



Green Ixworth Newsletter May 2025

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UK Megafarm 'blocked'

PLUCKED: A plan for a UK megafarm that would have housed 14,000 pigs and 714,000 chickens has been rejected by councillors over concerns about its climate impact in a first-of-its-kind decision based on a landmark legal judgment made in 2024. The company behind the project, Cranswick, had for three years sought to build the factory farm in Norfolk. But planning officers from the borough council recommended against allowing the scheme, citing a Supreme Court judgment on how decision makers should consider the climate impact of new projects, the newspaper said. Councillors voted unanimously to reject the project following the advice.

Carbon Brief

Council refuses Cranswick's Methwold megafarm application - BBC News

Good planting

We have previously reported that SW Cross and Son of Ixworth, had planted a new 10 acre wood on the east side of the A143 bypass about 100 m north of the cut off section of Crown Lane. It was destroyed by the drought three years ago but was successfully replanted last autumn. It is not accessible for the public at this point.

Having sold most of the arable land they have retained 300 acres including Bangrove Wood, the large lake and the scrapes developed in the flood plain of the Black Bourn, much of which is being managed with *"an exciting not-for-profit, run by some very switched on ecologists and environmentalists in their 20s who combine expert advice on nature conservation and restoration with creating opportunities for young people to get involved with nature, learn and have fun in a hands-on way. Their insight is that whilst re-wilding, nature restoration and conservation strikes a real chord with the young, there are too few opportunities to get involved. The NFP is called 'Young Wilders' <https://www.youngwilders.org/> . Do look them up.*

Given the objectives of Nick Cross and Young Wilders there will be many of our readers who are themselves young enough or have young family who might be interested in helping in this project.

We hope to be able to publish other good news generated by this overall project soon.

Our one big disappointment from the sale, is that Nick Cross, an exemplar of good practice as an arable farmer, farmed much of his land regeneratively, the new owner is efficient but not regenerative. This year he successfully harvested Sugar Beet, having sown it using strip tilling,

minimising soil disturbance. [What is Strip Tillage: Benefits and Examples – GrowerExperts](#)

We thank Nick for providing the Ixworth History Recorder with an annual summary of activity on the land he owns and allowing us to quote from it.

A new language.

There are many terms used in regenerative and other forms of sustainable farming. The glossary available from the Carbon Brief website below provides help.

https://interactive.carbonbrief.org/glossary/agriculture/index.html?utm_source=cbnewsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=2025-04-23&utm_campaign=Cropped+Beef+vs+the+Amazon+BRICS+vs+tariffs+Ag+alphabet

Best and most versatile land.

“It means what it says on the tin”. When someone wants to plant solar panels or storage batteries on it, it becomes extremely valuable for growing food. If the farmer plants grain for turning into chemicals or fuel no one is aware, so no one complains. With solar panels the ground can still be utilised for cropping of vegetation or animals or to increase biodiversity. If we demand it.

Converting just 3.2% of the land used to grow corn for ethanol in the US to solar power could increase the share of utility-scale solar energy from 3.9 to 13%, according to another study in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#). It estimated that if solar were developed on 46% of the land reserved for corn ethanol, it could generate enough energy to meet the US's 2050 decarbonisation goals.

Carbon Brief

Solar panels to be compulsory

Almost all new homes must be fitted with solar panels by 2027. The Future Homes Standard (FHS) will mandate that developers build homes in a low-carbon way. The extra cost of new homes with solar is approx £3,000 to £4,000 whereas the energy savings are approx £1,000 per year. Government sources confirmed the expected FHS to be published soon. It will not include a ban on gas boilers. However, minimum standards for energy efficiency in newly built properties under the rules will effectively preclude the installation of gas boilers. The government is also extending the £7,500 grant for householders to install heat pumps, hoping this will boost uptake. We understand this has been done to enable suitable alternatives to be used instead of heat pumps. For example Heat Batteries, rather larger and more sophisticated versions of storage heaters providing space and water heating, particularly suitable for buildings of multiple occupation. They also confirmed there will not be a ban on the sale of gas boilers by 2035 and people will not have to remove them from their homes, something which was never proposed.

The energy secretary, Ed Miliband, promised [a “rooftop revolution”](#) during the election campaign.

A [recent study from the MCS Foundation](#) found that equipping homes with heat pumps, solar panels and battery storage would save households living in a typical three-bedroom house more than £46,600 on energy bills over the course of a 25-year mortgage.

Jonathan Marshall, a principal economist at the [Resolution Foundation](#), said: “The mass adoption of heat pumps in our homes is vital if Britain is to hit its net zero targets. But the rollout is miles off track, with heat pumps particularly out of reach for many poorer families.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/may/01/solar-panels-fitted-all-new-build-homes-england-by-2027>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/06/uk-government-scrap-plan-to-ban-sale-of-gas-boilers-by-2035>

Why is renewable energy more expensive than gas???

