

**Sustainable Calne Monthly
Meeting (via zoom) Draft Minutes
Thu 8th July 2021 from 7:00 pm**



Agenda

- Welcome and apologies
- Adrian Cooper from Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve
- The use of peat in gardening including its use by Councils.
- Peatlands and the use of peat in gardening
- Approval of the June meeting minutes
- News & updates
- AOB
- Confirm the date/time for the next meeting

Attendees: John Bennett (Chair), Stan Woods (Treasurer), Denis Robinson, John Boaler, Jenny Joyce (Vice-Chair), Denis Griffin (Secretary), Celia Stevens, Averil Ashton, Tom Morris, Robert McNaughton, James Gladding, John Barnes, Sue Deedigan

Welcome & Apologies

Apologies: Sophy Fernley-Whittingstall, Lizz Jennings, Bob Greenwood.

John Bennett opened the meeting and welcomed our guest speaker Adrian Cooper. John proposed that we cover other agenda items after Adrian's presentation.

Guest Speaker: Dr Adrian Cooper, Chair of **Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve.**

Adrian told us the aims and a brief history of **Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve.** This is composed of small areas in local people's garden's, allotments and other small spaces. It encourages owners to allocate three-square yards of their space for wildlife-friendly plants, ponds and insect lodges. They also suggest allocating at least 10% of their land for re-wilding. For those in apartments they encourage the use of smaller spaces such as balconies or window sills.

They run their group without money or donations. So have no bank account or treasurer. They hold minimal information on members and contact with each other by phone, social media or one to one.

So far, 1,689 local people have become actively involved and the result is a community nature reserve of 5,000 square yards – the size of a football pitch.



The Felixstowe Citizen Science Group. This forum is to share the collaborative mapping and data analysis produced by the Community Nature Reserve. They use the Ten Principles for Best Practice in Citizen Science as defined by the European Citizen Science Association. Adrian finished by taking questions from our group.

Averil Ashton shared her concerns about the use of peat in gardening including its use by Councils.

She explained - UK peatlands hold more than 3bn tonnes of carbon, three times more than UK woodlands, but only about 20% remain in a near natural state.

Environmentalists have called for a ban on the sales of peat compost by the end of 2021, after the government's goal of a voluntary phasing out by 2020 failed. The target has now been reset for 2024.

Averil encouraged members to ask/find out:

- What is Calne Council doing to stop using peat?
- How can we encourage gardeners in Calne to opt for peat free compost?
- Can we challenge local garden centres and supermarkets B&Q etc to stop supplying peat compost?
- What is Wiltshire Council doing?

Approval of minutes from last meeting

Approved.

News & updates

Update by the Walking & Cycling group. Celia shared some draft power point slides on the data they collected from their recent cycle path survey.

Stan Woods and John Bennett are to visit Marden Vale School to look at a green space on the school property that may be used for an environmental project.

James Gladding has meetings planned with local companies Deceuninck and Hills on local energy creation.

Tom Morris – suggested members think of ideas for our stall at the upcoming Fair-trade event to be held in the Pocket Park in August.



AOB

John Bennet (chair) confirmed that we shall always have AOB on the agenda but it would be helpful if you know in advance of an issue to raise, please contact the chair or secretary before the meeting day. This will allow us to better manage the meeting and for you to share information to the members upfront.

Forest Gate Solar Farm

Sophy Fearnley-Whittingstall has offered to speak at our next meeting on the Eden Renewables Forest Gate Solar Farm in Pewsham. There was much discussion on this as they have now submitted their planning application to Wiltshire Council. (Reference PL/2021/06112)

Denis: noted that he looked over the comments for the application on the Wiltshire Council Planning Portal and comments rejecting the solar farm led by 3-1. He encouraged members to add their comments of support to address this imbalance.

John Barnes: Is a recently elected councillor for the Pewsham ward of Calne Without parish council. He confirmed there is a well organised anti solar farm campaign but in the recent parish election he beat the anti-solar farm candidate on a pro solar farm platform.

John invited us to attend a Calne Without Parish Council Public Meeting on this issue later in the month. He will send full details to our secretary to share with our members.

He also advised us to make some plans before our next meeting as the window to comment on the WC site closes on August 2nd.

Next meeting date & time agreed:

Thursday 12th August via Zoom 7:00 - 8:30 pm