



2G3S is short for Going Green in Sawston, Stapleford and the Shelfords. You can find out more about us and our aims on our [website](#).

2G3S Newsletter - Spring 2023

Editorial

Green issues are definitely getting an airing lately, especially with the prominence of programmes such as David Attenborough's Wild Isles pointing out how amazing but also how precarious is the wildlife of our own country. It is a good thing in itself of course that these issues are being reported and debated rather than overlooked or denied, but it can seem overwhelming when we read for example that ocean temperatures are increasing at a rate that is astonishing even oceanographers - what can we do about that as residents of a landlocked county? The answer is largely to carry on taking the steps that many of use already are to reduce our own negative impact on the environment, and where we can to encourage others to do so and make our concerns known. 2G3S was represented amongst the tens of thousands of individuals and groups who gathered in London over the weekend of 21st - 23rd April to participate in the peaceful and non-disruptive events organised by Extinction Rebellion calling on our government to act more decisively to address the climate emergency.

The UK's biggest wildlife charities are reporting a crisis in UK wildlife but also that we have an opportunity now to halt the decline. 2G3S will be focussing on biodiversity in the coming months distributing advice for encouraging wildlife in our gardens and local spaces, and some of these ideas are summarised in this newsletter.

A resource called Living with the Climate Crisis has been set up to help deal with the psychological impact of the issues we are facing, including a concise but thorough guide to green living. The network of organisations in our neighbourhood campaigning for and taking action to improve our environment has developed an ecology of its own - see the Resilience Network. As part of this network we will continue our programme of Repair Cafes, meetings and social events. There is an occasional section in this newsletter called Little Green Shoots, but perhaps we are ourselves the green shoots of recovery. I hope you find this newsletter of interest!

Peter Woods

Upcoming 2G3S events

Great Shelford Coronation Family Fun Day

Sunday May 7th, 12 noon - 3pm. Great Shelford Recreation Ground

We will be having a stall at this event, which is organised by the Parish Council. We hope to offer sunflower seeds for children to plant so they can watch how the sunflower grows. We will also have some activities for kids to make bug hotels, and advice for how we can all promote biodiversity in our own gardens.

Planning meeting 15th May

Our next planning meeting will be on Monday 15th May at 8pm - venue to be confirmed. Details, when confirmed, will be posted on the 2G3S website. If you have ideas for topics we should discuss, please email 2G3S.

Book Club - Thursday 25th May

In May we will be discussing 'Forget me not' by Sophie Pavelle. Like many of her generation, Sophie Pavelle is determined to demand action on climate change. In this, her first book, she describes the trips she took within the UK to see ten rare native species: species that could disappear by 2050 and be forgotten.

If you want to join us at Book Club please send an email to 2G3S with "Book Club" in the title (so we can let you know of any changes and future events).

Venue: The Rose, Stapleford, 8pm.

Stapleford Village Weekend - 24th June

We hope to have a stall on the Stapleford Rec on 24th June, once again sharing our ideas for promoting biodiversity on our doorsteps.

Great Big Green Week 10-18 June - Letters to Tomorrow



This year's Great Big Green Week is 10th -18th June. One way that each of us can get involved is to write a "Letter to Tomorrow".

You write a letter to yourself in the future, or to a grandchild, etc, about the climate crisis, and post it on the Letters to Tomorrow [website](#).

The letter can optionally be copied to your MP, and one letter each day is sent by the organisers to the PM and the Leader of the Opposition. The letter can explain your hopes for the future if our leaders step up to protect the environment, and can also detail fears about what life will be like if we don't slow climate change. Letters that others have written (including well-known voices such as Chris Packham) can be viewed on the website.

Great Shelford Repair Cafe - 15th July

Our next Repair Cafe is at the Great Shelford Rugby Club on the afternoon of Saturday 15th July. We hope to combine this with a clothes swap or jumble sale to expand on the idea of making the most of what we already have, and reducing our impact at the same time. The event is listed on the Cambridge Carbon Footprint events web pages where you can also find details of other local repair cafes. Further details, including a link for booking in items for repair, will be posted on the CCF site and our own website nearer the date of the event

2G3S Nature walks

Our Nature Walks are held on the 3rd or 4th Saturday of the month and start at 2 p.m. Walks are intended to raise awareness of local wildlife sites and associated fauna and flora. Participants are welcome to share their knowledge. All walks are at attendees own risk.

Here is a list of the remaining walks planned for 2023:

- Little Shelford Community Orchard and Woodland – May 20 (details below)
- Stapleford graveyard meadow – 17 June
- Nine Wells – 22 July
- Bury Farm Track – 19 August
- Wandlebury – 16 September
- Wale Recreation ground and woodland – 21 October

Please remember that dates and details may change, so we advise participants to check the 2G3S web site beforehand.

