Notes from Greening Steyning Steering Group Meeting – 14 March 2023

Present: Nicola, Melissa, Malcolm, Ronnie, Geoff (chair), Sally
Apologies: Shona, Vicci, Robin, John, Laura

Climate Tracker

The results are interesting and show some trends, if no big surprises, so are worth a read. Gives us good ammo for funders. There’s clearly a strong cohort of Greening supporters who are on board with this agenda and taking numerous steps, which it is good to acknowledge. But would obviously be better if we can widen the sample.

Action: Review in the Autumn whether we should repeat it next year or leave it for a year. We might want to adjust it slightly when we do re-run it.

Feedback on the Seed swap

Was reasonably successful. We had about 30 people with about half bringing seeds. Rushfields donated lots of seeds. We received £46 in donations from people who took seeds without bringing any. We have quite a lot of seeds left that we’ll distribute from the Community Fridge.

Action: worth repeating next year, but earlier in year and with more advance promotion.

Feedback on the Clothes swap

Didn’t discuss in detail. Look forward to hearing back from Shona.

Upcoming events – getting organised

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details/Actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>21 March</td>
<td>Green Drinks: Farming in a changing climate</td>
<td>• Geoff to chair and sort out AV</td>
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<td>• Sally/Malcolm/Nicky to manage bar</td>
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<td>• Geoff/Robin to buy drinks</td>
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<td>• Robin to bring Sum Up device</td>
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<td>• Nicky to bring cash float</td>
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<td>21 May</td>
<td>Nature walk as part of Big Walk Weekend</td>
<td>• Ronnie organising but will need helper</td>
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<td>• Plan to meet at Chequer, take community bus to Washington and walk back</td>
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<td>23 May</td>
<td>Green Drinks – Gerry Thompson on Rewilding an Urban Garden</td>
<td>• Ronnie organising and chairing</td>
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<td>• Make it bookable on Eventbrite (£3)</td>
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<td>• Ronnie to contact speaker</td>
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<td>• Melissa to organise publicity</td>
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<td>• Need volunteers to run bar</td>
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23 June | St Columba tour |
| Vicci coordinating. Plan for visit: |
| • 2:00pm - Meet at the Chanctonbury Ring car park and walk down as a group to 'The Great Barn' |
| • 2:15pm - Drinks served from the St Columba kitchen |
| • 2:30pm - Introduction and history of The Society of St Columba and the land by Greg, our founder |
| • 3:00pm - Farm tour with Anna, our Market Garden Manager |
| • 4:00pm - Market stall open with goods produced by St Columba, so people can choose to look around this/purchase products if they wish. |
| • 4:30pm - Walk back to the Chanctonbury Ring car park. |

**Ideas for Green Drinks talks from June onwards**

Ideas raised for the Autumn:

• How is Climate change already affecting us locally – what do the Downland Scheme surveys of birds, flora & butterflies tell us? - *Action: Geoff to float with Matthew Thomas*

• Practical session on Heat pumps / solar /etc. Maybe a panel discussion/ Q&A with early adopters – *Action: HEAT Group to consider*

• A food related event to coincide with the Food & Drink Festival in Sept – we know how popular sharing food is. Feast for the Planet? - *Action: Ideas/organisers needed!*

• A Quiz – *Action: Ideas/organisers needed. Maybe this could be an Xmas event?*

**Developing a Comms Pipeline**

Melissa needs to plan ahead and is developing a Comms Pipeline table on the Googledrive which shows what’s coming up month by month. The key deadlines to get items into our regular outlets are:

• 3rd of the month for the next month’s Your Steyning

• 23rd of the month for the next newsletter

*Action: Melissa to send a guidance note round giving details of what she needs by when to*

**Horsham funding update**

We’ve spent about 2/3 of the Horsham Community Climate Fund grant so far. Geoff has applied for a 3 month extension so we can spread it out a bit longer. There’s scope to spend a bit more on most of the sub-projects mentioned in our application: Comms, helpdesk, wildlife garden tour, the nature map, fashion show, and climate café.
Action: Project leads to think about what they can usefully spend over next month or so to use up the grant funding productively (please liaise with Geoff on plans before 31 Mar)

Creating a budget forecast for 2023
Nicola is creating a ‘steady as she goes’ baseline prediction of income and expenditure for the year to see how our finances are looking. She’s also keen to start gathering ideas on new ideas that we might put into future funding bids.
Action: Nicola to contact project leads to follow up.

