



DorsetCAN Newsletter 3 ~ April 2021

This Newsletter brings news of Dorset CAN and local activity, then national and international news. After that come new resources and four fabulous Case Studies of Community Campaigns in Dorset which we think could be an inspiration for other towns and villages in the county.

Items in red call for action from you now!

We're building our website - if you're part of a group that should be listed, please let us know at: DorsetCAN.news@gmail.com

We want a paradigm shift to stop the planet overheating; to reverse the appalling loss of wildlife; to restore and regenerate our soils, our land, our rivers and our oceans from devastating pollution by chemicals, plastics and other toxic waste; and to build a sustainable way of life for all people and all living systems and species.

For that to happen, we need to understand the processes that are damaging our world; to understand how we can reverse that damage; and to see what positive actions we can take and urge others to take.

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Update from DorsetCAN and Locally

- **Dorset CAN puts questions to Dorset Council**

There was great coverage in the *Dorset Echo* of the questions that we and others put to Dorset Council's Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 24th March. Here's an extract from Trevor Bevins' piece:

"Caz Dennett, from Weymouth, has criticised the way questions were framed in the council's climate consultation which, she says, gave respondents no chance to put forward some views about carbon neutral target dates in the short survey. She says that, as result, the conclusion of the report should be declared invalid because the two surveys, in her opinion, asked significantly different questions.

Corfe Castle parish councillor Josephine Parish claims that since Covid 19 Dorset Council has not held any 'genuine two way public engagement' on the climate and ecological emergencies. She says the authority also missed an opportunity by not sending out information about the issues with recent council tax bills. She says that although Dorset Council held no public meetings, where the public were able to ask questions, other organisations did so, proving that it could be done.

'Given the response rate of less than 0.5% of residents that Dorset Council achieved in its consultation process, will the scrutiny committee recommend that Dorset Council work closely with Dorset-based climate and environmental advocacy groups and organisations (including Parish & Town Councils) which are clearly able to reach – and communicate with – concerned residents more effectively?'

Other questions to this week's scrutiny committee ask why there is no implementation schedule for the Local Transport Plan. Helen Sumbler says dealing with transport matters is one of the best ways for the county to tackle climate change. She has also asked for an update on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan."

[Read the Dorset Echo article](#)

- **Get involved with our Questions campaign.** A Dorset CAN team is co-ordinating questions to Dorset Council Cabinet and Committees on issues like the Local Plan, the CEE Action Plan, and the CEE Bill. Email Sandra on imoveintolife@gmail.com if you would like to be involved.

- **Monthly get-together for Dorset CAN members/supporters**

The latest *Monthly Get-together* on 24 March was a huge success with inspiring talks about the CEE Bill, green roofs, car-sharing schemes, Youth Climate Action and more. If you missed it, [watch the Zoom recording here](#). The next Get-together is on Wednesday 28th April at 7pm. These are mass gatherings of people living in or near Dorset who want to do something about the Climate & Ecological Emergency and build thriving local communities. **The Zoom link is the same every month, please save it:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82302940667?pwd=eUFndUdad0p3ckdVbU5PbGxZV1lYdz09>

- **Dorset CAN Teams ~ Please join/help/get involved...**

At the Action meeting on 1 February, several teams were formed, based on the passions, skills and experience of DorsetCAN members. So far, there are 6 teams (listed with coordinators):

- **Advocacy** (coordinators: [Michael Dower](#) and Belinda Bawden: belindabawden@gmail.com)
- **Energy** (Colin Tracy: colintracy66@gmail.com)
- **Land Use and Food** (Ian Duckworth: iduckworth@live.co.uk & Julie Leah: julie_leah@btinternet.com)
- **Media, Website and Newsletter** (Tracee Cossey: traceecossey@hotmail.com)
- **Transport** (Helen Sumbler: helens@planetpurbeck.org)
- **Facilitation** ([Sandra Reeve](#) and David Brown: emaildrdavidbrown@gmail.com)

Please join us! To join any of these teams or propose a new one, email the coordinator.

- **Petition/Campaign - the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**

The Bill has been written by scientists, lawyers and activists; it's been proposed in parliament by Caroline Lucas MP and is gathering wide support. The key points contained in the bill are:

1. Ensure the UK cuts greenhouse gas emissions in line with its legal obligations
2. Protect and restore woodlands, wetlands and the wider natural world
3. Set up an assembly to involve people across the UK to develop a climate emergency strategy.

