



www.gefweb.org.uk

GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM
newsletter

MARCH – MAY 2020



FARMING WITH CARE IN SURREY

by Angus Stovold

**Early April – sunrise
at Lydling Farm**

Photo by Tiggy Stovold

INTRODUCTION by John Bannister

You see the Stovold name all over our part of Surrey and that's because the family have been farming around here since the 13th century. Angus has won many awards for his herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle. You can find him at the Guildford Farmers Market on the first Tuesday of the month. The key thing is that his animals are local, grass-fed and produced using organic methods. That means few if any chemicals, hormones or antibiotics are used and his approach is very good for our environment and the climate. He is passionate about climate change, the wildlife on Lydling Farm and about his animals, and has a clear vision for making his farm even more environmentally friendly. Read more overleaf.

FARMING WITH CARE IN SURREY

Angus Stovold



SurreyLife.co.uk

I THOUGHT IT WAS GENERATIONAL, but having just returned from a Farmland Bird walk, I can say from the sheer number of farmers there and the diversity of ages, that my industry is taking climate change seriously. Without exception, we are all hurt by the negative focus on our industry, especially the livestock sectors when we are doing a great deal already.

Our changing farming scene

I'm not a scientist but much of the data that is available from both sides of the road is wholly inaccurate. We are always lumped with South America or huge feed lot systems. However, we are farming in Surrey and over the last 50 years we have seen livestock and farmer numbers fall dramatically. In the past, every village had one or two dairies servicing the locals and large numbers of cows, sheep, pigs and poultry. Today, the farms are mainly filled with people with no connection to farming.

Surrey is experiencing a population explosion that doesn't seem to slow, and there's increasing pressure to build new developments with no regard for our already clogged roads.

As you all know, the Surrey Hills evolved to create a rich tapestry of small hedged fields dominated by woodland. Not a lot has changed except the fields have got bigger, partly due to the war effort to "dig for victory".

Interestingly, food is seldom mentioned in climate change debates and food security is never mentioned. I grew up with vegetables being the main production in Surrey, but as the profits were squeezed out, industry production has moved to rich grade one soils. To put fertility and fibrous structure back into the soil, livestock manure is used. We then plough to blend it with the soil and bury weeds.

This is the basis of organic production today and it has been for the last 2,000 years. We are now told that minimum cultivation (scratching the soil and not ploughing) is the future because turning the soil over releases carbon. To do this, you will need to rely on artificial fertilisers and sprays, so is this really the right advice?

I take climate change very seriously and I'm constantly thinking about how I can do more. I currently rely more on my 30 years of farming experience than the advice I am given. I have a Farm Conservation Officer based in my office and we are endlessly discussing the best way forward.

I'm successful at what I do and fortunately I'm in a position to part-finance the changes I want to make. This is an important point. Farmers are willing but often unable to implement changes due to lack of funds: some can barely feed themselves and environmental schemes are only part payments. Therefore, we need a vibrant working countryside in order to get the best from it.

Judging wildlife-friendly farms

I was Chairman of The Farm Wildlife Advisory Group for many years so I am often asked to judge farm environmental projects. I was lucky enough to judge a multiple project in East Sussex, on and around the South Downs and near the Knepp Estate (which is famous for its rewilding project).

This is an extract from my report.

The four best farms were:

Daylands Farm from Derek Crush. Derek has spent many years restoring hedges and preserving the wonderful swath of his meadows. The whole grass farm is rich in wildlife, but his hedges are some of the best I have ever seen, ancient hedges sympathetically

looked after with a 15-year rotational hedge-laying. I've never seen such a variety of species (and I've judged the national hedgerow competition!).

Will Hextall's farm, Hooklands, does not reveal itself until you step beyond the farmhouse. And what a farm! Will has spent a lifetime restoring this all-grass farm. Plotting his moves from his office with large maps like a military general, he has preserved ancient meadows and restored meadows to similar levels, all done with his determination to farm for the benefit of wildlife. The sheer variety of life in these meadows is breathtaking! He has recreated a gem of a farm.

I then went to the top of the Downs (perhaps two separate competitions for two very different farming environments) to Dom Gardiner's Lee Farm This is a large mixed farm but predominantly arable. A commercial shoot around the arable block has to be worked alongside Dom's farming and conservation enterprise, in which he has created buffer zones for wildlife around fields and split large fields with beetle banks or flower mixes. He's restoring downland, but it's his mind-set of farming alongside wildlife that is transforming this once barren landscape into a still profitable but diverse venture. Unfortunately some of the wildlife strips had suffered in the drought but if Dom continues on this path the farm will be a serious contender in the future.

