

2G3S aims to promote a positive vision of a society that enhances, rather than degrades, the natural environment on which we all depend. We hold events in our constituent villages and spread information to raise awareness of green issues and to show how we can work together, both at an individual and at an organisational level, to make changes to our way of life that will lead to a more stable and sustainable future.

Contact us at greengroupssss@gmail.com. Website: <http://2g3s.staplefordvillage.org.uk>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/2G3Sgroup/>

2G3S NEWSLETTER EXTRA SEPT 2020

This is an extra newsletter to alert you to various online events taking place, notably another Environmental Forum with our MP, Anthony Browne.

In chronological order, these dates are:

Next Monday, **28 September**, 8pm: Talk by Bill Powell **'What hope for cooks and forests dying in Africa?'**

Thursday **8 October**, 3 pm: **Environment Forum with Anthony Browne MP** (an open event for his constituents organised by his office)

Monday **12 October**, 8 pm: **Planning meeting**

Monday **26 October**, 8 pm: Conversation evening with Jenny and Derek Langley of **Extinction Rebellion**

Monday **23 November**, 8 pm: Conversation Evening on **Sustainable Dietary Choices** with Duncan Catchpole of Cambridge Sustainable Food.

Details of all these events follow, starting with the Environment Forum. This item is rather long, so if you are not interested, go straight to page 5.

ENVIRONMENT FORUM WITH ANTHONY BROWNE MP

The South Cambridgeshire constituency had a Zoom meeting with our MP Anthony Browne on 29 June as part of the mass lobby organised by the Climate Coalition under the banner 'The Time is Now'. Mr Browne was in charge of this meeting, which he styled an 'Environmental Forum' (see the report on our [website](#) (scroll down to 4 July) including a link to all the Q and A covered.). He has agreed to hold further such meetings, and the next one is scheduled for Thursday 8 October at 3 pm. **Register** by emailing him at anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk with your full address and the subject line 'Environment Forum Registration'. They'll be sending out the details and asking for questions nearer the time.

Meanwhile, four of us from different parts of the constituency have been meeting to prepare some **questions**. We thought we might focus on the need for a green recovery (the theme of the The Time is Now lobby), in particular in the context of the Chancellor's pending Comprehensive Spending Review. We have also been sent suggestions for questions from the campaign group Hope for the Future, who have been advising us. All these questions are set out overleaf.

How to proceed: register for the Forum. Don't include a question at this stage. You will be invited to do so later if you wish (not compulsory!), and you may well have a question already. If not, and you are seeking inspiration, do have a look at the suggested questions overleaf.

If you would like to **add your name** to one or more of the questions, either those from Zoe, Claire, Darcy and myself or one of those from Hope for the Future, please let me know which by emailing me **BY FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER** at greengroupssss@gmail.com with the heading 'Anthony Browne questions'. Our thinking is that if there is more than one signature against a question,

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there is a greater chance of it being taken on the day. We shall include email addresses of signatories when we submit the questions; if you have registered for the meeting your postal address will already be available to Mr Browne's office.

Finally, Hope for the Future have kindly offered to arrange an **informal training** call for people who will be attending the Environment Forum, where they can give training in effective lobbying, particularly in preparing 'asks' and questions for an MP. If you would be interested in this, let me know as soon as possible via greengroupssss@gmail.com and I will co-ordinate.

And so to the questions....

1 from Zoe Gilbertson: Energy efficiency and retrofitting

Background

Plans have been announced to establish a "New European Bauhaus" to help Europe move towards a circular economy. (1,2). Additionally, France is investing £13.5 billion and Germany £36 billion, in energy retrofitting schemes. The £2 billion funding for the Green homes grant (already over-subscribed) is a good start but appears to be a sticking plaster, not the boost needed to start a new industry.

