



# 2G3S Newsletter - Winter 2024

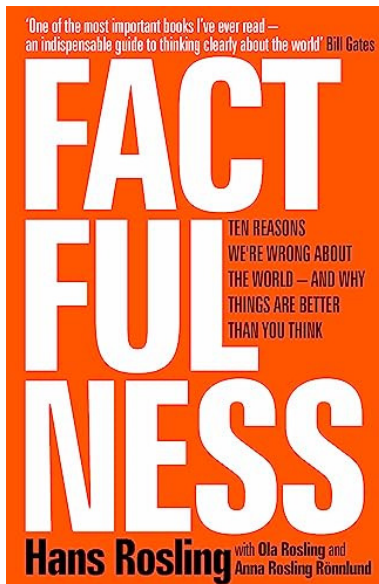
2G3S is short for Going Green in the Shelfords, Stapleford and Sawston. You can find out more about us and our aims on our [website](#).

## Upcoming 2G3S events

Check on our [website](#) nearer the event date for up to date details.

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### Book Club - Tuesday 20th February



We will be meeting on 20th February to discuss “Factfulness” by Hans Rosling.

The author is well known for his inventive visual presentations of statistics about the state of the world, and challenging our often out-of-date conception of how successful different countries are in providing education to children, vaccination and other markers of development. His approach is typified by simple multiple choice questions to which his audiences (us) unerringly score badly - very badly - compared to choosing answers at random.

The book follows this formula and he explores why we do so badly at answering his questions and how, in general, the “rest of the world” (apart from the developed west with which we are familiar) is in a much better state than we tend to think.

You can find more, and test yourself on the accuracy of your own worldview, on the website “[gapminder.org](#)”, which is built on the approach he developed with his surviving children Ola and Anna.

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). We meet roughly every 3 months.

Venue: The Three Horseshoes, Stapleford, 8pm.

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## **Repair Cafe at Great Shelford Free Church - 24th February**



**Great Shelford Free Church, Ashen Green, Great Shelford CB22 5EY**

**Saturday 24th February 2pm - 5pm**

Bring along your broken item and a skilled volunteer will help you fix it! We can tackle a wide variety of repairs including clothes and fabrics, basketry, electrical items, electronics and other items. (Please note that we will not be able to replace cracked screens on phones or tablets). The repairers are brilliant and can fix a lot of things but there are no guarantees.

Booking is highly recommended to avoid a long wait on the day, and to make things fair we politely request only one item per person. We ask all repairers to read and sign our repair agreement as we are all volunteers.

Please book your item using the following link: <https://bit.ly/3vbFMM7>

Bookings are open from 4th February until 19th February.

It's a free event but donations are very welcome. Tea and cake will be available of course!

We are grateful to Great Shelford Free Church for providing the venue for this event.

If you have any questions, please email [2G3Srepaircafes@gmail.com](mailto:2G3Srepaircafes@gmail.com)

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## **Dr Bike Stapleford - Tuesdays 3pm - 5:30pm**

The volunteer-run weekly Bike Repair workshops continue at the Old Slaughterhouse in Stapleford which is on Church Street near the Three Horseshoes pub. The workshop is open from 3 pm – 5:30 pm every Tuesday.

We offer a free 23-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.

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

## **2G3S Planning Meeting - 13th March**

We meet every couple of months to plan out what initiatives we are supporting and the timetable for our future events. Our next such meeting is at the community room on Cox's Close in Stapleford, on Wednesday 13th March starting at 8pm. Newcomers are most welcome!

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## **2G3S Nature walks and Social cycle rides**

Out thanks go to John O'Boyle who is taking a break this year from leading his monthly nature walks, which have proved very popular over the last few years.

Thanks are also due to Yasmin Emerson who has led the monthly social cycle rides, and who is similarly taking a break this year.

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## **Other News**

### **Situations Vacant**

We are looking for someone new to take charge of our Facebook page - if you are interested, please get in touch: email [2G3S](#).

### **Your Help Needed**

We in 2G3S are involved with two different initiatives for preserving and enhancing plant life locally. Sophi Berridge has drafted a proposal for planting new trees and looking after existing trees in Stapleford. Jo Sinclair has separately prepared a plan for submission to Sawston Parish Council.

