

For the latest news and more information, please see our website

Sustainable Blewbury Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 24 April, 7.30 pm at Winding Way, South Street

Find out about our many and varied activities in the past year, elect officers, and help us plan for the future with an informal discussion. There will be drinks and nibbles. *If you are interested in what Sustainable Blewbury does, please join us for the evening – everyone will be very welcome!*

Blewbury Garden Market

*Every Saturday morning starting 4th May,
from 9.15 to 11.15 am, at Blewbury Garage*

Our *tenth* season! Every Saturday morning from **9.15 to 11.15 am** (unless we sell out earlier) – note the slightly earlier opening times this year. The stall buys and sells bedding plants and seedlings, fresh local garden fruit and vegetables, flowers, home-made bread, cakes and preserves, Blewbury honey and free-range eggs.

Helpers: Would you like to help out on the stall every few weeks? Contact us at the address or phone below.

Producers: Please bring items to sell from 9.00 am; you set your own prices, we only take 10% commission. For more information and sales forms see www.sustainable-blewbury.org.uk/food.htm.

For more information: Email to bgm@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk or phone Eric at 07935 232 296.



Permaculture orchard garden

We are growing a wide and interesting variety of fruit trees, soft fruit and other things (e.g. rhubarb, globe and Jerusalem artichokes, etc.) on a pretty site on Woodway Road. Every now and then we have an afternoon working party. It's fun, and helpers get to share some of the produce. Phone 07935 232 296 if you are interested.

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The Wildlife Trusts' #WilderFuture Campaign Jo Lakeland

Most of what follows is quoted directly from the Wildlife Trusts website and publicity emails. The Wildlife Trusts is a movement made up of 46 Wildlife Trusts: independent charities who all share a mission to create living landscapes and living seas and a society where nature matters. The trusts are celebrating their centenary: between them they have more than 800,000 members, 40,000 volunteers, 2,000 staff and 600 trustees. David Attenborough was their president from 1991–95 and the current president is Simon King (2011–). I recommend watching the video “Wildlife Trusts – 100 Years of Conservation” about their history and their aims on YouTube (17 minutes): bit.ly/2G2gFz4.

The Wildlife Trusts launched their #WilderFuture campaign (bit.ly/2FQb0uG) on 28th March with a Wind in the Willows ‘trailer’. Wind in the Willows was written in 1908 (before Kenneth Grahame lived in here in Blewbury), with the author depicting an idyllic countryside existence for Badger, Ratty, Mole and Toad. Sadly, since we first met Badger and friends, the UK has become one of the most nature-depleted nations in the world. We've lost an astonishing 80% of meadows and heaths, and other habitats such as wetlands are in increasingly bad condition.

It starts as a nostalgic trip back to the river bank but takes a dark twist when it begins to reveal how Badger and his friends now have to live. Click on arrow on the picture of Ratty and Mole enjoying a picnic to watch the short video on YouTube (*and to identify the voices of the famous actors bringing the animals to life*).

It's not too late to bring our wildlife back!



The places that our wildlife call home – our woods, meadows, etc. – are becoming smaller, cut off from each other and damaged by chemicals and concrete. With fewer places to live or find food, the outlook for the UK's wildlife is bleak. The systems and laws that should be keeping nature healthy are failing – both for people and for wildlife.

But one of the aims of the #WilderFuture campaign is to create a network of safe havens for wildlife that will allow them to move from one to another to live and to find food. There is a link at the bottom of the page for you to read "A bit more about the Wilder Future Campaign (click on the **V** at the right), which includes their bold "Nature Recovery Networks" proposals.

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Water! **Jo Lakeland**

People are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of not wasting pure water, so in what follows we have several interesting links.

ReFill

These signs are appearing more frequently on cafes, bars, hairdressers, in fact anywhere where someone wants to give away tap water and so reduce the number of single-use plastic bottles being used.



ReFill (refill.org.uk) is an award-winning campaign to prevent plastic pollution at source by making it easier to reuse and refill your bottle instead of buying a new one.

Currently, less than 30% of people in the UK drink tap water in a reusable bottle, despite the fact that we are lucky to have some of the best quality, free drinking water in the world. There is simply no need for us to buy bottled water, and ReFill is on a mission to inspire social change.

If just one in ten Brits refilled once a week, we'd have 340 million *less* plastic bottles a year in circulation. That's a pretty good reason to start ReFilling! Read more on the ReFill website.

But how do you find the places that will ReFill your bottle? The easiest way is to

download the free ReFill app onto your phone from the Apple AppStore or Google Play. And yes, we do have a ReFill station in Blewbury: it's the StyleAcre Cafe at Savages. And there are eight in the centre of Didcot!



Some good news from WaterAid, or is it bad news?

WaterAid UK has teams working in 34 countries, and since 1981 they've reached 24.9 million people with clean water. I recently received a circular from WaterAid UK which states that for the first time in history nine people out of ten in the world have access to clean water. But it also said that today 800 children under five years old will die from diseases caused by dirty water and poor sanitation.

What a mixed message. But the Director of international Programmes at WaterAid thinks that it shows that WaterAid UK are making amazing progress, because children in Sub-Saharan Africa are seeing running water for the first time in their lives, which means that not only do they have an increased chance of growing up healthy, but they will no longer spend hours each day fetching dubious water from distant sources. Which increases their chances of getting an education which increases their chance of being able to earn a living! And this encourages her to continue in her work to reduce the number of children dying for lack of clean water.

