



Watlington Climate Action Newsletter July 2020

Here's everything you need to know about our projects and events this month, so you can keep up to date with everything that's going on. Anything you'd like to see included please email us at watlingtonclimateaction@gmail.com and let us know!

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Dates for your Diary

- **Thursday 9th July 7.30 pm** Fantastic Fungi and online discussion
- **Week commencing 13th July** Mass Unwrap At Home event

Details below!

Update from the Committee on Climate Change

The Committee on Climate Change has published its recommendations for the UK government to put the Environment at the heart of the nation's Covid-19 recovery. This includes energy efficiency and low-carbon heating, habitat restoration, creating energy networks that support the transition to renewables, sustainable transport and reducing waste.

Here in Watlington there is much we can do to support this change. From changing your energy supplier to volunteering for the Green Plan project, reducing car use, holidaying closer to home, and consuming less, there are many changes we can make now, without waiting for Government action. Whilst Government action is clearly critical, our individual actions send a strong message to show that voters support action on the Climate Crisis.

Plus many of the changes required actually add to our quality of life - local

shopping, less travelling, and enjoying countryside nearer to home to name just a few!

Fantastic Fungi

Watlington Climate Action Presents



Imagine an organism that feeds you, heals you, reveals nature's mysteries, and could help save the planet... today.

It's right under your feet.

Fantastic Fungi

7.30pm Thursday 9th July

fantasticfungiawatlington.eventbrite.co.uk

Breathtaking, beautiful, informative, entertaining, and hopeful, a "Must See"!

Our next event combines streaming the feature length film "Fantastic Fungi" at home, with an on-line discussion afterwards.

According to film review site Rotten Tomatoes, Fantastic Fungi is "a consciousness-shifting film that takes us on an immersive journey through time and scale into the magical earth beneath our feet, an underground network that can heal and save our planet. Through the eyes of renowned scientists and mycologists like Paul Stamets, best-selling authors Michael Pollan, Eugenia Bone, Andrew Weil and others, we become aware of the beauty, intelligence and solutions the fungi kingdom offer us in response to some of our most pressing medical, therapeutic, and environmental challenges...100% Critics Score"

Click below for details of how to get access to the film and the on-line discussion.

[Register here for Fantastic Fungi](#)

Plastic Free Watlington



Plastic is indispensable in providing safe PPE for key workers, but what about plastics in general? Can they help protect us from Covid 19, through single use plastic packaging?

According to the New England Medical Journal, corona viruses can survive on plastic surfaces for 2 - 3 days, compared to cardboard for 24 hours. In addition to this, the Food Standards Agency tells us that it is very unlikely that you can catch Covid-19 from food or its packaging. So, there is no need to reach for the

single use plastic covered option, as this does not provide any benefit. Instead, good hygiene practices, such as washing your hands, only picking up what you intend to buy, and washing all fruit and vegetables before use as normal provides better protection. Reusable cups are also still fine to use, just make sure you wash them using soap and hot water, or in a dishwasher.

Plastic remains disastrous for the environment from the extraction of the oil to produce it, to its disposal. As we now know, plastic negatively impacts the environment through burning waste plastic, through discarded plastic litter killing wildlife, and through microplastics entering the food chain and ultimately our own bodies. Plastic particles are literally in the air we breathe, and this problem is only getting worse. The only solution is to take action to reduce our dependence on plastic, in particular single use plastic.

That is why we are holding a Mass Unwrap At Home event to draw attention to the issue.

This is a whole week event starting Monday 13th July. On this week, please collect all your plastic packaging from your grocery shopping and at the end of the week take pictures of this so we can all see how much single use plastic is being wasted each week. Please send your pictures by e-mail to plasticfreewatlington@gmail.com or post to the Plastic Free Facebook Group.

Plastic Free July...

...Is here again – how can we reduce the amount of single use plastic in our lives?

Food – Look for items not wrapped in single use plastic, and take your own containers to shops. Here in Watlington we have The Undercroft, So Sustainable, and Calnan's Brothers, who are all Plastic Free Champions, not to mention Tutu Delicious, who are finally open again! So, if you can, shop local!

Bathroom – Bathrooms breed single use plastic, but almost everything has an alternative option. From bamboo toothbrushes to toothpaste in jars, from beautifully scented soaps, to shampoo and conditioner bars, or refills using existing plastic bottles, there are now many options to help eliminate single use plastic from your bathroom

Cleaning products – Another area where cleaning products typically come in plenty of plastic! But go back to basics with white vinegar and bicarbonate of soda, and you are good for most home cleaning. Get your refills at So Sustainable and avoid single use plastic and unnecessary marketing.

On The Go – Out and about and in need of sustenance, it's easy to reach for the bottled water, disposable coffee cup or throw away cutlery. Try to get in the habit of taking your own bottle, keep cup, and cutlery set with you, to avoid those situations! Like taking your own bags to the shop, this is just a habit that gets easier with time.