Applesham Farm is again a farm on top of the Downs and has been farmed a similar way for generations. Hugh Passmore is the current farmer and continues to farm it as a mixed farm. The farm is rich in wildlife, traditional grasses and wildflowers but is farmed commercially. It highlights to me how the future of farming could look by harking back to traditional rotations, controlling weeds and reducing the need for high inputs, and supporting a diverse ecosystem. Hugh understands this system and the needs of the wildlife it supports, yet it's a high output sustainable farm and the crops and livestock all looked superb.

Interestingly, I saw Turtle Doves, huge numbers of Corn Bunting and a variety and number of birds I can only dream of. Knepp has benefited from this but the local farmer's biggest complaint was the uncontrolled spread of undesirable weeds such as ragwort. On a recent farm walk, the RSPB officer stated that hedges need management. So I believe there is a place for rewilding but it's not the answer.

Now, on to my farm. Over the last 30 years I've been playing with nature conservation. I've put

hedgerows in to link habitats, preserved wetlands, used field margins and farmed in a sustainable and organic way. However, I did not understand the needs of nature. Greta Thunberg shattered my comfortable world and I had what can only be describe as an epiphany!

What I intend to do is better rotational farming, under-sow grasses in spring-cropped arable crops, have permanent six-metre margins around every field, reduce the size of fields and put hedgerows around every one. In some fields, we will put long-term nectar mixes and some grass fields we will only graze every other year. In areas that are unproductive, I will either re-wild (in a managed way) or plant trees. The system is traditional and involves livestock and ploughing. Within 10 years I want to have Corn Bunting and breeding Lapwings.

Coping with canines

One of the problems we all have in Surrey is that every acre is open to dog walkers. At a recent Surrey Hills-led cluster meeting, the RSPB, English Nature and the National Trust all said how important local farms are to the local wildlife because we're able to prevent dog walkers. So my plan is to stock-fence every hedge, buy unclimbable field gates and hedge wide footpaths, giving each field privacy for wildlife to thrive. All my footpaths will be managed in a very sympathetic way, making them wider and putting up educational story boards to explain what is happening and why.

I now have the confidence (after 30 years of farming) to create this. My problem is, I'm currently in Entry Level and Higher Level Stewardship schemes and these prevent me starting now. I will need to apply and be accepted for a stewardship scheme for capital works, as this is extremely expensive.

Again, I'm able to fund some, but not all of the costs involved. I need to make sure that my core business stays profitable. A key part of the end plan when all is thriving is to let people enjoy this



Coppice protection with deer fencing

haven, but in a managed way. Over the past few years there have been extensive studies into the relationship between nature and mental health/wellbeing benefits. This is an area that I'm interested in exploring.

The 'Green Sands Cluster'

The Green Sands Cluster managed by Surrey Hills so far involves over 10,000 acres from the Hogs Back to Hindhead, Surrey Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Waverley Borough Council, the RSPB, the National Trust and many farms. We are going to work together for the benefit of nature. This is the future! The Surrey Hills brand is going to promote local sustainable production, giving shoppers the confidence to buy responsibly. The key message is "Buy Responsibly". Don't lose the farming community by promoting the reduction of or stopping meat consumption and don't buy Brazilian or American meat (which you can buy in Guildford).

In conclusion (and it's important that GEF understands this), the Surrey landscape is going to change. We've left Europe and the CAP support system. The agricultural bill going through Parliament talks of enhanced environmental schemes – often these schemes are hard to access and are always targeted. This unfortunately means that Surrey farming will probably see a large reduction of income. We're all on marginal ground so fewer fields will be cropped. We'll need all the help we can get.

Protection of downland



New hedges

We're a willing community and the landscape in Surrey is very important to us all, as is climate change. Diversity of landscape, a successful enterprise working with nature and all of us being responsible is the key to the future of Surrey's countryside. We mustn't make the mistake of throwing the dishes out with the dishwater. We need to develop long-term plans and avoid knee-jerk reactions to create a better countryside for us and the planet.

Unexpected contributor to climate change

The obesity crisis is accelerating the effects of climate change, as people who are overweight eat more food and use more fuel for transport. Researchers from the University of Copenhagen found that obese people generate 20% more greenhouse gases a year – equivalent to nearly 1.2 tons of CO₂ – than if they were a typical weight for their build.

