

CONNECTING LOW CARBON GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTY

# Low Carbon Warwickshire Network

May 2025 – Issue – 49

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, Lillington and again in Wellesbourne.

## Warwickshire Climate Alliance – Pop-up Repair Café, Camp Hill, Nuneaton, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025

On Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup> Warwickshire Climate Alliance organised a big repair café event at Camp Hill, Nuneaton.

All types of repairs took place, electrical on various items from vacuum cleaners to radiograms, woodwork, sewing machines and jewellery. Act on Energy had a stall advising on energy saving around the home. Free vegetables from local allotments were also on offer. The repairers came from Solihull, Stratford on Avon and others places, mainly from South Warwickshire.

Repair Cafés aim to:

- **Reduce waste and costs** by extending product lifespans.
- **Conserve resources** like energy and raw materials.
- **Promote sustainability** for a greener future.
- **Foster community** through shared skills and knowledge.
- **Empower individuals** to be self-reliant by teaching repair skills.



Martin Drew, TRACC / WCA

## Napton Parish Council Climate and Environment Working Party - Repair Café, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025

As well as the usual repairs on offer, Napton Parish Councils' Climate and Environment Working Party added a Frock Swap and a Plant Share to their Spring Repair Café in the Village Hall. Cakes available in the café included: lemon drizzle, coffee, apple, rosemary madeira, orange & lemon and gluten free flapjack. Donations received for repairs, frocks, plants and café sales mean that an Autumn Repair Café can go ahead as planned.



## The LCWN Steering Group are recruiting

The LCWN Steering group steers and guides the direction of the LCWN and **we are very interested in recruiting members** from diverse backgrounds, who may bring different experiences, perspectives and skills. If you are interested, **please get in touch** at [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com). The Steering Group meet infrequently and only when we have something of significance to discuss. To find out a little more about the other 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 \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

- To date, the LCWN have secured funding for community engagement events at: Harbury, Napton on the Hill, Henley-in-Arden, Church Lawford, Boddington, Kenilworth, Brailes, Cubbington, Wroxall, Lillington and two events at Wellesbourne.
- The aim of all LCWN events is to inspire the formation of new environmental groups to start in rural areas and provide useful information to enthuse existing groups.
- The RSA have supported these events through funding room hire, creating an Eventbrite link, helping design posters and promoting all events through their Fellows Network.

## 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](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. Get in touch for more details. email: [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com)

## The 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.

[Sustainability at RSA House](#)

[Sustainability Network - The RSA](#)



## Act on Energy

**Warwickshire Energy Advice** – We are encouraging residents across all of Warwickshire to phone for full energy information, advice and guidance - call our expert advisors.



**Radio Teleswitching Service** is being turned off on 30th June 2025 and Warwickshire is a hotspot for people who are at risk. Call us or your supplier today to see if you will be affected. You could risk your energy bills doubling, or your heating being disconnected if you have an RTS meter and don't contact your supplier before the deadline.



**With over 25 years' experience**, Act on Energy is an award-winning charity, delivering free, impartial energy advice. Working in partnership with the Local Authorities and external organisations, we offer a range of services such as help with applying for grants, access to funding for energy efficiency measures and in-home support for those struggling with the cost of living.

**Free advice phone line:** 0800 988 2881, Email: [advice@actonenergy.org.uk](mailto:advice@actonenergy.org.uk),

Website: [www.actonenergy.org.uk](http://www.actonenergy.org.uk)

**Madeleine Avila-Thomas, Communications & Campaigns Officer, Act on Energy**

## Harbury e-Wheels

Diary dates - Open Gardens in aid of Harbury e-Wheels is on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June.

[Harbury Garden Walkabout | the National UK Open Gardens Directory](#)  
[Open Gardens in Warwickshire | town and village Open Garden events running in the county](#)





## Green Schools Project

Registrations are now open for schools to participate in the Zero Carbon Schools 2025-26 programme. This runs from after October half term until the end of the school year. 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

[Zero Carbon Schools Information Sheet 2025-26 - Primary](#)  
[Zero Carbon Schools Information Sheet 2025-26 - Secondary](#)  
[zero carbon schools - Green Schools Project](#)

**Cathy Wentworth, Green Schools Project**

## Garden Organic – Rugby Community Champions

**What to do in your garden this month:** The first of May sees the start of **No Mow May**, where lawn-owners are encouraged to leave grass to grow and avoid mowing for the month. It can be a great way of encouraging insects and pollinators into your garden. As the weather warms up, it's also the time of year to start planting out the more tender crop seedlings. Some seeds can go straight into the ground. Make sure you keep on top of weeds, hoeing regularly and leaving the weeds to dry out before adding them to your compost.