The next nature walk is on May 20th - Join me for an informal local nature walk around the community orchard on Saturday 20th May between 2-4 pm. We will observe the development of tree planting and also the flora of the meadow.

Meet at 2 p.m. at the junction of Hauxton Road and Garden Fields, opposite the end of Church Street near the telephone box book-share library.

Sturdy footwear is advised, long trousers as a precaution against any nettle/brambles and appropriate attire for the weather conditions.

You don't have to book for these walks - just come to the designated meeting point at 2pm. (The meeting point for each walk is given on the 2G3S website). Note these walks are intended to raise awareness of our local wildlife sites and share knowledge of the local fauna and flora, though you attend at your own risk.

John O'Boyle

2G3S Social cycle rides

Our monthly social cycle rides continue through Spring and Summer. Join us for a leisurely ride on quiet roads and traffic-free paths of around 20 miles, to include a coffee stop.

Here is a list of the dates for forthcoming bike rides:

- Mon 15 May
- Mon 19 June
- Mon 17 July

[none in August]

- Mon 18 September
- Mon 16 October

All are 10am start at Stapleford Pavilion. Returning to Stapleford by about 1pm.
Booking essential: greener@sawston.org

Dr Bike Stapleford - Tuesdays 3pm - 6pm

Volunteer-run weekly Bike Repair Sessions at the Old Slaughterhouse in Stapleford, which is on Church Street near the Three Horseshoes pub. 3 pm – 6 pm every Tuesday. (We have switched from Thursdays).

We offer a free 20-point check, and we can do minor repairs for a donation (just to help us maintain a stock of commonly used spares).

Children are welcome but must bring a responsible adult with them as well as their bike. We can't work on hydraulics or e-Bike electrics. We close at 6pm, so please try to arrive by 5:30 or earlier to give us time to check your bike.

If you are interested in joining our team of volunteers, or have any questions on Dr Bike, get in touch using drbikestapleford@gmail.com.

Reports on Recent 2G3S Events

Repair Cafes - Great Shelford in February and Whittlesford in April

Our event at the Great Shelford Free Church on 11th February was very busy indeed, with more repairers in attendance than recent repair cafes and no shortage of items for repair to keep them all occupied. We are once again grateful to the Free Church for providing this venue, but we are going to see how we get on in a larger space, by using the Great Shelford Rugby Club for our Repair Cafe in July.

The Whittlesford Repair Cafe happened to fall on the same day (April 22nd, Earth Day) as another local Repair Cafe in Fulbourn, as well as clashing with John O'Boyles nature walk and Extinction Rebellion's "The Big One" gathering in London happening over the same weekend. It is very pleasing that even with two repair cafes happening on the same day both were able to recruit a full team of helpers and repairers, so there seems to be no shortage of enthusiasm for these events from customers with items needing repair, and repairers willing to tackle the repairs.

The Whittlesford event was very effective in its repair rate thanks to excellent organisation by Alastair Knight. We would like to thank the members of Eco Whittlesford for their help in organising the event and the Whittlesford United Reformed Church for letting us use their church as the venue.



2G3S Book Club - February 2022

In February we discussed 'Regenesi's' by George Monbiot. This intensively researched work covers some fairly grim topics such as the pollution of the River Wye by run-off from intensive chicken farms, leavened with beautiful descriptions of, for example, the community orchard that the author helps to maintain. Since our session the problems on the River Wye have received more media attention, including on BBC's Countryfile, and it seems that this book has succeeded in making the wider public aware of the issue and prompted action to tackle this particular pollution problem at least to a degree.

Another aspect of the book is the unsustainability of food production as we know it, due to the damage it causes in terms of soil erosion, carbon emissions and loss of habitat for wild species of plants, animals (and fungi). Monbiot promotes the idea of producing protein by bacterial fermentation instead of rearing livestock, which would allow a large proportion of agricultural land to be re-wilded. Although this might sound rather dystopian and far from "green", there are already well-established processes for producing ingredients such as citric acid by this type of fermentation process. (You might imagine it is greener to use lemon juice which is rich in this compound, but world demand for citric acid cannot feasibly be met by growing lemons - we'd need trillions a year!).

Whether or not you share his enthusiasm for precision fermentation, the arguments that food production needs to move away from monoculture planting with its associated intensive use of chemical fertilisers, and towards mixed crops which create a self-supporting biomass in the soil, and substantially move away from livestock production towards plant-based food supply, so that the same amount of food can be grown on a fraction of the land area with far less adverse impact, we found compelling.

Our next Book Club meeting is on 25th May, see above.

Is there an alternative to “Growth, growth, growth”?



This was the title of a webinar held at the LSE on 8th March 2023 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Green Party, with speakers including Caroline Lucas.

