

Collaborating with young people on environment and climate change challenges

3 March 2023

An interactive session co-produced by the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum and students from Benjamin Britten High School (Lowestoft) and Sir John Leman High School (Beccles), and enabled by East Suffolk Council's Communities Team.

It was held as part of the Community Partnerships Annual Forum on 3 March 2023 at Trinity Park, the overall theme of which was "Bringing Ideas to Life".

This session was a follow up to Youth Takeover Action Day held online in November 2022, in which students from eight schools and colleges in East Suffolk articulated in that peer-to-peer setting their vision for a positive environment to help share ideas between schools. We know that young people from East Suffolk are concerned about our environment.



At this workshop, students reiterated some of the ideas that had been put forward during Youth Takeover Day (see the presentation that the students delivered during this workshop for a summary of the ideas that they shared: [PowerPoint Presentation \(eastsuffolk.gov.uk\)](https://eastsuffolk.gov.uk)). So the 'what?' and 'why?' have been provided by the young people but what about the 'how'?

In keeping with the wider theme of the Annual Forum of which this workshop was a part, the students then discussed directly with delegates how we might work together with young people to deliver innovative community solutions to pressing issues like this and continue the conversation.

A total of 41 delegates were in attendance. Representatives of the following organisations had registered for this workshop:

- Active Suffolk
- Anglia Care Trust
- Beccles Town Council
- Benjamin Britten High School, Lowestoft
- Bromeswell Parish Council
- Bungay Town Council
- Coastal Partnership East
- Community Action Suffolk
- Dennington Parish Council
- East Suffolk Council
- East Suffolk Greenprint Forum Steering Group
- Framlingham Town Council
- Get Suffolk Reading (National Literacy Trust)
- Hacheston Parish Council
- Involve Active Ltd
- Just 42
- Level Two Youth Project, Felixstowe
- Leiston Town Council
- Parham Parish Council
- Probation Service
- Samphire Homes
- Saxtead Parish Council
- Sir John Leman High School, Beccles
- Southwold Town Council
- Suffolk Climate Change Partnership
- Suffolk County Council
- Trimley St Martin Parish Council
- Yoxford Parish Council



East Suffolk Councillors Mark Jepson and Letitia Smith were also in attendance.

Key points from the discussion, facilitated by Emily Knock (volunteer member of the Greenprint Forum Steering Group) were as follows:

- The 'Green Day' idea in schools was popular as a way to try and educate and engage around the environment in schools
- Split bins was also something that was popular and there could be partnership working with Norse around this
- A lot of discussion about how free things could be donated to help young people with their projects
- Communication techniques to continue the conversation included social media, eye-catching posters and forums to discuss issues and ideas and provide updates

Pledges made by delegates were as follows:

- ESC – to continue to connect people, for example through the Greenprint Forum, the voluntary network of people and organisations committed or aspiring to environmental action in the community in east Suffolk
- ESC – create more forums / comms lines to keep the conversation and ideas going!
- ESC – to take feedback from the workshop to the Greenprint Forum Steering Group, to scope out a potential environmental project for schools and parish councils, including aspects around organic sustainable gardening and growing (a la "Field to Fork") and composting
- Probation Service can offer free labour to help with tree planting, preparing areas for planting, building bins, and potentially more;
- CAS – work with Mens Shed to create bird boxes for schools, using reclaimed/free materials
- Beccles Town Council – to enable the conversation between young people and Town Councillors to promote these issues
- Bungay Town Council – to develop a green day with Bungay schools & the local Community Partnership



Appendix 1 – summary of key points from table discussions

Table 1:

- What's achievable:
 - Split bins
 - Wildflower planting
 - Reusable water bottles
- Fundamental contract changes (waste, catering)
- Promoting sale of reusable drink containers
- School council as a forum to find solutions
- YP taking ownership of planting
- East Suffolk in Bloom
- Young people maintaining planting
- Collaboration with other local schools
- Promoting/training younger year groups – create ethos/legacy/culture
- Encourage community awareness
- School councils

Table 2:

- Most deliverable:
 - Green day
- How:
 - Trial day and timing (different years/timings)
 - Make sure all can benefit from added value – e.g. DT lessons across years
 - Cross curricular – involve maths, DT, English (writing poems, letters, proposals) – incentives
 - Feedback learning/evaluation
 - Flowers attract nature and health spaces
- Community sustainability – link in with Forest schools and other partners including Men's Sheds etc, and engage volunteers
- Barriers – time and money
- Engage young people – easier tasks – plant flowers, skills days (Yr7), many have siblings so used to communicating to younger audience
- Other thoughts:
 - More people engaged more value vs proven to continue
 - Provide evidence – photo books, presentations
 - Benefits: environment/mental health
 - Create a plan from Yr7 onwards and review
 - Consider maintenance and involving others – parents
- Science – biodiversity survey, soil analysis, different species viability
- Doable now

- Planting
- Tidying up school grounds
- Maintaining social areas
- Replant terrace pots/discourage rubbish
- Go Green involved in ESC grounds – can they help?
- ESC donations – spare materials in various departments
- Free compost – Suffolk waste partnership
- What else can you get for free? From who locally; what organisations?
- Social value constructors – feed into schemes (English write letters)

Table 3:

- More bins to separate rubbish from recycling (decorate it)
- Reward system (vouchers) to promote clean streets
- Norse!
- More cleaners – make use of unpaid work, make it a volunteering opportunity, increase volunteers
- Community fridge
- Ask companies to donate unwanted materials (net zero) – keith @ CAS with Men's Sheds and the YP to create animal boxes
- Make it more accessible
- School – compulsory survey (BBHS)
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, posters (eyecatching) to make people want to know more about what we do
- School bus
- Suggestion box
- Assemble so people can share more ideas
- Join or create meetings to seek out and share new ideas and regular updates
- Branch out to local places and use contacts and ask for any help
- More bins, community fridge saves waste, social media – important
- Collect litter on the beach – if budget permits, do a voucher scheme to give participants a free coffee or ice cream in return

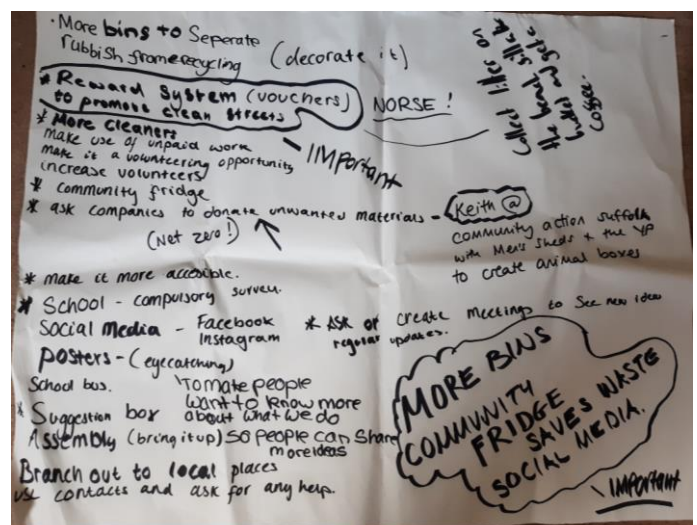


Table 4:

- Green days
 - Speak to others?
 - Compulsory surveys
 - Community conversation – talk to the community
 - Transport
 - Cycle – cycle maintenance
 - Walk
 - Share resources
 - Woodland Trust
 - Not just
 - InvolveUs – amplifies the voice
 - Community Partnership
 - WildEast
 - Suffolk Wildlife
 - Field2Fork
 - Litter picking not detention
 - Show the benefits
 - Like a PSHEE day
 - Impact on learning
 - School holidays – activities
 - Waste
 - Greenhouses - heat
 - Separate bins
 - No landfill?
 - Trial day
 - Food waste – Edwardson and Blake
 - Vertas