**G**arden Organic will be working in partnership with Rugby Borough Council to increase biodiversity in the town, through engaging local people in organic gardening, whether that be in a community garden, allotment or their own growing spaces.

### Rugby Community Champion training.

We are hosting our second Rugby Community Champion training session on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June, at The Hive, Hill Street Youth and Community Centre, 10:00am-12:00. If you'd like to sign up as a Rugby Community Champion or find out more, visit here: [MyImpactPage - Rugby Community Champions](#).

### Upcoming events:

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Family Fun Day.

Join us for a morning of activities for all ages! Find out more about how you can reuse items you might throw away, what happens in a compost bin and take home a newspaper pot! Drop in to Rugby Eco Hub, between 10am-1pm on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May. [Family fun day28th May poster.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June – Grow your own herbs, Hill Street Youth and Community Centre, 12:30-2pm

If you want to find out more about growing your own fresh herbs, then this workshop is for you! We'll talk about where to start, what you need to know and how to look after your plants as they grow. There will even be some herbs for you to take home to get started. Please register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/growing-your-own-fresh-herbs-tickets-1347648395629?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Please follow/like our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/rugbycommunitychampions>

**Heather Thomas, Rugby Community Champions, Garden Organic**



## Transition Town Rugby – Eco Hub

### Rugby Eco Hub

- Community Climate Fair: 7th June, Caldecote Park, 10:30am - 12:30pm
- Repair Cafe: 7th June, Rugby Eco Hub, 10am - 1pm
- Quilting workshop: 7th June, Rugby Eco Hub, 2 - 4pm
- Growing your own and Community Farming: 11th June, Rugby Eco Hub, 7:30pm start
- Growing food in small spaces: 14th June, Rugby Eco Hub, 10:30am - 1:30pm
- **Library of Things**, Every Tues, Thurs, Fri and Sat, Rugby Eco Hub.
- [Transition Town Rugby - Rugby Repair Cafe](#) First and Third Saturday of the month at Rugby Eco Hub, Betts Hall, Claremont Centre, 43 Clifton Rd, Rugby CV21 3QE (entrance on Bath Street, opposite Lawrence Sheriff School), 10am -1pm
- **Knitting Classes**, 1st and 3rd Thursday, 7-9pm, Starting 5th June [Rugby Eco Hub Knitting Classes](#)

Sign up for the Rugby Eco Hub Newsletter here: <https://rugbyecohub.org/>



**Carrie Pailthorpe, Transition Town Rugby**

## Net Zero Stratford – Climate Hub

### **Carbon Literacy training for residents of Stratford-on-Avon district**

Net Zero Stratford's accredited Carbon Literacy training will be offered free on 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 during Stratford's **Great Big Green Week**.

If you want to know more about the course and The Carbon Literacy Project, please email [janet@netzerostratford.org.uk](mailto:janet@netzerostratford.org.uk). The training will be in the PACCAR room on the second floor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.



### **Stratford-on-Avon Great Big Green Week 2025.**

There are over 50 events this year across the district, all celebrating wonderful projects and raising awareness of actions to combat climate change and protect nature. This is the fifth year that the Climate Coalition has promoted a national green festival. The Net Zero Stratford team hopes that all residents of Stratford district will find something to enjoy in the programme this year! Find out more in the flyer attached.

If you have any queries, please contact Janet Palmer at [janet@netzerostratford.org.uk](mailto:janet@netzerostratford.org.uk)



### [Net Zero – Stratford's home for community climate action Events](#)

**Janet Palmer, Net Zero Stratford**

## The Bicycle Bus / Cycle Infinity

Cycle Infinity CIC is holding 2 led rides around Stratford as part of their **Great Big Green Week** - Sat 7<sup>th</sup> to Sun 15<sup>th</sup> June.



### **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2 p.m.**

Thanks to a grant from Stratford Town Trust, Cycle Infinity CIC proudly hosts this FREE 5-mile family-friendly bike ride, starting and finishing at Bancroft Gardens (outside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre) showcasing the newly developed cycle infrastructure on Warwick Road and highlighting the Stratford-upon-Avon Local Nature Reserve.

