



Green Ixworth

Newsletter

July 2023

www.greenixworth.org.uk

Wildlife gardening

Large or small, if you are thinking of planting a wildlife garden a visit to Pensthorpe near Fakenham, in Norfolk could prove helpful. A number of different habitat and soil types are presented with the most appropriate plants for soil and wildlife. To give an idea of the information available this is the list of plants they use.

<https://pensthorpe.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/WildlifeHabitatGardenPlanting.pdf>

Look for plants with a Mediterranean or Turkish, Caucasus origins for survival in our new warmer drier climate. Most of those listed on the website will provide food for wildlife.

Animal Welfare

The government dropped election manifesto promised, Animal Welfare Bill but Andrea Jenkin MP has launched a petition to bring it back to the House and make time for it. Once 100,000 signatures are on the petition, Government has to make time for a debate on the issue. You can find the petition at:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/638720>

National Swift Week

This week is national swift week. We can see them flying screeching and nesting, those homes with nest boxes need to persevere as swifts often search one year and use the next. Do not be dispirited.

Suffolk County Council Guide to wall insulation

This guide explains all the details of external wall insulation and sources of payment. The Warm Homes Suffolk applies to those with less than £31,000 (not £30,000) household income but more sources of funding are listed. <https://www.greensuffolk.org/app/uploads/2021/05/Householder-Guide.pdf>

Hempyard Bridge

C Cllr Spicer hosted a meeting for the Ixworth Parish Council, with officers from Suffolk County Council highways, alongside other key stakeholders including a landowner, Green Ixworth and West Suffolk

Council. The agenda focussed on how the works to the bridge can be executed sooner than this time next year.

In short, it is now not possible for the works to this bridge to be done any sooner than next year owing to the fact that contractors must be in place before a licence application can be submitted to the Environment Agency. A new contractor is being appointed from 1 October 2023, they will appoint subcontractors to undertake this work due to its specialist historical nature and it is at that point when a licence can be pursued. It is hoped there may be some leniency to expedite this in May 2024 but that remains fluid and subject to confirmation. Other preparatory work such as ecological surveys and procurement tasks remain in progress. It was difficult to ascertain a schedule on when they would be ready to go and a further follow-up meeting in early Autumn is scheduled. Pics taken at the beginning of July showed significant deterioration in the past few weeks.

Some good planning news.

The large development on the left side of the A143 after Great Barton and before the Orttwell Road Roundabout is going ahead but in negotiations between the Berkely Homes and WSC one of the many conditions agreed in the appeal was that although gas boilers may be fitted in the first phase of work the plumbing system and physical arrangements must enable retrofitting of heat pumps. Under National regulations planners may not demand that ASHP have to be fitted. It may well be that given the additional expense of making the system ASHP compliant, any cost saving of using gas could be negated. Further they would have to install higher capacity electricity supply both for normal use, including HP and the provision for EV chargers.

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Solar energy good or bad?

Pressure is rightly increasing to reduce our use of fossil fuels to stop Climate Change. One solution is to use Solar Panels to turn sunlight into electricity. However, when solar farms are built on good quality agricultural land needed for food production that may not be such a good idea. We are going to need more good land in future for growing food. The scheme by Sunnica seeking permission to build a huge solar farm between the outskirts of Mildenhall in Suffolk and Burwell in Cambridgeshire covering approx. 11 square kilometres is a problem. We need the power it will generate so we should seek alternative sites.

Dr Catherine Judkins from Say No to Sunnica said the plans would use "highly productive arable farmland. It produces potatoes, carrots, wheat, and with the current situation in the world it's not just the energy supply that is at risk here, it's a food security issue as well," she said.

We know the consequences of importing most of our food, we see it in the daily increases in price of our grocery bills and food shortages. So, what can we do?

It is easier and cheaper to grow bulk crops in an open field than in one covered in panels. Some very new panels are near transparent which is helpful but management of crops beneath the panels is difficult unless the panels are high off the ground and that makes it difficult to clean and maintain them. Nothing we do in the environment has no cost but as we all need roofs on our buildings why not ensure they generate power both for the occupants and the community at large.

