



Green Ixworth

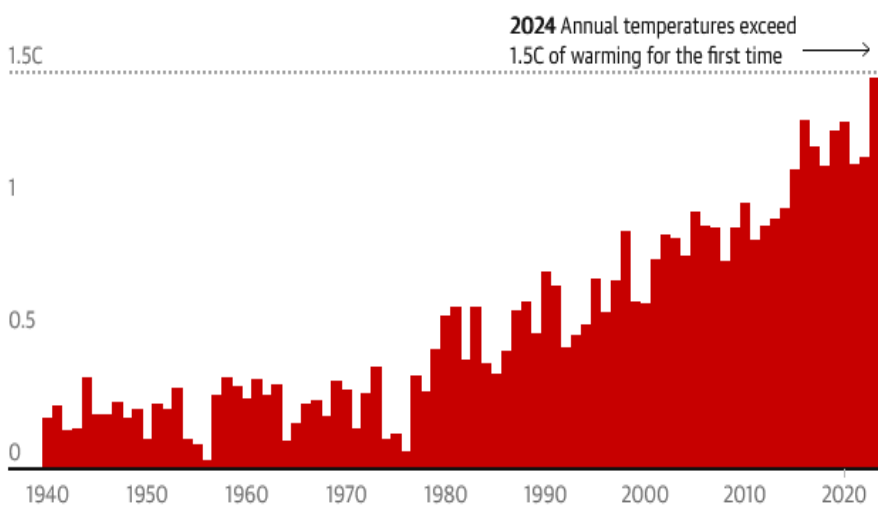
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www.greenixworth.org.uk
ginocarbon@hotmail.com

Welcome to 2005! We still have work to do.

2024 confirmed as the hottest year on record

Global average temperature relative to a preindustrial baseline, C



Guardian graphic. Source: Copernicus, ERA5. Notes: Relative to a 1850-1900 baseline

The Paris agreement target of 1.5C is measured over a decade or two, so a single year above that level does not mean the target has been missed, but does show the climate emergency continues to intensify. Every year in the past decade has been one of the 10 hottest, in records that go back to 1850.

The C3S data also shows that a record 44% of the planet was affected by strong to extreme heat stress on 10 July 2024, and that the hottest day in recorded history struck on 22 July.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/10/world-temperature-in-2024-exceeded-15c-for-first-time?utm_term=6780acd6f866bf3e196c9e23560f5a41&utm_campaign=GuardianTodayUK&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=GTUK_email

We are on the way.

In the last decade, the UK has more than halved its electricity from fossil fuels and doubled renewables, (Climate and energy website, Carbon Brief). Driving an electric car instead of a petrol model now reduces carbon emissions by 70% over the lifecycle of a vehicle, while warming a home with a heat pump instead of a gas boiler cuts carbon dioxide pollution by 84%.

Decarbonising Travel and Transport.

Discussions are taking place within Suffolk and wider, of methods of creating transport systems which maximise Active Travel and shared methods – cars, cycles/E cycles, public transport systems and private vehicles. Our membership of the Suffolk Green Cluster gives us access to consultations taking place with SCC. As a source of information on these issues, useful evidence based proposals are available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/newe.12410>

Introduction of Unitary Authorities and Mayors.

The proposals to establish Unitary Authorities can enable a more consistent approach across larger areas. In particular infrastructure developments could happen quicker than at present and more rationally, whether electricity distribution, public transport, major transport links, the A143.

The proposed arrangements place an even greater reliance on Neighbourhood and higher level plans. We have to actively participate in consultations, and be more flexible and pragmatic in our approach. Once agreed it will be even more difficult to oppose.

The authority being proposed for consultation and the one which looks likely for Suffolk would also include Norfolk and have an elected mayor. SCC has already agreed to negotiations with Government. Structures exist beneath the superior Authority and mayor will be crucial to establish local influence. Parish Councils will have to play an even more important role. The average consenting time for major infrastructure projects has almost doubled from 2.6 years to 4.2 years in the last decade, often delaying the construction of critical infrastructure, creation of jobs and economic boosts that kick in only once a shovel hits ground.

