

Update on Greenprint Forum activities from Jane Healey, Chair of the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum

As the origins of the Greenprint Forum were in the former Suffolk Coastal district, and we are still in the process of establishing more links with those involved in complementary action in the north of East Suffolk, a brief run through of our achievements since our establishment in 1996 to inform the former Suffolk Coastal District Council's Local Agenda 21 was deemed to be useful, and these include:

- The [Suffolk Hedgerow survey](#) led by late founding member Guy Ackers which saw 2000 volunteers surveying 44,984 field boundaries across Suffolk;
- Supporting the East Coast Carbon Efficiency project: 200 small businesses were visited by Groundwork Suffolk and provided with reports prioritising energy efficiency measures. 59 Businesses received grants;
- Instigating the [Sky Lantern and Mass Balloon Ban](#) through event hire on East Suffolk Council land;
- Embarking on a [Plastic Action Campaign](#) running since 2018, partly funded by the AONB, establishing a network of Plastic Action Champion volunteers to act as ambassadors for the movement helping others in their networks to reduce their consumption of single use stuff, and commissioning Groundwork to run an East Suffolk Yellow Fish project to address the issue of pollution entering the natural watercourses via surface water drains which achieved a 16 percentage point increase in the level of awareness of the link between surface water drains and aquatic ecosystems.

Presentations

Cllr James Mallinder, Chair of ESC Environment Task Group



James started his speech with an inspired explanation about how we all had a choice when it came to the environment. Individuals have a choice to make better environmental decisions and governments and world leaders have a choice to make changes in behaviour.

He explained he is working closely with the leader of East Suffolk to develop and deliver a clear environmental vision, of small changes that cumulatively can make a big difference over time while making sure all decisions will be viewed with the environment taken into consideration. However the environment, business and growth are compatible – it isn't an either/or decision – and our environment policies will be consistent to supporting our strategy business plan. The natural environment and development is not a binary relationship but must and should work together, often development is a positive using less resources, presenting opportunities to reduce the small carbon footprint and use resources more efficiently than old ways of doing things.

James explained as a direct result of declaring a climate emergency last year a task group has been established, which he chairs, to focus East Suffolk not only in reaching the target of

carbon neutrality by 2030 but to assist in threading the environment through east suffolk policies.

Environmentally we need to focus on education, leading by exemplary practices and the introduction of practical new policies. There is much to be done and we need to make sure we don't just look at the effects of our behaviour but also look at the causes of the problems and try and work with all groups to develop behaviour changes.

He finished reiterating the council was determine to do something until we got it right and to do so consistently.

Tom Bryant, Founder of TFB Consulting

We were treated to a lively and entertaining presentation by Tom whose experiences trekking the jungle of Borneo and spending time with indigenous tribespeople expanded his own understanding of sustainability which he expressed in terms of the three pillars of People, Planet, and Prosperity. In his presentation he explored the role of community groups in educating and raising awareness amongst those in our spheres of influence, and how businesses should pursue "profit with purpose" and recognise that sustainability is increasingly becoming regarded as good business sense as stakeholders such as employees and shareholders expect to know what the business stands for and clients and consumers are increasingly actively seeking to do business with companies that take are environmentally aware, are transparent and have a social conscience and how it is thus important for businesses to communicate their sustainability narrative through their website and social media channels. He emphasised that when businesses consider the costs of becoming more sustainable, they need to consider the costs going forward of not becoming more sustainable, such as damage to reputation, loss of business and loss of opportunities.

He reminded us that in order to move forward positively we don't all need to know everything, and that rather than needing a handful of us doing everything perfectly we need all of us to improve what they do – we all need to "be the change".

Peter Aldous, MP for Waveney

The local MP told us that he thought that the environment and climate change was the most important issue facing the UK Government and the world and that if it does not dither it may be possible for the Government to achieve its net zero target earlier than 2050. He also told us that he would like to see the Government raise its ambitions further to become a global leader and that it should use the forthcoming COP26 summit in Glasgow as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to show leadership.