Energiesprong is a Dutch retrofitting method that currently costs around £75K to retrofit a standard UK home. When considering the 5m social sector homes that will need to be addressed at some point, costs could be astronomical. If retrofitting is supported to quickly scale, billions could be saved. (3). This would provide post-covid employment and would also support house building. The Future Homes Standard, to be introduced in 2025, will require new homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and 'world leading' levels of energy efficiency. (4) Surely it would make sense for all new builds to meet high energy efficient standards now rather than having to retrofit them in decades to come? (5)

Question: Rather than relying on European companies, could the government support a wide variety of UK based industries around energy efficiency, insulation, heat and ventilation by committing more funding and allowing a retro-fitting industry to develop properly to scale, creating thousands of post-covid jobs? Please can you ask the Chancellor what investment has been allocated on this front in the Comprehensive Spending Review for 2021-24?

References:

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/725b5351-6ca3-4fc3-8dc7-902ac9fb2f3b>
2. <https://www.rechargenews.com/transition/new-bauhaus-and-hydrogen-valleys-to-help-55-eu-emissions-cut-von-der-leven/2-1-875985>
3. https://www.green-alliance.org.uk/reinventing_retrofit.php
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings>
5. <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/green-homes-grant>

Zoe Gilbertson

2 from Claire Mackenzie: Sustainable agriculture

Background

You clearly care about the countryside and you recently met with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and you visited Wimpole farm to discuss how to protect and regenerate our local environment. The government's proposed Environment Land Management Scheme is inviting our farmers to make a positive change towards more sustainable farming. But the Agriculture Bill, which is being written at present, gives no protection to British food or British farms - protection that was promised. There is pressure for this from all quarters and on the 22nd September the Lords reviewed the bill and voted heavily in favour that agricultural and food imports should meet domestic standards.

Question: If farmers are expected to implement the necessary and urgent need to reduce their carbon footprint the costs of their products will rise and so how are they meant to survive if cheap imports are allowed to enter the UK? The worry is that once again economics will win over the environment - how do you propose we move urgently towards a more sustainable agricultural system?

Claire Mackenzie

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3 from Darcy Simpson: Bus services

Background

With 'cars contributing 55% of domestic transport emissions (68MtCO₂e in 2018)' and '94% of car journeys being under 25 miles'¹ the need to improve and promote local public transport, like buses, is clear. The Department for Transport's Guidance: 'A better deal for bus users' (February 2020)² outlined an allocation of £220 million to transform bus services in the Spending Round for 2020-21, which included the rural mobility fund, supported bus services fund and funding for an all-electric bus town, all through local authorities. And an extra £254 million was added in 2020 to increase the frequency and capacity of bus services for safe social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic³.

These investments were all very welcome. However, some (particularly rural) areas are still not served by bus routes and some bus services that do exist are possibly under-utilised as many people outside London still prefer to use a car⁴. The first strategic priority in the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan is to 'accelerate a modal shift to public and active transport'¹. People respond well to a financial incentive to overcome barriers associated with a change in behaviour, as the success of the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme in August 2020 has shown, so this could be a good way to accelerate a modal shift. Increased mobility by bus would also enhance people's access to jobs.

Question: Please would you commit to asking the Chancellor at Treasury Questions this two-part oral question regarding bus services and incentives:

- The investment of £220 million in 'A better deal for bus users'² during the Spending Round for 2020-21 was very welcome. In the Comprehensive Spending Review for 2021-24 what funding has been allocated to create new frequent bus services for villages that currently have no or minimal bus services connecting to their nearest towns or cities?

- What new financial incentives are being introduced for people to leave their cars and travel on new or existing bus services? Incentives could include free public transport schemes like those in the French town of Dunkirk (Nord)⁵ and nationwide in Luxembourg⁶ or perhaps a 'Ride Out to Help Out' 50% discount scheme similar to your successful 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme in August this year (in this case it would be to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan¹).