The entire route is off-road, with an optional short on-road section, demonstrating that families can enjoy a safe, sustainable mode of travel directly from the town centre. The ride offers an opportunity to experience nature at its finest, featuring a riverside path and the chance to observe wildlife in its habitat. Marshals will be riding along to keep everyone safe.

For more information follow this link to the Facebook event page and to register interest –

[\(1\) The Great Big Green Week FREE family friendly bike ride - Nature Reserve \(5 miles\) | Facebook](#)

### **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2 p.m.**

Starting and finishing at the Stratford Greenway. Thanks to a grant from Stratford Town Trust, Cycle Infinity CIC proudly hosts this FREE completely 12 mile bike ride, showcasing the brilliant Stratford Greenway whilst highlighting the villages of Fernleigh Park and Meon Vale.

The entire route is off-road, demonstrating that people can enjoy a safe, sustainable mode of travel from Stratford to Meon Vale (or Meon Vale to Stratford!). The ride offers an opportunity to experience the great outdoors and a chance for a social catch up with friends and family whilst being active.

At the halfway point we will have a pit stop at the Meon Vale Pavilion cafe where will hear about some of the sustainability work in and around the new village, reward yourself with a drink and a piece of yummy cake or ice cream. We will then return to the start point. Marshals will be riding along to help keep everyone safe.

For more information follow this link to the Facebook event page and to register interest –

[\(1\) The Great Big Green Week FREE bike ride - Stratford Greenway \(12 miles\) | Facebook](#)

We could help your school start a bicycle bus initiative. Get in touch at [simon@thebicyclebus.co.uk](mailto:simon@thebicyclebus.co.uk)

**Simon Storey**

**Founder of The Bicycle Bus, Founding Director Cycle Infinity CIC, Bicycle Mayor Warwick District,**

### **River Hope**

River Hope is an emerging grassroots movement in Stratford-on-Avon District focused on the water catchments of the rivers Avon, Arrow and Stour in South Warwickshire. Through a community-led participatory process, it brings people together to better protect our local water bodies and all their biodiversity.



Water and river related activities in **Great Big Green Week's** programme for Stratford and Shipston which runs from Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June include:



- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>: Opening event. River Hope stall, New Place Great Garden, Chapel Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6EF
- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>: Dawn chorus walk with Bill Wright, Stratford Wildlife Friends
- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>: The Big Avon Clean Up, Rubbish Friends (supporting SOAK and The Big Paddle Clean Up)
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>: Green Book Talk in Stratford Library, discussing “Blue Mind” by Wallace J Nichols
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>: Craftivism Special on waterways with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre's Warm Hub
- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>: Green Book Talk in Alcester Library, discussing “Is a River Alive” by Robert Macfarlane
- Friday 13<sup>th</sup>: Creative Writing Workshop on the theme of water. Lucy Parrott Writing Workshops and Mary Manandhar
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>: River Hope photography installation: meet the photographers. The installation runs Sat 7<sup>th</sup> to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> at The Welcome Space, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6BB
- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> : Shipston River Day, Shipston-on-Stour.

See Stratford Great Big Green Week leaflet for further details of times and locations.

[info@riverhope.org.uk](mailto:info@riverhope.org.uk)

[River Hope | A community creative process in Stratford-on-Avon District](#)

### Cubbington and Lillington Environmental Action Now (CLEAN)

**10,000  
Sunflowers  
2025**

**The Big Planting Out Day  
31st May**

**HQ at Lillington School Playing  
Fields: Valley Rd Entrance  
10am -4pm Come and plant for  
10 mins or as long as you like**

**Collect Free Sunflower Plants**

Come and spread sunflower joy all around Lillington and  
Cubbington; Contact: [matt.black@pop3.poptel.org.uk](mailto:matt.black@pop3.poptel.org.uk)  
Mob: 07765 684941

Logos at the bottom include: arc, C.L.E.A.N., Lillington School, ARTY FOLKS, Warwick District Council, and a 'SUPPORTED BY: Warwickshire County Council' logo.



## Endangered species project

The number of places where animals can live free and happy lives is shrinking. Global wildlife populations are in decline with some species under threat of extinction.