(Source: *i Weekend*, 21 Dec '19)

FACTS & FIGURES

Tilbury

Buglife is challenging Natural England on its extraordinary failure to protect West Tilbury Marshes, an important invertebrate site in Essex, from development as a port.

(Source: *Buglife*, Apr '19)

A prodigious diet

The green woodpecker disposes of astronomical amounts of ants. It gathers them with a flick of a tongue four inches long and coated with glue. At rest, in order to fit inside the bird's head, the tongue coils behind the skull, over the eyes and into the right nostril. Ants are collected for the nestlings too – in one study seven green woodpecker chicks consumed an estimated 1.5 million ants and pupae before leaving the nest.

(Source: *'Wilding'* by Isabella Tree)

GEF NEWS UPDATE

The last quarter has been full of activity, mainly as a result of the welcome realisation that we must tackle the Climate Emergency before it is too late.

1. GEF Membership

We have been delighted to welcome 27 new members in the last quarter. This makes a net increase of 43 members since May and GEF now has a total of nearly 240 members.

2. Talks to Parishes, Residents' and Community Associations

The first six of Henrietta's presentations (another 16 are planned this spring) were well received and led to much discussion and some great ideas. Average audience size is about 40. We will be informing members of future presentations in your area by e-mail.

3. Grants

a. GEF is delighted to have been awarded a grant of £1k from the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFFs) for the next year of our Swift Project. The GEF members running this project are John Bannister and Sarah Davis.

b. The Rosamund Community Garden has been provisionally allocated a grant of £6,286 by Guildford Borough Council. This is subject to approval by the GBC Executive. Congratulations to Clare Millington, John Bannister and the team for the success of their application. This is a significant grant and a great boost for the volunteers at the Community Garden. If you would like to know more about the Rosamund Garden, it is located near Pewley Down, off Longdown Road, Guildford, GU4 8PP. Volunteers are most welcome and contact information can be found on the website <https://guildfordcommunitygarden.wordpress.com/about/>.

c. GEF are delighted to be partnering the University of Surrey's Centre for Environment & Sustainability, which has recently been awarded a Surrey Living Lab grant for a project that starts immediately. The aim is to use the questionnaires given out at our Climate Emergency presentations to enable web-based research that will help the residents of Guildford to reduce their carbon emissions over the next 10 years and measure the impact across the Borough.

4. Guildford BC's Climate Change and Innovation Board

GEF continues to be represented on this Board. The minutes and agendas are now available on the GBC website and the latest press release is available on <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/23659/Openness-and-collaboration-to-combat-climate-change>.

5. Newsletter editor

We are still looking for a new editor to take over from Clare Windsor from the end of March 2020 and hope that we may have found

a suitable volunteer. We are also looking for a Membership Secretary, with no candidates at the time of writing. Both positions are flexible and central to the ongoing success of GEF.

6. Community-wide collaboration

GEF is seeking to work much more collaboratively with the Guildford Society, Guildford Borough Council, the Holy Trinity Action Group, XR Guildford and Guildford Residents Associations on both Climate Change and the loss of biodiversity. A number of meetings have already been held and joint events are already being planned.

7. AGM on Thurs 23rd April

This is an opportunity for the Executive Committee to update members on progress in the last year and to share ideas for the future. A number of GEF members have put their names forward for election. Please let me know if you would like to help GEF to tackle the Climate and Biodiversity emergencies on any of our committees. *Adrian Thompson – Chair*

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2020/21 are due on 11th April, 2020. The subscription rate is being maintained again at last year's rate of £10pa (£15pa for a household at one address). For all those who have completed standing order mandates and gift aid declarations, there is nothing more that you need do to renew your membership and we thank you very much indeed for completing both returns in the past.

Most other members will receive a reminder by e-mail to pay their subscription and/or to complete a gift aid mandate. If we do not have an e-mail address for you, there will be a reminder form with your posted newsletter and we would be most grateful if these could be returned to me by 31st March, 2020. We encourage members to pay by standing order as it reduces our administration hugely, but if this is not your preference, then please send me a cheque and the gift aid certificate and I will confirm receipt.

If you know of anyone in the Guildford area who would like to become a member of GEF for £10pa, then please encourage them to apply for membership. This is the very best way in which you could help GEF to grow in the future. We hope you feel you are getting very good value for your membership of GEF.

