

## Community Planning Workshop for Climate Action and Nature Recovery

An interparish 'Green infrastructure' workshop took place in Waldringfield on 30 August 2023. The Town and Parish Councils of Brightwell, Foxhall and Purdis Farm, Hemley, Kesgrave, Martlesham, Melton, Newbourne, Rushmere St Andrew, Ufford, Waldringfield and Woodbridge took part. The workshop was facilitated by Peter Hobson, Professor of Biodiversity, Conservation and Sustainability at Writtle University and part funded by the Greenprint Forum.

Other representatives/stakeholders included staff and councillors from East Suffolk Council, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, The Suffolk Tree Warden Network, Taylor Wimpey, The Deben Estuary Partnership, Deben Soundings, The Forestry Commission, The Greenprint Forum, The National Farmers Union, The Suffolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, The Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Upper Deben Farm and university students.

This was the first workshop of its kind in Suffolk, the only other to have taken place in Essex in 2022. The idea is to roll out similar workshops across the country.

The aim of the workshop was to enable effective communication across partnerships with local councillors, who are at the front line of neighbourhood and community engagement, at the forefront. Delegates were asked to follow the steps involved in the 'MARISCO' planning process [www.marisco.training](http://www.marisco.training). The process involved rating levels of criticality and manageability of threats and contributing factors and producing time bounded and target driven work packages for new strategies.



Some of the issues raised by councillors and others included water scarcity and drought, water pollution and a desire to influence new development, the requirement for more hedges and trees, greater collaboration between parish groups and the farming community, surveying the state of our green spaces, connectivity of wildlife corridors, more involvement in citizen science projects, enforcement of laws and rules surrounding dog walking and fouling, planting for regeneration.



It was an intense and productive day but the refinement of what was achieved is still to come. It is hoped that there will be a follow up meeting for the councillors who attended within the next few months. By early next year, it is hoped we would have not only progress at individual council level, (perhaps movement towards a more refined environmental policy and updated Neighbourhood Plan), but also a joint statement to present to both SCC and ESC. The workshop was evidence that parishes working together can be more effective in feeding policy at a higher level. It was an invaluable opportunity to form links with policy makers and to show that Parish Councils get things done!

*Report by Jane Hall, Martlesham Parish Council*

