gardens on the day to share later.

Note for neighbours – we did a slip* of paper to put in neighbour's letterboxes, alerting them to the possibility of an increase in traffic in the road where relevant.

Timeline – it was really useful early on to create a timeline stating when we hoped to achieve what.

*Accompanying documents, notices or other: National Garden Scheme (ngs) guidelines for risk assessment and insurance, Garden (Safety) Notice for Start Points, Guide for Start Point volunteers, Note for

neighbours can be accessed from the LCWN Resource Library or direct from Lucy by emailing sustainablewellesbourne@wellesbourneandwalton-pc.gov.uk

Lucy Hartley, Sustainable Wellesbourne, November 2024

Ideas needed on the future of Shipston in Bloom

Shipston in Bloom volunteers have all retired/resigned this year and continuing with town tubs has fallen in my lap. I have recruited new volunteers and said they can plant what they like as far as possible native. We have sourced native daffodils, anemones and chionodoxa (unlike imported bulbs used before) and will be planting shrubs and perennials instead of annuals. We hope this will increase biodiversity and be good for pollinators. We are hoping to change the name too, so if any readers have some ideas, please let me know on hilary.kelly@shipstontowncouncil.org

Hilary Kelly, Shipston Town Council

LCWN Steering Group

The Steering Group meet infrequently and only when we have something of significance to discuss. **If you would like to join the Steering Grop, get in touch with us or wish to join the email address list to receive the Newsletter directly, please contact Bob Sherman at lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com**

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.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

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

If you would like to host an RSA funded "Low Carbon Community" event where you live, please email: 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 also started to develop an **event resource library** to support your event planning. We have also enabled the opportunity to share **regular Parish Mag and other publications** between groups. Seven groups in the Network are now sharing their articles and a suggested communications plan has been developed. Get in touch with Jacky Lawrence for more details. email: lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com

The RSA

Callum Bate is the Area Manager for the Central Area. His contact details are: The RSA, 8 John Adam Street, London, WC2N 6EZ, e: Callum.Bate@rsa.org.uk, w: [The RSA - RSA](#)



The RSA – the Royal Society for encouragement of the 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.



[Young Fellows networking event - RSA](#), 18 Nov 2024 | 06:00 PM - 07:00 PM | BST British Summer Time
An event for young RSA Fellows (18-25) to connect with one another globally.

[Young Fellows Mentoring Programme - the RSA - RSA](#)

Our Young Fellows Mentoring Programme catalyses transformation, encouraging Fellows to break down boundaries, embrace diversity, and forge lasting partnerships to drive meaningful social impact.

[Playful green planet - The RSA - RSA](#)

Playful Green Planet is an ambitious intervention to transform how children foster a connection to nature and community through outdoor creative play. Enabled and co-created by a movement of local citizens and coalitions, Playful Green Planet transforms unused green spaces into ecologically thriving outdoor playrooms and classrooms that grow children's capabilities for climate action and social activism.

[Student Design Awards - The RSA - RSA](#)

Every year, we've invited young designers and students from across the globe to apply their skills and creativity to design briefs that focus on the most pressing social and environmental challenges. Since the first prizes were given out 1924, the Student Design Awards have welcomed over 110,000 projects from over 20 countries.

[Regenerative Futures - RSA](#)

The future doesn't just happen, it's up to us to create it. As we face the challenges of climate change, inequality and environmental degradation, we know to simply sustain is not enough. We want to see a world where people and communities harness their potential to be sources of health and regeneration for all life on earth. Because people and planetary needs are intertwined, our problem solving should be too. We need to regenerate. The RSA has been at the forefront of significant social impact since 1754. From championing early smokeless combustion technology to hosting the influential Food, Farming and Countryside Commission.

Act on Energy - Winter is Coming Events

With the colder weather just around the corner, we will be attending events in Warwickshire around the message of 'Winter is Coming – Are you Prepared?' Discussions and advice will centre around the cost-of-living pressures as well as focusing on the practical help that is available.

Stratford Heating & Energy Bills Support (SHEBS)

Financial help is available for eligible Stratford District residents towards energy bills and to replace and repair heating systems – please find information about the scheme and its eligibility criteria here: [Stratford Heating & Energy Bills Support \(SHEBS\) | Act On Energy](#)



There is also some support available to offer boiler servicing for eligible Warwickshire residents - Anyone that meets the income, savings and vulnerability criteria can apply to have their boiler serviced.

