

CONNECTING LOW CARBON GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTY

Low Carbon Warwickshire Network

February 2026 – Issue – 56

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 community groups. 'Low Carbon Communities' events have been held in Harbury, Napton on the Hill, Henley-in-Arden, Church Lawford, Boddington, Kenilworth, Brailes, Cubbington, Wroxall, two in Wellesbourne and Lillington. **The next event is on Tuesday 9th June 2026 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. at the Eric Payne Community Centre, Alcester.** [\(1\) Low Carbon Warwickshire Network | Facebook](#)

Burton Green Parish Council - New Nature Recovery Area proposed to reconnect ancient woodland

Burton Green Parish Council has agreed to support an exciting proposal for a new Nature Recovery Area and Country Park between Kenilworth, Burton Green and the University of Warwick.

The idea is to create a continuous green corridor linking several important woods, including Black Waste Wood, Broadwells Wood, Roughknowles Wood and Crackley Wood, along land north of the HS2 line. At present these woods are isolated from one another. By reconnecting them with new native tree planting, hedgerows and meadows, the scheme would create a much larger and healthier woodland network.

This matters because wildlife depends on connected habitats. A continuous tree canopy and woodland corridor would help birds, bats, insects and mammals to move safely through the landscape, strengthen biodiversity, store carbon and improve air quality. It would also provide new walking and cycling routes and accessible countryside for local residents.

The proposal would sit alongside the University of Warwick's planned Eco Park and HS2 plantings of natural woodland alongside the new railway line, creating one of the largest green spaces in the area.



Burton Green Parish Council has supported the proposal and is now asking Warwick District Council to include this Nature Recovery Area in the next version of the South Warwickshire Local Plan, which is due to go out for public consultation from May.



The aim is simple: protect the Green Belt, reconnect ancient woodland, and leave a stronger natural landscape for future generations.

A Briefing Note for Town & Parish Councils that sets out a strategic proposal for the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) is available.

**Kyn Aizlewood, Burton Green Parish Council and
Kenilworth Abbey & Arden Ward, Warwick District Council**

Harbury Future Energy - the EV Charging Station

The recent BBC Coventry and Warwickshire article on the development of the Harbury Future Energy EV charging station project (see LCWN newsletter 51 Aug 2025 [LCWN-Newsletter-August-2025-issue-51.pdf](#)) stimulated a number of much appreciated congratulatory messages from contacts, friends and people who have been involved over the years. Some assumed from what they read that it is up and running or at least close to installation. Unfortunately, this is not quite the reality.

The project was developed by us 7 years ago but became a Warwickshire County Council project in 2023 with a large government Low Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure grant to enable it. By giving the Council this already fully developed project we were surrendering control and ownership; we could see no other way to fund it. Such are the legal entanglements around contracts that it has taken until now for the tender documents to be ready but there are still some hurdles ahead. The goodwill and intent are there but this is not a standard project for the Council, meaning there are extra risks to be avoided when awarding a contract.

We will eventually have our charging station with fast and rapid chargers. I just hope that by then we aren't all driving hydrogen cars or travelling in drones.

[Energy Initiative – Harbury Energy Initiative](#)
<https://www.harburyenergy.co.uk/energy-initiative/>

Bob Sherman, Harbury Future Energy

Garden Organic – Rugby Community Champions

Rugby Community Champions: The Rugby Community Champion project continues to grow. Volunteers are out in community gardens and talking to residents at events and workshops. Last year, we spoke to over 750 residents about growing their own and looking after biodiversity. If you would like to get involved or for more information, please contact Rugby@gardenorganic.org.uk

Visit Garden Organic: We have announced our tour dates for the rest of 2026. If you'd like to come and see our Demonstration Garden or visit the Heritage Seed Library, take a look at our [website here](#)

The Heritage Seed Library: The Sowing Your Seeds project aims to find and share local and heirloom crops growing in vegetable plots across the Midlands. Made possible thanks to National Lottery players and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we want to learn more about edible plants that are thriving locally, as well as hear and share the stories of the people behind them.

To find out more and to get involved please visit [our seed search webpage](#).

As part of the Sowing your Seed project, the Heritage Seed Library are running webinars about Seed Saving, the next one is Tuesday 3rd March 6-7pm, [here is more information](#)

Heather Thomas, Garden Organic, Rugby Community Champions



Action 21 – Invitation to the 30th Anniversary Celebration, Tuesday 24th March, 5 p.m.

Action 21 in Leamington owes its existence to the landmark 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio. This Earth Summit stood out for its sheer scale and ambition: 179 countries, over 100 world leaders, accepted that environmental protection is a shared responsibility linked with sustainable development. It adopted an action plan 'Agenda 21' to be implemented at global, national and local level.