**Teachers,**

**Encourage your students to research:**

- ❖ The most endangered animals.
- ❖ Why are their populations declining?
- ❖ What is being done to protect them?
- ❖ What more could we do to help?
  - ✓ Then write and illustrate a poem about what they have found out.
  - ✓ Certificates for all and prizes for the best entries.
  - ✓ The winning submissions will be published in an anthology.



Please send entries by end of May 2026 to:  
Gabrielle Back, 3 Underhill Close,  
Finham, Coventry CV3 6RB



**Rotary**



Savers Charity Number 1108191

## Bee Friendly Warwick – Bee Wild, 14<sup>th</sup> June

'Bee Friendly Warwick' is hosting its annual event at Hill Close Gardens with plenty of activities, demos, and lots of local Wildlife Groups invited.

This annual event, 'Bee Wild', will be held at Hill Close Gardens. Amazingly, entry is free, but Hill Close Gardens would appreciate adults donating to its ongoing restoration appeal.

Bee Wild is Saturday, June 14th, 2025, between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Come along to learn about the bats, wild bees, butterflies and hedgehogs living in our area and how you can help them to survive and thrive! You'll be able to chat to the various local wildlife organisations who have given up their time to come along. There will also be engaging demos of weaving and woodworking, more activities for children and more gift stalls.

There will be lots of information and leaflets on the best plants for pollinators year-round, together with plants for sale. Families, schools, and groups can add

Reg charity: 1085278



**Saturday 14th June, 2025**  
**11:00am and 4:00pm**  
**Hill Close Gardens, Warwick**



Scan QR for full info

ADULTS PLEASE DONATE  
Under 18s free

# Bee Wild

- Come along to learn about the bats, wild bees, butterflies, hedgehogs living in our area and how you can help them to survive and thrive!
- Find out what plants are good for pollinators and about wild bee houses
- Have a go at weaving and see some woodworking
- Hear some poetry about bees, veg and gardening
- Find out about the book about Fletcher and the Bee
  - Search for insects in Hill Gardens
  - Follow a mystery trail with clues to letters
  - Paint a rock, make a seed bomb and do some crafting
- Listen to music and enjoy the Cafe






their wildlife-friendly garden (or plan to create one) to a local map to show connected habitat across Warwick. Plus, there will be examples of good solitary bee houses and a bumble bee house to show you.

This year, you can chat with even more exhibitors: the Warwickshire Badger/Mammal Group, the Warwickshire Bat Group, Warwick District Council's Biodiversity Group, and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. There will also be information from our local hedgehog rescue team, a photographic display of local insects by Sabina George, poetry by Matt Black, live music and Fletcher & the Bee posters by local author Julia Rawlinson.

Free crafting activities are available again this year, including the popular rock painting, making seed bombs, the insect hunt in the afternoon and a find-the-word trail around the gardens. Children who come dressed as insects will receive a small treat!

There will also be the usual interesting local gift stalls with everything from honey to bee-themed gifts, wildlife-inspired art, aromatherapy soaps, knits, bags, and jewellery to buy. It will be a fun day with something for everyone to enjoy.

**Sara Lever, Bee Friendly Warwick,** [beefriendlywarwick@gmail.com](mailto:beefriendlywarwick@gmail.com)

### **Bee Friendly Leamington Spa**

Bee Friendly Leamington have now been awarded Bee Friendly Town status by the Bee Friendly Trust. They are hosting an event at All Saints Parish Church on 7<sup>th</sup> June.

Bee Friendly Warwick was also awarded the Bee Friendly Town award at the same time as Bee Friendly Leamington.



**Julie Burton, Bee Friendly Leamington**

There is also a Bee Friendly Kenilworth.

**This probably makes Warwickshire the county with the most Bee-Friendly Towns.**

[Bee Identification leaflet](#)

[Local Bee Friendly Groups - South Warwickshire Climate Champions - Warwick District Council.](#)



### **Leamington Spa Town Council - Climate Change Grant**

Royal Leamington Spa Town Council has a Climate Change Grant fund to support local community groups to address the climate change challenge and would welcome applications.

The grant fund is open to not-for-profit community groups located in the town, who wish to undertake activities to contribute to climate change objectives. Project ideas could include:

- Energy Efficiency – projects / works which seek to reduce energy use and carbon emissions through improving energy efficiency.
- Improvements to a community building.
- Projects which promote and increase the use of sustainable travel modes such as cycling, walking and public transport.
- Renewable / low carbon energy – projects / activities which seek to reduce energy use and carbon emissions through renewable energy generation and use.
- Awareness / understanding - Raise awareness of climate change issues – to assist understanding of climate change and to promote action to address it.