With over 25 years' experience, **Act on Energy** is an award-winning energy advice charity covering the West Midlands, including Warwickshire. Working in partnership with the **Local Authorities** and external organisations, we offer a range of services - from **free, impartial energy advice** and help with applying for **grants and funding** for energy efficiency measures through to financial welfare support for those struggling with the cost of living.

We're here to help! www.actonenergy.org.uk
Call **0800 988 2881** or email advice@actonenergy.org.uk
[Act on Energy UK | Facebook](#)
[Warwickshire Household Support Fund | Act On Energy](#)



Transition Town Rugby – Thinking Thursdays

A few groups in Rugby are working together to organise some talks, films and discussions, under the banner '**Thinking Thursdays**'. Details at <https://www.transitiontownrugby.org/initiatives/thinking-thursdays>. Booking not essential, but will guarantee a seat.

Thinking Thursdays is a series of events offering an opportunity to think about climate and related issues, and discuss solutions - local, national, international.

- **Thursday 12th December** - film and discussion about sustainable housing and Passiv Haus design - more details to follow

All events are at Rugby Eco Hub, Claremont Centre, Clifton Road CV21 3QE.
Doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Free, but suggested donation £2. In collaboration with Rugby Friends of the Earth and Rugby Green Christians.



Sign up for the Rugby Eco Hub Newsletter here: <https://rugbyecohub.org/>
[Transition Town Rugby](https://rugbyecohub.org/), [Library of Things \(rugbyecohub.org\)](https://rugbyecohub.org/), <https://rugbyecohub.org/repair-cafe>

Carrie Pailthorpe, Transition Town Rugby

Net Zero Stratford – Climate Hub

Free Carbon Literacy training for residents of Stratford-on-Avon district
Net Zero Stratford is now offering free Carbon Literacy Training at the Climate Hub, 30 Meer Street, Stratford-upon-Avon.



The current course started on Thursday 7th November. Further dates for free training in the district will be advertised after Christmas. The course was described as "informative", "collaborative" and "a lot of fun" by those who took part in September!

There is a maximum of twelve learners per course, so need to be signed up for early if you are interested. If you have any queries, please contact Janet Palmer at janet@netzerostratford.org.uk
Sign up will be via Eventbrite

Harbury's Energy Initiative - A village cutting carbon emissions
Tue 19th Nov, 19:30 @ Net Zero Climate Hub



Great Big Green Week planning meeting
Thu 21 Nov, 14.00 @ 2pm at Hornby Cottage (contact Janet below)

National Grid - What does the future of UK energy look like?
Tue 26th Nov, 19:30 @ Net Zero Climate Hub

Winter is coming - Home energy advice with Act On Energy
Sat 16th Nov, short talks at 10:00 & 12.00
Plus drop in sessions until 14.00 @ Net Zero Climate Hub

Climate Action Book Club
Mon 2nd Dec, 15:30 @ Net Zero Climate Hub

Home energy tips and tricks
Thur 5th Dec, 19:30 @ Net Zero Climate Hub, by Andy Clough

Repair Cafe
Sat 7th Dec, 10.00-14.00 @ Methodist Church, Old Town

Janet Palmer, Net Zero Stratford

Diary Dates
NOVEMBER 2025



SEVERN
RIVERS TRUST

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
TREE PLANTING DAYS
26TH & 28TH NOV 2024

Get outdoors and join our team as a Severn Rivers Trust volunteer, planting a species rich native woodland in Wellesbourne, supporting the establishment of wildlife corridors across our Warwickshire landscapes

- ✓ Hands on experience planting new woodland
- ✓ Natural flood management for the village of Wellesbourne
- ✓ Establishing wildlife corridors across Warwickshire
- ✓ Hot drinks and biscuits on us. All tools provided.

Tues 26th & Thurs 28th Nov
10am - 3pm

Next to playground, Boyse Lane, Wellesbourne, CV35 9UN.
Please park considerately, and car share/ cycle/ walk where possible.

