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Sustainable Blewbury activities

Green drinks – Monday 7th October, from 7.30pm at The Blueberry



Green drinks are a friendly chat over a drink, to ask questions or tell us what you think about green topics. At this session, items to talk about include ideas for the annual autumn clearing of leaves from village footpaths and the new Blewbury Climate Action initiative that we are undertaking with the Parish Council. Everyone is welcome and we'd really like to hear what you think. It's completely informal with no fixed agenda, just come and chat.

Apple juicing 2019 – Sunday afternoons at Blewbury Manor

Our public sessions, to make some of the best pure apple juice you have ever tasted, are at two-week intervals. Remaining sessions are:

29 September, 2–4 pm; 13 October, 2–4 pm; 27 October, 11 am–1 pm
(if demand; note time).

Bring washed apples (especially if they are windfalls) with bad bits removed, and screw-top wine or drink bottles. To preserve the juice we can **pasteurise** it so it will keep for up to a year, or you can freeze it in a plastic container. Pasteurising the juice takes quite a while so **please arrive early in the session** if you want to do it. **Prices** are reasonable: £1 per pressing (bucket or large basket), and 30p per bottle to pasteurise.

If you have huge quantities of apples we can't do them all in our public sessions, but **the equipment can be hired** at low cost: £10 for 24 hours in Blewbury or Upton, £15 elsewhere. For bookings or more information email us at info@sustainable-blewbury.org.uk or phone 07935 232 296.



Hedge laying

This autumn and winter we will be continuing with our programme of hedge laying in Blewbury, both to strengthen and reinvigorate some hedges and to teach the craft skills to new participants. We will start in October when the nesting season is over. At the moment we have one private and one public stretch of hedge in mind. We welcome volunteers – if you would like to take part please email John Ogden at jogden@blewbury.net.

Also, the National Hedge Laying Championships will take place near Pewsey and some of us will be attending – to observe, not to take part! It’s an opportunity to see at first hand the widely differing regional styles of laying hedges. If you would like to come along then please contact John Ogden for arrangements.



Blewbury Garden Market’s best year ever!

We’ve had a record year, with week after week of consistently high sales. We had a lot of plants and seedlings in the spring, then made a smooth transition to having more fresh garden produce than in past years. That was partly due to some new and enthusiastic producers, including the school gardening club. Added to that was a regular and varied supply of home-made cakes, bread, Blewbury honey and jam. Thanks to all our customers, loyal helpers, and to David Kinniburgh for doing the financial chores each week and keeping our accounts.



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Climate change news

Jo Lakeland

“The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have all the facts and solutions. All we have to do is to wake up and change.”

Greta Thunberg: bit.ly/2mlrjtx

It is difficult to decide what to include in climate change news, because every day there is something new to read or listen to about the new problems that our environment faces, or more rarely, news of a successful action to reduce carbon emissions. So I am concentrating on a few pieces of news that are either important to us or that might make you think.

Younger People and Climate Change

I am writing this article during the week between the two big School Children’s Climate Strikes on 20 and 27 September. I admit that I am impressed with what they have achieved, and hope that they will have stimulated adults sufficiently to pressurise our politicians into making enough changes to achieve zero carbon before it is too late.

I am aware that some adults think that the reason behind the Friday children’s strikes in term-time is merely to get out of school for a day. It may apply to a few, but not the majority.



Youth strike, Oxford, 20 Sept. 2019 (UKCSN)

What follows is from a summary in the weekend i (21–22 Sept.) of a longer opinion article in the 20 Sept. New York Times written by 17 year-old Ms. Jamie Margolin: nyti.ms/2lOmNDN.

Ms. Margolin is the founder of [Zero Hour](https://www.zerohour.org/).

“I’m 17 years old, and I’ve been a climate justice organiser since I was 14 years old. I started as a community organizer with ‘Plant for the Planet’ in Seattle, giving climate action presentations to

middle and high schools, testifying at bill hearings in my state legislature, and lobbying my city council (in 2015) to adopt warning labels on gas [i.e. petrol] pumps.

“My classmates say things like, ‘I never want to have kids because the world will be totally unliveable for them.’ If adults want youth to be studious and pay attention in school to prepare for our futures, then they need to do their jobs to make sure that a future exists for us.

“I am driven by a desire to see the beauty of the world survive and exist not only for me, but for generations that come after.

I am striking because it is pointless to study for a future that does not exist.

I am striking for complete system change.

Will you strike with me?”