Further information about the grant fund can be found at

[Environment & Climate](#)

[Climate Change Grants | Royal Leamington Spa Town Council](#)

For more information contact Stephen Marks, Town Clerk, via [clerk@leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk);

## **Sustainable Wellesbourne – Open Gardens for Wildlife**

For the next Open Gardens for Wildlife in Wellesbourne there are 11 residential gardens to see (13 on Sunday) plus four other places in Wellesbourne with beauty spots for wildlife to visit..and a participating café. There will be a Plant Swap and Sale on the Saturday at the Methodist Church Hall, so do bring clearly labelled plants to swap. We hope to put together an accessibility information sheet available a week or so before through the SW email address should anyone need it. A ticket for each day is £5//head but if bought on Sat, £8 for both days.

The focus of the day will be hedgehogs and bats with some of the gardens having had static bat detectors set up in the weeks before. The data from these will be revealed at the free Bat Walk we have arranged for the following Thursday evening. The bat walk is available to all, but numbers are limited to 20 so booking is essential. This is the link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bat-walk-tickets-1303297912139?aff=oddtcreator>

For extra information about accessibility and parking, please email [sustainablewellesbourne@wellesbourneandwalton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:sustainablewellesbourne@wellesbourneandwalton-pc.gov.uk)

[Wellesbourne Open Gardens for Wildlife | the National UK Open Gardens Directory](#)



## **OPEN GARDENS FOR WILDLIFE IN WELLESBOURNE**

*See and share ideas for a Wildlife Friendly Garden*



**1pm – 5pm**  
**31 May and 1 June**  
**2025**



Pick up tickets and maps from the Methodist Church or Chedhams Yard in Wellesbourne; limited street parking nearby or walk from the Village Car Park, CV35 9NH and Twitey's Glamping in Hunscombe (Sunday only), CV35 9EX

Follow Sustainable Wellesbourne on our facebook page for more details or for info on accessibility, contact Sustainable Wellesbourne:



[sustainablewellesbourne@wellesbourneandwalton-pc.gov.uk](mailto:sustainablewellesbourne@wellesbourneandwalton-pc.gov.uk)

## Warwickshire County Council - Park Life Reads

Celebrate Summer at the Park Life Reads Festival!

Warwickshire Libraries Seeks Local Experts for its annual family festival. Be part of something special this summer! Warwickshire Libraries invites passionate community members to join us for Park Life Reads – a free family festival celebrating the perfect blend of literacy, wellbeing, and sustainability.

**August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Riversley Park, Nuneaton**

We're looking for enthusiastic individuals and organisations to enhance our festival atmosphere with:

- **Expert advice booths** - sharing knowledge with neighbours
- **Pop-up Repair Cafés** - giving treasured items new life
- **Green-themed activities** - inspiring eco-conscious fun for all ages

Your participation will help create a vibrant community space where families can discover the joy of reading while embracing sustainable living practices.

**Have skills to share?** This is your opportunity to connect with the community and inspire positive change. Ready to get involved? Complete our brief form at: [Park Life Reads 2025 Nuneaton](#)

Join us in making Park Life Reads an unforgettable celebration of community, creativity, and care for our planet!

## Green Libraries Week

Join Warwickshire's Green Revolution!

**Calling All Local Sustainability Experts**

This October, be part of something transformative. Warwickshire Libraries is searching for passionate sustainability champions to power our **Green Libraries Week Campaign running between 27<sup>th</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2025.**

Your expertise could inspire an entire community to embrace greener living. We're seeking individuals as follows:

- **Repair café wizards** who can show others how to fix instead of discard
- **Energy advisors** offering practical solutions to lower bills and carbon footprints
- **Renewable energy enthusiasts** willing to share real-world experiences
- **Green speakers** for our community coffee morning series

Whether you have professional credentials or hands-on experience, your knowledge matters. Help us create a ripple effect of positive change across Warwickshire.

Ready to make a difference? Complete our quick form at: [Green Libraries Week](#)

Together, we can build a more sustainable future—one library at a time.