Please bring lunch, wellies or boots and suitable warm & waterproof clothing!

Email at: imogen.rutter@severnriverstrust.com

For more information: www.severnriverstrust.com

JANUARY 2025

Savers, Handprints for Action Project, 31st January 2025



Handprints for Action Project



Our **Handprints for Action** are what we can do to help heal our environment what we give, a helping hand, or a healing touch.



Teachers Encourage your students to:

- Draw around their hand
- Write on it a positive action that their family are already doing, – or one they would like to do to protect the environment.
- Decorate their handprint in bright colours for flower petals or greens for leaves.



Handprints will be assembled into a garden collage for display at Holy Trinity Church and other venues

Send your handprints to:
Gabrielle Back, 3 Underhill Close, Finham, Coventry, CV3 6RB by the end of January 2025.



Savers Charity Number 1108191

Sustainable Wellesbourne / LCWN / RSA, Tomorrow's Wellesbourne 2025 event, St. Peter's Church Hall, Saturday 25th January 2025, 10 a.m. till 1.30 p.m.

There will be a local resident talking about his retrofitted, low carbon home, Anne Marie Lambert on low waste cooking and one other talk. There will also be tables and information about Wellesbourne based, related groups.

Lets Go Zero Schools

Nature funding for schools:

Good news for schools wanting to green their outdoor space. DfE has identified the following Warkwickshire schools that qualify for £10K of non-competitive National Education Nature Park funding. If you have any contacts at the following schools, please encourage them to apply.

125654	Abbey CofE Infant School
148319	All Saints Bedworth CofE Academy
125653	All Saints CofE Primary School and Nursery, Nuneaton
125761	Middlemarch School
139936	Nicholas Chamberlaine School
139468	Oak Wood Primary School
139469	Oak Wood Secondary School
142021	St Michael's Church of England Academy
130889	Wembrook Primary School

All they need is a plan and a budget. The online **application form will be open until Thursday 27th March 2025**. Grant money has to be **spent by Thursday 5th June 2025**.

What can the grant be spent on?

The grant can only be used for capital spend. In 2024/25, the grant can only be used on any of the themes below or any combination of them:



- Transforms a grey space to a green space, or that
- Builds or improves a [pond](#), or that
- Creates or improves a [grassland](#)
- [Frequently asked questions | National Education Nature Park grant / RHS](#)

LGZ/OVO Foundation Nature Prize

There are 25 chances to win prizes of either £200 or £1,000 towards school nature projects through the **LGZ/OVO Foundation Nature Prize** <https://letsgozero.org/our-competitions/> Open until 25th November. Apply on a form OR on a video application.

- Previous winners include: food waste wormeries, wasteland community gardens, rewilding projects
- Projects must: involve students 0-18 in UK and engage with the wider school community

[Add a pond or rain garden | Education Nature Park](#)
[grassland](#) [Add flower-rich grassland | Education Nature Park](#)

Sarah Mills, Let's Go Zero Climate Action Advisor to schools (West Midlands)

Warwickshire County Council – Sustainable Warwickshire Podcasts

Search for Sustainable Warwickshire on Spotify or Apple, or visit:

[Creating School Climate Action Plans | Sustainable Warwickshire](#)
[Sustainable Warwickshire | Warwickshire County Council \(podbean.com\)](#)

Who Are You? – Introducing Jack Cooper, Postcode Revolution

This month we get **Jack Cooper, the 23-year-old Founder of Postcode Revolution**, to tell us something about his climate journey.

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

It was aged 19, over the course of 2020, that I first woke up to the climate and ecological emergency and felt a moral responsibility to act. I had not been very interested in climate or nature before then, but a deep interest in Buddhism in particular, put me on the path to environmental action.

2. What made you commit to doing something?

It was a growing awareness of the mass suffering of climate breakdown, combined with a feeling of moral responsibility to do something to prevent it.

3. What have you done?

I was drawn to radical environmental activism first: from running onstage and speaking at concerts to running on the Amex football pitch. After gaining a criminal record for my actions and connecting with the Climate Majority Project, I decided to change course and engage in community climate action. I decided to act where I was, connecting with my neighbours, creating a community and acting on climate and nature in the postcode I'd grown up in all my life. I've since inspired others to do the same and I call the movement Postcode Revolution.