Blewbury Climate Action (BCA) progress



The Blewbury Climate Action website is a work in progress, but if you would like to look at it go to blewburyclimateaction.com. It will improve!

It is rather obvious to write that the global climate emergency is not new, but we really do need to persuade people that we need to do something about it *now*.

There were some ideas of what we could do in the email sent to SB supporters last month, but I think they were too complicated. Action does not have to be complicated:

FOOD: Eat more meatless meals (and especially less beef and lamb), don't waste food, buy local and grow your own if you can.

CONSUME LESS, WASTE LESS, SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE.

DEMAND CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FROM OUR POLITICIANS: tell them we want action, not talk!

And things BCA could do:

PLANT TREES: Should it be a wood, or within the village or along the roads from the village?

DEMAND: That banks and other investors stop funding fracking and vast fossil-fuel projects.

CAMPAIGN FOR A CYCLE TRACK: From Blewbury to Didcot and other destinations.

SAVING ENERGY (AND MONEY): Publicise cost-effective methods of insulating homes.

What do you think BCA should tackle first? Would you like to get involved?

You can email BCA at info@blewburyclimateaction.com or leave a note in the BCA suggestions box at the Post Office.

Sustainable Harwell

This is another, very new, local sustainability initiative. The person behind it is Giles Barwell, who called a meeting to test the interest in his Sustainable Harwell idea as recently as 16 July. Thirty people attended, and produced an enormous number of suggestions for improving sustainability that they could work on as a community. These ideas are included in an introduction to Sustainable Harwell on the Harwell village website, at bit.ly/2IBKbof. Giles facilitated an online survey to narrow the number down to the three items the group would like to see taken forward as quickly as possible. These will be the focus of Sustainable Harwell's second meeting at 7:30 on Wed. 2 Oct. in the Cherry Room, Harwell Village Hall. Giles stresses that all are welcome, not just Harwell residents.

Trees: tropical forest fires ... and UK mass tree-planting campaign



One of the BCA ideas that has provoked the most interest is planting trees, and planting a wood. Planting trees is not an immediate answer to absorbing carbon dioxide, but after a few years it becomes more effective. George Monbiot wrote in the Guardian of 25 Sept. that “Rewilding will make Britain a rainforest nation again”. Forest fires in both

the Amazon basin and the rainforests of Indonesia rage on, forgotten by most of the media, in spite of the fact that the Indonesian fires are particularly dangerous because the underground layer of peat is burning, pouring out stored carbon dioxide and methane.

These intricate living systems that took millions of years to evolve are being incinerated in moments, then replaced with monocultures such as palm oil and soya. Giant plumes of carbon tip us further into climate breakdown. And we're not even talking about it.

The Woodland Trust is calling for one million people to join the UK's biggest mass tree-planting campaign, urging volunteers to grab a spade and help tackle the climate crisis. Plots on suitable sites around the country are being prepared for 30 November, when the Big Climate Fightback campaign will start with [pledges sought from one million people](#). Local groups are being encouraged to run tree-planting events and councils are being asked for permission to plant trees on their land, or outside schools and other publicly owned properties.



By 2025, the Woodland Trust hopes to have planted a tree for every person in the country. All of the trees provided by the charity will be native broadleaf varieties, such as oak, birch and hawthorn. Read more at: bit.ly/2IODMGe.

Oxfordshire County Council's plan to be carbon neutral by 2030

Some extracts from an Oxfordshire County Council press release, dated 19 September 2019 (the day before the big schoolchildren's Friday climate strike). See bit.ly/2nWmHee for the full statement.

As pupils protest about climate change, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has been working on a new action plan to accelerate its programme to become carbon neutral by 2030.

"The council has already delivered an average 6% per year reduction in carbon emissions since 2011 – double its target – but is determined to do more. Oxfordshire County Council is delivering a series of 'green' initiatives, including helping install more solar panels on schools."



Carbon emissions

Councillor Yvonne Constance (OCC cabinet member for the environment) said: "We have set ourselves ambitious but achievable targets. ... Since school students are at the forefront of this campaign, it is right that we are working with schools to help them reduce their emissions."

"As part of its 'big switch', the council is committed to replacing streetlights with low-energy lighting over the next four

years. This will reduce Oxfordshire's greenhouse emissions from streetlighting by 70%."

"Oxfordshire County Council is proud to be at the forefront of many 'green' initiatives, from the 20 Solar Schools to better waste management, and working in partnership with residents and volunteers as a thriving community. But we're not complacent, and we recognise the challenge everyone faces to reduce waste, and prevent global temperatures rising."