References:

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878642/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-better-deal-for-bus-users/a-better-deal-for-bus-users>

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/transport-secretary-announces-new-measures-to-keep-passengers-safe-now-and-level-up-for-the-future>

⁴<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/transport/articles-reports/2019/02/07/half-brits-dont-taking-bus>

⁵<https://www.focustransport.org/2019/09/free-buses-in-dunkirk-success.html>

⁶<https://www.mobiliteit.lu/en/tickets/free-transport/>

Darcy Simpson

4 from Linda Whitebread: development and the implications for water resources:

4.1: prospect of major development in South Cambridgeshire

Background

I was pleased to read that you said recently, regarding potential housing proposals in the forthcoming joint Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge: "It will ruin the quality of life here and seriously damage the environment. It has to stop. We need less development, not more." (reported in Cambridge News, January 2020).

This is my view precisely. But in the latest 'call for sites' in the Local Plan landowners and developers identified enough land to build up to 200,000 new houses by 2040. They won't necessarily all be built – the Plan itself is expected to identify land for 'only' up to 30,000 new homes (Cambridge Independent, 23/9/20) – but this is still a huge increase, largely occasioned by the promotion of Cambridge and its environs as a 'growth area'.

Question: How do we persuade the government and the planning authorities that development isn't always a good thing?

4.2: Water crisis

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Background

Any development that does take place will have implications for our water supply. England is home to 85 per cent of the world's chalk streams, most of which are in East Anglia, and many in South Cambridgeshire. These streams have been severely threatened in recent years, largely because of abstraction rather than rainfall (although East Anglia is increasingly susceptible to drought). We need to protect these streams, not only because they are internationally important wildlife habitats, but also because we rely on them for our water supply.

In the UK the average personal daily water consumption is 150 litres; other European countries with similar rainfall patterns use less (Environment Agency 2008). Anglian Water are aiming for a figure of 120 litres per day by 2045 (Water Resources Management Plan 2019); we need to do much better than this.

Both Cambridge Water Company and Anglian Water are encouraging consumers to use less water. This may or may not result in a change of behaviour. Meanwhile we still use high quality drinking water to flush our toilets and water our gardens. It is estimated that only 4% of the water we use at home is actually drunk; we use 30% to flush toilets (Waterwise, June 2020).

Question: Will you ask Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to make a requirement that all new housing and business developments, where possible, harvest, store and re-use rainfall, include greywater recycling schemes, and incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), building on the good practice demonstrated in the Eddington development in Cambridge?

(Based on Recommendation 8 of the Cam Valley Forum 'Let it Flow' report May 2020)

Linda Whitebread

EXTRACT FROM 'HOPE FOR THE FUTURE' REPORT INCLUDING POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR AB



Tree Planting

Anthony's contribution to the [One Nation report](#) ('Building Back Greener' - a report from One Nation Conservatives published August 2020) called for more tree planting to take greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere, however he hasn't taken any action beyond this to pressure the government to deliver on this agenda.

Potential Ask 1: Will he commit to asking an oral question at the next Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) questions about tree planting? This could be asking Ministers whether they have assessed the possibility of planting even more than 30,000 hectares of trees a year?

Potential Ask 2: Will he submit a written question to the Secretary of State for DEFRA (the department tasked with tree planting) asking at what date the government will achieve the planting of 30,000 hectares of trees per year?

Potential Ask 3: Will he submit a written question to the Chancellor asking what assessment has been made of the economic benefits of increased tree planting?

Government spending

As a member of the influential Treasury Committee, Anthony will have a good understanding of the government's spending priorities and how to influence them. The Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review later in the Autumn will set out government priorities for the coming years, including on many climate related projects.

Potential Ask 4: Will he commit to asking the Chancellor an oral question in Parliament at Treasury Questions, asking him whether the proposals set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review will be compatible with the UK's commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050?