We need the support of as many MPs as possible from all political parties. **Please read more, join the campaign, and ask your MP to vote for the Bill when it returns to the Commons in May.**

For more info and/or join the campaign, visit [DTAction's CEE pages](#)

Caz Dennett is devising a campaign and schedule with a variety of activities through to the Bill's 2nd reading in Parliament (likely in May). **If you would like to join a working group to further shape and help implement the campaign, please contact her: de-net@hotmail.co.uk**

- **Corfe Castle Parish Council Environment Group is setting up a Giki Zero pilot.**

This is from their recent publicity:

Giki Zero Toolkit Pilot. - *Did you know according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) everyone in the UK has on average a carbon footprint of 9 tonnes per year. The WHO calls for a target limit of approximately 2 tonnes per person per year.*

[The Giki Zero toolkit](#) is a step-by-step guide to a sustainable life; allows people to understand their environmental footprint and then find steps to lighten it and provides personalised steps to suit each person's lifestyle and budget to help them find their path to Net Zero.

The Pro version of Giki Zero means the Parish Council can look at data sets from the community which means it can identify the barriers to progression. There are also monthly promotional resources community groups can access to help promote and maintain interest in the Giki Zero toolkit.

With this in mind Corfe Castle Parish Council have set up a pilot for 50 people to join Free of Charge Giki Zero Pro. If you'd like to join, please contact the Clerk on 01202 670105 or email corfecastlepc@aol.com

- **Beavers in Dorset**

Last month, Dorset Wildlife Trust released two beavers into an enclosed site in west Dorset. This landmark project is the first of its kind in Dorset and welcomes beavers back to the county for the first time in over 400 years. The Wildlife Trust reports :

*"Following several years of preparation, a pair of Eurasian beavers (*Castor fiber*), an adult male and female, are now settling in. They were relocated from Scotland to Dorset under licence from NatureScot. Their new home, a large site of freshwater habitat, is not accessible to the public. However, monitoring of the enclosure will provide rare, close-up video and photo footage of the charismatic creatures as they explore, make themselves at home and start to influence the landscape.*

Beavers are known as 'nature's engineers' and their activities, including wetland creation through the building of dams, have the potential to increase biodiversity, filter and clean water, and even reduce flooding by slowing the rate of water passing through rivers and streams during storm events."

Wimborne Spring Green Festival

An inspiring green-themed programme of online events will include films, nature and wildlife talks, children's craft sessions and more – all designed to encourage and equip us to live more sustainably and build a more hope-filled future. Just like spring greens, Wimborne Spring Green Festival will do you good!



The festival runs from 17-24 April.

<https://www.wimbornehistoryfestival.org.uk/wimborne-green-festival/>

Facebook: Wimborne Green Festival

email: wimbornegreenfestival@gmail.com

'Back to the Future': Poetry Festival

Dorset based poetry magazine *Tears in the Fence* has, since it began in 1984, had a long association with environmental causes. It holds an annual poetry festival in Stourpaine which it hopes to resume this year. In the meantime, it offers a one-day Zoom poetry conference on **Saturday May 8**.

As humanity looks forward to a possible emergence from the pandemic, can we rebuild our society more sustainably and more humanely than what has gone before? Does our poetry have a part to play in changing our ways?

Sessions:

10am: 'Realignment With Nature'

2pm: 'Healing and Renewal'

7pm: 'New Beginnings'

Poets reading include Jess Mookherjee, Lesley Harrison and Mandy Haggith. For details:

<https://tearsinthefence.com/festival> Use the 'Donate' button to book (suggested donation £15).

National and International News & Activities

- **Water companies discharged raw sewage into rivers in England more than 400,000 times in 2020**

Untreated effluent was released into waterways for more than three million hours last year. According to the BBC: *Sir James Bevan, chief executive of the Environment Agency, said that his organisation was "working actively with the water companies to ensure overflows are properly controlled". He also said that the harm they do to the environment needed to be stopped.*

The Rivers Trust, which campaigns to protect river environments in England and Wales, said: "This is a shocking volume of untreated contaminated wastewater reaching our rivers and shows that our current approach and infrastructure, managing storm water in particular, needs a radical overhaul." [BBC News item](#)

- **The Other Pandemic**

"It is undeniably horrific that more than 2.8 million people have died of Covid-19 in the past 15 months. In roughly the same period, however, more than three times as many likely died of air pollution. This should disturb us for two reasons. One is the sheer number of air pollution deaths – 8.7 million a year, according to a recent study – and another is how invisible those deaths are, how accepted, how unquestioned. The coronavirus was a terrifying and novel threat, which made its dangers something much of the world rallied to try to limit. It was unacceptable – though by shades and degrees, many places came to accept it, by deciding to let the poor and marginalized take the brunt of sickness and death and displacement and to let medical workers get crushed by the workload..." This is the start of Rebecca Solnit's recent piece in *The Guardian*. [Full Guardian article.](#)