Warwick District Council (WDC) initiated a Local Agenda 21 in January 1996 with a meeting in the Assembly Rooms attended by 100 representatives from local organisations. Ten working groups were set up in areas such as transport, energy, food, youth involvement, and global links. Please join us as we return to the Assembly Rooms thirty years on to take stock.

Action 21 still aims to reduce waste, promote reuse, increase knowledge related to recycling, energy, food, biodiversity and transport, and support our Warwick District community in living more sustainably and healthily. We do this with a large inclusive and dedicated volunteer team:

- the Re-use Centre in Court Street sells donated items to save them from landfill and provide goods to the local community at affordable prices.
- a bike workshop refurbishes over 450 donated bicycles each year.
- donations to partners working with the most vulnerable residents.
- projects to promote re-use crafting, community gardening and green spaces
- and working in partnership with many other local organisations.

If you are coming, RSVP to: anniversary@action21.co.uk so we know how many to cater for – many thanks.



Emma Knights, Action21

Warwickshire Cycle Buddies – Helping Adults Build Confidence Cycling

Warwickshire Cycle Buddies is a free community service that connects novice adult cyclists with experienced local riders to help them build confidence cycling around the Warwickshire area.

The initiative matches individuals who would like support cycling with volunteer “cycle buddies” who know the local area. Buddies meet participants in their neighbourhood and accompany them on gentle rides, providing one-to-one support in a relaxed and friendly setting. This helps people feel more confident riding on the road and become familiar with local cycle routes.

Cycle Buddies Warwickshire aims to encourage more people to rediscover the enjoyment of cycling and feel confident using their bike for local journeys. By connecting people with experienced riders, the project supports individuals who may feel unsure about cycling alone or who want help finding safe and suitable routes.

The initiative is a partnership between Clean Air Warwickshire, Cycleways Kenilworth, Leamington & Warwick, and Action 21, and was initially funded by Warwickshire County Council’s Green Shoots Community Climate Change Fund. Its overall aim is to help more people in Warwickshire cycle and encourage a shift from car journeys to cycle journeys where possible.

Cycle Buddies Warwickshire relies on volunteer buddies and continues to welcome both experienced cyclists willing to support others and adults who would like help building their confidence cycling.

To find out more, visit: <https://warwickshirecyclebuddies.co.uk/>

Katherine Attreed, Warwickshire Cycle Buddies and AtKat Marketing



DIARY DATES

FEBRUARY 2026

This event is for residents and local stakeholders in Wellesbourne, but anyone is welcome to come along. We won't turn you away – no-one will ask for an address - and all opinions are valid.

As a 'heads up', Open Gardens for Wildlife in Wellesbourne is 16th and 17th May, 1-5pm this year.



Lucy Hartley, Sustainable Wellesbourne

MARCH 2026

This is an event organised by Stratford Churches Together to inspire people to take action on Climate Crises with Christian faith. It is the way to spread out Eco-Church programme in Stratford. At the moment we have 9 churches registered for Eco Church.



The poster features the Stratford Churches Together logo at the top left, which consists of three interlocking circles in green, red, and blue. To the right of the logo is the text "STRATFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER". The main title "Lent Course: Calling Wounded Earth Home" is prominently displayed in the center, with "Lent Course:" in brown and "Calling Wounded Earth Home" in green. Below the title, it states "Mondays, 7:30pm at the UNITED REFORMED CHURCH". A list of dates and themes follows: 23rd Feb LOVE - God & Creation, 2nd Mar TRUTH - Climate Change, 9th Mar WISDOM - Response, 16th Mar JUSTICE - Living Together, and 23rd Mar HOPE - Christ's Gospel. At the bottom, it says "Refreshments from 7pm". The background of the poster is white with a large, dark, gnarled tree branch extending from the right side towards the center. A wooden cross is positioned at the bottom right, partially obscured by the tree branch. The overall design is simple and impactful, using natural imagery to convey the theme of the course.

STRATFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER

Lent Course: Calling Wounded Earth Home

**Mondays, 7:30pm at the
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

23rd Feb LOVE - God & Creation
2nd Mar TRUTH - Climate Change
9th Mar WISDOM - Response
16th Mar JUSTICE - Living Together
23rd Mar HOPE - Christ's Gospel

Refreshments from 7pm

Lim Ho, Stratford Methodist Eco-Church, Stratford Churches Together

The **Big Plastic Count** is taking place from 9th to 15th March and provides valuable data to show the true scale of the plastic crisis. <https://thebigplasticcount.com/>

Local Power Plan - Community Energy

The government's new Local Power Plan launches in March. This plan has a strong focus on community energy and presents an excellent opportunity for community groups to benefit and to develop with good financial and technical support. The Local Power Plan is available to read and is 27 pages long rather than a small book:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/698b50136c8ef8db1fcfd88e/gbe-local-power-plan-2026.pdf>

Great British Energy summarise the Plan thus:

"The plan sets out how together we will grow local and community-owned clean energy across the UK, ensuring that communities directly benefit from the energy they help to produce.