Government is seeking to increase the number of planning officers. There is merit in bolstering local planning teams, over 3,000 planners left the public sector between 2010 and 2021: will an extra 300 by 2026 make a tangible difference? It is probably all that might be recruited in that timescale. We should place greater emphasis on how AI and data sharing can transform planning departments, not only to speed things up but to allow for more informed, strategic decision making at local, regional and national levels.

If these changes do occur it will require organisations like Parish Councils and ourselves to respond to consultation much more quickly and deeply. We shall not have the luxury of delay or procrastination. Environmental organisations will need to take a more proactive approach and regularly share information and seek to arrive at a common purpose. Parish Councils who are bound by decisions taken at monthly meetings, need to have informal arrangements in place with neighbouring PCs so a proposal may be discussed then taken back to individual PCs for decisions.

Sizewell C and Pakenham and Ixworth

The government reaffirmed its commitment to the project in the October Budget, we now have a clearer timeline for Sizewell C's funding. The "Capital Raise" process to bring private investors into the project is moving to its final stages to be concluded in spring 2025? with a Final Investment Decision (FID) taken as part of the 2025 Government Spending Review. (Quoting the Government not predicting)

Securing the Planning and Technical approvals has led to some delays so as of now, we do not yet know the full implications for the work to be carried out in Pakenham. The work proposed is to change half of Pakenham Fen from rush pasture to fen meadow with its greater biodiversity, replacing fen meadow lost at the Sizewell C site. Some of the Pakenham fen is already fen meadow quality, and being retained, the rest of the existing fen is very unnatural with pipe drainage and redirected straight water courses. A rare wet woodland will be enlarged as well.

The preliminary work on the Pakenham Fen site should commence in Spring 2025. Preparing access and securing the footpaths and bridges for continued use during the works.

SCC, is the planning authority for Sizewell C. Green Ixworth is advising our County Councillor, Joanna Spicer over the implications for our communities. These include ensuring the water quality and volume entering the Black Bourn and the supply to the Water Mill is not diminished, that the Public Rights of Way are both protected and improved and that the road links to the site are improved, protected and after some 6,000 HGVs have used Thurston Road, properly reinstated.

An explanation of the project in more detail, including maps, is available on our website:

<https://www.greenixworth.org.uk>.

This regular newsletter from Sizewell C illustrates the scale and implications of the site and its offshoots at Benhall, Halesworth, Pakenham, Ipswich, etc.

<https://www.sizewellc.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/SZC-Community-Newsletter-November-2024.pdf>

What a vintage reason for solar panels.

<https://www.pv-magazine.com/2024/11/29/agrivoltaics-can-increase-grape-yield-by-up-to-60/>

More good News.

Wind turbines have overtaken gas as Britain's biggest source of electricity as the Government pushes ahead with plans to make the nation more reliant on renewable energy.

Wind accounted for 29pc of the UK's electricity last year, while gas tumbled to around a quarter. In the previous year, 2023, gas represented 32pc of the UK's generation mix.

Not just Green Bridges.

The article below sets out the very clear argument for taking action to prevent the massive disruption to and the death of wild animals. As well as causing the direct deaths of animals, noise and various vehicle chemical/gas pollutants, disrupt normal set routes and as in humans, damage mental activity. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/newe.12407>

Death on our rural roads.

Two pedestrians die and 34 are seriously injured by vehicles on rural roads each week, according to the Department of Transport. Give people the right to walk around the edges of privately owned fields, say campaigners seeking to open up more paths in the countryside in England and Wales.

Slow Ways, a group advocating for more access to the countryside, say that "people in rural areas without pavements, often have to walk on roads, which can be extremely dangerous with blind bends and fast traffic".

The British public appears to agree. A poll by YouGov found seven out of 10 adults (71%) thought people should be allowed to walk along the edge of fields that were privately owned, as long as they were respectful and responsible, and if the only other option was to walk down a narrow or busy road with no pavement or legal footpath.

