



Green Ixworth

January 2024

www.greenixworth.org

Welcome to 2024.

We can look back on the hottest year ever recorded and in East Anglia, one of the wettest and like many others suffered from floods. (*see below*). We are only one group among many in Suffolk and working together in Green Ixworth and with others we can make serious changes to our planet and people's lives whether through energy use, biodiversity, waterways or the built environment.

How is the UK dealing with Climate Change?

Well, government seems to be taking us backwards:

- postponing the date for ending petrol and diesel cars.
- encouraging and subsidising oil companies to develop new oil and gas fields.
- reducing funding for government Departments like DEFRA.
- making it difficult to install the cheapest energy – wind turbines on land.
- ignoring the Committee on Climate Change, set up by Theresa May's Government, with all party support, to ensure it followed the trajectory needed to ensure Zero Carbon by 2050.

Evidence suggests a very large majority of electors still believe in climate action. A pity that government is now using the environment as a campaigning point to create a wedge with other parties and damaging UK's once held reputation as a Global Leader of action on Climate Change.

The government is failing on almost all of its environmental targets, risking an "irreversible spiral of decline" in nature warns Dame Glenys Stacey chair of the Office of Environmental Protection. The OEP was established by government after Brexit to be the UK environmental watchdog. Of 40 environmental targets, government is largely on track to achieve 4, partially to achieve 11, and largely off track to achieve 10. There was insufficient evidence to assess the other 15. Dame Glenys said she was disappointed, government had taken a full year to respond to the OEP's previous report on progress and has not shared a detailed plan of how it will meet the legal requirements of the Environment Improvement Plan. Our countryside is unfortunately not in safe hands.

The Conservative MP and ex Energy Minister Chris Skidmore, was asked by Government to report on how things were going and what more needed to be done to ensure Climate Change policies were properly implemented. The Government trashed and then ignored his report, as a result of which he has resigned from Parliament, creating a another by-election.

Alok Sharma, the Conservative MP, who successfully presided over the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, has stated that the government "is not serious" about meeting its international climate commitments. He is not standing again at the General Election.

On the positive side, Government, has now decreed that no gas boilers will be installed in new housing from 2025. It has rightly abandoned the idea of burning hydrogen in boilers which would use up to 8 times more electricity than a heat pump. Heat pumps in new housing are quicker to fit, and require fewer skills than retrofitting, so top up training should help existing existing plumbers.

The Editor

Green Ixworth Public Meetings

1st February Cllr Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council. WSC environmental policies and their implementation.

14th March Julian (Joolz) Thompson – Community Climate Action - Suffolk Green Cluster and Community Energy

2nd May Fe Morris, Forestry Commission and Suffolk Tree Warden Network. "Woodland creation, management grants and support available?"

We can expect the General Election between now and January 2025 which will occur on a Thursday. In the event we might wish to change the date of any of the meetings affected.

All meetings are open to the public and all speakers are happy to answer your questions. Hot and cold drinks will be provided. Doors open at 6.30, start at 7.00pm and usually finish by 9.00pm. Held in the Methodist Church, High Street, Ixworth, just up the hill from the Pykkerell Pub.

Energy and you.

Loft insulation Scheme

Our Bulk Buy insulation scheme has been improved to make it more accessible by removing any household income limits and changing to loft insulation only. So it is now the Loft Insulation Scheme. The subsidy of 50% remains up to maximum of £200 per household. The scheme is still funded by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership.

- 50% reduction up to £200 maximum.
- Over £400 total cost the customer will pay the full price offered on the goods.
- Payment from the customer will be taken by Travis Perkins.
- Free deliver or collection will be arranged between customer and TP.

The new application forms will be available on line shortly. We shall circulate the address as soon as we have access to it.

And for old buildings.

Some helpful if obvious tips to deal with cold weather for older buildings.

[How to Protect Your Old Building From Winter Weather | spab.org.uk](https://spab.org.uk)

How to make use of flexible electricity tariffs.

The webinar below is organised by our partner Southern Community Energy to to explain the benefits of flexible tariffs for your electricity supply: [Join the guestlist – Flexibility Tariffs – Zoom, Thu 25 Jan 2024 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM \(tickettailor.com\)](#)

Guidance on energy usage and cost saving.