- **Climate Emergency UK working with local councils**

- Their **2030 Pledge Campaign** calls on local councillors to pledge:

“... to do everything in my power to ensure our local authority works in collaboration with the local community to:

- *set a target date of no later than 2030 to reach net zero emissions for our District/County/Borough.*
 - *develop and implement an ambitious Climate Action Plan that allows people, enterprise and nature to thrive.*
 - *ensure that tackling the climate and ecological emergency is a priority in all the actions and decisions of the local authority.”*
- Their Climate Engagement Trello Board collects examples of community engagement by local authorities on the Climate and Ecological Emergency. You can view the board [here](#).
 - Their [LOCAL AUTHORITY CLIMATE PLAN CHECKLIST](#) – developed by Climate Emergency UK, Friends of the Earth, Centre for Alternative Technology & Ashden. Community groups (that’s us) can use the checklist to assess the ambition of their local authority’s plan. **Has anyone got time to use this to assess Dorset Council’s draft Action Plan? Please let us know if you have.**

[Climate Emergency UK Newsletter March 2021](#)

- **Climate change to put farming sectors under stress**

A new study by the Met Office gives examples of how two of the UK’s most important farming sectors are likely to be impacted by climate change. The study examines the effect of climate change on the dairy and potato farming sectors over the next thirty to fifty years.

The research found that heat stress in dairy cattle is projected to increase significantly in key dairy regions of the UK, particularly South Western England.

The UK region with the largest herd of dairy cattle is the South West, where there are around 750,000 dairy cattle (according to the latest figures from Defra). The study shows that heat stress conditions are met around two-to-three days per year, but in the period 2051-2070, this could extend to around one month per year on average.

The study is based on a climate projection known as RCP 8.5: a high emissions future. The pathway is credible as mitigation efforts to achieve the more drastic [cuts in] greenhouse gas emissions representative of other pathways can’t be guaranteed. The report’s author said: “Given the potentially serious consequences for UK farming, we felt it was appropriate to work with a high impact scenario. Even under lower emission pathways, we know that our climate will continue to change so even if the impacts are smaller than identified in this study, our study provides useful information for adaptation planning.” [You can read the full paper here.](#)

- **Bees exposed to more toxic pesticides despite overall use falling**

New Scientist reports that bees have been exposed to growing levels of toxicity from pesticides over 25 years, despite the amount used falling. The toxic exposure is based on US data but probably applies to other countries too.

Countries should consider following Denmark’s lead with “toxicity taxes” on pesticides to encourage farmers to change which products they use, says one of the researchers behind the new findings.

In recent years, pesticides that precisely target crop pests have been linking to falling insect numbers, with the European Union banning outdoor use of several widely used pesticides known as neonicotinoids in 2018. In January, following its exit from the EU, the UK controversially allowed the emergency use of such “neonics” to kill aphids carrying a virus that threatens sugar beet.

“We saw people from media, politics and even scientists often talk about how the amount of pesticides changes [over time]. At the same time, we saw, as ecotoxicologists, that the toxicity of pesticides changed. Some insecticides used today are way more toxic to some groups of organism than ones used decades ago,” says Ralf Schulz at the University of Koblenz and Landau, Germany, who led the new research.

He and his team combined US government data on the weight of 381 pesticides used between 1992 and 2016 with their own index of the pesticides’ toxicity for different groups of species, from birds and mammals to pollinators and plants, to create a measure dubbed “total applied toxicity”. They found that for pollinators, plants on land and aquatic invertebrates such as dragonflies, this increased by about 80 per cent between 2005 and 2016, even though the weight of pesticides used fell.