He went on to provide an update on progress of the Environment Bill, Agriculture Bill, and Fisheries Bill through Parliament.

He told us that the Environment Bill is intended to uphold and strengthen environmental protections post-Brexit and embed the polluter-pays principle through Government policy. However he considers that some aspects of the Bill need strengthening and he would like to see a commitment to the principle of non-regression on environmental protection laws.

Peter told us that the Agriculture Bill would replace the subsidy on land with rewards for environmental enhancement and be underpinned by the principle of public money for public good, whilst the Fisheries Bill would promote sustainable fishing, outlaw electro-pulse fishing, and transfer powers to control access to UK fisheries to the UK post-Brexit and that he hopes that the Bill presents an opportunity to revitalise Lowestoft.

Karen Thomas, Head of Coastal Partnership East

Our coastline is the fastest-eroding in Europe and Karen emphasised the importance of partnership working to address the challenges faced by coastal communities. In addition to the force of erosion, our constantly changing coastline is also subject to the effects of rising sea levels caused by thermal expansion of the oceans and melting glaciers and sea ice both resulting from global warming, and isostatic readjustment as the landmass of Britain continues to rebalance following the retreat of the ice sheets after the last Ice Age with northern Britain rising whilst southern Britain including our coastline sinking.

In response to these issues Karen told us that building our way out isn't the answer everywhere – and that we need to remember that where it is appropriate there are still ongoing maintenance costs – and also that the natural process of erosion can bring benefits too particularly for biodiversity, tourism and archaeology.

The need to manage adaptation to a changing coastline without risking blighting areas affected is key and that with strong local partnerships in place, local groups have been helping Coastal Partnership East to identify local priorities.

Ian Rowlands, Director of Incredible Oceans

Ian was our final speaker who helped us to understand that where other people are coming from in terms of their perspectives and motivations can vary and how this can affect the success or otherwise of our attempts to communicate effectively with them on the subject of climate change and the need for action. He reminded us that facts alone do not sway everyone – many people will have an emotional reaction to the issue, and base their responses on pre-existing convictions which are very hard to shift – and that as communicators we do well to recognise and remember that it can be hard for us to change our own minds as well.

Ian explained how reactions can be negative in different ways, covering confusion, anger, and the “whatever” response, and how the linguistic bases of the words we use can influence how successful the message can be with words of Anglo-Saxon origin being more widely

understood than words of Latin origin – which in itself poses a bit of a challenge in communicating an issue in which so much science is involved given that the language of science is overwhelmingly derived from Latin.

He also gave us an interesting perspective on how society can be categorised into settlers, prospectors, and pioneers. The priorities of settlers tend to be motivated by factors such as security, family, and a sense of community; prospectors by wealth, material and position; and pioneers by ethics and what they see as “the right thing to do”, and that this information can be useful to us in selecting the way we frame our messages. For example, in the case of promoting solar PV, a settler may be persuaded by the security of energy supply and reduced dependence on the grid along with long-term cost savings, a prospector may be tempted by the enhanced status in the neighbourhood conferred by being seen to own the right stuff and being successful enough to afford it, whilst for a pioneer the environmental benefit might be sufficient motivation. We do need to recognise however that any one person’s place in any of these categories is not absolute – we may have aspects of more than one category – and that it is not fixed for life, changes in circumstances can result in a shift in priorities and therefore shift in category – and we of course need to be cautious about putting people in boxes – but having an awareness that motivations vary can be very useful as if we find that one appeal does not work, we can try another.



Slides from the presentations by Jane Healey, Tom Bryant, Karen Thomas and Ian Rowlands are available via our Events page online: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum/events/past-events/> (James Mallinder and Peter Aldous did not use slides)

Open-Floor Conversation

The second part of the event was an open-floor conversation, chaired by Sue Hall, intended to explore obstacles to action and ways in which we might overcome them (I nearly used the word “surmount” but having listened to Ian’s presentation changed my mind!)

