

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 online and 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 SUMMER 2021

Hello everyone – and as usual an especially warm welcome to those receiving this newsletter for the first time. It comes out roughly quarterly. The next issue is due in November; contributions should reach me by the end of October. You can unsubscribe at any time (or send items for inclusion) by contacting us at greengroupssss@gmail.com.

CRISIS WITH THE RIVER CAM



(The Cam at Grantchester - Felix Stigter)

We are leading with this item this time, since the situation is so grave. On 8 July, Stephen Tomkins of Cam Valley Forum gave us a disturbing and comprehensive account of why our chalk streams are in such trouble – basically because of unsustainable demand, pollution, and resultant damage to the natural environment. To meet environmental flow targets and restore health to the rivers it has been calculated that abstraction should be reduced by 60-70%. Yet, incredibly, the water companies are in fact licensed to take even *more* water than they do already. And instead of a reduction in demand there are plans for at least 9,000 further homes in the area by 2041.

We need to be active about this.

- Write to our MP, Anthony Browne. His door is at least half ajar – encourage him to keep pressing the water companies and the government to take meaningful action – we’re talking structural change to reduce demand (eg fewer houses etc; building regs to include compulsory use of ‘grey water’) and increase supply (new reservoir?)
- Write to the water companies – Anglia Water, Cambridge Water Company. What are their plans to address the crisis? Is the Anglia Water ‘Love Every Drop’ campaign adequate? Do people even know about it?
- Get a water meter.

For a full report of Stephen’s talk, including more suggestions for what else we personally can do about it, go [here](#). The slides he used are [here](#) and [here](#) (Stephen asks that the images not be used for any commercial rather than educational purpose). And go to the end of this newsletter for Stephen’s *Last Word* on the subject.

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please email us at greengroupssss@gmail.com

FUTURE 2G3S EVENTS

Nature Walk, Great Shelford, 2 pm Saturday 21 August



Nature Walk, Dernford Reservoir, June (Beth Atkin)

Following successful nature walks in 2020 and earlier this year, John O'Boyle is going to lead another walk, this time in Great Shelford along Jenny's path towards Hauxton. Meet at 2 pm at the signposted entrance gate on Church Street, opposite King's Mill Lane. Many people will be able to get here on foot or by cycle; but if coming by car, park on Church St. As usual stout footwear is advised and also long trousers as a precaution against nettles/brambles. Bring sun protection if appropriate, and water if it's a hot day. This walk will be at participants' own risk.

During the hour-long walk we shall be concentrating on wayside plants and trees. (We shall turn back after about 45 minutes as it should take less time on the return.) People are of course free to leave the walk at any time. Many thanks, as ever, to John.

Face to face conversation in a Stapleford garden: 25 August

WE ARE CORDIALLY INVITED to join Stapleford resident Patricia Mirrlees for a drink and a chat at her home The Stone House, 40 Mingle Lane, from **6.30 – 8.00 pm on Wednesday 25 August**. This will be a social occasion at which we can get to know each other, but we shall also be discussing green issues. Patricia is particularly interested in how we can work to improve our local environment for wildlife and biodiversity, be it (for example) by getting councils to reduce verge cutting and allowing grass to grow and planting wildflowers instead; making life easier for insects including bees and butterflies by planting nectar rich flowers and seldom mowing lawns; and for animals like hedgehogs creating highways by making gaps in garden fences. Other issues we might discuss are the water crisis (see elsewhere in this newsletter) or the recent IPCC report – but let's see where the conversation leads us. It will be such a luxury not to have a set agenda to work through at speed!

If coming by car, park near the Johnson Hall on Gog Magog Way – the entrance to The Stone House is opposite the church lych gate. The Stone House has a large garden, and we shall sit outside. Patricia will serve soft drinks and tea/coffee.

We hope lots of us will be there! If you can come, please contact us at the usual address – greengroupssss@gmail.com. Please let us know by **Monday 23 August** so Patricia knows how many to expect.

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Tackling Climate Change and Biodiversity at a Local Level **Monday 6 September**

Talk by Pippa Heylings

Chair of SCDC Climate and Environment Advisory Committee
Member of national cross-party Climate Change Task Force for COP 26

7.30 pm Cox's Close Community Centre, Stapleford (and by zoom)

We have all been scared by recent fires, floods and heat waves throughout the world, and by the message of the first part of the sixth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released on 9 August. Pippa will lead a discussion on how we can respond locally, both as individuals and at a local authority level, especially in the run-up to the global climate summit COP 26 being hosted by the UK later this year.

Contact us at greengroupssss@gmail.com to be sent the zoom link, or just turn up on the day.

