

Sustainable Calne - Minutes of Ecology Meeting 11.2.21

Subject: "Enhancing the Local Ecology"

Present:

John Bennet,
Tom Morris,
Denis Robinson,
Bob Greenwood,
Cath Crofts,
Mala Tu,
Fiona Campbell,

John Boaler,
Celia Stevens,
Rob Mercer,
Kevin Whitehorn,
Ben Braine
Chris Lawrence
Averil Ashton,

Neil Pullen
Sue Barker
Tamzyn Long,
Kevan Wind,
Stan Woods.

Agenda:

1. John Bennett introduced the meeting to the 4 aims of Sustainable Calne:

- To deliver community energy
- To influence sustainable transport
- To enhance local ecology
- To build happier, healthy communities

2. John Bennett explained that the groups who are already working on improving ecology would be briefly outlining their work and that we would look at ways we can work together and also if there any gaps for things that could be done.

He also explained the things we already have in place:

- A walking and cycling action group, looking to limit the damage to the local ecology by making it easier and safer for people to walk or cycle in and around town.
- A Tree planting and wild meadow group which has drawn up plans for action in and around Calne.

.....and in the pipeline

- A wild flower meadow, heritage orchard and small wood
- Wildflower and Tree planting on verges.

.... and some possible ideas for the future

- **Minister for hedgehogery** – organise hole cutting in fences between gardens and 1 hole making volunteer.
- **Secretary for raised bed development:**
- **Garden Nature reserve Supremo:** Avril to speak
- **Path Czar** – audit and training for repair
- **Cycle Guru** – take some lead and split current walking and cycling group
- **Captain of Terracycle** – look into and perhaps organise if it's deemed suitable.
- **Liaison officer** to create and maintain membership of Friends of the Earth and other bigger groups and smaller local groups to feed down money and expertise.
- **Transition City Mogul** – Tom Morris is doing the training.
- **Wing commander of wood recycling.**

3. Contributions from groups already active:

Friends of Marden Valley – Tamzyn Long explained that they are a fairly new group, having picked up the work of Friends of Abberd Brook. Will work to ensure Marden Valley is protected and also have working groups to help improve the area around the brook – eg a bulb planting day next week.

Contact: Facebook Friends of the Marden Valley or <https://friendsofthemardenvalley.blogspot.com>

Avon Needs Trees – Sue Barker told us the work of Avon Needs Trees (Bristol based charity) was to try and plant trees within the Avon catchment area to restore natural habitats, improve ecology and in the long run reduce the chances of flooding lower down the river. Hazelands is the first site they have purchased and they are currently in the process of planting 10,000 trees to restore some ancient woodland. They are keen to involve the community of Calne. A lot of professional survey work has been carried out to ensure biodiversity is not disturbed.

Contact: avonneedstrees.org.uk

Calne Clean Up Crew – Cath Crofts explained that the group primarily worked as a litter picking group but also undertook other projects such as tidying up small garden areas – basically to improve the look of Calne. At this time of year they often do big litter picks to clear the main roads coming into the town of rubbish hidden in ditches and hedges. Recently a couple of A frames with bags and pickers have been put out to encourage people to do a quick litter pick around the town.

Contact: facebook Calne Clean Up Crew or email: calnecleanupcrew@hotmail.com

Beverbrook Sports Centre- Kevin Whitehorn & Chris Lawrence - Calne Town Council staff members

Kevin explained that a lot of work had gone into making the centre more sustainable, environmentally friendly and with a low carbon footprint. This is what Calne Town Council have achieved:

1. They wash all vehicles with recycled rain water
2. None of the rubbish enters landfill
3. The Community Hall is heated by air source heat PUMP
4. Movement sensitive lighting means no energy wasted when rooms are not in use
5. Our Coffee cups are 100% compostable
6. We collect rain water in a pond to irrigate the football pitches and water plants during the summer
7. 100 trees were planted on site in 2015 with plans to plant many more
8. Grass cuttings are composted on site to use on the football pitches
9. A rolling programme to replace all the facility Lights to LCDs

Working with the new Sustainability officer there are also plans to consider having a community orchard and doing some hedge-laying to encourage wildlife. They are investigating solar panels and also having some charging points for electric vehicles

Contact: k.whitehorn@calne.gov.uk

Calne Town Council and Calne in Bloom – Rob Mercer and Ben Braine Calne Town Council staff members

They added to Kevin's contribution as they are working together on many areas – for example to improve composting of green waste from around the town. They are looking for spaces to have other wildflower areas and a 'wormery' to produce fertilizer.

