



Parish Councillor Network Meeting

Thursday 12th November 2020

Improving the biodiversity of your community

Agenda

- ❑ Introductions and background – Elaine O’Leary, NACRE
- ❑ What is biodiversity and how to improve it – Jenni Hedges, NACRE
- ❑ Community energy schemes – Harry Mellor, South Northants Action on Climate and Chair Easton Neston PC
- ❑ What members are doing to improve their biodiversity
- ❑ The Hunsbury Hill Farm project – Richard Hollingum, Trustee NACRE
- ❑ Questions
- ❑ NACRE support
- ❑ Useful sites



Community Resilience

- ▶ Community resilience is a key topic at the moment
- ▶ **Community resilience** is the sustained ability of a community to use available resources (energy, communication, transportation, food, etc.) to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations (e.g. economic collapse to global catastrophic risks). This allows for the adaptation and growth of a community after disaster strikes. Communities that are resilient are able to minimize any disaster, making the return to normal life as effortless as possible. By implementing a community resilience plan, a community can come together and overcome any disaster, while rebuilding physically and economically. [*Wikipedia definition*]
- ▶ Many parishes looking at developing community emergency plans
- ▶ Communities Prepared and ACRE published a [new guide to rural community resilience](#)
- ▶ Biodiversity and green development of a community can play a key part in this resilience



Lessen the impact of climate change on your village/become carbon neutral



- ▶ **Climate change** occurs when changes in Earth's climate system result in new weather patterns that remain in place for an extended period of time. This length of time can be as short as a few decades to as long as millions of years.
- ▶ **Carbon neutrality**, or having a **net zero carbon footprint**, refers to achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions by balancing carbon emissions with carbon removal (often through carbon offsetting) or simply eliminating carbon emissions altogether (the transition to the "post-carbon economy").
- ▶ About three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions that are attributed to humans come from burning fossil fuel
- ▶ [Northamptonshire Climate Change Strategy 2020 - 2023](#)

Ways of helping

- ▶ Recycle and reuse
- ▶ Reduce fossil fuel use
- ▶ Carbon off setting – if net emissions equal zero, then carbon neutral
- ▶ Encourage use of carbon calculator - save money!
- ▶ Develop a environmental strategy for your community
 - ❑ As part of your community resilience plan
 - ❑ Include flood awareness – NCC Flood Awareness toolkit at:
<https://www.floodtoolkit.com/>
- ▶ Change people's attitude to their gardens – not all insects are bad!
- ▶ Increase biodiversity
- ▶ Encourage energy efficiency measures in homes



Biodiversity and your community

Jennifer Hedges

Rural Officer, Northamptonshire ACRE

What is Biodiversity?

- ▶ The term 'Biodiversity' describes the variety of plant and animal life in a particular geographical location or habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.



Why is it important?

- ▶ A quarter of all species on earth are now at risk of extinction because of climate change and habitat loss.
- ▶ Spending time in green spaces or bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical health.
- ▶ A healthy biodiverse environment controls pest species, and helps pollinate our crops.
- ▶ Losing species can have a knock on effect on the whole ecosystem, causing a chain reaction, we don't fully understand the impact that could have on us as a species at the moment!



What to consider?

- ▶ What green spaces do you have in your village? Think about village greens, pocket parks, church yards and gardens.
- ▶ A biodiverse village has lots of different habitats, ideally that are linked together. A good variety of habitats will support lots of different species. Consider hedgerows, street trees, woodlands, meadows, roadside verges, water courses and ponds.
- ▶ Think about a whole village approach, how could you include the whole village? Look at holding a bioblitz and coordinate your efforts! Hedgehog street is a great example of getting the whole community involved.



What to consider...con



- ▶ It doesn't have to cost money! Simple actions can make a big difference! cutting hedgerows after the berries have been eaten by the birds, cutting roadside verges after they have flowered.
- ▶ Consider the 'value' of your habitats, it can be tempting to plant trees on an area of grassland but wildflower meadows are the fastest decreasing habitat in the UK, 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s.
- ▶ A wildflower meadow can support up to 40 species per square metre. Many of our grasslands today are improved and species poor.