Listen to Sustainable Warwickshire podcasts on Spotify or Apple or visit

<https://sustainablewarwickshire.podbean.com/>

[Sustainable Warwickshire | Warwickshire County Council](#)





## On track for High-Speed Rail - by our guest blogger Neil Kitching

I recently enjoyed the experience of high-speed trains in Spain. Are they truly green? Why hasn't the UK got a network of high-speed rail? As an environmentalist, should I support HS2?

### Spain's High-Speed Network

On a recent holiday to Spain, I travelled by train from Madrid to Segovia then from Madrid to Malaga. This was a revelation. Spain has invested heavily to improve its rail network. The journey to Segovia included a 28km tunnel through the Guadarrama mountains, an enormous civil engineering achievement that I had never heard of.



The journey from Madrid to Malaga took 2 hours 20 minutes to travel 530km at speeds up to 310km/h. This is a similar distance to London to Carlisle which takes 4 hours on one of the UK's fastest rail lines (max 200km/h).

Spain has built a network of high-speed rail lines radiating out from the capital Madrid to its main regional and coastal cities, including a link to France. This has been a deliberate policy to encourage economic development beyond Madrid.

### Global High Speed Rail Network

According to Wikipedia, China has by far the longest network of high-speed rail, followed by Spain (4,000km) then France, with the UK lagging at 1,485km. However, this is a generous definition (lines that can take trains at speeds over 200km/h). Using a stricter definition, say 300km/h, then the UK only has one purpose-built high-speed rail line, the 108km from London to the Channel Tunnel.

### Building HS2

HS2 is the name given to the high-speed rail project proposed to link London to the north of England and to Scotland. The Government has scaled back the initial plans with only London to Birmingham under construction. This will cut journey times to Birmingham from 80 to 52 minutes and may knock 30 minutes off the 4h:30 minute time to Glasgow.

The original cost estimate of £17 billion has spiralled to perhaps £66 billion for the 225km route (although the final cost is still unclear). This budget includes demolishing 400 homes and building five twin-bore tunnels totalling 43km. Costs have spiralled for many reasons, including poor project management, political interference and continual changes to the design. For example, following public protests and to protect ancient woodland, more and longer tunnels have been incorporated including through the Chiltern Hills. The developers have had to apply for 8,000 planning and environmental consents and to fight at least twenty court cases.

### Economic Benefits of New Train Lines

Economists can estimate the net benefit of new infrastructure. In the case of rail projects this is the cost of construction compared to the short and long-term economic benefits. Short term benefits include construction jobs whilst long term benefits arise from fuel savings (or increases), reduced journey time (which is assumed to be a benefit to society), increased business travel, and more tourism and leisure expenditure. The difficulty is that major infrastructure projects also have a longer-term impact on human

behaviour. For example, house prices will rise near a railway station (e.g. for commuters) and faster train connections will also encourage new houses to be built in surrounding areas - house building was the prime economic benefit claimed for the new £295m Borders railway line in Scotland. This all gets very complicated and open to political manipulation. However, it is safe to say that given the huge cost increases, HS2 will not create a net benefit to the UK economy for decades, if at all.

### **Will HS2 cut Carbon Emissions?**

Constructing new high speed rail lines is expensive and carbon intensive. Generally, a completely new line with tunnels and bridges is required to take trains safely at that speed.

Several consultancy reports have been commissioned on the carbon impact of the HS2 project. The conclusion seems to be that there will be no substantive carbon reduction, perhaps a neutral impact over a number of years:

- An estimated 6m tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> will be emitted from construction, one third of this from tunnelling through rock which is an energy intensive process;
- Trains travelling at high-speed require much more energy to overcome air resistance;
- However, the line is electrified, so the operational carbon emissions are relatively low and will decline further as the UK continues to decarbonise its electricity grid;
- Increased freight capacity freed up on existing lines will cut emissions;
- But passenger numbers will rise, thereby increasing emissions from the current base.
- Then there is the knock-on impact on carbon emissions. For example, new business activity and housebuilding near the stations at Euston and Birmingham. This becomes impossible to calculate with any certainty.

An argument commonly used to justify high speed rail lines is that it will reduce carbon emissions by cutting the number of flights taken. Whilst this does not apply on the London to Birmingham route, it could apply for Edinburgh or Glasgow to London. Currently there is competition between flying and trains for these routes, but many people choose to fly because it is slightly quicker and often costs less than rail. A high-speed line would be quicker than flying (including airport time) but the critical factor would still be cost.