Corona Virus – At the moment there is a huge increase in the use of disposable masks and latex gloves, which can cause a problem for the environment. With regard to disposable Latex gloves Public Health England do not recommend these as a protective measure for the general public. Instead they advise that washing hands is "a far better precautionary measure". For every-day use in the shops, a reusable fabric mask will do the job - search for Mair Joint Stylist on Facebook for a selection of beautifully made masks which have three layers of cotton fabric and a metal nose clip.

Late edit: Watlington Parish Office is now supporting The Community Face Covering Initiative which is implemented by a group of local volunteers. Masks are available from the Parish Office. These are not for sale; they are free at point of source for those who cannot afford it or who are vulnerable. Any cash donations will be used to buy more elastic, cord, thread etc. People can also pay the gift of a free mask forwards through helping others in the community in

some way or helping us by donating cotton materials.

Find out More from Plastic Free July

Green Plan - Hedgerow Survey



A hedge in need of maintenance



A thriving hedge providing rich habitat and carbon sequestration

Hedgerows cover the landscape of the UK rather like the stitching in a patchwork quilt and to many of us they define much of the British countryside. Yet in many ways they are overlooked or perhaps even taken for granted.

Originally planted to mark boundaries and land ownership and to act as an effective living fence to keep animals either in or out of fields, hedges provide so many different benefits to both us and wildlife. They provide shelter for farm animals; help to stop soil erosion from fields, supply habitat and a food source for birds and insects. They are the largest semi natural habitat in the country and are corridors through which wildlife can move along in an increasingly intensely farmed landscape. As many as 16 out of the 19 birds included in the Farmland Bird Index, as used by Government to assess the state of farmland wildlife, are associated with hedgerows, with 10 using them as a primary habitat. They can also be an important carbon sink and help in the prevention of flooding.

Yet not all is well with our hedgerows. In the last Countryside Survey it was found that only about 50% of our hedges were in 'favourable condition' and in arable areas in particular, only 12% are in favourable condition. Years of 'over trimming' have made many of our local hedges into thin, gappy relics of what they once were and at the other extreme some hedgerows have become so neglected that they are now overgrown and close to collapse.

With proper management either of these extremes can be improved and hedgerow surveys on a farm or at a parish level help to identify what the hedges consist of and what condition they are in. This in turn can lead to practical management that will benefit the hedge and guarantee its future.

As a result of the Watlington Environment and Climate Change meeting at the town hall it was agreed that hedgerows play an important role in the local environment and that a survey of the hedgerows within Watlington parish is needed - and for that we need volunteers!

We will be using a recognised hedgerows survey format developed by PTES (Peoples Trust for Endangered Species) and basic survey training will be provided. Surveys are best done in the autumn months so we will kick off with an introduction to hedges and the survey itself sometime at the end of August with a view to starting on the surveys in the middle of September.

We will especially be looking at the hedgerows on Parish land and, with the permission of landowners, on some of the private land. For hedges without permitted access we will endeavour to do as best we can from a public footpath or road.

We are looking for volunteers to help with this survey. Please contact Nigel Adams on nigelpadams@aol.com, or watlingtonclimateaction@gmail.com

Green Plan - Gardens

Most of the green space in Watlington is in the form of gardens, so making the most of the potential of our own green spaces for enhancing biodiversity and carbon sequestration is something we have control over as individuals. To help us, Iain Naismith of Watlington Environment Group, and his daughter Eliza Naismith, are collaboratively writing a series of articles on this topic which we will be sharing with you shortly!

Create a Mini Pond



Watching the films at the Film Festival From Your Sofa event, and taking part in the online discussion helped attendees to gain a better understanding of wide ranging climate change issues, especially as these films are based on real life stories. The conversations held afterwards helped people enhance their understanding even more but in a light manner whilst still thinking how to make a difference to Watlington.

One of the films in particular, *March of the Newts*, inspired us to think about how we can help our local amphibians by providing ponds in our gardens. If you don't have space for a garden pond, consider creating a "mini pond". A washing-up bowl, a large plant pot, or a disused sink could all be repurposed as ponds, providing you make sure creatures can get in and out. Your pond will need light, but not full sunlight all day. If your container isn't water tight, first add a piece of pond liner. Then, a layer of gravel and rocks, creating different depths. Fill your pond with rain water, as tap water contains chemicals. Add some pond plants, such as miniature waterlily, or lesser spearwort. Then wait for wildlife to come.

For more information, click the link below. "*March of the Newts*" which is 4 minutes long, is available to watch on Vimeo.

[How to create a Mini Pond](#)

Watch March of the Newts

Website & Social Media

Development of our website is progressing - so watch this space as we will have something to share with you soon!

We still need someone to help with our social media, so if you have a talent for creating engaging content and have experience of Instagram and Facebook, please get in touch!

Tip of the Month

Don't forget - the Waste not Want not Watlington group on Facebook is amazing for sharing equipment if you need to borrow something or have things to give away!

The group is an on-line Library of Stuff where instead of everyone owning their own, occasionally used pieces of equipment, it is possible to loan out and borrow equipment just when it is needed. This model is more economic and sustainable - and requires less storage space at home.

In addition, people have been using this group also as a "Buy Nothing" group, helping to further reduce consumption of the Earth's resources.

Please help spread the word by sharing the group with your facebook friends!

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