During the conversation some obstacles to climate action were raised:

- Structural/systemic barriers prevent those of us who want to act from acting and provide an excuse for those reluctant to act.
- Attempting to lobby decision makers and big business is frustrating and can make us feel like we are getting nowhere.
- The emphasis on growth conflicts with the need to protect the environment.
- Planning rules limit the ability of those living in Conservation Areas to “green” their homes.
- Lack of legal framework restricts local councils’ ability to make radical changes.
- Lack of Government ownership of, and direction of responses to, the issue.
- Processes in local councils are too slow to enable the urgent change we need NOW.
- Some residents perceive our efforts to persuade them of the need to act as being “patronising”.
- The EV charging infrastructure is too confusing, too many different operators that EV users need to subscribe to.
- Lack of skilled engineers in the region to enable the shift to renewable energy systems happen.
- Lack of guidelines to encourage broader public participation.

And lots of ideas were raised too including:

- Use of the CCAN (Climate Change Action Now) model pioneered in Framlingham as a template for other communities to replicate locally.
- Use of the model of the network of Plastic Action Champions to establish community champions for other types of environmental action.
- Collective lobbying by Greenprint, ESC, Town and Parish Councils, grass roots group to add weight to our voice on mutual goals.
- 10p Carbon Levy on car parking fares in ESC car parks to reinvest in sustainable transport. *All present were invited to indicate whether they would oppose this proposal – no opposition was heard.*

- Use of planning rules to encourage or require new EV charging points to be open access.
- A tag on every household's wheelie bin once a year to advise residents of actions they can take.
- Review of the Warm Homes Healthy People scheme to transition from fossil-fuelled heating to renewables.
- A working group(s) of nominated reps from grass roots groups across the wider Greenprint membership and ESC to focus on developing ideas in actions.

What next?

It came across very clearly that those present all appreciated the need for action and felt very strongly that more needed to be done urgently.

The East Suffolk Greenprint Forum's Steering Group will review all of the feedback arising from this conversation to attempt to identify opportunities to move things forward. All of this feedback will also be shared with East Suffolk Council's Environment Task Group to help inform their work. Progress where possible will be reported to all members of the Greenprint Forum once tangible actions have been developed.

The Greenprint Forum Steering Group are firmly of the view that in order to move forward effectively to achieve the more sustainable future that all present clearly want to move towards, this requires mutually supportive and constructive partnership working by those who are willing to "own" the problem collectively and focus on solutions. We are all part of the problem – we can all be part of the solution.

Acknowledgements



Above, L-R: Ian Rowlands; James Mallinder; Tom Byrant; Peter Aldous; Karen Thomas

In addition to the speakers, the Greenprint Forum and the East Suffolk Council Environment Task Group wish to thank all attendees for contributing their time and input to this very interesting and lively evening – we could not have run this event without your cooperation.

With special thanks to all stallholders listed below for engaging with, advising and inspiring attendees during the networking session:

- Climate Associates Ltd www.climate-associates.co.uk
- Coastal Partnership East <https://www.coasteast.org.uk/>
- East Suffolk Greenprint Forum <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum/>
- Friends of the Earth www.scoastalfoe.com
- Greener Fram & Fram Climate Action Now (Fram CCAN) <http://greenerfram.co.uk/wp/>
- Groundwork East <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/hubs/east/>

- Lowestoft Climate Action Group
<https://www.lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk/events/lowestoft-community-action-group>
- Plastic Action Champions <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum/plastic-action/plastic-action-champions-and-volunteering/>
- Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/> provide volunteering opportunities for those who want to get involved for nature and also grant funding for grass-roots conservation projects.
- Suffolk Waste Partnership <https://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/> Confused about what can and can't be recycled? This website is most helpful; check out the A-Z.
- Transition Woodbridge <https://transitionwoodbridge.org.uk/>



Inspired to make your home or business greener? Here are some useful links:

<http://www.beeanglia.org/> Business Energy Efficiency Anglia – free support for businesses looking to reduce their carbon footprint and grants for businesses to implement energy saving measures

<http://www.greensuffolk.org/at-home/energy/sea/> Suffolk Energy Action is a service that provides funding and advice for energy efficiency home improvements such as loft & cavity wall insulation and heating improvements.