Useful links

- ▶ This website is about orchard projects- <https://www.theorchardproject.org.uk/about-us/>
- ▶ Also some basics of caring for fruit trees here: <https://treecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Guidelines-for-orchard-planning-and-planting.pdf>
- ▶ Historic Species records by location- <https://nbn.org.uk/the-national-biodiversity-network/archive-information/nbn-gateway/>
- ▶ Northamptonshire's Biodiversity action plan - has information about priority habitats and species locally. New one due 2021!
<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/archaeology-biodiversity-and-landscape/documents/PDF%20Documents/Northamptonshire%20BAP%202015-2020.pdf>



Funding

- ▶ Funding for conservation only projects is not popular with funders- you need to pitch your project from a community angle!
- ▶ The woodland trust has a free tree scheme:
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>
- ▶ Funding for trees available if you link in the school
<https://treecouncil.org.uk/take-action/grants-for-trees/>
- ▶ Funding for parks and green spaces (closed until October due to COVID) <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/our-work/landscapes-parks-nature/public-parks-urban-green-spaces>
- ▶ Daventry District Council has climate action grants of £1k:
<https://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/your-council/news/1000-climate-action-grants-available-29-10-20/>



How Northants ACRE can help

Elaine O'Leary

Northamptonshire ACRE

We can help

- ▶ We have strong green credentials and ethos as reflected in the HHF project
- ▶ Becoming a member of Northamptonshire ACRE at £35 for the year:
 - ❑ Provides discounts on services including biodiversity audits
 - ❑ Gives access to other Parish Councillor network meetings
 - ❑ Be involved in the HHF development and have your say
 - ❑ Can attend AGM on 25th November 2020 at 10am to hear more: email Natasha.JimenezSanchez@northantsacre.org.uk to obtain Zoom link



Future training

Communities Prepared training

This is based on a nationwide community resilience programme, which equips communities with the knowledge and tools to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from, emergencies such as flooding, snow, other severe weather events and utilities failures

Managing green spaces in your community

Put into practice the theory of managing your green spaces and improving the biodiversity.

In addition we can offer:

A green audit of the biodiversity of your parish

NACRE provides a chargeable service to review the biodiversity of your parish with recommendations as to how to improve it



Green directory

- ▶ Directory of all the different green initiatives that parishes may be using eg.
 - ❑ Rain water collecting on allotments
 - ❑ Wildflower meadows
 - ❑ Large scale energy projects
 - ❑ Green transport schemes
 - ❑ Swift Boxes
 - ❑ And more
- ▶ Will send out a survey early next year to find out what everyone is doing
- ▶ Also collecting details from villages previously entered Northants Village Awards
- ▶ Directory will be available to members





Useful sites relating to green measures

Useful sites



- ▶ Community orchards:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11466/1973262.pdf
- ▶ Street Lighting: interest free funding for public sector lighting:
<https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/street-lighting>
- ▶ Rural community energy fund for large scale renewable projects:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-community-energy-fund>
- ▶ Zero waste shopping at Flore: <https://coffeeandrefills.com/>
- ▶ Street trees: <https://www.facebook.com/saveourstreettrees/>
- ▶ Right Tree, Right Place: <http://www.richtrees4cc.org.uk/members/Search.aspx>

Useful sites...con

- ▶ Soil mapping: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/>
- ▶ Could sign up to the [Charter for Trees, Woods and People](#)
- ▶ [Centre for Alternative Technology](#) - an educational charity dedicated to researching and communicating positive solutions for environmental change
- ▶ Environmental sustainable network with membership – [Fit for the Future](#)
- ▶ [Nene Valley Catchment Partnership](#) – covers the River Nene catchment area
- ▶ NALC's work on Climate Change - <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/climate-change>
- ▶ Ideas from other Parish Councils: NALC's [Points of Light 2020](#) publication
- ▶ If you have a pub or take away in your village, used oil can be collected - <https://www.olleco.co.uk/uco-collections>



Next Meeting – rural food access

If you haven't done so, why not take part in our '[Access to Rural Food in Northamptonshire](#)' survey

If you have suggestions for topics that you would like to discuss at future meetings please email details to acre@northantsacre.org.uk

www.northantsacre.org.uk



acre@northantsacre.org.uk



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