Resources

- **Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)** has a network of skilled advisers who support local communities + information, training, advice for parish councils & public service partners:

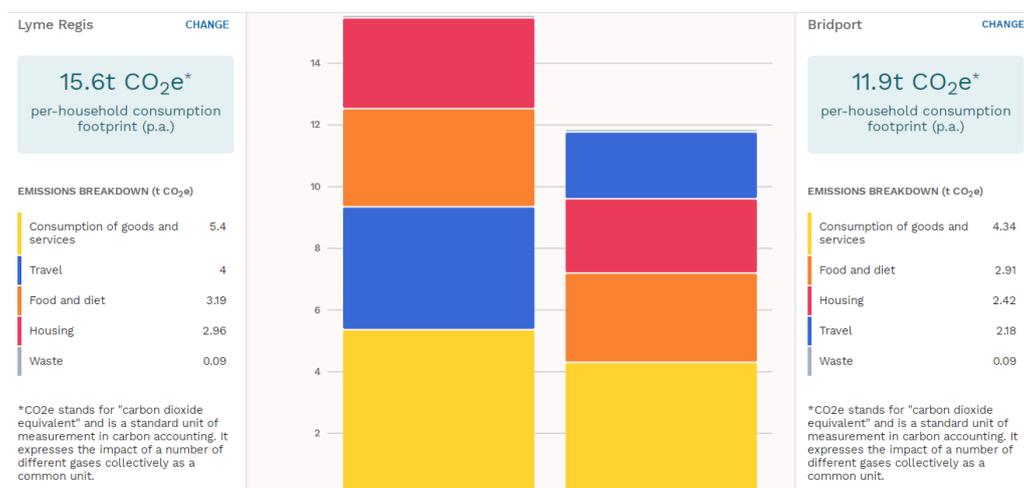
[A Guide to Rural Community Resilience](#)

[A Community Guide to your Water Environment](#) (rivers, basically)

Their advisers have lots of information on how village halls can reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to a zero-carbon future. [ACRE Website](#)

- **New Carbon Footprinting Toolkit**

Lyme Regis town councillor Belinda Bawden feels the [Impact Carbon Footprint Toolkit](#) could be a significant help to town and parish councils as well as business and community groups trying to plan for net zero carbon futures. The toolkit shows the main sources of local emissions so local action can be directed effectively. For example, housing accounts for almost half the territorial emissions in Lyme Regis with transport the second largest contributor.



Consumption emissions per household in Lyme Regis compared to Bridport

Once the effect of consumption is taken into account, however, the housing contribution is reduced to the fourth largest, with the emissions caused by the consumption of goods and services; travel; and food & diet categories exceeding those from housing.

The scale of the consumption-based emissions seems daunting but there are personal and family-based Carbon Footprinting Toolkits, for example, [Giki Zero](#) (see Local News for Corfe Castle's initiative with Giki Zero) which are fun as well as functional to use.

Using the [Impact Toolkit](#) at a community level alongside encouraging households to adopt small lifestyle changes (with [Giki Zero](#)) can create genuine community engagement as individuals realise the impact their personal consumption habits can have in the overall carbon footprint of their towns and villages.

The Impact Toolkit also allows comparisons with national and county averages, as well as other towns. A preliminary analysis of neighbouring and similar towns in Dorset seems to show that towns with more balanced reliance on local and visitor services have lower carbon footprints than those more dependent on the visitor economy.

- **The UK's Centre for Sustainable Energy** supports the many community groups who are trying to do something about climate change, energy or sustainability, including develop renewable energy projects or make their village hall or other buildings more energy efficient.

They have a [CSE initiative to share the resources](#) they've found most useful to support communities taking action on energy. You can browse and download for free.

- The fundamentals
- Improving your community building
- Community-wide energy saving projects
- Neighbourhood and low carbon planning
- Renewable energy projects
- Resources for schools and educators

[CSE Home Page](#) ~ [CSE Resources Page](#)

- **A wonderful series of podcasts on Climate Change is available at <https://outrageandoptimism.libsyn.com/>**

You can find hope and despair in equal measure, with 94 podcast episodes on topics like

[The race to zero](#)

[The future of shipping](#)

[Climate Justice and Racial Justice with David Lammy](#)

[Hope, Rage and What We're Going to Do About It with Jonathon Porritt and Lily Cole](#)

[The Third Mass Bleaching Event with Emma Johnston](#)

[Sign up for the Global Optimism newsletter here](#)

CASE STUDIES: Two inspiring projects you can copy in your community:

‘Shaftesbury HomeGrown’ – How to Build a Community Farm

Shaftesbury’s community farm is a legacy of the ‘Transition Town’ movement. Thanks to landowners who let us lease land on the edge of the town, for more than 12 years Shaftesbury HomeGrown (SHG) has grown food seasonally as naturally and sustainably as we can. A changing group, all volunteers, have shared planning and carrying out farm tasks, benefitted from access to produce discounted in proportion to their hours worked, learned new skills, and enjoyed good company. We grow fruit, vegetables, flowers and herbs, keep bees mainly as pollinators rather than for honey, and free-range hens for wholesome eggs. Some things have adapted over the years: livestock used to play a greater part and we kept sheep and pigs. Throughout, the intention has been to provide opportunities for members of the community to join together to grow and have access to healthy local food.



