

**2G3S Newsletter Extra September 2021**

**Upcoming 2G3S events**

[**The Climate Coalition Great Big Green Week 18 – 26 September**](https://greatbiggreenweek.com/)

In less than two months’ time, the UK will be hosting the biggest international summit our shores have seen in a generation. Known as COP26, the event will see world leaders and negotiators from around the world descend on Glasgow, with the outcomes decided there playing a critical role in tackling climate change over the coming decade and beyond. People from all walks of life are stepping up to take action on climate change. There are many ways to get involved, from activities you can do at home, to attending events locally, to [emailing our MP](anthony.browne.mp%40parliament.uk) and making sure he knows how critical COP26 is.

In the run-up to COP26, SCDC Councillor Pippa Heylings recently gave us a stimulating talk on tackling climate change and biodiversity at a local level – see the [report on our website](http://2g3s.staplefordvillage.org.uk/category/local-developments/).

As part of the **Great Big Green Week**, 2G3S is organising a **Litter Pick in Stapleford** **next Sunday** 26 September. Meet at 2 pm at Clerk’s Piece (on the cyclepath to Sawston, just after the footbridge). Litter-pickers will be provided, but bring your own gloves and wear green if you can. If you have a hi-vis vest, bring that too. Stout shoes and long trousers are advised. This is a family-friendly event; children are the responsibility of accompanying adults. Please note the proximity of the stream. As with all our events, attendance is at participants’ own risk.

(Please contact us at greengroupssss@gmail.com if you are intending to join us so we can make sure we have enough pickers. If there are enough of us some can go to other areas too.)

**Monday 11 October 7.45 pm: Planning Meeting**

Either by Zoom (from 8 pm) or in person at Cox’s Close Community Room, Stapleford CB22 5SP; email greengroupssss@google.com for a zoom link or just turn up on the night – refreshments at 7.45 and the meeting starts at 8 pm.

**Saturday 16 October 2 – 3 pm: Nature Walk**

John O’Boyle will be leading another walk, this time at The Stone House, Stapleford. Further details [here](http://g3s.staplefordvillage.org.uk/event/nature-walk-stone-house-stapleford/).

**Wednesday 20 October Workshop: ‘Action for Climate Justice’**

**7.30 pm in the Community Room at Cox’s Close, Stapleford; or 7.45 by Zoom.**

Do you feel bamboozled by all the talk of carbon emissions and COP26? Do you feel helpless in the face of so much bad news? If so, come along to this friendly workshop introduced by **Katie Williams** from the UK Youth Climate Coalition. She will address the following issues:

* What is climate justice?
* How are people around the world affected by climate change, and what are they doing about it?
* How is Cambridgeshire affected by climate change, and what can we do about it locally?

This will be followed by general discussion. We want you to leave the workshop with good ideas for things you CAN do locally to make a difference (see also below\*), and some recommendations for books, websites, podcasts etc for further information.

Email greengroupssss@gmail.com to reserve a place. Free; all welcome – see you there!

**Thursday 4 November Film: ‘The Sequel: What will follow our Troubled Civilisation?’**

7.30 pm Sawston Free Church, High Street, Sawston CB22 3BG. Free; donations welcome.

This film (about an hour) is about the vision of the late green thinker, David Fleming. He was convinced that what he termed the ‘climacteric’, or a perfect storm of events which will disrupt climate, nature and economic systems, is inevitable – what we need to do is create resilience so that we can rebuild society in its wake. This is a serious film, but one that offers hope and a way forward. There will be time to discuss it afterwards.

Email greengroupssss@gmail.com to reserve a place and receive any updates.

**Thursday 2 December Annual Open Meeting, The Rose, Stapleford**

Put the date in your diary – we hope this can be an in-person meeting. More details in our next regular newsletter, out in November.