In both cases grant funding would be available to cover the capital costs, but they would rely on volunteer effort, for example in helping to find locations for new trees, actually plant the trees, and then to assist with ongoing management once they are planted.

We are keen to hear from anyone who is willing to get involved in practical ways - the success of these applications, and the initiatives themselves, will depend on having sufficient numbers interested in volunteering to help. Sophie has a deadline of 14th February so please get in touch straight away if you want to help - email [2G3S](#).

Another ongoing conservation initiative is trying to get Protected Verge status on Sawston Bypass. Jo and others have been surveying plant species and doing some management work to support them. The areas recently bulldozed by construction works (pipeline / cabling) at the northern end of the bypass have missed the Lizard Orchid and the colony of Common Spotted Orchids, and the exposed chalk is actually good for many species. The Wildlife Trust will decide on the Protected Verge status in the next few months.

## Have your say in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Cambridgeshire Council has opened a survey on our attitudes to nature recovery in the region, which will help to define the Nature Recovery Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Please do respond to this survey - it is a chance for us all as individuals to register what we think is important.

Here is the link to the survey:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/biodiversity-and-greenspaces/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-local-nature-recovery-strategy>

There is information on the background to the consultation included in the survey.

The closing date for comments is Friday 5 April at 5pm.

## Hedgehog Highways

East Cambridgeshire DC surveyed constituents about the animals they most wanted to help, and hedgehogs topped the poll. The Council is now working with developers of new housing estates to incorporate hedgehog-friendly measures as they build eg holes at the bottom of fences, to enable hedgehogs to pass from one garden to another. In your own garden you can do this. You can also put out water and cat or dog food for them, and leave a pile of leaves for them to lie in or make a house. More information on the [RSPCA website](#).

*Helen Hale*

## What is the Carbon footprint of your street?

The Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions has produced what it calls a “[place based carbon calculator](#)” which is an interactive map of the carbon footprint of every neighbourhood in the UK. Although this is intended primarily to assist in local planning and academic research, it is quite interesting to take a look at where you live and how this compares with other locations. You can zoom in in quite high detail, to for example compare the EPC rating of houses in a particular street.

## Climate Psychology

As a contrast to the last item which is an example of an analytical approach to addressing the climate crisis, others are concerned about the impacts on our mental state. Some communities, including some villages in South Cambs, organise Climate Cafes - which provide a way for anyone worried about the climate emergency to meet informally and talk about their concerns. Nationally, the [Climate Psychology Alliance](#) provides resources for individuals and for groups wanting to provide this type of support.

## Willow Tree Plantings

The Great Shelford Village Charity have constructed a “[willow classroom](#)” in their community garden in More’s Meadow.

## Greening Your Home

Last October, as part of British Libraries week, Cambridge Library hosted a talk by climate scientist Jonathan Gregory on how he has retrofitted his own home to reduce his own carbon emissions, preceded by a concise summary of why global heating is happening. The event was live-streamed, and the recording is still available to view for free, [here](#).

## The Big Plastic Count 2024



In 2022, the first Big Plastic Count used citizen science to show that almost 100 billion pieces of plastic are thrown away in the UK each year, with hardly any of it recycled.

This has become an annual event, but there's a good reason why you might want to get involved in this year's [Big Plastic Count](#): In 2024, governments will be at the negotiating table for a [Global Plastics Treaty](#), aiming to pave the way for a worldwide reduction in plastic production.

This time around, Greenpeace and Everyday Plastic be using the results of the count to convince UK politicians to lead the way at the UN talks and push for a really strong treaty. It's a massive opportunity, and your participation can help make a significant impact!

Here's a summary of what you need to do:

1. Register: Get your free counting pack (digital or via post) which includes everything you need to take part
2. Get Counting: Count all your plastic waste from 11-17 March
3. Submit Results: Submit your data via the Big Plastic Count website by 31 March
4. Get Your Footprint: Discover your plastic footprint and use the results to make a difference!

Here is the link to [REGISTER](#).