Other countries are doing this already, making it compulsory for developers to install them in all appropriate new homes and businesses. The UK Government has been very slow to recognise the value of this, which is a much cheaper and secure option than building huge solar farms on good food producing land. France and Germany are well ahead of the UK in obliging businesses to install over car parks for example.



Denny Brothers, Bury St Edmunds

Some businesses are already doing this so it is both possible and profitable” A good example of this is Denny Brothers printers and engineers in Bury St Edmunds which is capable of producing over 100% of its electricity on a good day and an average of 55%, using roof mounted panels, as shown above, as well as many environmentally sound policies. It is also a winner of many environmental prizes.

The CPRE has on its website a petition calling for the UK Government to commit to a target for least 60% of the solar energy required by 2035 to be delivered through rooftop solar.

<https://takeaction.cpre.org.uk/page/127929/petition/1>

In the meantime, many of us are able to fit our own panels and batteries. For more information and availability of financial help, look on our website. www.greenixworth.org.uk

What to do with our waste

The General Meeting held in June welcomed speaker Siobhan O’Dell, Liaison Officer for waste management company SUEZ, whose ‘energy from waste’ incinerator at Great Blakenham, burns most of Suffolk’s black bin domestic waste, producing electricity in the process. It is a highly regulated ‘clean’ process and while not perfect is a massive improvement on landfill. She discussed problems and limitations of recycling and anticipated changes resulting from legislation in the new Environment Act, which includes a move away from ‘co-mingled’ kerbside recycling to ‘segregated’ bins for glass, food, and soft plastics. In time it will result in consistent collections across the UK instead of the current varied local approach making the processing of recycled waste more efficient.

Extended Producer Responsibility is another welcome provision in the Act which should rationalise packaging materials, simplify labelling and reduce plastic waste by introducing financial penalties on manufacturers.

Third area of change is a planned returns scheme on plastic bottle.

Headlines from the discussion were that;

Recycling is important but remains problematic and carbon intensive. Reducing the production and use of plastics is most important for the future. Consumers and therefore manufacturers are not yet getting this message.

Increase in taxation on landfill has proved effective in reducing this method of waste disposal but problems of historic landfill continue. The technology involved in the 'energy to waste' incinerator is a better process as it is relatively clean and turns our general waste (including soft plastics) into electricity.

By international comparisons, UK waste management is well regulated and doing better than other developed economies, but we need to improve further. Exporting our waste to other countries is not a good option. Dealing with our own waste is more secure and responsible. Suffolk is doing OK in waste management and must continue to improve.

Consumer pressure, complaining and demanding improvement in packaging is important.

Upcycling, rather than carbon intensive recycling/down cycling is better and needs more attention.

For information on visiting the energy-from-waste facility at Great Blakenham contact suffolkefw.uk@suez.com or phone 01473 839149

Some good news from Anglian Water.

They are reinstating an existing borehole near the old Pump House in Ixworth and fitting a pump. This water will be used to improve the quality and water flow in the Black Bourn. In 2024 they plan to halve the water abstracted by Ixworth Water Works which should increase the flow of springs.

Bury St Edmunds Folk Festival



Our stall attracted plenty of attention from visitors to the Folk Festival held in the Walled Garden in Nowton Park. The picture shows "customers" with Liz and Roger, he still seated because of the long day and the heat. Age has its toll.

Unsurprisingly the festival crowd were not only interested in the environment but a number of recently written songs performed reflected this.

Interest was expressed in the wide range of projects we are tackling and the cooperation with other organisations, local councils and other environment groups. Some projects are complete, most in hand and others waiting to take off.

The music was great and good to know that our Tony Phillips was joint organiser of the whole event. They are to be congratulated and we look forward to next year's two-day event.

We also sold hedgehogs made from recycled books on behalf of Friends of Ixworth Library. Some are still available for £3 at Ixworth Library. Guaranteed to be flea free but not from book worms.