**Other news**

**Harston Food Hub**, Weds and Sat 12-2 pm at the Harston Baptist Church (Chapel Lane, CB22 7NG) to help people in the area to access essential food items at the community pantry and to get fresh produce that might otherwise end up in landfill. The fresh produce is available for everyone to share but the pantry is only for people who actually need it.

harstonfoodhub@gmail.com 07876 297001 <https://www.facebook.com/harstonfoodhub/>

A propos of climate change, 2G3S supporter Rosemary Jones has drawn our attention to the issue of **reflectivity,** which she says is a serious issue currently under-reported. She writes:

*A global decrease in reflected heat caused by melting ice and snow and the construction of roads, runways and buildings in heat-absorbing dark colours almost everywhere on the planet now accounts for half of annual warming. Recent research indicates that even stopping emissions immediately would not alone stop the warming for about 40 years. We urgently need to introduce measures to re-enable solar reflectivity.*

Rosemary is researching this further and is hoping to draw up a petition to the UN to ask them to consider such measures, which would also create many jobs.

\* See the separate item following this newsletter on **things we can do individually** during the **Great Big Green Week** and beyond to mitigate climate change and promote biodiversity. Claire and I had planned to suggest ‘10 easy things’, but that proved too difficult - there are so many things we can do!\* Maybe your First Thing could be to go through the list and work out your own ten….?

(\*..or NOT do so often – eg mowing the lawn; washing clothes; buying new stuff….)

***Our next regular newsletter will be out in November. Meanwhile, you can still support the UK Youth Climate Coalition by signing the open letter to Anthony Browne about the*** [***Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill***](https://www.ceebill.uk/) ***– see details on our website*** [***here***](http://2g3s.staplefordvillage.org.uk/category/local-developments/)***.***

*Linda Whitebread*



**Things you can do to help combat the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis**

**Eight ways to help the planet**

1. **Start the journey!**

Nobody is perfect and the journey to sustainable living starts with a simple change. Try calculating your carbon footprint to identify where you can make changes that are easy or will have the biggest impact to start with. [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/carbon-footprint-calculator/) (CCF) have a calculator.

1. **Look after your health and the planet in the kitchen!**

Global food systems account for 1/3 of total greenhouse emissions and the way food is produced and transported can impact negatively on nature e.g. damaging the soil and biodiversity. Small changes can make a big difference to the environment and our health; consider reducing your meat and dairy intake: ‘red meat’s a treat’, or have a ‘meat free Monday’. Where possible consider buying locally produced, seasonal, unprocessed and organic food; use up leftovers. Find lots of good ideas and tasty recipes from [Cambridge Sustainable Food](https://cambridgesustainablefood.org/climate-diets-individual).

1. **Reduce energy use in the home and save money**

Heating our homes and powering appliances is where we use a lot of energy. Simple changes such as remembering to put a lid on saucepans, turning off electrical items (not just using standby) and turning down the thermostat to the WHO recommended 18°C are free and easy habits to make. For lots of great ideas [go to CCF](https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/open-eco-homes/) for personalised home energy advice.

1. **Use Active or Public Transport where you can**

Cars and plane travel are carbon intensive forms of transport. Did you know for short distances petrol or diesel cars use 40% more fuel per km when the engine is cold, and produce more emissions? Did you know that SUVs consume, on average, 20% more energy per km than a medium sized car? Replacing short car journeys with walking or cycling benefits our own health, saves money, and improves air quality. How about replacing one car journey a week, or 10% a year, with cycling, walking or taking public transport? For more ideas go [here](https://sustainableliving.org.nz/_Files/travel_learning_guide_2016_slet.pdf).

1. **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!**

In that order! Everything we buy has an energy and resource cost at each stage of its production, transportation and disposal. The more affluent society has become, the more we consume, which means that each year we use up more of the planet’s resources than can be replenished. [Earth Overshoot Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Overshoot_Day) marks the date each year when our demand for resources exceeds what the planet can regenerate in that year. In 1987 the date was 23 October; in 2021 it fell on July 29.

So buy less stuff! Do you really need it?! If so, can you get it secondhand or borrow/share? Think about whether something can be used lots of times and repaired before you buy it. Even recycling has an energy cost so should be seen as a last resort. Make your own compost, reduce food waste and support the circular economy. Watch [‘The Story of Stuff’](https://www.storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-stuff/) for some inspiration.