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# Reports on Recent 2G3S Events

## Pure Clean Water film screening - 1st February



We were delighted that event was a sell-out, with the venue capacity of 80 seats reached shortly before the day of the screening. We had tried hard to advertise the screening, but the film is its own best advertisement, as it was evident from a “straw poll” that most had been recommended to see the film by friends or colleagues who had already seen it.

Perhaps the most worrying point made in the film is that our local chalk streams now rely on artificial “augmentation” whereby the water company uses some of the water it has abstracted from the chalk aquifer to add to streams that would otherwise run dry (because of the abstraction), or to pump back into the chalk to maintain the flow from natural springs. During the dry summer of 2022, the water company chose to stop the augmentation, allowing streams to run dry anyway, rather than impose any restriction on domestic water usage.

Following the film itself, there was a chance for audience members to find out more about what they had just seen and explore the issues raised in the film. On hand were Tony Eva, the film’s director; Katie Thornburrow, a local councillor; Mike Foley, from Cam Valley Forum; and Monica Piyok, from Friends of the River Cam. (Katie and Monica had appeared in the film, interviewed by Tony).

One suggestion from Cam Valley Forum, mentioned in the film, is to adopt a principle of “Chalk Streams First”, so that decisions on planning, development, and water abstraction take into account the need to maintain a flow in these waterways. This principle does not seem to tally with current practice and is at odds with the prospect of significant new residential developments in the region which would require a corresponding increase in the amount of water abstracted.

It is possible that a new reservoir to be built near Chatteris could provide some mitigation by allowing more water to be abstracted during the winter when the water table is high, to fill the reservoir, which then provides a supplementary supply during the summer. However, this would not be in operation until the 2030’s at the earliest, and there is no guarantee that this would in any way protect the chalk streams rather than just meet the demands of an increased local population.

So it seems essential that our per-capita demand for water is reduced. This would need to include all uses including agricultural, but the aspect that each of us has some control over is our own domestic consumption. The average daily home usage is quoted in the film as 140 litres per person. The panel members were asked if they had measured their own water consumption and two of them had a personal usage of around 40 litres a day, and an audience member said theirs was about 70 (I have looked at my own home use and this is also around 70 litres a day).

From the comments made by those with lower than average consumption, this had been achieved simply by being aware of the value of our drinking water supply, and changing habits to avoid waste



rather than compromising on cleanliness, hygiene or the enjoyment of a hot shower. However, watering the garden should be from a water butt, not from tapwater. There was a consensus that it's OK to let a garden lawn go brown in a dry summer – it will grow back green remarkably quickly when the rain returns – but there may be no practical alternative to tap water in dry spells if growing plants for food in a garden or allotment.

Of course those without a water meter installed have no way of knowing what their usage is, but customers can request to have a water meter fitted, and in the majority of cases this will lead to lower bills through lower usage – having to pay per litre is a good driver to adopt the good habits that avoid water waste.

We talked about the Eddington housing development which is designed to achieve an average daily usage of 80 litres a person (rather than 140), by having a separate drain for surface water and grey water, so that it can be collectively retained, filtered, and re-used as a secondary water supply to each property for toilet flushing and to supply washing machines. This is the largest such system in the UK, involving about 3000 residences, but sadly (madly?) has not so far been commissioned due to an inconsistency in the various regulations concerning the water supply. For more information [see this blogpost](#).

This dual supply and drain approach may become more common in future, and regulations may require the plumbing in new buildings to be put in place to support this, but in most cases where separate plumbing is incorporated, the two types of waste water leaving a property are re-combined into a single main drain, since there is no onus on water companies to treat them any differently. And retro-fitting grey-water storage and re-use in an existing property is likely to be impractical on grounds of cost, available space, and ensuring the stored water does not pose a health risk.

So how can the level of abstraction be reduced? Beyond valuing our own home water supply and taking steps to reduce personal consumption, what we can do as individuals is to add our names and voices to support for a Chalk Streams First approach, join and support groups that are campaigning to protect the chalk stream habitats, and respond to public consultations such as on the [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) for our region (see above). Going further, perhaps we need to provide [legal rights](#) to the rivers themselves?

