

Environment Working Group Report

June 2023

The Environment Working group continues to meet approximately every six weeks to two months and works to address both the Arundel Town Council Strategic Plan and the objectives that were identified at the “Climate Change Event” in November 2022. A key element of the areas identified at this event was to improve the Recycling and Composting capacity within the town.

Recycling Containers

Counsellor Steve McAuliffe has facilitated the development of further recycling bins in the town and after a meeting in April there was a general consensus that the best place to install bins for this purpose would be near the “Fish Tables” in Jubilee Gardens. However it was also felt that we need to know more about how these bins might best be used and the most suitable bins. We are currently undertaking research to ascertain this, which will include a visit to the Biffa Recycling Plant.

Composting

Felicity Chadwick from the “Juniper Café” has been co-ordinating the collection of coffee grounds from cafes and restaurants, and a suitable receptacle has been purchased to store and disseminate this form of compost. Coffee grounds are rich in nitrogen and make excellent compost.

Composing of Kitchen and Garden Waste

Unlike other local areas Arundel has no facility for the collection of kitchen waste, although currently there is a pilot programme running in Mid-Sussex. Currently it would appear that Biffa at Ford does not have the facilities to take Kitchen waste.

Rita Godfrey from Agenda 21, has been conducting research into what we might need to do to run a Kitchen and garden waste scheme. She has looked at a scheme currently running in Lewes. Felicity is willing to take this forward and is prepared to Project Manage the scheme.

Recycling Stall Farmers Market

We have now run the “Terra-Cycle” stall within the Farmer’s Market on two occasions, Saturday 15th April and Saturday 20th May. The stall is set up like a grocers market stall with tiered shelves and boxes to collect different types of plastics that are harder to recycle in the normal way. So people bring along a bag of different types of plastics (please see flyer). In the first week, we did have some interest, but by the second week we were lucky to have the wooden tiered grocer’s shelves that Tracy had ordered that looked very effective and eye-catching. There was a huge amount of interest with many people coming with bags of plastics which also led to a discussion about where things could go, maybe to supermarkets soft plastics collections, or in their own blue top recycling bins. We had difficulty keeping up with the volume arriving at the stall. We were lucky to have Joy Carter from Sussex Green Living with us on Saturday April 15th and Rob Frayatt on Saturday 20th May. Rob has told us that Sussex Green Living will support us with this project as long as we feel we need this. At the moment while our knowledge is growing we feel that we definitely need this support. I then sorted the plastic that we had collected and took it up to Horsham to the “Womble Shed” which is in the Baptist Church. The sorted plastics then go off to “Tera-cycle” who process the plastics into sustainable and valuable community based objects, such as picnic tables, benches and duck-boards (please see further information on: <https://www.terracycle.co.uk>).

As discussed at the "Environment Working Group" on Monday 5th June we said that come the autumn, likely October, we will move the Terra-Cycle stall into the Norfolk Centre, we hope that by this time there will be sufficient interest in the recycling of plastics for people to come to the Centre.

It needs to be emphasised that we are entirely dependent on the excellent volunteers who run the stall each week and we would be delighted to recruit more.

Moving Forward with Plastic Recycling

The next stage, we hope would be to set up permanent plastic collection bins, at a key site maybe at the schools. Possibly we would consider collecting a range of different plastics, such as tooth-brushes, crisp packets, pens etc. We need to research a little more about what other sites do across Sussex and how they manage this.

The Green Hub

We have now held "Green Hubs" alongside the Repair Café. The aim of the "Green Hubs" is to provide an exchange of ideas and information. There has been limited take-up and it's something that we need to re-think. On the first Saturday (15th April) we were very pleased to welcome the following organisations who have sustainability and biodiversity at the heart of their work: "Sussex Green Living", (Carrie Cort), "Arundel Bee Project" (Nick Field), "Swallows, House Martins and Swifts", Paul Stevens brought along the nests that he makes which can be fixed to different facia, including plastic ones, He also brought along his survey of Arundel which showed quite clearly that numbers of these birds are diminishing and that the largest population resides in The Causeway/Queen Street. It would be valuable to get Paul back to support us in creating a biodiversity strategy that would include swallows, swifts and house-martins. Also "Arundel Green Team", came along to show something about what they are doing and to recruit new volunteers. On the second Saturday (20th. May) Brent Lodge Animal Hospital from Sidlesham was supported by Alex Forster and Asha Parcs, and they disseminated information about what we can all do to support wildlife, including hedgehogs in our gardens and in the wider country side. Kay Wagland also came along to tell people more about the projects that "Agenda 21", are currently engaged with including the support of hedgehogs in the Ford Road cemetery. This Hub is not really working very well at the moment I feel as footfall is poor. It does need I think need rethinking. Considering what it is we hope to achieve.

Workshops

In the afternoon the idea is to run workshops that promote, Biodiversity, sustainability, recycling etc. We also hope that these will also be a way of re-cooping some of the cost of the Norfolk Centre.

So we will be running the following:

17th June

The Green Boutique Eco-Friendly Cleaning Products Workshop

15th July

Bicycle Repair Workshop

19th August

Sustainability Market

16th September

Mosaics with found materials materials

21st October

Junk Journals

18th November

Christmas Sustainability Market

16th December

Christmas Wreaths with natural and recycled materials

Half-Payment for the Norfolk Centre

It was agreed at the last “Environment Working Group Meeting” (5th June 2023) that we would like to pay half of the rent for the Norfolk Centre, this would be £70 each month. This money would come out of the “Environment Working Group budget”.

Link Organisations

Arundel Green Team

Bringing together different organisations across the town, the Arundel Green Team has done extraordinary work in developing green spaces and promoting biodiversity. (Please also see article in “The Bell”).

They have a very enthusiastic and energetic group of volunteers, so far eighteen altogether, who have to date completed 183 hours of work: weeding, soil improvement, planting and watering. The group started with the pathway leading from the station, removing brambles and then improving the soil with mulch and finally planting. It is hoped that people will be encouraged to use the pathway to the west of the station. The Green Team then moved on to the Quayside raised beds which are now planted with herbs, including seven bay trees. It is anticipated that as these grow people will pick the herbs for their own use.

The Green Team is now moving forward to look, with members of the Garden Association and Tree Wardens, at different green spaces across the town and how they might best be managed in relation to safety and to biodiversity.

In July the Green Team are hosting a group of students from Seaford College to give them the opportunity to get involved with different Green projects and the chance to interview members of the team.

The Arundel Green team continue to apply for grants to support their work and to ensure that work is sustainable longer term.

Agenda 21

On Thursday 25th May Agenda 21 held its AGM at the Victoria Institute, and presented their ongoing projects:

The Seed Swap

The Harvest Waste Produce

Refills

Canada Road Trees

It is hoped that we can move forward together with supporting these projects as well as developing new projects, maybe specifically around looking at how we might all encourage wild life across the town and beyond.

Future Development for the Environment Group

At the last meeting (June 5th) we discussed the use of weed killer and pesticides by West Sussex and other organisations and how we might as a group and as a Town Council develop a policy that would look at the town becoming a pesticides and weed-killer free town.

Carole Beaty June 2023