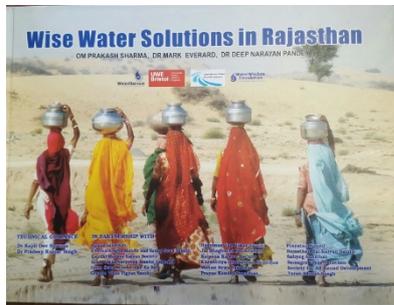
If you want to read more structured information about access to drinking water, UNICEF published Data: Monitoring the situation of children and women in countries throughout the world in 2017, and this includes a section on drinking water: bit.ly/2pOlrWa.

WaterHarvest

WaterHarvest is the organisation Mike Edmunds (the SB chairman until he died in 2015) worked for as a volunteer in Rajasthan, one of the driest parts of India. At that time it was known as Wells for India. The aims of WaterHarvest is to combine ancient and



traditional methods of collecting and storing water with modern methods, and their website gives a real insight into what they do and the ethos that underlies their work. See www.water-harvest.org.



I recommend reading the blog “Thoughts from the field”: Om Prakash Sharma, WaterHarvest’s India director, shares his views on the charity’s achievements eighteen years after joining.

And if you have £15 to spare, their recent collaborative book “Wise Water Solutions in Rajasthan” is a good read, available now from their on-line shop.

Royal Horticultural Society – Gardening in a Changing Climate

One of the things Sustainable Blewbury does is to support Blewbury School by running a weekly after-school gardening club, and we have benefited from the free advice and resources of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening. But the RHS advice sheets are available to everyone online, including non-members, so do search their site for the help you need. I recommend “Get growing” bit.ly/2C1MozZ, a series of short advice sheets on everything you could possibly want to know on starting to garden (ideal for working with youngsters).

The RHS has long been concerned about the impact of climate change on gardens and gardening, and their first report was in 2002. This report was updated in 2017 using evidence from a survey of the experiences and opinions of amateur and professional gardeners. An illustrated 12-page summary of their “Gardening in a Changing Climate” report is available to download as a pdf at bit.ly/2GvoYCc, or if you want to read the entire 45-page report, go to bit.ly/2pa03Nd.

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Hedge laying in Blewbury during winter 2018 – 2019

John Ogden

Those of you who have walked the footpath from Westbrook Street towards Upton, known as Coffin Way, will have seen that the hedge along its northern side has been laid. This has been undertaken by a group of volunteers funded and supported by Sustainable Blewbury (SB). It is predominantly a blackthorn hedge, about 190 metres long, and will benefit considerably from being laid to improve its density at ground level. We were concerned that there would be problems with thorns but we have come through with only minor scrapes and bruises.

The hedge is laid in the ‘Midlands Style’, which is to say that the brush faces out into the field (a further deterrent to cattle for which this style was designed) and is held together by hazel stakes and hazel wands plaited along the top to create a sturdy boundary. SB has funded this work by supplying the tools of the trade: axes, billhooks and saws, and by buying-in the hazel stakes and binders –

nearly 400 of each were required for this particular job. At the village end of the path there was a gap of some ten metres or so in which we planted hawthorn to complete the field boundary.

The photos below show, going clockwise from top left: the hedge before it was laid, cutting into the trees so they can be bent horizontal, installing the plaited wands (two views), and finally the laid hedge.



In the past the same group has laid the hedges around Ticklers Folly field and along Pound Furlong footpath. The Ticklers Folly hedges are publicly owned and SB's services are, of course, supplied free of charge, but in the case of the other two the landowners have made generous contributions to SB funds.

Hedge laying is not only a traditional craft which is worth preserving and developing local skills, it also strengthens and invigorates the hedge creating a much improved habitat for birds and small mammals – there has been a noticeable increase in hawks, owls and other raptors around Ticklers Folly since the work was done. We are looking for suitable hedges to lay next season – the season runs from November to early March to avoid disturbance to nesting birds. Please get in touch with us if you have any suggestions, or if you would like to participate and learn the skills.

A walk back in time

We thought it would be helpful to list the hedges our volunteers have laid, so that you can see how they grow after being laid. The list works back in time from the most recent to the very first hedge.

- Winter 2018/19: Coffin Way (the footpath from Blewbury to Upton)
- Winter 2017/18: Pound Furlong path (the footpath connecting Pilgrims Way to Rubblepit Lane and Tickers Folly Field; go south up the track opposite Nottingham Fee, then bear right along the path towards Tickers Folly Field, along the south side of Palmers' garden)
- Winter 2016/17: the Bohams Road side of the new Cemetery and Tickers Folly car park
- Winter 2015/16: the hedges between the new Cemetery and Tickers Folly Field and its car park

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The Sustainable Blewbury newsletter is edited by Jo Lakeland and Eric Eisenhandler

We have a substantial programme of activities in and around the village.

Getting involved is fun and can make a very positive contribution to village life and local environment. If you'd like to get involved in what we do, or to receive our free Newsletter, email us at info@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk or phone Eric Eisenhandler at 01235 850558.