France has gone further with its Climate and Resilience law. This bans short haul domestic flights (unless a connection to an international flight) for inter-city travel where the high-speed train takes less than 2.5 hours. This has certainly instigated discussion about the merits of high-speed rail but has had little practical impact, with only flights from Paris to Orly, Lyon and Nantes affected. Spain is considering following suit.

### **Carbon Cutting Options**

We are spending £66 billion pounds on a project that may not cut the UK's carbon emissions. Alternatively, we could have spent that sum on installing 5.5 million heat pumps in homes at £12,000 each. This would reduce our carbon emissions by around 10 million tonnes per year (out of a total of 385 million tonnes). Priorities!

### **Conclusions**

This is a complex and complicated topic with no easy answers. I am trying to balance the pros and the cons and will let you decide. Even the Green Party is divided on the issue of HS2 (it is currently in favour) but



many environmentalists have campaigned against HS2, or against aspects of the route, primarily fighting their cause on local issues (impact on noise, disruption, scenic views, and on ancient woodland and wildlife).

It seems to me that high-speed rail lines are a symbol of an advanced economy and society. I certainly benefitted from the lines in Spain, and this has helped to spread economic benefits beyond Madrid. They provide a good low-carbon alternative to short-haul flights.

However, I am not convinced that they will help to cut our carbon emissions to any significant extent. Whilst high-speed rail is far more efficient than travel by car or plane, this will be offset by the resultant increase in travel and economic (construction) activity induced by faster travel.

HS2 has gone spectacularly wrong. Its initial aims of relieving congestion on existing lines and opening up the 'north' of the country were worthy. But the UK is a more densely populated country than China, France or Spain which makes it much more difficult to carve a new route through our towns and countryside. Political indecision, lengthy planning processes, poor project management and opposition to the route have all helped to cause the massive cost increases.

I think that London to Birmingham is the most congested and expensive part of the UK to build a high speed line. Despite misgivings, I am in favour of selected high-speed rail lines, but they need to be built with environmental safeguards in place and built effectively, without cost overruns!

You might also enjoy my book, Carbon Choices, on the common-sense solutions to our climate and nature crises. Available from Amazon or a signed copy direct from me. I am donating one third of profits to rewilding projects.

If you have any ideas for future blogs, then please contact Neil at [carbonchoices@gmail.com](mailto:carbonchoices@gmail.com)  
[On track for High-Speed Rail](#)

**Neil Kitching, Carbon Choices, May 2025**

### **Thoughts from an Organic Farmer – News from the farm: A problem at the top**

If you assume that there is no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, then there is a possibility that you can contribute to making a better world." – Noam Chomsky

The assumption that there is no alternative to self-interest as the organising force of capitalist society is a tyrannical fallacy, imposed on us by a small minority; those with money and power, who have got to the top, and find themselves able to make rules which serve them well, but society and the environment poorly.

Riverford's ten-year journey to employee ownership was driven by the belief that there is a better way; that, given agency and opportunity, most of us, most of the time, do have an instinct for freedom and fairness, which is often missing or suppressed in conventional management structures. Co-owners contribute to decision-making through our Co-owner Council. Their broad perspective is essential, and always brings a well-measured, sophisticated generosity.





Last week, councillors Toby and Dave fed back the recommendations of our elected Remuneration Committee, which sets our pay. Striving for greater equality in pay is one of our founding principles, enshrined in three key commitments: that no one can ever earn more than nine times the lowest wage (for context, this pay gap is over 400 times for Tesco, and typically 25 times for a UK company of our size), that our annual profit share will be divided equally, and that we all have the same terms of employment.

In accordance with these principles, Dave pointed out that since 2021, pay has risen by 38% for our lowest earners, and only 15% for our highest earners. To my surprise, the committee members, who tend to be lower earners, questioned the fairness of this, given that most senior managers are now paid well below the market rate. Becks, an external director who sits on many other remuneration committees (all without staff representation), said that it was one of the most mature and balanced conversations she has been part of.

Defaulting to narrow self-interest is destroying our planet and society; we urgently need better governance. Is it that self-serving ambition gets you to the top? Or that humanity, hope, and the instinct for freedom are often sacrificed along the way? Employee ownership has taught me that the best decisions involve those who have hung onto those vital qualities, whether that be leaders, managers, or others.

