

LEVELLING UP THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Notes from NALC Webinar 27 October 2021

Host: Luke Perkins (BHIB Councils Insurance)

Speakers: Ed Gemmell (Hazlemere Parish Council)

Dave Goulson (Professor of Biology at University of Sussex)

1. While listening to this webinar I got the impression that Cuckfield is moving in the right direction but that we need to work on communication
2. Hazlemere Parish Council (HPC) declared a Climate/Environmental Emergency, and this has become a cornerstone of many of its decisions. This has been very popular with the voters, in particular with the older generation. The general reaction has been that people are looking for leadership in this matter with a single thread rather than having a series of *ad hoc* groups. HPC have a couple of Facebook groups, and these are used for communication and also asking for volunteers – in general the council is overwhelmed with such responses.
3. It was also strongly suggested that the Climate/Environment Emergency is included in the Neighbourhood Plan and can therefore be given as a factor for planning rejections or suggestions for more environmentally friendly building materials.
4. A TPO survey has been taken and published; again this means that the environmental impact of tree loss can be included in planning decisions. Tree loss will mean an immediate loss of canopy cover and a slow replacement as the trees obviously take time to grow.
5. Tree planting should be encouraged on both public and private land. This should include community orchards.
6. Verges should be used for native wildflowers and less mowing. This requires communication with the community about the mowing policy and also about when they are cut. This raised the obvious question for me, being who is responsible for which verges. Do we need to do a survey of every street and then work out who is responsible (County, District, Parish) and develop a co-ordinated effort? Or do we just take it over – I know, money. It will mean less mowing, but this will need to be restricted to specific times of the year. We could obviously also plant more trees in the verges.
7. The same principle applies to wild meadows/gardens and cemeteries. Communication is the key to this as we now realise after this years' comments for the community.
8. A quick-hit in Hazlemere has been (and will continue with) Bee Squared in which households are encouraged to clear a 1 metre square in their garden for wildflower seeds provided by the council. They are also asked to put a sticker in the window showing they are participating in the scheme (<https://hazlemereparishcouncil.org.uk/news/bee-squared-get-involved->

- [here/](#)). The cost was £0.28 per household and was sponsored by 2 local firms and a charity with volunteers putting the mixed seeds into envelopes for distribution. This helps create wildflower corridors for our pollinators. It was a great success in Hazlemere and demonstrates that the council is working on environmental issues.
9. Try to get a green energy provider (difficult in current times) and look to getting smart meters. Eventually aim for solar panels and batteries to make council facilities as green as possible.

I hope to get a copy of the session as it was recorded. If so I will distribute.

Martin Sheldon