We will expand community and local clean energy by providing up to £1 billion of funding, hands-on support, better business models and policy ambition and regulatory reform so that local projects can be developed at scale across the UK.”

An introductory webinar about the plan is being hosted by Ashden on **March 10th, from 1pm to 2:15 pm** entitled: **The Local Power Plan - What does it mean for Community Energy?**

The long-awaited UK Government Local Power Plan has now been published, committing £1 billion over this Parliament to local and community energy. Its ambition is to give every community the opportunity, capability, and support to take control of its energy future and share directly in the benefits. But what does this mean in practice for community energy organisations, and for those working to enable local, low-carbon energy projects? Join us for a free lunchtime online event (1pm to 2.15pm) to explore the Local Power Plan and its implications for the sector. Take part in the discussion, put your questions to the speakers, and hear from Energy Learning Network partners and Great British Energy, with contributors to be announced. The event is hosted by The Energy Learning Network, a collaboration between climate solutions charity Ashden, the Centre for Sustainable Energy, and leading community energy bodies in every UK nation: Community Energy England, Community Energy Scotland, Community Energy Wales, and Northern Ireland’s Action Renewables.

You can register for the meeting here: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Bob Sherman, Harbury Future Energy

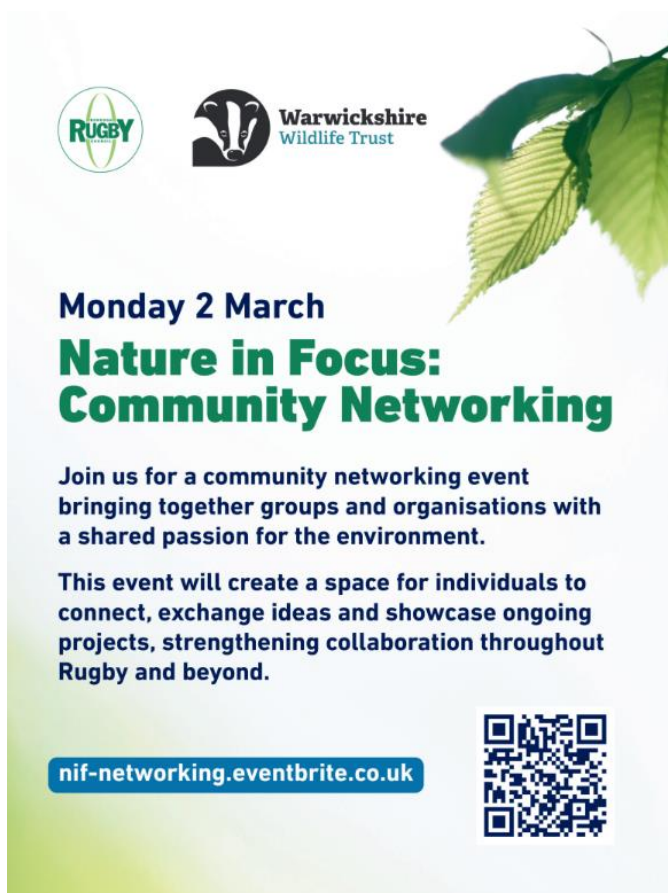
Nature in Focus: Community Networking

6-8pm on Monday March 2nd in the Rokeby Room, Benn Hall, Rugby, CV21 2LN.

Hosted in partnership by **Rugby Borough Council** and **Warwickshire Wildlife Trust**.

This event is focused on allowing community groups and residents passionate about the environment and climate change to share what they are working on and exchange ideas. It aims to improve connections between the different groups to help build a community of practice. This comes following feedback from last year's Nature in Focus: Rugby event, as attendees appreciated the opportunity to come together.

During the first hour, groups will be given an opportunity to describe who they are, what they do, and what they want to achieve. These should be quick overviews that then enable effective networking in the second hour. A full agenda is included on the Eventbrite. [Nature in Focus: Community Networking Tickets, Monday, Mar 2 from 5:45 pm to 8 pm | Eventbrite](#)



The poster features a light green background with a large, detailed illustration of a green leaf on the right side. At the top left, there are two logos: the Rugby Football Union (Rugby) logo and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust logo. The main title 'Monday 2 March Nature in Focus: Community Networking' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title, there is a paragraph inviting people to join a community networking event. Further down, another paragraph describes the event's purpose: to create a space for individuals to connect, exchange ideas, and showcase ongoing projects. At the bottom left, there is a blue button with the text 'nif-networking.eventbrite.co.uk'. At the bottom right, there is a QR code.