During the pandemic we needed to limit the number of people working at any one time. We introduced an additional work session to accommodate new members whilst keeping down the number on site at one time. We’ve all appreciated the outdoor activity and social side of collaboration. Summer 2020 gave us an abundant harvest of fruit, vegetables, and safe fun. Many of us have described our involvement as ‘a life saver’ and this is one of the things our chair, Helen English, spoke about when interviewed for ‘This is Alfred’, Shaftesbury’s daily podcast. Hear her on the 27th August at minute 17:06: <http://bit.ly/Dcan301>



Encouraged by a good growing season, more volunteers and greater awareness of the climate emergency, in September 2020 the group decided to ‘scale up’ and play a larger part in the town’s life. As well as increased food production, we’re looking for land-based projects to run alongside the farm’s core activities. Already we’ve gained:

- a tree nursery
- a new weekly family workday
- teenagers tackling a wide variety of tasks as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award
- a connection to a dementia-friendly group
- understanding of what’s needed (like a compost toilet) to make the site more family-friendly and suitable for therapeutic gardening
- poles cut from the hedge, used to make a wattle fence panel and supports for beans/squash
- permission for a polytunnel for which we’re raising funds and support from the local community through Crowdfunder: <http://bit.ly/Dcan302>



What are the secrets of our success? We’re largely self-sufficient; only occasionally needing supplementary funding to acquire say, a chicken house or now the polytunnel. Members must be comfortable with community growing and collective decision-making. It’s not for everyone, but for us the enjoyment of working together is as important as the food we produce.



For information or to arrange a visit: contact Helen English: 07789 845498

‘Friends of Turner’s Nursery’ – How to Create a Community Orchard

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, in the heart of the busy town of Poole, there was a bramble patch that had lain untouched for 40 years. Dense thickets of prickly briars and stinging nettles grew among the tall alder, willow and oak and foxes, badgers and birds made their homes. In springtime, frogs laid spawn in small ponds where the Bourne stream emerged from under-ground springs. Dragonflies danced overhead. Birds sang from the branches. Sometimes a travellers’ horse would graze.

The patch of greenery among the grey streets and houses was loved and valued by the people round about. They had fond memories of Bill Turner, the strange old man who had, in years gone by, supplied them with wallflowers and lettuces from his nursery, using his vintage motorbike and sidecar to deliver vegetables to the nearby shops.

Then one day in 2010 a dark rumour was heard. The council was planning to take the land and build. It was their right. Word spread. People gathered. They didn’t want to lose their green oasis. What could they do?

In pubs, homes and cafés the good folk of Parkstone met to talk, plan and imagine what they wanted for the land. Outside the school gates, parents and children shared ideas. The vision of Turner’s Nursery Community Orchard was born. It was to be a place where fruit was grown, wildlife could thrive and people could play.

A group was formed. Neighbours talked. Coffee was drunk. Leaflets were drafted. Newspaper articles written. Supporters engaged. The Friends of Turner’s Nursery took their vision to the council and asked for permission to use the land. They knew that if they could show how much the space was valued then it could be protected. They were willing to work, if they were allowed. After much debate, discussion and patience, the Friends succeeded. They were granted the right to plant.

Ten years passed.



In the heart of Parkstone today there is a beautiful orchard where people find peace in hard times, nature thrives, children play and learn, and the dreaming continues.

The people love the beauty of the blossom in the springtime, the chance to wander in the woods, the space to contemplate, the apples and plums in autumn, the hedgerows where the birds can nest and sing. In the graveyard over the road, Bill Turner sleeps peaceful; his nursery is protected. And yes, dense thickets of prickly brier and nettle remain where the wildlife can live undisturbed.



The way has not always been easy and the future is uncertain but in the present all is well.

To find out more, contact Friends of Turner’s Nursery: friendsofturnersnursery@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page. The orchard is open to all – there is no lock on the gate. It lies between Upper Road and Victoria Road in Parkstone. In normal times, friendly social workdays are held on the first Saturday of each month. All welcome.

We have more Case Studies lined up for future issues. If you can’t wait, you can get the Box Set [here](#), featuring:

- Starting a Community Food Security Project
- Bringing Back the Wild Things
- How to Run a Tree Planting Campaign
- How to Relate to your MP

If you missed the lobbying tips, ideas and campaigns in the last newsletter, see them here.