Adrian Thompson

Sign the petition for a car-free day in Guildford

Go to <http://petitions.surreycc.gov.uk/Car-Free-Day/>

A huge list of green tips

is on our website at <http://gefweb.org.uk>

New homes for Humans and Swifts in Godalming

Sarah Davis, GEF member and Swift Project heroine

AS ONE FEMALE COMMON SWIFT falls asleep under the starlit skies of Africa, she starts to dream of her migratory flight ahead tomorrow. It's a daunting journey ahead, flying nonstop across sub-Saharan Africa. She will need to travel south along the western coast before flying across to Mozambique and visiting the Congolese rainforests. She will keep going, climbing high above the seas, over Morocco, Spain, France and to England. With luck she should reach her nesting site on a sleepy housing estate in the south of England within 5 to 6 days.

She has returned to the same nest for the last five years or so and here she will meet up with her lifelong partner and hope to raise two or even three chicks, if there are enough airborne insects. She will be exhausted, dehydrated and hungry upon her arrival, having travelled through many more storms than normal due to Climate Change, and having to increase her miles travelled from her normal 12,400 miles to 17,000 miles, as she has to make some detours to avoid bad weather and search for an ever-decreasing insect supply. But she dreams happily about how she will celebrate when she gets there, and join her breeding partner, and sing, and swoop with the Swift colony over the rooftops in England's summer skies.

Imagine her horror and desperation if she arrives at her faithful nest and the building has been demolished! Gone, for ever! Her sweet dream has just turned into the perfect NIGHTMARE!

John Bannister at Ockford Ridge with Sarah Davis



Sadly this scenario is unfolding right across our country. We are pushing out wildlife, with our need for new homes. We are concreting this "green and pleasant land". In 2017 the Government pledged to build 1 million homes by the end of 2020 and to deliver half a million more by the end of 2022. The 'Single Departmental Plan' was updated in May 2018. The plan sets out to develop a further 300,000 net additional homes a year on average. (Ref House of Commons Library briefing paper, Stimulating housing supply, Gov initiatives England, Wendy Wilson, May 2019)

Of course we need housing for people, and homes need improving, but this pace is now relentless. Everywhere you look you see new developments



going up. Given that most of our wildlife has already been driven out of the countryside and is trying to adapt and share our urban living, I believe we all have a responsibility to build with them in mind. Our gardens, our parks, our new housing developments, could be their last stronghold. Many species have shown us for some time now that they can adapt to urban living, and the Swift is no exception.

All about Swifts

Despite being similar in appearance to Swallows, Swifts are actually more closely related to Hummingbirds. They migrate here from Africa for a 12-week period in summer to breed. The Swift's top speed was recorded in a recent study at over 110km per hour. They are likely to be seen as a scythe-like (crescent) silhouette against the sky, often in parties, swooping, screaming and chasing one another at dawn and dusk.

Because of their aerial lifestyle, Swifts have developed tiny feet and almost no legs. Their feet do not permit them to perch, they therefore cling to vertical surfaces, such as cliffs. The Common Swift



has been visiting us since before Roman times, and has adapted its nesting sites due to changes through time. First living in caves, then moving to holes in trees in our forests, and now into our urban setting, nesting between broken pointing on brick-built houses or under roof eaves.

However, with modern builds incorporating plastic soffits instead of eaves, Swifts have fewer nesting opportunities than ever before. Breeding numbers have plummeted, with a 57% decrease in the UK between 1995 and 2016. And with factors like climate change, extreme weather, and reduction of airborne insects, the numbers have continued to drop.

Oh no, not here!

I became aware of a tragedy taking place at Ockford Ridge, a housing estate in Godalming at the beginning of 2019. The estate is mainly social housing, with some old buildings from the 1930s. Recently Waverley Borough Council decided to demolish most of the houses on the estate. Then rebuild. I happened to grow up on this estate and I remember it to be a place full of wildlife. As a child I remember seeing Fox cubs at the end of our garden, building homes for Hedgehogs, and counting the Bats in the evening that were flying between all the gardens. And of course a large colony of Swifts has been on the estate since it was built. My father taught me how to identify the difference between House Martins, Swallows and Swifts. When the Swifts arrived, usually by the end of April or the beginning of May, we would sit out in the garden of an evening and they would be screaming over the rooftops in large numbers and swooping over our heads.