Potential Ask 5: Will he write a letter to the Chancellor asking him to prioritise green, low-carbon investments in the Comprehensive Spending Review? (Anthony may also be willing to post a copy of this letter on social media to publicly show his commitment) If Anthony is unwilling to do this, he should be willing to forward a letter from you to the Chancellor with a cover letter from himself, in which you can ask the Chancellor to prioritise climate change projects.

Potential Ask 6: As a former journalist, would Anthony be willing to write an opinion piece for a major newspaper about the need for the Comprehensive Spending Review to help meet the nation's climate change goals?

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Talks /Conversation Evenings (all via Zoom)

To take part in any of these meetings, please email greengroupssss@gmail.com with the header 'Africa Talk', 'Extinction Rebellion' or 'Sustainable Dietary Choices', as appropriate, and the Zoom link will be sent to you before the meeting. If you haven't used Zoom before there are tutorials on their website, or on YouTube.

WHAT HOPE FOR COOKS AND FORESTS DYING IN AFRICA?

Monday 28 September (NEXT MONDAY!) 8.00 pm to 9.30 pm



Bill Powell was to have spoken at our April meeting about the need for cleaner and more efficient cooking methods using farm and forestry waste in Uganda, including demonstrating a stove that he had seen used. We have now arranged for him to talk to us online, show some slides, and answer questions.

Lockdown didn't only stop the UK in its tracks; it also came to Uganda, with all education closed down. This left a forestry college instructor stuck in Kampala and running out of money. Benedictor Waniale is an expert on many kinds of biomass stove and suddenly had time to work closely with Bill, who together with his family paid Benedictor to build ten large efficient family stoves of a kind also used in remote areas of Latin America. Bill will describe some of the people and cookstove projects he has been involved with in Uganda. Actual demonstrations of stoves will have to be postponed of course!

Online Conversation Evenings

Monday 26 October, 8 pm: EXTINCTION REBELLION

We are delighted to welcome Jenny and Derek Langley from Cambridge Extinction Rebellion who will give their personal insight into what XR is all about, followed by a chance to ask questions.
(This meeting was to have been held at the end of March)



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Monday 23 November, 8 pm: SUSTAINABLE DIETARY CHOICES



With Duncan Catchpole. As the founder and owner of the Cambridge Organic Food Co., Duncan has over twenty years' experience in the sustainable food and drink sector. He is a founding committee member of Cambridge Sustainable Food and has been leading CSF's headline project of creating a Sustainable Food Hub for Cambridge since its inception.

Planning Meeting 8 pm, Monday 12 October

We are still meeting online because of the pandemic. It would be great to see you if you would like to come! We shall be discussing possible future events, and progress on various campaigns such as the South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon campaign; contact with Anthony Browne; local transport issues. Either stay for the whole meeting, or just drop in to say hello. Bring your own cuppa!

Email greengroupssss@gmail.com with the heading 'Planning meeting' and you will be sent an agenda and the Zoom link. We hope to see you there!

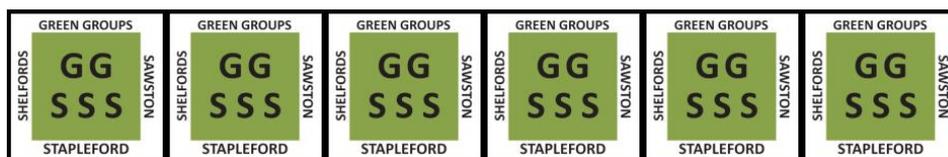
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Finally....since there is a little space left, I should like to give a shout for the [Cambridge Climate Change Charter](#), being promoted by our friends at Cambridge Carbon Footprint. Calculate your own carbon footprint; see what groups in Cambridge are doing to help you reduce it; take the challenge; spread the word!

All for now in this 'Extra'. If you're still reading – thanks very much. We hope to see many of you at one of the events described. The next regular newsletter will be in November. Meanwhile, stay safe!

Linda Whitebread

For Green Groups in the Shelfords, Stapleford and Sawston: greengroupssss@gmail.com



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