The Great Big Green Week, 18 – 26 September

The Great Big Green Week is a national week of activities promoting action on climate change. For more details, see [here](#). To support this locally we are arranging various events including:

- Litter picks in the local area weekend of 25/26 September. Litter picking can be fun - all hands on deck! Bags and grabsticks will be provided. Bring your own gardening gloves to protect your hands, and **wear something green** if you can. If you have noticed a particularly littered locality in the area, let us know and we will try and get there.
- Fruit and Veg Swap weekend of 18/19 September.
- A virtual interactive talk on climate change and climate justice to support developing countries towards zero carbon. Led by Katie Williams.

We are still finalising details of these events - contact us by email or on our Facebook page.

Planning meeting

Monday 11 October 7.30 pm

Watch the website for details of venue; email greengroupssss@gmail.com for the zoom link

Film: The Sequel: What will follow our troubled civilisation?

Thursday 4 November, 7.30 pm. Venue details to follow (see website)

This optimistic film imagines a thriving, resilient civilization after the collapse of our current economies, drawing on the inspirational work of **David Fleming**, grandfather of the global Transition Towns movement. It is based on his posthumously published lifework "Lean Logic: A Dictionary for the Future and How to Survive It".

Opening with a powerful 'deep time' perspective, from the beginning of the Earth to our present moment, the film recognises the fundamental unsustainability of today's society and dares to ask the big question: What will follow? Can we develop diverse, convivial and satisfying lives without economic growth?

We encounter extraordinary projects and people from four continents, with contributions from Kate Raworth, Roger Scruton, Stephan Harding, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Rob Hopkins, Jonathon Porritt and Peter Buffett. Should be a good one!

Further ahead..

This year's **Annual Open Meeting** will be on Thursday 2 December; details in the next newsletter. We are also hoping that our **Repair Cafes** can resume in the Spring.

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PAST 2G3S EVENTS

How to pay for better bus services?



On 10 May **Edward Leigh** of [Smarter Cambridge Transport](#) gave us a talk via Zoom. He outlined why we need better bus services (they provide affordable mobility for people who cannot drive, or do not have access to a car; they make car-free living viable for more people; they reduce congestion and pollution) and made the case for a National Road User Charge (NRUC).

For a full report of the meeting, including details of the Q and A which followed, see [here](#).

Bike rides

Member Yasmin Emerson led two very successful social bike (or tandem!) rides in June and July, starting at Stapleford Pavilion and each covering around 20 miles. Around 6 – 10 people came along and visited villages such as Haslingfield, Barton, Hinxton and Chrishall, with time for a relaxing cuppa *en route*! We hope to arrange more of these in the future – thanks, Yasmin.

Plastic Free July

USE OF PLASTIC DECREASES SIGNIFICANTLY IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE VILLAGES FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN BY LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP



.....No, not really, but I thought it was time we had some decent fake news in this newsletter! And who knows, maybe it isn't totally fake.....we certainly put out a lot of notices (and crafted whales!) in our constituent villages, which provoked interest and comment. Many thanks to Helen and Claire for spearheading this campaign.

Eat for our Future

2G3S is helping Cambridge Sustainable Food (CSF) with its summer 'Eat for our Future' campaign. The aim is to encourage us to move towards a more sustainable 'Climate Diet' by changes in what we cook at home. On 30 July we jointly held a stall in Sawston where Bea Brown and Rosie Sykes cooked tasty baked beans, vegan banana muffins and other items. Samples of local seasonal vegs were available together with British-grown pulses (Hodmedod's is the name to look out for - they can be bought in various shops in the area and through the Cambridge Organic veg box scheme). There was plenty of advice on offer and people shared tips about eating a diet with less meat and dairy or going vegan. Thanks to Peter Woods for leading on this for 2G3S.



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OTHER UPCOMING GREEN EVENTS

News from Great Shelford Library

The Friends of Great Shelford Library are funding the purchase of a range of books on climate change and the natural world. Over the next year, we will be buying an eclectic mix including books by Mike Berners Lee, David Fleming*, and biologist E. O. Wilson; books on green growing, and "greenwash"; titles from the Penguin "Green Ideas" series; "spotter's guides" for people who want to explore local wildlife; and a range of children's books for younger readers. It will take a while to source and put the books on the shelves, but by autumn we hope to be ready to roll out the first books in a new display. *Helen Harwood*

* see the news about our David Fleming film on page 3 of this newsletter.

World Car Free Day 22 September

It is [World Car Free Day](#) on 22 September. We don't know of any events being arranged locally, but you might know better.....in any case, why not mark the day by walking, cycling, or taking the bus/train instead of your car – let us know how you get on!