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

Seeing the tangible, positive impacts of Postcode Revolution has been essential to keep me going, along with frequent reminders of disasters happening now all around the world and into the future.



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

I don't believe there is one solution, so this is a tricky question to answer. But I wish everyone knew about the Climate Majority Project (who incubate Postcode Revolution) and became aware of the number of things they can do to make change. From talking to neighbours to talking to governments ... no action is too small.

Ideas worth sharing

Postcode Revolution, founded by Jack Cooper

What if we talked to our neighbours?

What if we connected by acting on climate, nature and energy; and creating greater ecological safety and resilience?

That's the future, on your doorstep.



Like many young people in 2024, Jack grew up with an absence of local community and a world on fire. He decided to try and change this in the summer of 2023 and knocked on the doors of the people around his childhood home; almost all of whom were strangers. He and his family set up a Postcode WhatsApp and Facebook group and invited residents to their garden for a community connection event. What followed was the formation of an energy group - with the organisation of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for 5 houses - along with the sharing of food, tools, and a postcode book group that continues to meet to this day.

He has since inspired other postcode communities to form in Brighton and Worthing and is able to study Postcode Revolution through his Liberal Arts BA course at the University of Sussex. He also has a passion for learning about nature and developing the Forest Garden Society at the university: their activities ranging from gardening to eco-education with nurseries to organising music festivals.

Jack hopes Postcode Revolution can provide energy and inspiration for new forms of community climate action, whilst also providing recognition and wider awareness of all the vital work that is going on already. He has produced a digital toolkit for people who want to act in their neighbourhood and a Postcode Revolution podcast is coming soon.

Check out <https://www.postcoderevolution.com> for more information and ways to connect.

Good News

Pioneering Centre for Neurodiversity and Net Zero Set to Transform Warwickshire

The Social Impact Academy is excited to announce plans for a groundbreaking 30-acre site in Warwickshire dedicated to advancing neurodiversity and driving the journey towards Net Zero. Designed as a Centre of Excellence, this site will empower neurodivergent talent to connect with local industries, reduce carbon emissions, and foster sustainable innovation.

Founded by a Warwickshire native with a deep commitment to social impact, the project is a deeply personal mission, inspired by his experiences and dedication to ensuring a sustainable future. Having returned to his roots, he is leveraging global experience in environmental offsetting and indigenous community engagement to create a unique hub that will support both Net Zero goals and neurodivergent empowerment. The founder's vision is to make Warwickshire, particularly near Southam, a beacon of sustainability and inclusive excellence.



“We aim to bridge the gap between neurodivergent talent and the industries that need innovative thinkers to reach Net Zero,” says the founder. “With the head of Net Zero for the government backing this initiative, we’re set to build powerful connections between local businesses, schools, and wider audiences.”

This project will be a model of neuroinclusion and environmental responsibility, with hopes for one in every county. In addition to hands-on sustainability efforts, a January conference will offer an in-depth look at the initiative’s goals and its potential to transform the region.

Future plans aim to focus on converting existing properties and land into off-grid, self-sustaining energy hubs. These centres will utilise renewable technologies to generate their own green energy and support local communities with eco-friendly, reduced-rate power with partnerships with eco-friendly utility companies and biodiversity-focused initiatives.



The Social Impact Academy invites local stakeholders, businesses, and community members to learn more and join this mission. For those interested in supporting this vision, a request form is available on our website, where you can find further details on our work and upcoming events. [The Social Impact Academy](#)

This is a unique opportunity to put Warwickshire at the forefront of neurodiversity and sustainability, creating a community and industry-driven path toward a greener, more inclusive future. We are looking to be locally invested and are open to local investors to be involved, as there is a guaranteed return as the project will be self-funding.

[Partner With Us | The Social Impact Academy](#)

Mark Hamilton-Taylor, Founder, The Social Impact Academy

Butterfly Conservation UK - Introducing our first ever Butterfly Conservation Youth Panel

The panel is made up of 10 young people, aged 16-25 years old, from all the corners of the UK.