Monday 2 March
**Nature in Focus:
Community Networking**

Join us for a community networking event bringing together groups and organisations with a shared passion for the environment.

This event will create a space for individuals to connect, exchange ideas and showcase ongoing projects, strengthening collaboration throughout Rugby and beyond.

nif-networking.eventbrite.co.uk

Ellie Lawson, Rugby Borough Council



The Gathering: for Water and Nature

Join us in and around Stratford-Upon-Avon between **Friday 6th March 2026 - Sunday 15th**, to see water differently – as a living presence that connects people, place and nature.

[The Gathering - River Hope Events - River Hope](#)

[Join us for the 29th International Day of Action for Rivers on March 14, 2026 - International Rivers](#)
<https://rubbishfriends.org.uk/litterally>

6th-15th March

The Gathering for water and Nature

Join us to see local water differently –
as a living presence that connects people, place and Nature.

We are co-creating an opportunity for people to come together for listening, learning and planning to mark the International Day of Action for Rivers. Scan the QR or visit the link to book tickets and find out more.

riverhope.org.uk/the-gathering/

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Creating ripples of change - together

Friday 6 March	Thursday 12 March	Saturday 14 March
18:00 - 19:00 Rother Street Arts House "Is a River Alive?" book talk Tickets via Stratford Literary Festival	18:30 - 20:30 Stratford-Upon-Avon Town Hall Workshop: Nature and river rights, charters and guardians	Various times and locations Community-led ceremonies by local rivers marking the International Day of Action for Rivers
Tuesday 10 March	Friday 13 March	Sunday 15 March
18:00 - 20:30 Brook Arts Hub Film night: ice-river-sea	08:30 - 21:30 Crownie Plaza Hotel Living with water, now and into the future - free day of speakers and discussions, and evening film "Jo in the Water" (ticketed)	10:00 - 17:30 Crownie Plaza Hotel Celebrating water and Nature - free day with an Interspecies Council, film, "Waterbeings" book talk, poetry, and the birth of "Ondine" (spirit of the river)
Wednesday 11 March		
13:30 - 15:00 Stratford Library Film Club: "Salmon Fishing in the Yemen"		

riverhope_movement | #gathering4water

Partners and supporters include:
Crownie Plaza Hotel, Purple Square AV Ltd, Stratford Town Trust, Stratford Literary Festival, Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, Safehaven, South Warwickshire Area Network (SWAN) for Wildlife, Warwickshire Libraries, Stratford Climate Action/Net Zero, River Rights Network, UK River Summit, Tatton Lodge, Laseach and Eircode

Mary, Claudine and around 50 others in South Warwickshire, River Hope, Rubbish Friends

The University of Warwick - Climate Change - Rebuilding the Consensus and Changing the Narrative

Why have climate change politics got so divisive? What could change the narrative?

In the context of increasing political attacks on the UK's net zero target and sharp party divides over climate change, this half-day conference, organised by the [PAIS Environmental Politics Cluster](#), (PAIS = Politics and International Studies) will provide a deep dive into climate politics in the UK.

In 2019 a Conservative government implemented a target for the UK to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 without any objections from MPs. By 2025, the Conservative Party (alongside Reform UK) were campaigning to scrap the target. The shattering of the UK's political consensus on climate change is part of a broader international '[vibe shift](#)' (The Economist article) on the issue.



Across two expert-led sessions we will debate why the politics of climate change have become so divisive in recent years in the UK and how the narrative surrounding this issue could be changed.

The second panel session will feature a series of presentations on ideas to help shift the narrative on the issue.

Venue: OC0.02, The Oculus, Central Campus, The University of Warwick.

Date: Friday, Mar 13th, 2026 from 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm.

Find out more about [climate change activity in PAIS](#).

Find out more about the [Politics of Climate Change MA](#).

[Climate Change - Rebuilding the Consensus and Changing the Narrative Tickets, Friday, Mar 13, 2026 from 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm | Eventbrite](#)

[Explaining climate change policy inertia: Policymaker perspectives on building energy efficiency in the United Kingdom - ScienceDirect](#)

Dr. Mitya Pearson - Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Studies

Braunston Climate Action network – Retrofit Event



Alan Mawer, Braunston Climate Action network



APRIL 2026

Climate Emergency UK - Scorecards Volunteer roles open!