When I watched the first phase of houses being demolished and new housing and flats put in its place I was horrified. Hedges were replaced with concrete, large gardens replaced by small strips of green grass. The new buildings were sterile to wildlife. I decided something had to be done before it was too late.

The Swift Project takes off

We found a brilliant solution called a Swift brick – a hollow brick installed into a wall that acts as a nesting area for the Swifts. We hoped the new bricks could be included in the new builds.

I had recently joined Guildford Environmental Forum and had met John Bannister, who offered guidance and support on this project. Together we met with Waverley Council and the site developer, armed with all our information on how to make the new estate Swift-friendly. After meeting the builders and discussing Swift bricks we reached

an agreement, that the next phase of 37 houses (replacing 17 houses) would have Swift bricks fitted. In fact we ended up with 15 Swift bricks, 16 Bat boxes, 4 Sparrow terraces, some Blue tit boxes and Robin nests!

The developer was already aware from ecological surveys that there was a high population of Bats, Sparrows, and Starlings, the birds being on the Red list of the BOCC (Birds Of Conservation Concern) and the Bats being protected in their own right. Sadly, although Swifts are on the Amber list of the BOCC they are currently not a protected species. We needed to survey the population of Swifts to show there was a significant colony and provide evidence



Left to right: Mark Constable (Waverley Housing Development Officer), John Bannister (GEF), Sarah Crush (Thakeham's Liaison Officer), Sarah Davis (GEF and conservation volunteer).

of their nesting sites. We also wanted to see the effects on their population from the new housing development.

I met with a local Swift group in Reigate, who had been monitoring their Swifts for many years. They visited the site and taught me how best to survey this population, and all through the spring and summer, John and I studied the Swifts.

Survey results

Between May and July, 13 surveys were written up. Numbers were low in the stormy days of early May but as time went on and the weather improved, numbers increased. By our last survey, we were counting over 120 Swifts.

We also completed observation tables on nesting. From the 1st of June to the 31st of July, 23 nests were observed closely in the area next scheduled for demolition, and it was clear that there were many more nests across the rest of the estate.

From doing this Survey we learnt a lot more about Swift behaviour, including witnessing a curious behaviour known as 'Banging'. This, although we don't know for sure, is when juvenile Swifts follow adult birds as they enter their nests and throw their

bodies up against the wall, just below the nest entrance. They do this over and over again for about 15 to 20 minutes before flying away. It's thought they may be learning how to find and enter nests by following the adults. Surrey Bird Club came to see our work and took some photos of Swifts in nests which I needed as evidence.

Getting locals involved

The residents started to take an interest in what we were doing and I saw a golden opportunity to raise local support. We spoke to them and many were aware of their Swifts and most were excited about them. We took down house numbers of residents



Sarah, with Alan Thorogood from GEF, gets down to the all-important awareness campaign.

whose houses were not being knocked down, and who wanted to put up Swift boxes. These boxes will be installed in March of this year. Many thanks are due to John Bannister for securing a grant to obtain more Swift boxes, both for this project and throughout the surrounding Guildford area.

It was clear we were going to need more hands on deck to monitor over the next 5/6 years or more. I started to write articles about the project in the local 'My Ockford Ridge' newsletter. Using this I put out a request for volunteers and gathered four interested residents who will help us survey again this spring and summer.

I chose to start a media campaign and get the local newspaper on board to promote the use of Swift bricks on new development sites. On the 13th of November, with most of the Swift bricks installed at gable height, John Bannister, myself, and representatives of the council and developer had a photo-shoot on site for the *Surrey Advertiser*, and I provided the newspaper with an interview.

Over the course of the project I networked with Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT), GEF, Surrey Bird Club, RSPB, and BTO. Waverley Borough Council invited me to their Summer Fairs to run awareness stands about the project. I attended four summer events

when the Council celebrated 100 years of social housing. Further awareness stalls were run alongside the GEF apple pressing events across the summer. There was great interest from the general public. SWT provided support at some of the events, and we tackled subjects like incorporating Hedgehog highways, hedges, native planting, etc.

What happens next?

Further proposals were made by myself to Waverley and a 5-year plan has been drawn up. This includes:

From summer 2020

- Mitigation for demolished houses.
- Swift boxes to be used alongside Swift bricks.
- Swift walks to be conducted to train volunteers.
- Workshops to be undertaken with the local school.
- Information leaflets to be developed for residents on how to support their Swift colony.
- Volunteers to focus on surveying nesting sites.