Growth is the dominant economic model, but an increasing number of experts are arguing no growth or degrowth should be the goal. What is no growth and is it a viable way forward when much of the world is hooked on consumption?

A recording of the webinar is available to view on [Youtube](#).

Other Local News

Stapleford and Great Shelford's Neighbourhood Plan

If you are a resident of Stapleford or Great Shelford, you can respond to the [Mid Term Community Consultation](#) which will guide the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan.

“It is an opportunity for you to view and comment on parts of the evidence base that will underpin our Neighbourhood Plan, such as housing needs data for our area, maps of important views we propose to protect, aspirational active travel routes through our area, and possible ways in which access to our countryside can be improved so we can enjoy it more”.

<https://www.greatshelfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/SGSNPlan/>

Net Zero Now



Net Zero Now is an initiative from Cambridge Carbon Footprint to provide training for individuals who want to take an active role in promoting carbon reduction initiatives locally. Applications were open during April but unfortunately will have closed by the time this newsletter goes out. Details of the programme can be found on CCF's [NZN web page](#). If you are interested but have missed the deadline you will be able to register to receive information on future courses.

Home Energy Efficiency Upgrade Grants

Cambridge Council was one of the successful applicants to receive funding from government to supply Home Upgrade Grants to low-income households, to provide energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades. This includes South Cambridge. The scheme launches in May 2023 – look for details on the [actionenergycambs.org website](http://actionenergycambs.org).

Encouraging Biodiversity on your doorstep

No Mow May

If you have a lawn and wish to help our wildlife this Summer, consider giving the lawn mower a rest to allow wild flowers to develop during May, then let it 'bloom in June'. You may be surprised at the number of nectar-producing plants that appear, such as orchids, to the benefit of bees which are important pollinators. The Plantlife charity initiated the 'No Mow May' scheme and their [website](#) gives more details, including improvements to biodiversity that this simple step can help achieve.

Remember that it's important to remove the cuttings after the flowering season so a thatch does not build up to suppress more delicate plants. Also to make the area look like a managed site keep a neat edge around the site by conventional mowing.

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/>

John O'Boyle

Helping Hedgehogs

The number of hedgehogs in this country has fallen by over one third since the start of this century and loss of traditional habitats means that our domestic gardens are now the most significant habitat for this endangered animal.

This means all of us who are lucky enough to have a garden can play a part in helping to prevent further decline in our hedgehog population.

The charity [Cambridge Hedgehogs](#), formed in 2019, offers [advice for gardeners](#) on its website on how to make gardens hedgehog friendly, as well as what to do if you find an injured hedgehog and information on its campaigns to help preserve our local population. Independently of this, Shepreth Wildlife Park has a [Hedgehog Hospital](#).

Pesticide Free Cambridge

[Pesticide Free Cambridge](#) have issued [a guide](#) for businesses, schools and residents on practical alternatives to the use of pesticides. Their website also provides details on their campaigns to reduce pesticide usage by our local authorities, local businesses and the university, and nationally, as part of Pesticide Action Network UK.

News from further afield

Carbon Capture

The aim of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees, or even the weakened target of “well below 2 degrees” will require an element of actively removing Carbon Dioxide from the atmosphere – our failure to act early enough to reduce emissions by the amount required means that there is already enough CO₂ in the air to exceed these targets even if governments’ pledges to reduce emissions are faithfully implemented. The UN IPCC issued its [latest report](#) in March, reminding all of us that further urgent action is needed for these targets to remain achievable. [A recent assessment](#) reported by the BBC summarises how the UK is living up to its own pledges.

Carbon Capture and Storage, and more generally Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) has been contentious for two reasons, firstly because it appears to offer an excuse for us as individuals for failing to change our habits – “I know flying causes emissions but one day they’ll just suck the CO₂ out of the air and everything will be OK” and, for governments, dilutes the imperatives of decarbonising transport, building and construction, the food supply and energy use in our homes. The second reason is that the technology does not yet exist at any substantial scale, so that the overall effectiveness of the technology in practice, and the timescales over which it can be developed to the scale that would significantly impact global CO₂ levels, even with the right political will, are uncertain.

However, we are now in a situation where we need Carbon Capture in addition to (and crucially not as a substitute for) reducing our carbon dioxide and methane emissions. A recent report, [“The State of Carbon Dioxide Removal”](#) assesses the amount of Carbon Capture that would be needed to meet the agreed climate goals if all the promises on emissions reductions are achieved. It compares this with what can be met by current plans for Carbon Removal programmes and finds that there is a significant shortfall, in other words there will not be enough carbon capture

installations early enough in this century to remove the amount of carbon needed to meet the Paris climate goal.