CE-UK are seeking volunteers to mark councils on climate action for the 2027 scorecards. From **April to June 2026** we will once again be marking councils climate action. And we need your help to be able to do this. Can you be one of our 250 volunteers to **mark council climate action this year?**

We are also running the [Local Climate Policy Programme](#) again - an in-depth introduction to local climate policy, giving you direct access to insights and experience from **practitioners in the climate sector**.

[Join Cohort 1 now](#)

[Application: 2027 Action Scorecards Volunteer Registration - First Cohort - Action Network](#)

Let's create council climate action together.



How? Volunteer to mark councils for the

2027
Action Scorecards

CLIMATE EMERGENCY UK
In partnership with mySociety

MAY 2026

Savers / Rotary - Endangered Species Project

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



Savers Charity Number 1108191

Rotary





JOIN OUR



Wild Activity Week

Learn about the wonders of nature
and wildlife in Tysoe

27 - 31 July 2026, Mon-Fri 9.15 - 12.15

**Based at Sun Rising Nature Reserve, St Mary's Church
and the Community Orchard**

- Do you know what an owl pellet is? What's in one?
- Can you tell the difference between a butterfly and moth?
- Where would you find a dragonfly nymph?
- How do you spot the queen in a hive and dance like a bee?
- Did you know hedgehogs can swim and run?
- What is eating the fruit in the Orchard?

Find out the answers to these questions and many more . . .

The workshop is for 5-11 year old children (who attend
Tysoe CE School or who live Tysoe Parish).

To reserve a place and/or for further info: email
jennifer.randerson1@virginmedia.com or call 07795 611088.

Bookings on a first come first serve basis. Price £5 per session.
Spaces are limited.



Shirley Cherry, Tysoe Wildlife

The LCWN Steering Group

We began the Low Carbon Warwickshire Network in April 2019, mainly to support action in rural communities. Since then, despite the inconvenient interruption by Covid lockdowns, we are now connecting over 50 separate organisations, rural and town community groups, church groups, local authorities at all three tiers and have supported 12 successful events.

This has been achieved informally with a light touch by a small group of volunteer steering group members who meet only when there has to be something of substance to discuss. In most years we have met just twice and held two socials. There are no formal roles apart from Bob as Chair and Jacky producing the brilliant newsletters.

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

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

Jacky Lawrence FRSA - [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 FRSA - [LCWN-Newsletter-February-2023-issue-24.pdf \(harburyenergy.co.uk\)](#)

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

Sarah Mills, Let's Go Zero - [Sarah Mills | LinkedIn](#)

The LCWN aims to build trust-based connections and create more and better opportunities over time for the mutual benefit of all involved.

If you want to find out more, drop us an email at: lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com

Bob Sherman, LCWN Chair

Power Station - a film

The LCWN Steering Group is currently working with three Warwickshire EcoHubs, Stratford, Rugby and Leamington, with Warwickshire County Council and with Warwickshire Climate Alliance to arrange the screening of a film called '**Power Station**'. Once we have arrangements complete, we will circulate details about the film, about venues and confirmed dates. Subject to final decisions the proposed dates are:

Leamington - mid to late May

Stratford-on-Avon - June 5th or 6th

Rugby - June 11th

We are also hoping to show it in Nuneaton

Keep an eye out for more details!

Bob Sherman, LCWN Chair

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. Get in touch for more details. email: lowcarbonwarks@gmail.com

Our event checklist covering what you may need to consider in organising an event is on the web site.

[RSA-LCWN-event-checklist.pdf](#)



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.



[Circle | Our Online Community | The RSA](#)

<https://youtu.be/eUh-TXKIdiE>, RSA Minimate: Climate Change and the Future of Humanity

[Sustainability Network - The RSA](#)

[Climate change Archives - The RSA](#)

[SDGs and beyond: UK climate leadership on the global stage - The RSA](#)

[The future of sustainability: regeneration rising - The RSA](#)

[Luke Dorian - The RSA](#)

LCWN Schools

There are many organisations who are able to support schools. There is a list of the resources we are aware of on the web site. [LCWN-schools-List-of-Resources.pdf](#)

plus

[Home - Gateway Alliance](#), [Courses - Gateway Alliance](#), [Courses - Gateway Alliance](#)

Ted's Tech – Liquid Fuel from Algae

MODERN MANUFACTURED OIL - using nature's process from millions of years ago.

HutanBio of Cambridge UK have researched Algae for a number of years and have now patented evolved strains that will thrive in high desert temperatures and sea water. The company is installing its first commercial production plant in Morocco, close to the sea, on land unfit for agriculture, enabling the use of seawater in which to grow the their Algae, producing oil's suitable for use in planes, trains, lorries, cars and ships etc.

HutanBio certainly appear to have done their homework, over twenty years of researching thousands of strains of algae to come up with one that stands out from others. Fast growing in high temperatures and sea water, using desert land unfit for growing food of which there are many square miles in Morocco, Western Australia and Namibia for example.