#### [News from the farm: A problem at the top - Wicked Leeks](#)

**Guy Singh-Watson, farmer, founder and creator of Riverford Organic Farm, May 2025**

#### **Useful Links**

- [www.harburyenergy.co.uk](http://www.harburyenergy.co.uk)
- [Warwickshire Low Carbon Network – Harbury Energy Initiative](#) (please note, the web link for the LCWN still comes up as Harbury Energy Initiative, but HEI is now incorporated into Harbury Future Energy.
- 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 \(heartofenglandcf.co.uk\)](#)
- [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.
- [Community Buildings: Help Tackle Climate Change and Restore Nature - WALC - Town and Parish Council Support](#)
- [Climate and Nature - WALC - Town and Parish Council Support](#)
- [South Warwickshire: Council and Community Acting for Climate and Nature - WALC - Town and Parish Council Support](#)



- [South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme Newsletter](#)
- [South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme Newsletter - Issue Two](#)
- [South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme Newsletter - Issue Three](#)
- [South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme Newsletter - Issue Four](#)
- [South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme Newsletter - Issue Four](#)
- [Key Environmental Dates: 2025 Calendar - WALC - Town and Parish Council Support](#)
- [Biodiversity Spring 2025 Newsletter - Download - Warwick District Council.](#)
- [The Social Impact Academy](#)

### 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 65: 16Apr25 Bats, with Daisy Finniear | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 66: 23Apr25 Nature Park, with Martin Harrison | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 67: 30Apr25 Corsham Climate Plans for Net Zero by 2030, with Garry Ford | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 68: 07May25 Libraries working to Net Zero, Anna McMahon | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)
- [Banter 69: 14May25 Net Zero Template, David Morgan-Jones | The Great Collaboration Knowledgebase](#)

### 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](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com)

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

<https://www.facebook.com/Low-Carbon-Warwickshire-Network-101562702401683/>

### 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).

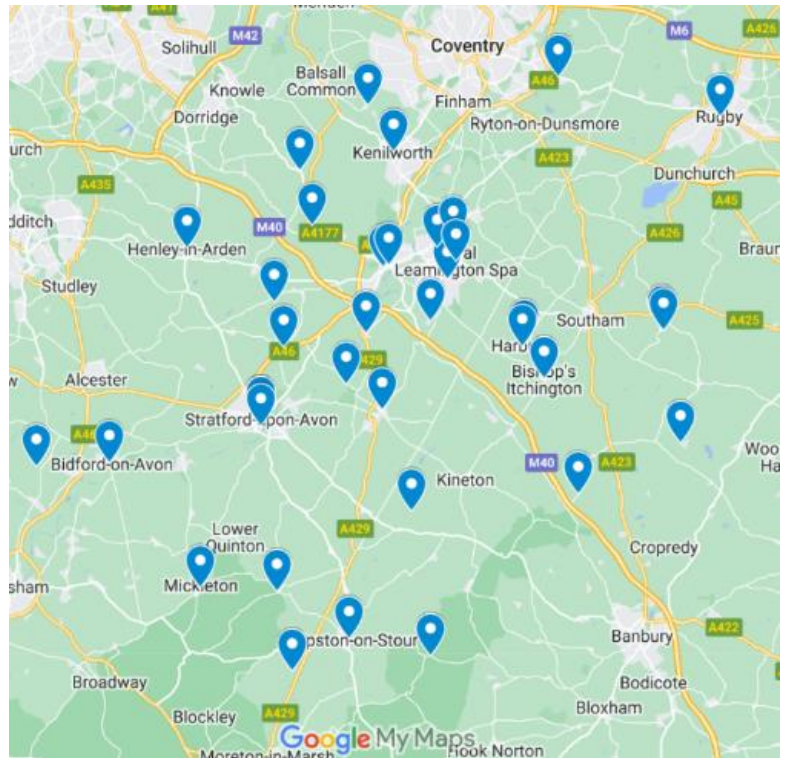
If there are still gaps or errors in your entry, or if you have a question, please let Ian know. email: [lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com](mailto:lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com)

**SearchOut Warwickshire** is a mapping service run by Warwickshire County Council. You could register your group there too.

[Welcome to SearchOut – SearchOut](#)

SearchOut Warwickshire is there to help you find and access organisations, services and events that are local to you.

Things that will help you stay active, healthy, happy, and well. And make taking care of the health and wellbeing of you, your family, and friends a bit easier. [Environmental – SearchOut](#)



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?







### **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 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.