On a different topic, we are hoping to arrange a screening of “[Six Inches of Soil](#)” at the Marven Centre later this year. This film is about the growing (pun intended) difficulties with conventional farming techniques and how the alternative approach of regenerative agriculture is being pioneered in this area.

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## Conversation Evening - Sustainable Food - 29th January

Ann Mitchell from **Cambridge Sustainable Food** gave us a very interesting talk at our conversation evening at the Free Church in Great Shelford at the end of January, with lots of discussion and a quiz to test our knowledge. CSF has been in existence for 10 years and works to build a fairer, more sustainable food system, with less waste, fairer distribution, food security, and healthier food. A lot of their work at present is running eight food hubs, which they supply with excess food from supermarkets. Last year they redistributed 187 tons of food!

We discussed how our choices of food affect our health and the planet - if you choose to do just one thing to really make a difference to the carbon footprint of your diet, eat less meat (especially beef)

and dairy. If you're interested in finding some recipes, there are lots on the [Veganuary](#) website, and also on the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) site.

To read more about the dysfunctional food system in this country, read '[Ravenous](#)' by Henry Dimbleby, who was called the Food Czar, having worked on the National Food Strategy, the School Food Plan, and with DEFRA.

See if you can get the right answers to some of the quiz questions – answers at the end of the newsletter:

1. Of all the land in the UK used for agriculture, how much is used for crops for humans to eat?

15%, 25%, or 40%?

2. Can you name 4 foods that are most wasted by households?

3. How much food is wasted before the produce leaves the farm gate?

10%, 20%, 30%, 40%?

4. The carbon emissions from one person's average weekly food shop:

Vegan 36kg CO2 equivalent,

Vegetarian 46kg CO2 equivalent,

Average diet including meat ??kg CO2 equivalent.

*Helen Hale*

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## 2G3S Book Club - 21st November

We met on 21st November last year to discuss *Islands of Abandonment* by Cal Flyn, who explores (often literally) places around the world that for different reasons have become depopulated and abandoned by human society. She documents how they have become unintended habitats for wild plants and animals and developed their own ecosystems.

The author tries to conclude on a positive note – that nature can recover and thrive even in seemingly inhospitable and “unnatural” landscapes – but after reading the book we were left with a rather more negative mood despite the fact that *Islands of Abandonment* is an impressive piece of research blended with compelling first hand accounts. We do not seem to be learning the lessons that these places can tell us about the effects of war, social neglect, and willful pollution. There is also a feeling of foreboding that some populated spaces are increasingly at risk of becoming future examples of abandonment as climate breakdown continues.

We have chosen a more upbeat title for the next session (on 20th February, see elsewhere in this newsletter for details).

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## Sawston Repair Cafe - 18th November



Thanks to all who came to our event at the Sawston Free Church on 18th November, and thanks too to the church for allowing us to use this wonderful venue. As usual our repairers were faced with a wide range of challenges: from lawnmowers to cuckoo clocks, and from curtains to kettles.

We were pleased with the success rate of repairs, and judging from the comments left by visitors, the owners of the items brought along were also pleased with the outcome and enjoyed the experience.

We are organising our next repair cafe in Great Shelford on 24th February - for details see elsewhere in this newsletter!

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### Sustainable Food - Answer to Quiz Questions (see report above on our 29th January event)

1. 40% - the rest is to feed animals. Eat more plants and less meat.
  2. Bread, milk, salad, bananas. Only buy what you need; freeze bread or toast it; taste a little of the milk to see if it's OK, even if the use by date has passed; make banana bread or "ice cream" with overripe bananas, or slice into porridge.
  3. 30% - supermarket contracts are too specific on veg size, shape, etc, so much gets ploughed back in. Buy wonky vegs, vegs from greengrocers and local producers, join a veg box scheme.
  4. 61kg CO2 equivalent.
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The editor welcomes ideas and copy by email, for inclusion in future newsletters. The next edition will be due in May 2024 - please send contributions to the editor before the end of April.

We encourage you to let us know what you think about this newsletter- send your comments to the editor via [2g3newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:2g3newsletter@gmail.com).

The [email address for general enquiries to 2G3S](mailto:mail2G3S@gmail.com) is now "mail2G3S@gmail.com".