We know that young people want to engage with nature & conservation organisations. We know that young people will be disproportionately affected by the climate crisis and nature decline. And we also know that currently less than 1% of people supporting or volunteering with Butterfly Conservation are aged under 25. This is where we want to make a difference. The message we want other young people to get is that you are not alone, that Butterfly Conservation is for you, too.



The environmental sector can and should be accessible to those who are young, ethnically diverse, LGBTQ+, neurodivergent, and all other walks of life.

[Youth Panel | Butterfly Conservation](#)

Ted's Tech – Hydrogen from sea water

At last someone has done it! Electrolysing salty sea water into Hydrogen without rapid degradation of the electrodes!

American firm Equatic of San Diego has developed an Electrolyser that can continuously extract Hydrogen from Sea Water without rapid degradation of its electrodes, a problem that has held back other companies. Not only are they producing Hydrogen economically but at the same time sequestering large quantities of carbon back into the ocean.

Equatic are planning the world's largest Ocean based Plant in Tuas, Singapore after having two smaller pilot plants in Los Angeles and Singapore in 2023.

This development should fit in well where cables from ocean wind farms come onto land, enabling surplus energy to be collected and stored as Hydrogen, for use to produce electricity during calmer weather.

For more detailed information search:-Equatic.tech

[Equatic](https://equatic.tech)

Ted Dowdeswell, Member of Harbury Energy Initiative, November 2024

Air Miles - a perk too far - by our guest blogger Neil Kitching

In this blog I will explore the concept of frequent flyer programmes. I argue that they help to create a culture that encourages flying and is bad for the environment. They can also cause a conflict of interest when flights are paid for by an employer but the employee benefits.



Introduction

I was inspired to write this blog following a conversation with someone who has amassed 200,000 air miles and wasn't sure what to do with them.

The aviation sector is a large emitter of carbon dioxide and has additional adverse impacts on our climate (contrails and nitrous oxides). Global emissions from aviation are rising steadily and there are no technological tools available that will substantially reduce global emissions in this decade or next. Even as new technology comes on stream it takes decades for this to permeate through the aviation sector. Perversely, aviation is currently undertaxed compared to other industries, for example there is no tax on kerosene. For all these reasons, we should not be doing anything to encourage increased consumer demand for flights.

What are Frequent Flyer Programmes?

Frequent flyer programmes are loyalty schemes for customers run by many airlines. Members receive two types of points when they buy air tickets:

1. Tier points allow members to reach different 'levels' eg bronze, silver, gold. The level you are at enables you to access benefits such as access to airport lounges (with free food and drink), priority check-in and boarding.
2. Reward points (or air miles) can be exchanged for free or reduced-price flights and seating upgrades to business or first class.

How do you collect points?

You collect points by booking flights with eligible airlines and are awarded more points (per £ spent) if you have reached a higher level in the scheme. Longer flights and more expensive flight options such as business class and first class, attract more points.

You can also collect points from buying goods and services from affiliated companies such as hotel chains, car hire and credit cards. Despite their stated green credentials, you can swop Tesco Clubcard points for Virgin Points. You collect Clubcard points from shopping at Tesco's or using their credit card. Tesco's website says that as a Virgin member you can "make your travel experience so much more rewarding with exclusive benefits to make your journeys unforgettable."

Who collects points?

Both business and leisure travellers can collect points, but it is dominated by the business traveller market. Apparently, Ton Stuker, a car dealership consultant, has clocked up over 24 million miles on 12,000 flights.

This is big business. The frequent flyer programmes operated by United Airlines, Delta and American Airlines are each thought to have over 100 million members.

Although the flights are paid for by the company, it is normally the individual who chooses which airlines and flight timings they take. This creates a potential conflict of interest as the individual benefits from the perks.

Normally all income and perks for an employee are treated as a taxable benefit, but the HMRC (in the UK) has agreed to waive air miles from taxation.

Many of these same businesspeople also choose to take a lot of leisure flights, often subsidised by the points they collected at work.

What's the Problem?

Frequent flyer schemes encourage inefficiency, more flights to be taken and increased emissions. The potential to collect more air miles may encourage businesspeople to:

- book unnecessary flights, perhaps instead of a more efficient teleconference;
- avoid budget airlines (which don't offer air miles);
- book more expensive flight options such as business or first class; and
- take additional, unnecessary flights to maintain their 'level' and associated perks.