Appendix 1 – record of input from delegates during open-floor conversation

Proposals

- The Greenprint Forum began by proposing use of the existing model of Plastic Action Champions, who support the movement reducing dependence on single use plastic, to tackle other climate related issues. Air pollution champions, for example, could include some of the same people who are already plastic action champions.
 - **ACTION – ESC will communicate to all Town and Parish Councils relevant information about how communities can help tackle issues such as excessive idling and the Greenprint Forum will relay this.**
- Climate Change Action Now could be a model for a Bottom-Up solution which communities across the district and beyond could adopt. Greener Fram have started a CCAN group Fram CCNA – the approach is a positive one, to recognise the following:
 - we're all addicted to fossil fuels and are therefore all part of problem,
 - all of us have some of the answers but none of us have them all,
 - all of us can do something NOW and we shouldn't worry about what we can't do but get on with what we can do,
 - we can all get the word out through our networks and get people doing it.
 - **ACTION – the Greenprint Forum Steering Group will attend a meeting of Fram CCAN in the near future to investigate the potential for promoting the application of this model elsewhere**
- Individual lobbying and acts such as leaving excess packaging at the tills can be frustrating and seem to result in little action, so suggestion made to collectively collate a list actions that we want to see from our MPs/Government, local Councils, and big business, and lobby collectively to amplify our voice.
 - **ACTION – the Greenprint Steering Group will write a letter directed at County Council and MPs/Government which we will invite all delegates attending this event, all Greenprint Forum members, all Town and Parish Councils in East Suffolk, the ESC Environment Task Group, and ESC to add their support to.**
- For ESC to disinvest in fossil fuels and encourage others to do the same.
 - RESPONSE FROM ESC CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES COUNCILLOR MAURICE COOK FOLLOWS:

“The majority of our investments are with other local authorities and UK Banks. We also have investments with the CCLA Property Fund (£1 billion property fund split between over 350+ local authorities) and the CCLA Multi-Asset Fund which is a mixture of different investment funds (cash, gilts, property, equities etc.) and this is the fund that is hard to monitor. CCLA stands for Churches, Charities and Local Authorities and these are the only organisations that can place investments with them.

“We are currently looking to deposit money with Barclays Bank’s Green Deposit account which links the deposits to a wide range of projects in pursuit of the transition to a lower

carbon economy. A quarterly Green Deposit Impact report will be available to all deposit holders.

“This Council will not actively seek to place investments into fossil fuels etc. and we always look for green alternatives.

“We are currently looking to deposit money with a Green Deposit account which links the deposits to a wide range of projects in pursuit of the transition to a lower carbon economy. A quarterly Green Deposit Impact report will be available to all deposit holders.”

- Suggestion made for ESC to use the planning process to prevent more charging points being installed unless they are open-access, to overcome the barrier to ownership and usage of EVs of the lack of interoperability of myriad EV charging point providers.

- **RESPONSE FROM ESC PLANNING TEAM FOLLOWS:**

The Suffolk Coastal area’s existing Local Plan is the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (July 2013), the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD (2017) and the Felixstowe Area Action Plan DPD (2017) as well as the saved policies from the 2001 Local Plan. A new Suffolk Coastal Local Plan is at advanced stage and is currently going through its Examination during which the independent Inspector will be considering whether the plan is ‘sound’. The Waveney Local Plan was adopted in March 2019.