The council are looking at electric machinery but currently the battery life wouldn't allow enough work to be done in a day. Electric vehicles for other uses are also being investigated.

These plans were met with a positive response from the meeting and it was felt the Council should be publicising these measures for a more sustainable way of working. It could also encourage others when seeing their local council following these steps.

Contact: r.mercer@calne.gov.uk

Castlefields Canal and River Park(CARP) – Denis Robinson

Denis explained the background to the formation of CARP:

1990s Castlefields Park was under maintained by NWDC.

1999 CTC prepared to takeover ownership if improvements made first.

2001 CARP established as a registered charity. Their aim is to preserve, protect, develop and improve the environment of the River Marden Valley and surrounding area. They also work to provide amenities and facilities for recreation and leisure activities for the benefit of the town. They have monthly volunteer working parties to help maintain the area, although some maintenance is also carried out by Calne Town Council. They have used pallets to make a large "bug palace", have planted a wildflower area and with the Rotary Club planted lots of spring bulbs. They hold fundraising and other events such as the annual Easter Egg trail. They have worked with St Mary's School and Kingsbury Green and other groups on a variety of projects. They also have several art installations which reflect the ecology of the area.

Future plans include:

Work with Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust to improve the river in the town centre

Work with CTC to complete phase 2 of the wall rebuild.

Work with Wiltshire Council & landowners on Rights of Way downstream to Black Dog

Contact: info@calne-castlefieldspark.co.uk or Castlefields Canal and River Park website

Little Green Spaces - Avril

Avril explained that this wasn't something that was happening now but she thought it was a very simple idea – that people devote 2-3 square metres of their garden to promote wildlife. Examples could be given to show what could be done- eg choice of flowers, small bug hotels, bird boxes, hedgehog holes, solitary bee posts a mini pond etc. If this was done it expands greatly the amount of space given over to this.

Mens Shed – John Bennett explained that the Men's Shed had played an important role in contributing to lots of projects eg making the furniture for the Pocket Park.

Contact: <https://www.calnemensshed.org/>

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust – Neil Pullen

WWT works across a range of areas to improve wildlife in the county. Tree planting, nature reserves with hedgerows, ponds etc are key components of their work. However, they do have two Care Farms – working with young people with a range of issues.

WWT has been involved in lots of projects in Calne – advising groups, survey work, working with schools etc.

They have 2 reserves locally – Morgan's Hill and Penn Wood. They are doing work to replace trees lost through Ash die back. They have a big problem with dogs at Penn Wood – both with dog waste and with people allowing dogs off leads so working to educate people on this. Contact: www.wiltshirewildlife.org

Calne Pocket Park – Fiona Campbell

The Pocket Park was established in 2019 and has a three year lease on the area. The main purpose was to provide a sense of well-being and an attractive place for people to walk through and to meet. Community events were a key part of the plan – and although these have been limited by Covid there have been some small events. In terms of Ecology there is a large bug palace made by the River Warriors children's group, some wildflower raised beds with solitary bee posts and large pots with trees as the ground can't be dug up. Contact: calnepocket@gmail.com

Break Out Groups for Discussion:

Ecology in Calne: These were the points for discussing in the break out groups:

- Is there an area that you feel still needs covering?
- Share ideas on how working alone or together we can make a small change to improve the local ecology
- Could you lead an, as yet, un-started project, we can support you. Could you recommend someone to take on a task.
- What would you like/ what were you expecting, to be the outcome of this meeting?

Feedback from these discussions is included in the possible actions.

Possible Actions:

1. Could we promote Little Green Spaces – have a campaign and model a couple of places where this is being done. Then people could register themselves using our website. Would require some initial work but would then be largely on-going. Good way to empower people to feel they are making a difference.
2. Promote an on-line talk about dog walking – Neil had explained this is a real issue and I'm sure would be echoed by others working in conservation and farming.
3. Look to see if there are any other green spaces – such as the area at the top of Lickhill Road by the football ground- where we could have raised community vegetable beds or a community orchard – these are places people walk through every day and near where they live.
4. For Calne Town Council to publicise more of what they are doing as this provides an example of what is possible – as well as offering people a chance to take pride in what is happening.
5. Some way of co-ordinating volunteers across projects.
6. What can be done about some of the places waiting to be developed that stand derelict and unsightly for years? Can we find ways to put temporary planting etc? Can the council do anything?
7. Can we join the Re-wilding Blue Heart campaign?

Date and time of next meeting and topic:

March 11th: Building Happier, Healthier Communities.