1. **Help wildlife where you live**

One third of all major food crops worldwide are dependent on pollinators. Did you know that in the UK urban gardens total more hectares of land than all the nature reserves added together? If we all gardened for wildlife, just imagine what positive impact we would have, then add in all the land in verges, roundabouts etc. Native plants are best for native wildlife. Check out the [Royal Horticultural Society](https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/gardening-for-the-environment/planet-friendly-gardening-tips) for lists of pollinator friendly plants for your garden/window box and other top tips; and [The Wildlife Trust](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions) for ideas on how to garden for wildlife. Simple ideas from mowing your lawn less to using rainwater make a big difference to the life in your garden. If you can plant a tree in your garden use the [Woodland Trust’s guide](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/03/british-trees-to-plant-in-your-garden/) to choosing one, if not consider sponsoring a tree in your [community](https://sponsor.treesforstreets.org/provider/cambridge-city-council?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=SJ+-+Cambridge+30%2B&utm_campaign=SJ+-+TFS+Aug+Traffic&utm_content=TRAF+Cambridge+Streets+Copy-+Man+SI&fbclid=PAAabH8Bb8v7j0i79a4RToGdRda8HGwfXjC8pusN2aZQpxtkQrnaU9NIl2Sbk) or with the [National Trust](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/plant-a-tree).

1. **Save water**

Only 1% of the water on our planet is fresh, salt-free and available to us in streams and underground reserves. It is essential to life. We only drink around 5% of the water we use, the other 95% goes down the drain from showers, taps, laundries and toilets or into the garden. To get clean drinking water to our taps costs energy to extract it, pipe it, clean it and then pipe it and clean it again (hopefully!) before it heads back to the rivers. In Cambridgeshire the water is taken from the chalk aquifer, the ever-increasing demand for which is so high that not enough is left to flow down our rare and important chalk streams, causing them to dry up, which harms local biodiversity. Saving water is easy, from washing your clothes or flushing your toilet less to having shorter showers or installing rain water butts. Check out [Anglian Water’s Love Every Drop campaign](https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/save-water/) for more ideas.

1. **Consider Green Finance**

Whatever your passions - be it anti-deforestation or opposing arms dealing - how do you know that your money is not being used to fund industries you don’t agree with? Consider switching your current account to an ‘ethical’ bank or join a campaign to green your pension. Two websites with food for thought and ideas: [Make my Money Matter](https://makemymoneymatter.co.uk/) and [Tiny Eco Home Life](https://www.tinyecohomelife.com/most-ethical-banks-uk).

**Five ways to help yourself and others**

1. **Talk about what you are doing**
* The ‘non-converted’: It doesn’t have to be an Earnest Conversation – a casual remark eg ‘because it’s better for the environment’ will help to normalise this as a reason for what you are doing
* Those who are already committed to doing things: Try to touch base regularly with those who think like you do for fresh inspiration and support. 2G3S (of course!) [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/); [Transition Cambridge](https://www.transitioncambridge.org/); wildlife groups; issue-based groups such as [Cambridge Cycling Campaign](https://www.camcycle.org.uk/), [Friends of the Cam](https://www.friendsofthecam.org/).
1. **Get involved**
* Educate yourself; not just the problems but the many solutions being proposed. Loads out there: press, magazines, internet – or books. Two at random: ‘There is no planet B’ by Mike Berners-Lee; ‘Gardening for bumble bees’ by Dave Goulson. Watch out for the featured books on climate change and the natural world at Shelford Library this autumn.
* Take an interest in the news
* Sign petitions
* Write to your councillors or MP or the government
* Consider whether direct action – demos etc – is for you.
1. **Engage with other people**
* Smile or say hello when out walking
* People rather than profits; community rather than corporations – will be our salvation.
1. **Don’t be a misery!**
* Have fun. Laugh with friends. Ritual, festival, celebration – all are important.
* Take time to appreciate things (remember – sing, even?! - the Simon & Garfunkel song ‘Feelin’ Groovy’: ‘Slow down – you move too fast. You’ve got to make the morning last…..I’ve come to watch your flowers growing…..’).
1. **Be kind to yourself and others**

Do what you can and don’t beat yourself up that it isn’t more. It all helps. And try not to judge other people - you don’t know what constraints they may be under. Lead by example!

*Claire Lord and Linda Whitebread 2G3S September 2021*