The existing Suffolk Coastal Local Plan does not explicitly mention charging facilities for vehicles, but supports travel plans and a range of measures to reduce the use of private cars. The emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan contains section 7 on Transport which seeks to support increasing use of low-emission vehicles. Policy SCLP7.2 Parking Proposals and Standards (page 124) supports development with vehicle parking that take opportunities to provide vehicle charging points and associated ancillary infrastructure. The supporting text (page 122-123) acknowledges the increase of low-emission vehicles as a reliable form of transport, the expected wider uptake of such vehicles, and supports and encourages their infrastructure needs, such as passive and active electric charging points.

Waveney Local Plan contains a section on Sustainable Transport (page 235) that supports the use of low emission vehicles and electric charging points. Developers are encouraged to provide each new house with on plot parking with at least one electrical charging point, and to provide ducting and electricity supply to communal parking spaces to enable future installation of charging points. Policy WLP8.21 Sustainable Transport supports development that includes facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

The emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and adopted Waveney Local Plan provide the vision and policies for East Suffolk up to 2036. Technological advances may be made during the lifetime of the Local Plans that require a flexible approach to low-emission vehicles and charging points. Whether electrical charging points are for private or public use will depend on the type and location of the development.

Full responses to all of the following proposals will be provided in a further update in early May 2020.

- Can Greenprint provide scrutiny on expenditure decision making processes of SCC, ESC, parish/town councils.
- Those of us who own cars tend not to object to service bills including an environmental disposal charge added for things like old tyres and fluids. Therefore would motorists mind a 10p carbon offset charge on car parking charges which could be reinvested into sustainable travel alternatives?
- Suggestion made for ESC to review the Warm Homes Healthy People scheme to move away from fossil-fuelled central heating to favour renewable forms of heating e.g. solar thermal water heating, ground source/air source heat pumps.
- We need to make the transition away from universal car ownership, what about Zip Car schemes for borrowing cars, could the Council purchase an EV for people to borrow on a Zip car type scheme to help people who don't have a car, and might persuade those who currently have a car to consider giving theirs up. JM will look into scheme in Norwich run by the council but pointed out that most successful car club schemes need someone in the community to be that ambassador and "own" the scheme.
- Suggestion to distribute a tag on every wheelie bin this year telling all householders the ten things they can do to make a difference.
- We need a working group out of this. This could be made up of nominated community representatives from the Greenprint membership and from ESC to focus on the suggested solutions above, and other suggestions, and make them happen. Does ESC have a role in training engineers for which there is a perceived lack in the region, we will need these in the future to build the infrastructure needed for projects which will be key for carbon neutrality.
- Greenprint Forum public events should be held more often.

Remarks and obstacles

- We need to push home the need to act. System choice is what we need to act upon, but we need to do the smaller individual actions as well.
- There is wide support from those present of individual local action but we also need structural level changes.
- We still feel powerless and want bigger change and action NOW but any effort by councils to use the tools at their disposal to make progress where they are able to should be recognised and applauded. All in the room and in the movement should be supportive of council actions done wherever possible within their framework.
- We all have a responsibility to use our voices to influence change to the structure – the desire for change has to come from grass roots. We all need to set an example but

we need support from all levels and ESC is seen as the crucial link so pressure for change must also come from the District Council.

- Comment from an ESC Cllr we have woken up as a Council to the need to respond. We are trying as ESC to do what we can but we want Government to introduce emergency legislation to support us in this and to help us go further which we would expect if the Government was really serious about this issue. We need the legal and political power behind us to act.
- If we change our personal purchasing choices we have power as individuals too if we all make those choices collectively e.g. not buying newspapers.
- Lack of leadership from the top.
- Every Council needs to implement x, y, z in 2020.
- Growth conflicts with environment.
- Lack of guidelines to encourage broader public participation.
- Lack of Government ownership of, and direction of responses to, the issue.
- Lack of clarity and facts to help the public know what to do.
- Buck passing by government – if the government says that councils are responsible for domestic energy efficiency, where is the resource to make this happen?
- We must acknowledge the scale and complexity of the issue. We have the opportunity of making the right choices, let's exercise those choices whether through the cars and food we purchase and the travel choices we make.
- A shame we were able to listen to our MP but didn't have the opportunity to speak back to him.
- We need a bigger team.
- Governance needs to change its way of doing things.
- Lack of funding to work in the community.
- Comment from an ESC Cllr – community action isn't enough, we absolutely need the council to support it. The problem is the council doesn't have the clout to make it happen. It's frustrating but we must try to overcome negative emotions and anger and work positively for change, and where we cannot do it ourselves we need to demand it but should do so collectively—Greenprint Parish and Town Councils, community groups, ESC, all of us together. This change needs to happen in next few months, it is that urgent.