This very useful site gives plenty of information on virtually all options of insulation and energy provision and financial assistance from local and national government:

[nergy Efficient Home - Invest To Save On Your Energy Bills \(energy-efficient-home.campaign.gov.uk\)](https://energy-efficient-home.campaign.gov.uk)

Planning Policy Changes

Since our last Newsletter, Government has published its revision of the National Planning Policy Framework. There are significant changes which on the face of it seem helpful but others less so. When we have digested and interpreted the contents we shall produce a summary. In the meantime you may wish to read the document for yourselves at: [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Hempyard Bridge.



An update meeting with Suffolk Highways last October is to be followed by another in February. So far we are assured that the June commencement for the restoration work is still on. Our concern now is that the condition of the bridge is rapidly deteriorating as shown in the picture. There are a number of cracks and fissures which seem to be deepening and widening. Also a fallen tree is threatening the upstream side of the existing structure. We are also seeking a root barrier to be installed both to protect the village end of the bridge and the magnificent Black Poplar which is close by.

Floods - The recent devastating floods have reminded us all of the need to drive down carbon to slow and then reduce dangerously high global temperatures. We are in the incredible situation where the melting of the Greenland Ice cap could stop the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) now providing warm sea in winter. We are facing higher temperatures over all but with excessively hot weather, drought and heavier rain. Suffolk County Council is Suffolk's Leading Local Flood Authority. We have produced a short primer on the causes of floods and their significance to East Anglia. Find it on: [Flooding-and-its-causes-1.pdf \(greenixworth.org.uk\)](#)

Solutions? - "Sponge cities" are so called because they absorb water rather than get rid of it as fast and cause flooding and sewage overflows. Planting trees, shrubs and grassland is a solution to many of these problems in urban areas and can readily replace non-porous paving.

Commenting on the decisions in 2015 to scrap rules to implement Sponge cities and do nothing since, Alistair Chisholm, Director of the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management said "These rules should have come in, in 2015 and we have had 13 years of delayed rules. This has been kicked down the road and what is going on now is a result of that". The Flood & Water Management Act of 2010 required developers to install sustainable drainage systems but ministers argued it was too costly for developers, so only Wales has done so. More on this at: [Conservative 'failures' have led to more sewage pollution, say water experts | Water | The Guardian](#)

Inaction - Plans for urgent change to tackle sewage outflows, which spill untreated human waste into rivers and seas, has still not been delivered although the plans were requested, by Government, from the water companies for delivery by 18th August 2023.

Water pollution - In the Wye river valley recent research shows 70% of the phosphate pollution has come from Chicken/Egg Farms alone. High levels of nitrogen are also likely to be present in the river from farming run off.

BBC Radio 4 - Climate reporter Tom Heap, presents "Rare Earth" a new environmental program on Friday 26th January at 12.04pm. Tom has also been a regular contributor on Countryfile.

"Climate Capitalism" - In his new book, Akshat Rathi, climate reporter with Bloomberg, argues that smart policies can harness capitalism to cut carbon pollution without killing markets or competition. **"It is now cheaper to save the world than destroy it,"** he writes, adding that this holds true even when viewed through a narrow capitalist lens. Serious progress is being made.

Food for Thought Talks - Food Museum - A series of talks about the future of our food production, distribution and consumption, to be held in the Food Museum at Stowmarket.



A community farm group iFarm, is hoping to buy its own village pub in Suffolk so that it can host social events related to its work and provide a social point for the local villages

The group owns 10 acres of farmland at Blo' Norton just over the border in Norfolk. It wants to take on the freehold of The White Horse at Thelnetham, near Diss, just 15 minutes' walk from the farm. Green Ixworth is working with iFarm within the Suffolk Green Cluster and very much welcomes the initiative iFarm have taken. They have been running the pub for some time on a lease but now have most of the funding to purchase it.

It has already attracted a £298,800 grant from the government's Community Ownership Fund to help buy, renovate and restore the pub so that it can continue as a community and social hub - but in order to secure the money it must raise £60k itself. It has so far raised about £40k - but must reach its fundraising target by the **end of January**.

Julian Thompson, who is chairman of the management committee - said he was confident they would reach the target. "At the moment we have been operating the pub for two years with a tenancy and an option to purchase. Our option to purchase expires at the end of February," he explained.

If anyone would like to take a stake in this community venture, please contact Julian for details at: joolz@ifarm.land – every little helps.