To me, the message seems clear – unlike Carbon Removal, there are no fundamental technical barriers to achieving emissions reductions and it is essential that this should be our urgent priority: it is a lack of political ambition that is limiting progress on decarbonising, and even where that ambition exists, we seem to be painfully slow in taking action. There is an interesting perspective [here](#) on whether the current approach that is exemplified in the COP summits is really the best way to make progress internationally.

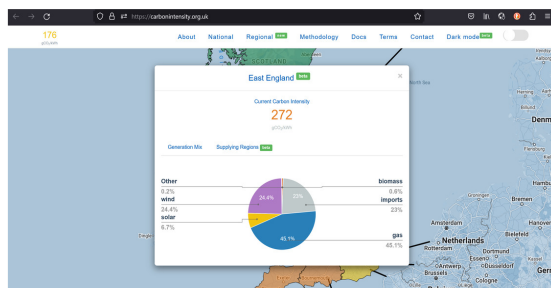
The UK government announced some incentives for the development of carbon removal technology in the budget recently, but unfortunately failed to say much on the topic of emissions reduction. Although our children’s and grandchildren’s generations may be reliant on carbon dioxide removal to help maintain a habitable planet, our own priority must be to give them time to do so by slowing down the rate of global heating. If you want to learn more about this topic, you may be interested in [The Carbon Removal Show Podcast](#).

Relinquish, Redirect, Restore

Many of us are familiar with the “Three Rs” of Reduce, Re-use and Recycle, but have you come across Relinquish, Redirect, Restore? These are the core aims of the [Plant Based Treaty](#), which campaigns to halt the widespread degradation of critical ecosystems caused by animal agriculture and to promote a shift to healthier, sustainable plant-based diet. You can endorse the treaty as an individual, and also lobby businesses, councils or organisations to endorse the treaty.

Make tea while the sun shines...

If you want to minimise the carbon cost of your electricity, and are able to chose when to operate power-hungry appliances, you may be interested in the [Carbon Intensity Forecast](#), which predicts several days in advance what the mix of energy sources are likley to be in the UK electricity grid. The forecast can be for the GB as a whole or by region (the screenshot below shows the instantaneous situation for the East of England on 24th April). The developers of this app are making it available as an embedded software resource so that other applications (such as smart home devices) can use these forecasts to automatically schedule activities to minimise their carbon intensity.



Could we build community “Power Stations” in our villages?

We are lucky to have “Solar Together” in our area as a way of reducing the costs of installing Solar PV by volume ordering for multiple individual projects, but it’s still an expensive undertaking, and in other areas there may be no such support.

A group in North East London, called POWER, are taking a different approach, with a ‘show and do’ project building a solar “POWER STATION” across the rooftops of their neighbourhood including homes, schools, and community buildings by enacting a kind of grassroots Green New Deal - working with the support of Octopus Energy on the one hand and with art on the other to tackle the interlinked problems of the climate crisis, cost of energy, and cost of living generally.

The Fitzwilliam Museum featured some of this group’s exploits in its ‘Defaced: Money, Conflict, Protest’ exhibition last year. You can find out more about this group on their website <https://www.power.film/about>.

Living with the Climate Crisis

Living with the climate crisis is a recently launched initiative from Rosemary Randell Randell which provides group support and routes to action for those struggling with the climate crisis.

The [Living with the climate crisis](#) website contains a raft of resources to address these psychological aspects, but also includes [Living Lightly](#), a very readable and informed guide to the practical steps we can all take as individuals to play our part in achieving climate goals and minimise our impact on the environment.

The Resilience Network

In case you have not already come across this resource, the Resilience Network aims to map all the green and social justice based organisations in a particular area. It is currently very Cambridge-centric, which makes it a great resource for us! Here is a link to the [Cambridge Resilience Network](#) (in “List” view - the alternative “Map” view is pretty amazing).

There are also networks for Cambridge University and Anglia Ruskin University. You will probably recognise many of the organisations listed, but may also discover a few you were not aware of.

The High Seas Treaty

It is great to be able to report some good news on the environment. In March, the International [High Seas Treaty](#) was finally agreed at the UN in New York. This provides a framework for establishing marine protected areas in international waters and is regarded as a breakthrough in conserving marine habitats and biodiversity. You can read one opinion about why campaigners think this is so important in [this article](#).

More on the subject of carbon capture:
[Volcanic microbe eats CO2 'astonishingly quickly', say scientists](#)

And finally a not so good news story:
[Soft plastic take-back schemes - don't believe the hype](#)

Last Word

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” —Margaret Mead, anthropologist

Thanks to Linda Whitebread

The editor welcomes ideas and copy by email, for inclusion in future newsletters. The next edition will be due in August - please send contributions to the editor before the end of July.

We encourage you to let us know what you think about our our new format - contact the editor via 2g3snewsletter@gmail.com.



Copyright (C) 2023 2G3S. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
2g3snewsletter@gmail.com