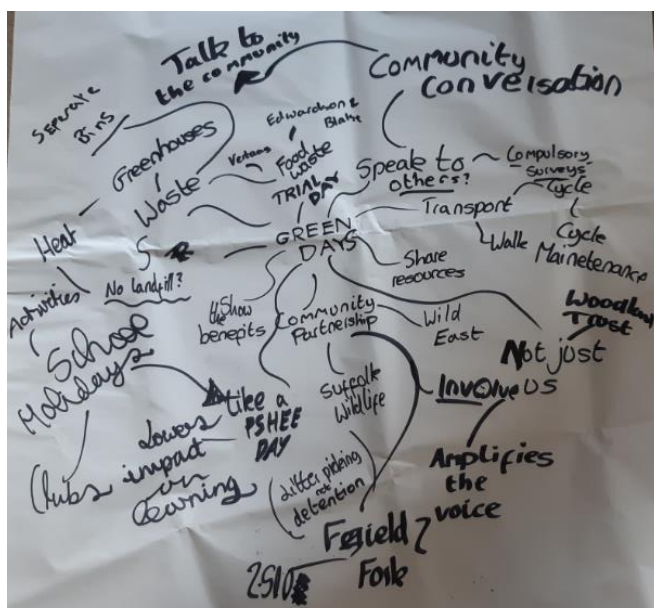


Table 5:

- What's achievable:
 - Recycling
 - Reducing plastic
 - Multiple use bottles
 - Learning how to recycle
 - Recycling project
 - Social actions
 - Bottles and blankets
 - Beach clean-up for schools (competition?)
 - Encouraging others
 - School allotments
 - Free trees (website)
 - DT projects
 - Reinvestment
 - More bins
 - How to deliver:
 - Communication – community and leaders
 - Headmaster forum
 - Funded by community
 - Assemblies
 - Social media
 - Emphasis on students
 - Kitchen staff

Appendix 2 – notes captured during the open floor discussion

- Green day – achievable
 - Free stuff!
 - Spare materials
- Planting
- Recycling bins – split
- Community fridges
- Rota of volunteers
- Reusable bottles
- Wildflower planting – achievable
- Involvement through school councils, student union, crosshairing between schools
- Conversations with community
- Social media and posters
- Networking e.g. via CPs
- Beach clean schools competition with sponsorship
- Education

- YP lobbying Vertas
- How young people want to keep in touch – compulsory surveys at BBHS
- Punishing litterers!
- Sponsors

Appendix 3 – notes captured verbatim via post it notes on the tables

How can we continue the conversation with young people?

- For BBHS to be connected to waste management team to sort out the one bin to have 2 bins minimum to start recycling – for BBHS to lobby Vertas and water bottles!
- Meet with YP to gain their views. Follow through with them so they see progress. Educate via Instagram for recycling. Review with YP
- Higher years to engage younger years by sharing easier tasks
- A suggestion box in schools and social media

How can we deliver and act on those ideas?

- Contact parish councils who can:
 - Advise on who to contact at ESC
 - Provide noticeboard for posters
 - Disseminate info through parish e-magazine and paper magazine
 - Enable contact with village hall committee! Sites of recycling bin
- Work with Norse for bins
- ESC can work more closely with Norse and schools to find solutions to recycling and waste issues

Which ideas you feel are most deliverable?

- Placing more bins in and outside of schools – less litter and cleaner environment
- Make less non-reusable plastics and punish people who litter
- More bins to separate rubbish from recycling

How can we ensure those solutions can be sustained?

- Sustainability – link in with constructors social value

Other comments:

- To help reduce litter and cut down on using plastics. Feed children a cooked snack

made by schools

- Packed lunches are the main source of litter and waste – make all pupils have access to free school meals!
- Make it compulsory for all pupils to watch the documentary in PSHE: ‘conspiracy’ – changed my life, looks at our carbon footprint and how part of it is so unknown
- Encourage clothes swaps – remove stigma re: 2nd hand clothes, encourage more re-use
- Monthly film clubs – free snacks to entice people in – watch eco documentaries:
 - True cost of fast fashion
 - A life on our planet
 - A plastic ocean
 - Kiss the ground
 - Food inc – before the flood
 - So many!!!