The Microalgae are to be grown in automated photobioreactors hanging from high fences covering many square kilometres with Biofarms producing up to 10 crops per year, each km² yielding around 4,500 tonnes of oil a year or just over 5 million litres. To cap it all they claim at the same time that this will capture 25,000 tonnes of CO₂ - on land unfit for growing food!

Interested in learning more? Search:- [HBx Biofuel | Fuelling our Future Planet](#)

[HutanBio Founding Story](#)

Ted Dowdeswell, Harbury Future Energy

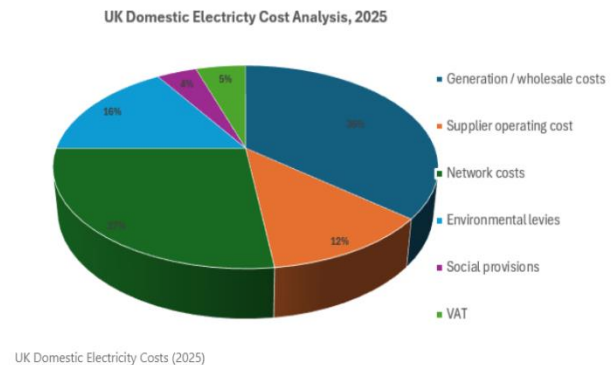


Domestic Electricity Costs - by our guest blogger Neil Kitching

How many of us understand our electricity bills? Why is electricity more expensive than gas? How can we reform our bills? My latest blog reveals all.

UK Domestic Electricity Costs (2025)

The surprising thing is that the **wholesale cost** of generating electricity is only 36% of the total cost. There are huge variations within this 'average' generation cost. Recent onshore wind and solar assets are cheap to operate but the UK grid relies on natural gas power stations to provide peak demand (see Cost of Energy blog [Cost of Energy Explained](#)).



Network Costs (27%)

Maintaining and operating the transmission and local distribution network is 6 and 12% of the total cost respectively. This has been increasing, and will increase further, to pay for new power lines to connect renewables to areas of demand and to upgrade the grid to provide sufficient power for electric vehicles and heat pumps.

Balancing costs (4%) cover expenses incurred by the National Energy System Operator (previously the National Grid) to maintain electricity supply in line with demand 24 hours a day. This includes constraint payments (where generators are paid to switch surplus generation off) and auxiliary services for detailed frequency response and to maintain a steady voltage across the network.

Generators can place bids into the **Capacity Market** (3%) auction to supply electricity for peak periods, such as 4-7pm in winter. Gas generators are the largest recipient of these payments, followed by battery storage projects and demand reduction aggregator services.

The UK has a programme to install a **smart meter** (2%) in every household by 2030. Smart meters are fitted for 'free' although this is paid for by a levy on all our bills. Smart meters provide real time information, avoid the need for physical meter readings and enable new time-of-use tariffs that are essential to efficiently operate electric cars and heat pumps.

Environmental and Social Costs (20%)

The **Renewables Obligation** (RO) was a scheme to encourage generators to build and supply more renewable electricity. The scheme ended in 2017, and these legacy payments (11%) will gradually wind down to 2037 (maximum 20-year contracts).

The RO was replaced by **contracts for difference** (3%) which are a more cost-effective way to encourage the construction of new renewable energy. Developers agree a 'strike-price'. If the market price for electricity is below the strike price the generator is paid the difference, but if the market price is above then the generator pays back the difference. So, there is a guaranteed income stream for the generator (and investors) and better sharing of risks and rewards.

Feed-in-tariffs (2%) were a government initiative to pay consumers to install small-scale domestic renewable energy. They were introduced to kick-start a new industry with tariff rates reduced over time as the market adapted. The last scheme was closed in 2019, and like the RO payments will gradually decline

over 25 years. I installed solar panels at home in 2010 and will continue to receive a feed-in-tariff until 2035. My gain is paid for by every electricity bill payer.

‘Social provisions’ (4%) comprise the **Energy Company Obligation** (ECO) and the **Warm Homes Discount**. ECO is an obligation on energy suppliers to invest in energy efficiency measures for vulnerable and low-income households. It has operated since 2013 and has had some success, but also critics who argue that energy suppliers are conflicted as they have little incentive to reduce their customers’ energy consumption. The Warm Homes Discount is an annual £150 discount off electricity bills for around six million vulnerable and low-income customers. This is funded by a levy within everybody’s standing charges (including those who receive the £150 discount).

The UK Government has announced changes from April 2026. The ECO scheme for gas and electricity will be abolished and replaced by the Warm Homes Plan. In addition, 75% of the remaining RO costs will be met by the Exchequer (taxpayer).