Election news
• The idea of a ‘meet the candidates’ or hustings event ahead of the May 5 local elections has been dropped.
• Several Greening members are thinking of standing as Parish council candidates (Yeah!)
• There is still a shortage of District Council candidates in our area
• Sally spoke about the Climate and Nature Pledge campaign that the South East Climate Alliance is running ahead of the local elections. She’s keen to find some volunteers to approach all the local candidates to get them to sign it.

Wildlife Gardening videos
Ronnie raised the idea of us producing some videos to support our wildlife gardening work. These could be filmed ahead of the open garden tour. But another idea would be to put a call out for local gardeners to make film short clips themselves to share via social media, with appropriate tags – with the idea of get a buzz going as spring and summer unfolds. We could edit these into a highlights compilation perhaps. The idea of relying on user-generated content sounds very appealing, though there are plenty of practical aspects to work out.
Action: Ronnie to speak with Ben, Phil, and Melissa to develop the idea.

AOB
Malcolm is in touch with Wests to see if they can source biodegradable lamination pouches, and/or waterproof inks – so we don’t have to apologise for our posters.

Next meeting
The suggested date of 9 May won’t work as neither Geoff & Vicci are around.
Action: Vicci to confer and set an alternative date in early May
MARCH UPDATES

Feedback on the meet up in Feb with Sustainable Henfield 2030

A group of us (Geoff, Sally, Vicci, Robin, Ronnie, Nicky) had a very convivial supper with counterparts from the SH2030 Group (Gill Perry, Vas Siantonas, Tony Baker, Ruth Robotham, Sam Leader). The idea was to compare notes and look for areas of potential collaboration.

They are on a very similar trajectory to us so we agreed we should stay in touch on a range of issues, including:

- energy co-op ideas
- Active travel between the villages
- Campaign on bus transport between villages
- developing community /wellbeing in a climate/biodiversity crisis
- biodiversity links down the nature corridor/Adur,
- working with Steyning Grammar where most of our 11-16s go to school

Action: create a WhatsApp group so we have an easy line of communication (2 from each side). SH2030 to arrange a return match at some point.

Lifestyle

1) seed swap and fashion swap can be reported on by Nicola or Shona.

2) Farmers market recycling to continue for the near future but as more sponsors pull out we may have to reconsider.

3) The Steyning Grammar School Sustainability Fashion Show will be taking place on 4 May in the evening. They are looking for rubbish! (old bin lids (metal), plastic bags, milk bottle lids, burst balloons, damaged books, or crisps packets)

4) plans underway for a refill stall at a Farmers market in collaboration with Jed at the post office

5) Pesticide amnesty idea being explored but WSCC have put the brakes on

6) Lifestyle website to include posts on local business sustainability - Post office and Gatley’s pet supplies collaboration with Wadars are in draft.

COMMUNITY FRIDGE REPORT

- Running smoothly with sufficient volunteers.
- Failure to establish collections from Waitrose stores in either Storrington or Worthing as stores do not use the approved app to distribute food.
- More food required, particularly for the Monday session. Sign up to Neighbourly and FareShare Go in progress which will give us access to more food. Budgens no longer donating food.
- Agreement with the Church to continue use of Church Cottage for a further year.
- There is a further £375 donation available from the Wilson Memorial Trust but I need to explain that we require the money for electricity costs not Fridge/freezers which they may not be willing to support.
- We have received approval from Fishawack Health for a donation of £159 through one of our volunteers.

Transport Group

• Rick Goring is keen on cycle path to Washington (and Chalk restaurant) and he is pursuing – but has met resistance from WSCC on idea of moving a footpath slightly. Have offered Greening support to lobby for this if needed.