OTHER 2G3S NEWS

On 9th August **Katie Williams** went to a workshop organised by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Committee on Climate. The group were given an overview of local emissions and how climate change impacts the local area, followed by a discussion on barriers to reducing emissions, and what solutions will be important for the future. Focus areas for solutions were Food & water, Housing, Employment, and Transport. See Katie's full report [here](#).

And **Beth Atkin** is representing us at the Cambridge Carbon Footprint/SCDC Net Zero Now training programme. Topics include how to engage people in climate change conversations eg avoiding catastrophe language by focusing on protection, helping at a local level etc; working with volunteers; organising a campaign. See the really useful resource materials [here](#) and a video of a TED talk 'Let's Change the way we talk about Climate Change' [here](#).

Please support Katie Williams who is still collecting signatures for an open letter to our MP Anthony Browne about the [Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill](#) – see [here](#). You can also download a poster to display [here](#).



GREEN SHOOTS

(the section where we detail the latest 'green' developments in the area)

Two slightly different 'green shoots' this time:



Firstly, 2G3S supporter Jim Chisholm has replanted the 'bike planter' in front of the Stapleford Spar with herbs, and raised the level to make it more user-friendly for cyclists.

And secondly, local family business Glebe Farm [has won a court case](#) against Swedish giant Oatly who had said the name of Glebe Farm's 'Pure Oaty' oatmilk was too similar to 'Oatly'. Glebe Farm, near Huntingdon, grow their own oats and make their own delicious oatmilk (which I get delivered from Plumb's Dairy). A classic David and Goliath scenario – well done Glebe Farm!

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LINKS

Some interesting developments re transport:

- [Byway Travel](#) will arrange your no-fly UK and Europe itinerary using “slow travel trips that take the scenic route to local stays and off-the-beaten path experiences, with none of the hassle of researching and booking it yourself.” Recommended by *The Guardian*.
- [Trainhugger](#) plants a tree for every journey booked through the business, and ploughs a third of its revenue into tree planting. Recommended by *Positive News*.

Finally, [Sharegift](#) lets you donate small numbers of shares to charity. Recommended by *Plantlife*.

LAST WORD

Items are the views of the author and not necessarily those of 2G3S. Send 300 words (pic optional) to me at greengroupssss@gmail.com

Our article today is from **Stephen Tomkins** of Cam Valley Forum, who gave us such an interesting but disturbing talk in June (see earlier in this newsletter).

The Tragedy of the Commons

I found myself, recently, faced with confronting OfWat (who price and regulate the water industry) as to just why we, in Cambridge, have made such a mess of our local water resources management. I pointed them to our limited groundwater supplies being essential for the life of our local Cambridgeshire chalk streams and for the water we all need from the tap - provided for us at relatively low cost by our local water companies.

‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ is an expression that has long been used by ecologists to describe the way in which we mismanage such shared resources. Originally the analogy was used to describe the historic situation where village commoners each have an entitlement to graze their local common land. Each grazier benefits from his own animals, but the grassland resource is shared. If one grazier increases their own herd size they, as individuals, will gain in the short term but at the expense of those that act more fairly. In this analogy the ‘tragedy’ is that the grassland will become poorer and poorer until it is overgrazed and almost valueless. This reality eventually forced commoners to a more limited entitlement.

Our groundwater tragedy, here and now, is compounded by some other ‘inconvenient truths’. Firstly, recharge of the chalk aquifer is dependent on winter rain alone, as in summer the green plants drink it all. Secondly, summers are hotter and drier now. The resulting soil moisture deficit in October needs to be made up the more so by autumn rain, before the aquifer, beneath the soil, is replenished. So, no surprise, in half the winters we get little or no recharge at all.

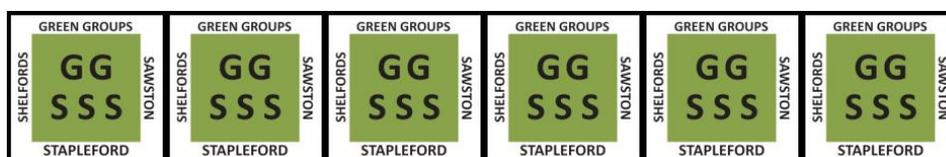
If this is partly climate change we have ourselves to blame. We over-abstract the groundwater for our water supplies. That abuse is already unsustainable, in my view, and yet there are likely to be even more of us wanting this limited resource. Water companies, regulating bodies and individuals all need to take urgent steps to use less water or we’ll lose what we have, the first casualties being our beloved rivers and associated wildlife. We ‘water commoners’ need to stop cheating nature!

Stephen Tomkins

No room for more! Stay safe and well everyone!

Linda Whitebread

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



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