This will reduce the average household energy bill by around £150 - a 13% reduction in electricity bills and 6% for gas.

The Price Cap

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine there were huge spikes in the wholesale price. The price rose from under £50 MWh to a peak of over £350.

The UK Government introduced measures to cushion domestic consumers from these steep price rises and ever since has maintained a ‘price cap’ – the maximum amount suppliers can charge consumers per unit of electricity. The price cap is currently set at £270 MWh, equivalent to 27p per unit of electricity. The difference between actual costs and the price cap is paid for by the Government (taxpayers).

The price cap is currently £1,758 which is the estimated energy bill for an average household. You will pay more if you use above average energy and vice versa. The price cap is split between electricity (2,900kwh, £950) and gas (12,000kwh, £800).

Under the January 2026 price cap, a unit of electricity (27.7p) costs 4.7 times more than a unit of gas (5.9p). This is a problem as it is expensive to electrify your heating. The Government’s proposed changes from April may reduce this a little to around 4.3 times.

Standing v Variable Charges

Total costs are allocated between standing and variable charges. Your standing charge is calculated to cover the fixed costs of operating the network, metering costs and supplier overheads. It also includes the costs necessary to pay the Warm Homes Discount.

Standing charges are around £200, 21% of an average £950 electricity bill. This is a high proportion and disproportionately affects low electricity users who must pay the same standing charge as everyone else.

What about Gas Bills?

There is a huge discrepancy between electricity and gas bills. Most of the environmental and social levies on electricity bills do not apply to gas. Gas bills include a share of ECO (to be abolished in April 2026), a

share of the Warm Home Discount and a small Green Gas Levy to support biomethane. Overall, such levies add around 5% to a gas bill, but 17% to an electricity bill.

Discussion

There is upward pressure on electricity bills to pay for the expanded transmission and distribution networks required for renewable energy, and to cope with the expected increase in our demand for electricity. Fortunately, new renewable generation can be cheaper than natural gas, so the long-term outlook is favourable.

To encourage consumers to move to electric low carbon heating we must reduce the large gap between the unit price of electricity and gas.

There are environmental levies on electricity which do not apply to gas. As a result, electricity is now far greener than burning gas, but these levies have placed an unfair burden on electricity costs relative to gas. Therefore gas should have a carbon tax applied to it or a higher Green Gas Levy. After all we have a plan to get to a 100% low carbon electricity supply by 2030 but why is there no plan for gas?

The Government is planning to abolish the ECO scheme and shift the burden of the RO scheme from April 2026. This will reduce electricity and gas prices but has a bigger effect on electricity. There is a logic to shift electricity levies to general taxation as this will help to support low carbon heating. General taxation is also more progressive (bigger impact on wealthier families) than electricity bills. However, this planned shift is not sufficient.

The legacy feed-in-tariff payments and the levy for the Warm Homes Discount should also be shifted to general taxation. Do consumers understand that they pay higher standing charges to reduce bills for those on low incomes?

But there is no such thing as a free lunch and there is the principle that all subsidies for fossil fuels ([Fossil Fuel Subsidies](#)) should be abolished. So we should charge the full 20% VAT on gas and electricity bills.

A lower electricity standing charge and higher variable rate would assist those who live in smaller low-usage homes and would encourage those in larger homes to invest in energy efficiency. The levy for the Warm Homes Discount should be removed from standing charges. A more radical idea would be to charge the variable rate in price bands dependent on usage. Charge the first 1,000 or so units at a cheaper rate with 'excessive use' charged at a higher rate.

Of course, any changes will have winners and losers.

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
[Domestic Electricity Costs](#)

Neil Kitching, Carbon Choices



Thoughts from an Organic Farmer – News from the farm: Weathering storms & speaking too soon

In early February I wrote, perhaps a little smugly, of the extraordinary resilience of crops and pickers in the face of two, now approaching three, months of double our average rainfall and the resulting waterlogged soils ([News from the farm: Rain down the neck & occasional sun on the cheek - Wicked Leeks](#)). Though this remains largely true of my own farm with its well-drained, steep fields that do not hold onto the water, no sooner had my words gone to print than I got wind of a very different story from our growers in Devon and Southern Europe.



Roots and the microbial communities that live in close association with them need oxygen to respire and generate the energy needed to mobilise and absorb nutrients. When rain cannot drain away as fast as it is falling, the soil pores become filled with water, which excludes oxygen; if this persists for more than a few days, soil respiration changes from aerobic to anaerobic. The first warning is a change in the smell – from the pleasant mushroomy aroma of a well-structured and aerated soil, to the foul, acrid stench you'd get from the mud at the bottom of a stagnant pond. Squelching through mud where water has stood for weeks, you get a whiff of hydrogen sulphide and ammonia which signifies putrefaction and death.