• Nobody has applied for Lollipop person job at Shooting field - any ideas (to Sarah)?

• A283 traffic calming and 20s plenty moving (aptly) slowly forward

• ‘White Bridge footpath’ moving quite quickly forward - but funding now biggest issue. £200-250k needed. Public consultations coming up soon (10-12 am on Sat 8 April at Beeding VH, and Sat 29 April Steyning Centre).

• Have offered Greening help on the comms for this, and the crowdfunding campaign that’s going to be launched soon (they hope to raise up to £50k from this)

Biodiversity Group

• Nature map group: Hedgerow Surveying was supposed to start on 21st March but cold, wet Spring has delayed leaf on trees and hedgerows opening making plant identification difficult so I have postponed it until April. Have been in contact with 3 local landowners who are interested in having their hedges surveyed. Fingers crossed!

• Rick Goring has expressed interest in us surveying the new hedgerow he plans to plant in the winter as part of the Weald to Waves wildlife corridor.

• Steyning in Bloom Open Gardens trail on the 25th June: we have been told we can include 5 wildlife friendly gardens. I have 3 definites, am looking at a 4th with a link to some community tree planting in Shooting Field but would desperately like to make it 5.

• Don’t know that this is really Biodiversity but it will involve looking at birds and plants along the way, but I am putting together a GS walk for the Big Walk Weekender.

Life on the Verge:

• We presented the decision to the Upper Beeding Parish Council to step away from Hyde Stree Verge. We are now going to discuss a more formal partnership on Deacons Way.

• A letter about Hyde Street has been sent to the immediate Verge neighbours to keep them informed and a list of possible ways forward has gone to the Parish Council to consider and consult.

• Our signs have been removed from Hyde Street.

Repair cafe

• Three very busy cafés in the first three months of the year.
• Increased takings on the refreshments and, noticeably, people are coming out of curiosity and finding plenty to interest them because of the home energy advice, seed swap etc. No Repair cafe in April because it clashes with Easter.

• I have been speaking to volunteers from Partridge Green who hope to set one up there, and one of our volunteers has agreed to help them. That means there will be RCs in BN44, Henfield, Storrington, Partridge Green and Shoreham.

• I have managed to recruit three new electrical repairers, which will be a massive help as that is the busiest station. We have one new general repairer and we found a new computer repairer but she hasn’t worked out and luckily she realised she wasn’t the right person for the job.

• The atmosphere and general goodwill observed in early cafés continues and when it is busy, as it has been this year, there is a real buzz about the place which is lovely to be a part of.

Schools liaison

• We advertised in a newsletter for more volunteers to help me with this. Two came forward and I have met with them and they have agreed to look after the two primary schools. However, since then, one of them has had to temporarily withdraw probably until September. Not much progress made with the primary schools as they have been getting themselves up to speed and preparing some ideas to take to the primary schools about things they might be able to help with.

• I met with the SGS headmaster about six weeks ago after he had agreed to push forward on the recycling, however, he threw it all down to the Eco-council and this is run by two quite young girls and they have had mock exams and are making slow progress. I have only intermittent success in making things happen at the main school as everybody seems to be very busy.

• I have much more success with the two lower schools where I have two very good connections with staff and particularly at the towers. We have achieved quite a lot already in the greenhouse, gardening and forest school space and have more things in the planning stage. The Towers have bid for £25K for three forest school facilities at the three sites.

HEAT group/Energy Helpdesk:

• After a quiet end of year, things have picked up at the Helpdesk on the Beeding Saturday events, with a steady tickover of clients.

• We are developing our offer, by offering one to one consultation sessions at Steyning Library. We will probably be setting up an online booking for this.

• We have been in talks with other groups in Sussex (Alton, Henfield, Hasscocks), who are considering setting up something similar, which is encouraging.

• From many conversations, it’s reassuring to know that this winter people are tending to ‘tuff up’ and get used to lower temperatures in their homes - without serious side effects.

• On the Huddleston solar farm front: there are some frustrating delays related to the UK power networks grid connection. Have offered Greening support on lobbying.