Frequent flyer programmes help to create and maintain a culture that normalises and encourages flying amongst businesspeople and the relatively affluent. They create additional climate emissions by:

- the additional demand for leisure flights created by the discounts awarded;
- providing an incentive to employees to take unnecessary business flights; and
- encouraging upgrades to business and first-class travel for business and subsequent leisure flights.

People travelling in business and first class are allocated more space on the plane, fewer passengers can be carried and the emissions per person therefore increase. Emissions from business class are 3 times more carbon intensive than standard class, whilst first class emissions are 4 times as intensive (Defra emission factors 2023).

UK Bribery Act

Frequent flyer programmes could influence an employee to act in a way that is not in the best interests of their company.

For business travellers, it could be argued that frequent flyer programmes create a conflict of interest. The UK Bribery Act 2010 defines a bribe as “any advantage given to influence a person in the carrying out of a function connected with their work or office”. Clearly frequent flyer programmes are designed to influence a person. Legal interpretation is beyond my area of expertise, and there may be exemptions, but this is surely one for companies to think about?

For example, at my work I must get my manager’s approval before I can receive any hospitality. I need to register, and get approval, for any gift more than £25. Anything that could, or be seen to, influence my decision making would not be approved.

What should I do with my Air Miles?

If you are ‘lucky’ enough to have collected air miles and are having doubts about using them on yourself then there is another option.

You could use your air miles as a discount towards your next business flight. However, this is difficult unless the employee pays for the flight themselves and then claims the cost on expenses. Many businesses require flights to be booked using their company appointed travel agency.

Most frequent flyer programmes will offer you the chance to donate your rewards to one of their approved charities. For example, some airlines will allow you to donate to the Red Cross, to help fund their essential international travel. Of course, the airlines promote this as part of their Corporate Social Environmental agendas.

So, back to my initial conversation. Their 200,000 Avios points are nominally worth around £2,000. They could be exchanged for sixteen off-peak return trips from London to Barcelona or eight return trips to New York. They could be donated to charity, or simply allowed to expire (which I guess is a 'win' for the airline).

Discussion

Airlines argue that their frequent flyer programmes are a legitimate form of marketing designed to win market share from their competitors. However, frequent flyer programmes:

1. encourage a culture of flying amongst businesspeople and the relatively well off by normalising, ‘gamifying’ and rewarding travel;
2. create a potential conflict of interest (and additional costs to the company) when deciding whether to travel, and which airline and flights to choose;
3. increase carbon emissions by subsidising subsequent leisure flights.

I do have sympathy for people who must travel as an essential part of their job. Travelling can be stressful and tiring, and sometimes takes place in an employee’s own unpaid time. Access to decent lounges and perks may be justified – but should be paid for in the price of the ticket.

What I think cannot be justified is anything that incentivises more flights, and steers people towards less carbon efficient forms of travel.

Action

Changes to frequent flyer programmes could help companies to decrease their business travel costs, would help business people to avoid any potential conflicts of interest and would be a win for the environment.

Ideally governments would review and regulate frequent flyer programmes to ensure they do not incentivise more flights.

In the meantime, each company should review its travel and conflict of interest policies. They could ban their employees from using air miles, require them to be donated to charity or insist that they are used on future business flights.

If the air miles belonged to the company, rather than to the individual, this would take away the conflict of interest, would reduce company travel costs and eliminate the additional leisure flights. However, this change might require a significant change to frequent flyer programmes as currently the points are allocated to an individual, and not to the employer.

Companies like Tesco's should consider if their partnerships with frequent flyer programmes are compatible with their stated environmental objectives.

Will this make a difference? I do think that anything that directly encourages people to take more flights is immoral. Air miles help to create a culture of flying which we should address head on.

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 here [Buy \(carbonchoices.uk\)](https://carbonchoices.uk). I am donating one third of profits to rewilding projects. Follow me: @carbonchoicesuk ([twitter](#)) @carbonchoices ([Facebook](#)) @carbonchoices ([Instagram](#)).