Two-fifths of respondents said they were likely to walk more if such a walking network existed.

Slow Ways is calling on the government to develop an inclusive, extensive and easy-to-follow national walking network, including this proposal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/26/call-for-right-to-roam-on-edges-of-private-farmland-england-walking>

A great Christmas present.

A deadline for registering historic rights of way is to be scrapped after a warning that the looming cut off date could result in the loss of thousands of miles of footpaths.

The last government set a deadline of 2031 for all rights of way in England to be added to the official map, after [abandoning a previous commitment to scrap the](#) policy.

Once recorded as rights of way and added to the definitive map, paths are protected under the law for people to use and land owners to maintain.

In an announcement timed to mark the traditional Boxing Day stroll by many people, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced it would [remove the registration deadline.](#) on 26th, Boxing/St Stephens Day. A spokesperson for Defra said "Our countryside is a source of great national pride, and this government wants to improve access to nature for people. We are committed to making sure the public access nature, from green spaces to forests to river walks, in a responsible way and we strongly encourage everyone to follow the countryside code."<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/26/defra-scrap-england-deadline-to-register-thousands-of-miles-of-rights-of-way>

The Charter for Small Waters.

Prepared by the Wildlife and Countryside Link, this Charter finds that 75% of England's freshwaters are small water bodies including streams, ponds, small lakes, springs, flushes and ditches. These habitats support over 70% of our freshwater species and provide essential resources and connectivity across the wider landscape. Small waters represent a significant opportunity to take efficient and effective measures to drive environmental improvement and argues for a programme of protection, restoration, creation and monitoring for small waters. They urge the Government to adopt the charter and realise these benefits.

<https://www.cameopartnership.org/the-charter-for-small-waters/>

Developers and their reduced circumstances.

Hodson Developments, developer of 6,000 homes in Ashford, Kent has sparked fury after abandoning its commitment to invest £50 million in local services and infrastructure including schools, roads, libraries, social care, etc. Not surprisingly local residents are up in arms supporting the District Council in its likely legal action against the developer. Apparently profits would be significantly reduced if the expenditure on services and infrastructure needed to support the 6,000 new homes were to take place. Is it not strange that these profit calculations are only made and announced after planning consent is granted?

The GI Debate.

When addressing the protection of our environment, issues of proportionality and alternative options, are rarely considered among the host of issues we wish to promote. This has recently come to the fore both nationally and locally.

The £100 million cost of the bat tunnel on the HS2 line and several millions on the three new fen pasture sites, including Pakenham, to mitigate the destruction of a small area at Sizewell, could be questioned on the grounds that better environmental results could be produced by using that money elsewhere. Too often we seek the "perfect", often at higher costs when the lower cost "good" would enable additional projects to be considered. Under all systems there will be a limit on affordability and one way or another most of the cost will come back for the taxpayer to find.

The Fen Meadow replacement means losing a small amount of Sizewell Fen Meadow at huge cost and disruption with extensive environmental damage from approx 160,000 miles of HGV travel, pollution, noise road damage, carbon, plus neighbour distress. This is in addition to the multi million pound cost.

Proportionality is something English Law only recognises within legally defined limits. UK law requires precision. Much environmental legislation is very specific and gives those effected by it, little opportunity to agree something different, it is often all or nothing. However precision often provides loopholes where action is not precisely unlawful. Generally, regulations applying to businesses, provide a get out of "where reasonably practical" or "unless the cost is unreasonable", etc. There is sometimes an ability to provide an alternative which produces the same results.

The protection of wildlife may or may not receive total protection dependent on its rarity or closeness to a grouse moor or salmon farm.

Mitigation of environmental damage is clearly important but should there be a possibility of using funding in ways which can produce much greater environmental benefit elsewhere.

Your thoughts on this would be appreciated, to help inform supporters of Green Ixworth and others. We can publish a summary of the comments on our website. Contact: www.greenixworth.org.uk.