Specific issues requiring feedback from ESC

- Concern was raised about the nylon sacks on Thorpeness beach comprising part of sea defences which are degrading and leading to plastic pollution. **A public consultation with Thorpeness residents has been carried out to seek solutions which are needed before the properties fall into the sea – ESC cannot simply remove the defences without an alternative plan in place, ESC are aware of and dissatisfied with the bag fragmentation and are monitoring and in process of removing bags as they break up.**

- Why is ESC not carrying out air quality monitoring for particulates PM2.5? **ESC has specific legal responsibilities to monitor Air Quality. These are spelled out in detail by guidance from central Government. (DEFRA). Those responsibilities are accompanied by obligations to act on the results of that monitoring where the results exceed certain parameters. ESC has no resources, obligations or powers to monitor, assess or act in respect of Air Quality beyond that. Our extensive statutory activities in respect of Air Quality Monitoring are reported annually in detail. (These reports are available online via: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/environmental-protection/air-quality/>)**

PM2.5s, as pollutants go, travel very large distances (hundreds of miles) which means that measuring them (to an accuracy determined by the depth of our pockets) may well give us information about them, but with no real prospect of being able to identify the source or to do anything with the information. Central Government manage the national effort to monitor PM2.5s and DEFRA publish maps which show the results of that modelling across the UK <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/laqm-background-maps?year=2017>. PM2.5s are not readily controlled by local actions. National (and international) strategies to control sources of PM2.5 pollution provides the only real means of controlling this pollutant. It is reassuring to see the beginnings of tighter national controls over sources of PM2.5 with the recent announcements concerning the phasing-out of internal combustion engines in private cars and restrictions over the supply of coal and unseasoned wood for domestic burning.

- Concern was expressed at the decision re Coronation Wood in Sizewell and the destruction of 10x TPO protected trees in Woodbridge. **The full Arboricultural Impact Assessment can be viewed here: <http://publicaccessdocuments.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01474197.pdf> . The full portal entry for documents relating to Sizewell B relocated facilities is as follows: <https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=externalDocuments&keyVal=PQ5NVGQXJJ100>**
- Concern was expressed at perceived lack of transparency of the ESC Environment Task Group (three cross-party members of the Task Group were in attendance). **The Task Group will be presenting proposals to the ESC Cabinet for the Cabinet to consider implementing, therefore any proposals arising from the Task Group will only be implemented following the proper scrutiny and democratic accountability as would any other decisions made by Cabinet. Information about the composition and work of the Environment Task Group is available on the Council's website: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-environment-task-group/>**

- Obstacle of making home more energy efficient in a Building Conservation Area was raised e.g. solar PV. NOTE: **Guidance to those living in a Building Conservation Area who wish to install solar PV is available here:** <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/design-and-conservation/installing-solar-photovoltaics-in-a-conservation-area/> ESC is in process of working up guidance on planning to make sure it includes whatever more can be done that is positive even if non-binding.
- Aldeburgh Clean and Green have experienced the obstacle of being perceived by residents of being patronising and also resistance from some authorities for example they suggested replacing open topped litter bins 2 years ago to reduce windblown litter. **ESC are aware of the bin situation in Aldeburgh and are proactively working with Clean and Green, Norse and the local town council to find a solution.**