[Air Miles - a perk too far](#)

Neil Kitching, October 2024

Thoughts from an Organic Farmer - News from the farm: Forgive me the nostalgia

Tim and Jan Deane, founders of the UK's first organic veg box scheme, came for lunch yesterday – taking me back to my induction into what, in the 1980s, was called the 'organic movement'. I turned my back on life as a management consultant in London and New York to join a rag-tag group of freaks from the fringe. In a decade characterised by shoulder pads, brash consumerism, and Harry Enfield's 'Loadsamoney', these people believed in the redemptive possibilities of the soil. My snappy suit ended up eaten by moths in my damp cottage as I bent to the task of learning a new trade. It felt like coming home.



In the 1980s, there were no handbooks, courses, or YouTube videos on organic farming. You had to seek out those who were doing it, glean what you could while helping them to pick potatoes or plant lettuce, then have a go and learn from your mistakes. I drove my battered Citroën Dyane to visit established organic growers, everywhere from Pembrokeshire to the Fens. I was invariably offered honest advice, food, and a place to lay my head, sometimes in a caravan in an orchard, sometimes in a manor house sporting coat of arms. All were given generously, and I was encouraged on my journey of discovery, as an ally in a common cause.



Tim and Jan Deane were a few years ahead of me on that journey, and had recently acquired a small farm on the southern fringe of Dartmoor. To my eyes, the soil looked difficult and poorly drained – but Tim, with limited machinery, but plenty of patience and experience, coaxed some wonderful crops from it. After visiting Japan, Jan introduced the veg box to the UK. Their business grew rapidly, until, with extraordinary generosity, they persuaded me to start my own veg box scheme. They even donated the first 30 customers. And the rest is history.

Tim has now hung up his hoe. His occasional missives on nature and farming, which first appeared in the Organic Grower magazine, have been published in a short but beautiful book called Nature Notes. As I sat reading Tim's gentle depiction of the industry I love and the nature it is embedded in, I reflected that I may have sold more veg boxes in the end, but we arrived at a similar place. You can buy Nature Notes on Amazon, or (much better) from the Organic Growers Alliance. Visit [Nature Notes - Organic Growers Alliance](#)

Guy Singh-Watson, October 2024, farmer and founder and creator of Riverford Organic Farm

Useful Links

- 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 \(heartofenglandcf.co.uk\)](#)
- [Energy Efficiency Grants | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)
- [Green Homes Grants - Energy efficiency at home - Warwick District Council \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Net Zero – Stratford's home for community climate action \(netzerostratford.org.uk\)](#)
- [Solar Soft Loans | Heart of England CE \(hecommunityenergy.org\)](#) HECE's Solar Soft Loans are a subsidised investment model. They are only available to schools and community organisations.
- [Green Schools Project - Autumn 2 News](#)

Repair Cafés

- [Repair Cafés – Sustainable Warwickshire](#), (Alcester, Barford, Harbury, Kenilworth, Leamington Spa, Rugby, Stratford, Wellesbourne).
- <https://www.repaircafe.org/en/cafe/repair-cafe-southam/>
- <https://www.repaircafe.org/en/cafe/budbrooke-repair-cafe/>
- Napton on the Hill
- [Visit a Repair Café Near You \(repaircafe.org\)](#)

The Great Collaboration (1 hour) Banter Sessions for Town and Parish Councils

- [Banter 41: Share more, Waste less, 16Oct24, Harvey McGivern | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 42: Home Insulation Efficiency by Design Graham Stoddart-Stones | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 43: 30Oct24 Experiences with an EV, with Ian Graham | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 44: 06Nov24 Climate Anxiety with Linda Aspey | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)

Want to get involved? – Warwickshire's Climate and Environmental Action Groups

LCWN Steering Group member, Ian Wood, has mapped the locations of all the Warwickshire climate and environment community action groups in the Network.

[LCWN Map - Google My Maps](#) (right click, open hyperlink).

If there are still gaps or errors in your entry, or if you have a question, please let Ian know.

email: lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com



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 groups already in the Network?



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

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

LCWN Facebook group

[Low Carbon Warwickshire Network | Facebook](#)

Set up by Emma Powell for everyone to share useful things. Please like and follow it. Please send any comments to lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com

[\(2\) Low Carbon Warwickshire Network | Facebook](#)

<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 let us know what you wish to see in your newsletter: 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.