Interesting and useful items

Oxfam Superstore in Oxford

You're probably familiar with Oxfam shops, both for donating items you no longer need and for buying items both used and new. In September, to coincide with its **Second-Hand September campaign** aimed to reduce the 11 million items of clothing sent to landfill every week, Oxfam has opened a much bigger superstore near the Oxford eastern bypass in Cowley. A major aim is to encourage much more re-use of all sorts of items.

The store has a much wider range of goods than smaller Oxfam shops: one-of-a-kind finds, handcrafted gifts, clothing, furniture, homeware, books, music and more, both donated and from their own range. There's a drive-through donation point, and it even has a cafe inside an Oxfam water tank.

Note that the store is only open for sales on four days a week:
Tuesday 9:30am – 5:30pm,
Thursday 9:30am – 7:30pm,
Saturday 9:30am – 5:30pm,
Sunday 10:30am – 4:30pm.

The store is at 6500 Alec Issigonis Way, Oxford Business Park North, Oxford, OX4 2JZ. For more information see their website: bit.ly/2nheQYp



The Hive Eco Store and Refills – a mobile pop-up shop

The Hive, a pop-up eco store based in East Hendred, moves around in a converted horse trailer. They now have a regular visit to Savages to fill and *refill* for home cleaning, body care, haircare, dental, laundry, soaps, BZBee wraps and more!

Their next date at Savages are on Saturdays: 28 September and 26 October, from 10am to 3pm. For more information contact Sally Povolotsky at bzbeewraps@gmail.com, or go to the BZB Eco Store & Refills Facebook page. They are “buzzing to make single use plastics a thing of the past!”