It is not!!! But the statement is often made by those who for various reasons are opposed to upsetting the natural order of what ever it was they had got used to. Many of those folk also have close relationships, or believe they do, with the oil and gas producers.

Two important things to remember.

- 1) Gas is sold to the customer ie the gas distribution company or generator - at globally determined, market prices by the oil and gas companies then they sell it to you.
- 2) The price paid for the electricity generated is unnecessarily complicated but suits the generators because it is more expensive than otherwise and therefore more profitable. When renewables are unavailable, generators are asked to bid a price at which they will produce more power. The accepted price is then paid to **all** the generators even if they are already contracted to supply at a much lower price.

This excellent article from the Guardian explains all.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/apr/20/why-the-uks-electricity-costs-are-so-high-and-what-can-be-done-about-it>

Underground cables – too expensive?

A report by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), found underground cables were on average about 4.5 times more expensive than overhead lines.

In some cases, burying the cables is vastly more expensive. For example, a typical 15km-long 5,000MW overhead line was estimated by the report's authors to have a build cost of nearly £40m, while an equivalent underground cable would cost about £330m or, in a new tunnel for easy access, £820m.

Putting the cables underground also generally takes much longer than building pylons, whilst we need to move quickly to build energy infrastructure to meet the 2030 target to almost entirely remove gas from the electricity grid. If High Voltage DC cables are used, as some local objectors argue as an alternative, each end of the cables will require a large inverter station which are regularly being objected to because of their size.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/apr/29/labour-to-press-on-with-pylons-as-study-shows-underground-cables-more-costly>

Why do “we” not do more?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/apr/19/theres-only-one-way-to-fight-the-climate-greenlash-appeal-to-the-naysayers-self-interest>

An interesting article which explores the reasons why well meaning people still fail to do what they may to contribute personally to Climate Change reduction. It examines why little action is taken to support or work with campaigns capable of enhancing individual's contributions magnifying the whole effort.

Easy come easy go.

Water companies are paying rip-off charges for infrastructure improvements. In many cases they are paying way over the odds for work which would cost substantially less than in other European countries and the US.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/apr/23/ofwat-investigating-rip-off-cost-of-water-firms-infrastructure-works>

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Events 2025:

COURSES:

Wildlife in your community - Weds 9 July, 10am-4pm - Hadleigh Cricket Pavilion, Hadleigh - IP7 6DF. Find ways of prioritising wildlife in your Parish to inform a Biodiversity Action Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or local wildlife initiative.

Churchyard management - Fri 16 May, 10am-4pm - Pakefield Church, Pakefield NR33 0JZ
Discover how churchyards can be havens for wildlife and ways to help them continue to thrive.

Understanding your local river - Sat 7 June, 10am-4pm - St Mary's Parish Hall, Ufford IP13 6DS
Understand how you and your community group can become champions for your local river.

EVENT Wilder Communities Day - Sat 11 Oct, 9.30am-3.30pm - The Food Museum, Stowmarket IP14 1DL

A day of talks, walks & workshops to help you boost wildlife in your community. An opportunity to share good practice and network with others.

Events will be run by SWT's Wilder Landscapes team and habitat specialists.

WEBINAR Marketing & social media - Tues 3 June | 7pm-8.30pm - Via Zoom
Encouraging community support for your wildlife group is key to its success, join us to discover ways to communicate most effectively.

Please book online: suffolkwildlifetrust.org/wilder-communities. All £20pp. Webinar free.

Your editor attended a previous "Understanding your local river" course and was quite inspired.

SWT also have two water vole field ID skills sessions coming up at Carlton Marshes and Lackford Lakes. These will be a short session in the field to learn how to identify water vole field signs. If you sign up, you will also be sent a link to an online video introduction to water vole ecology to watch before the field session (see links below). These water vole courses are part of a regional push to get more up to date records of water vole activity in East Anglia after the recent successful mink eradication project in the region. This training will help upskill and encourage members of the public to look out for water vole in their local area, so they can possibly submit one of sightings and or/ take part in [The National Water Vole Monitoring programme](#). This will allow us build more of a picture about how water vole are doing in Suffolk and help tell their story.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/water-vole-field-skills-training-session-tickets-1308338237889?aff=oddtcreator>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/water-vole-field-skills-training-session-tickets-1309974401699?aff=oddtcreator>

These skills sessions are free.

For more information please contact:

community.networks@suffolkwildlifetrust.org or @suffolkwildlifetrust

We are short of information on Water Voles in the Black Bourn and tributaries. We have a number of WV rafts available for riparian owners or those with permission to install and regularly inspect them.

Sizewell News

https://issuu.com/sizewellc/docs/sizewell_c_monthly_update_april_2025?fr=xIAE9_6d4Bq

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