Walking down rows where the slope is steeper, you'd normally expect the crop to be thinner where soil is thinner, but this year these are the areas with the healthiest plants. Where the fields are more level, and water stands for longer, the plants are wilting, showing disease, and in some cases giving up altogether. Cauliflowers are the worst affected and our January King cabbages are a write-off. We've also suspended picking of spring greens due to poor quality which has been a real blow.

After three years of drought, our growers in Spain and Italy have suffered a series of calamitous storms, torrential rain, and low light levels which have drastically reduced yields of cucumbers and peppers and have hit the quality of oranges and calabrese broccoli. Whenever I hear a blinkered (and often oil-industry-think- tank-funded) economist pontifying that the higher CO₂ levels and temperatures associated with climate change will drive faster photosynthesis and thereby increase yields, I want to scream with frustration. As we are seeing, whether in sub-Saharan Africa, Spain, or Devon, it is the extremes and unpredictability that we're struggling to weather... not the averages.

Learn more at: [News from the farm: Weathering storms & speaking too soon - Wicked Leeks](#)

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

Want to get involved? – The groups / organisations associated with the LCWN

Links to the following groups / organisations is on the web page. This was last updated in January 2026.
[LCWN-group-names-and-links-Jan-2026.pdf](#)

Group / Organisation Name

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Achieving Results in Communities (ARC) | 6. Bar Zero |
| 2. Act on Energy | 7. Bidford Climate Action |
| 3. Action 21 | 8. Binley Woods PC |
| 4. Alcester Town Council | 9. Bishops Itchington PC |
| 5. Avon Dassett PC | |



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|--|--|
| 10. Bishops Tachbrook Resident's Action on Climate Change (TRACC) | 28. Kenilworth Town Council |
| 11. Boddington Parish Council, Sustainability Group | 29. Let's Go Zero |
| 12. Claverdon Harnessing Alternative and Renewable Green Energy (CHARGE) | 30. Let's Make Stuff Happen |
| 13. Clean Air Warwickshire | 31. Mancetter Parish Council |
| 14. Coventry and Warwickshire Co-operative Development Agency | 32. Napton Environmental Action Team |
| 15. Cubbington and Lillington Environmental Action Now | 33. Net Zero Stratford |
| 16. Energise Leamington | 34. Pillerton Hersey PC |
| 17. Garden Organic | 35. Rugby Eco Hub |
| 18. Gateway Alliance | 36. Rugby Transition Town |
| 19. Grapevine Environmental Action Team | 37. Savers charity |
| 20. Green Schools Project | 38. Shipston in Bloom |
| 21. Greening Mickleton | 39. Shrewley & Wroxall Environment Action Team |
| 22. Ilmington 20:20 | 40. Snitterfield Actioning Climate Change |
| 23. Wolverton Parish Council | 41. Stourvale Action For the Environment |
| 24. Harbury Future Energy | 42. Stratford Climate Action |
| 25. Hatton Extinction Rebellion | 43. Stratford Friends of the Earth |
| 26. Henley Climate Action | 44. Stratford Methodist Church Eco Congregation |
| 27. Kenilworth All Together Greener | 45. Stretton on Fosse Parish Council Sustainability Initiative |
| | 46. Sustainable Brailles |
| | 47. Sustainable Wellesbourne |
| | 48. Warwickshire Climate Alliance |

Other Groups

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Burton Green Parish Council | 7. River Hope |
| 2. Friends of Radford's Green Environment | 8. Rubbish Friends |
| 3. Harbury e-Wheels | 9. South Warwickshire Area Network for Wildlife (SWAN) |
| 4. Leamington Eco Hub | 10. The Bicycle Bus |
| 5. Leamington Spa Library of Things | 11. The Great Collaboration |
| 6. South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme | 12. Warwickshire Cycle Buddies |

The Low Carbon Warwickshire Network (LCWN) aims to connect environmental groups across Warwickshire primarily in rural areas, sharing ideas and supporting new activities. The network encourages collaboration among local community groups to develop projects that reduce carbon emissions, produce climate change strategies and promote sustainability. [\(1\) Low Carbon Warwickshire Network | Facebook](#)



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



Useful Links

- Heart of England Community Energy [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.
- Warwickshire & West Midlands Association of Local Councils LTD (WALC) [Climate and Nature - WALC - Town and Parish Council Support](#)
- [Key Environmental Dates: 2025 Calendar - WALC - Town and Parish Council Support](#)
- [South Warwickshire Area Network for Wildlife \(SWAN\)](#)

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 around 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.