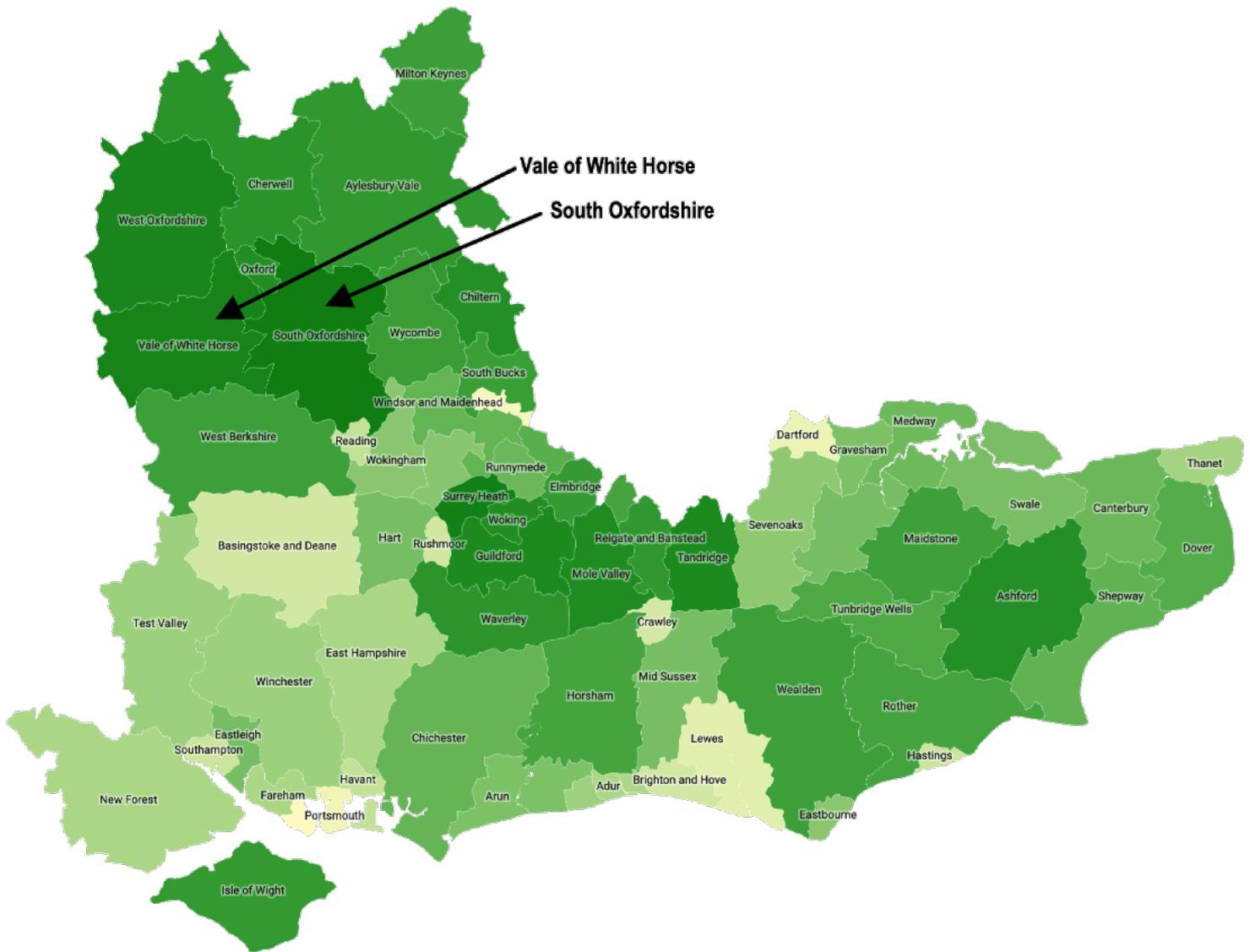


Interesting information on recycling rates

The government has set a target of 50% for household waste recycling by 2020. But there are huge variations between district councils. This can be seen very clearly in an interactive map of the South East and accompanying data table for England. They were compiled from 2017/2018 DEFRA data for the waste company Insinkerator (insinkerator.emerson.com/en-gb).

A map of the South East is at datawrapper.dwcdn.net/84TPd/3/ and the data behind it, covering all of England, can be explored at datawrapper.dwcdn.net/q6Ysb/3/. If you move your pointer over the online version of the map you can see the performance of each district, or you can search for a particular district in the data table.

The recycling rate for the Vale of White Horse is 60.4%. This is the eighth highest of 353 districts in the UK and third highest of 57 in the South East. South Oxfordshire, which is on the same waste collection contract, is even a bit better with 63.0%, which is third in the UK and first in the South East. Although this is good, we should not be complacent – it could surely be improved.



Offshore wind power is becoming much cheaper

The UK has been one of the leading countries in installing wind power offshore rather than on land. The first offshore installations were very expensive. In 2013 our BEI website quoted a WWF report that said: “The current cost of offshore wind is around £150–£169 per MWh* ... Reducing the cost of offshore wind to £100 per MWh [10p per kWh] by the early 2020s has become a key objective ... Costs of offshore wind may fall further beyond the early 2020s with ... projections of £70-80 per MWh by 2020–2030 forecast”. But that cost prediction has now turned out to be much too high!

On 19 September 2019 the government announced new 15-year contracts to build 12 renewable energy projects, generating up to about 6000 MW and supplying up to 7.5 million UK homes. Most of the contracts were for offshore wind, and the guaranteed prices were about £40 per MWh. This is 30% lower than the last big offshore wind power contracts in 2017, which were £57.50 per MWh. £40 per MWh is *below* the current wholesale price of electricity, and it’s likely that these windfarms will not need to be subsidised at all.

For comparison, the cost of electricity from the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station currently under construction is guaranteed by the government to be paid at £92.50 per MWh, and that very expensive agreement will remain in place for 35 years, not 15 as for wind. The Hinkley Point subsidised price is estimated to eventually cost the public up to £50 billion.

(Note that, for standardisation, all prices quoted are in 2012 pounds, so indexing for inflation means they are really higher.)

The biggest element of these new contracts will be an “industrial wind hub” in the Dogger Bank region of the North Sea (between Newcastle/Hull and Denmark), to be built by SSE and Equinor (the Norwegian state-owned company formerly called Statoil). It will consist of three wind farms connected together, forming the largest offshore wind project in the world. It will generate up to 3600 MW, which could power up to 4.5 million UK homes. The three wind farms will be completed between 2023 and 2026.

The winning schemes also included four *onshore* wind farms on remote islands: two on Orkney and two on Lewis, as well as energy-from-waste projects. Sadly, the government is still discouraging onshore wind on the mainland.

There’s a BBC article at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49769259, a Guardian one at bit.ly/2mulxG5 and a somewhat more detailed and technical article at bit.ly/2mpNcb2.



* MW (megawatts) measure how much electric power is being generated at any given time. For example, the now-demolished Didcot A coal-fired plant could generate 2000 MW. A different unit, MWh (megawatt-hours), measures the total amount of energy that has been generated; for example 1 MWh could mean generating 1 MW for one hour, 0.1 MW for 10 hours or 10 MW for 0.1 hour. The ‘units’ on your electricity bills are kWh (kilowatt-hours), and 1 MWh is 1000 kWh.

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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.