Years 2021 to 2023

- Source further funding grants.
- Continue surveys for at least 3 years.
- Continue to liaise with developer as each building phase goes up.
- Continue with awareness via Swift stalls at community events.
- Give talks to local organisations.
- If after the first year Swifts do not occupy bricks and/or boxes, we will work together with Hampshire Swifts to fix up Swift 'Calling' devices near potential nest sites.

For the next phase of 37 houses

- We plan to install 50 Swift bricks, and further Bat boxes and bird terraces.
- A wildflower meadow is planned, and native hedges on one side of the estate.

Widespread benefits

Waverley have said they will now be considering all birds, including Swifts, in their future developments. This is good news for both humans and birds, since the locals being surrounded by wildlife will benefit from better physical and mental health.

In five years time, if the project is successful in saving this colony of Swifts and increasing their numbers, we can showcase this example to other Borough Councils and developers. Waverley are certainly keen to roll this out. Perhaps Guildford Borough Council would like to come and have a look? I will keep you all posted.

Maybe our female Swift about to migrate will not have a NIGHTMARE after all, but a DREAM COME TRUE.

If you would like to volunteer on this project in the spring and summer, either helping put up Swift Boxes, or surveying the Swifts, please contact me via GEF (speak to Adrian Thompson or John Bannister) or contact me at this e-mail: sarahguildfordgodalmingswifts@gmail.com

Poor fish

Ninety per cent of world fish stocks are either fully- or over-exploited from fishing.

(Source: Marine Conservation Society, 2018)

FACTS & FIGURES

Exercise

Some countries are actively working to get seniors off the sofa: there's aerobics with cheerleader pompoms in South Korea, free gym vouchers in Finland, and here there's walking football in Walton-on-Thames.

(Source: BBC World Service, 4 Feb '20)

Feeding the ever-growing population

Our current food system can feed only 3.4 billion people without transgressing key planetary limits, according to an analysis of global farming. However, reorganising what is farmed and where, along with some changes in diets, would enable us to feed 10 billion people on a sustainable basis, suggests the analysis.

(Source: New Scientist, 20 Jan '20)

Plant power

Carrots could be used to strengthen cement and cut CO₂ emissions for the building industry. Academics at Lancaster University mixed carrot particles with concrete, and found an increase in strength of 80% and a strong resistance to cracking.

(Source: i Weekend, 31 Jan '19)

Swifts need you even more

John Bannister

GEF is running the Swift Box Project this year as we have been successful once again in getting a £1,000 grant from the Community Foundation for Surrey, who have been so good to us. GEF will top up the project budget as required.

Last year you, our members, put up 60 swift boxes across Guildford, Farnham, Farncombe, Bentley and places in between. Thank you to everyone who was able to give GEF a donation towards the project.

Now that we have the grant we're giving the swift boxes away to anyone with a suitable house where there's past evidence that swifts have been seen locally. It doesn't have to be on your house, it could be your church, school or a public building where swifts have been seen and you have the necessary permission. Help to get the boxes up can be provided if you have a ladder and a drill but feel unsafe on a ladder.

Outstanding Volunteer Award from Butterfly Conservation for our friend Bill Downey

Bill has made an invaluable contribution to Butterfly Conservation (BC) over many years.

As Transect Coordinator, he doubled the number of transects to around 120, filling gaps in knowledge, including SW London, Surrey Heaths, and the West Weald. His engaging style motivated new volunteers to get involved – and inspired them to do more. He always takes time to ensure that volunteers are properly trained and briefed.

He has been instrumental in driving the Branch's conservation activities, including the conservation committee. He built beneficial relationships with partners like National Trust, Surrey and London Wildlife Trusts, City of London Corporation, borough ecology officers, local landowners and volunteer groups. The partnership with London Wildlife Trust – and his support for their Great North Wood project – was one reason for BC being invited to partner in the £1m Dream Fund "Brilliant Butterfly

Another piece of very good swift news is the decision to install a swift tower on the Green at Shalford, designed by the sculptor/artist Will Nash with funding from a number of sources including GEF. The official opening will be on Monday 27th April. Further details will be forthcoming. We featured the tower design in our March – May 2019 newsletter, showing the elegant shape able to hold over 50 nesting sites.

Right now as you read this, swifts will be somewhere in central Africa at the very beginning of their return journey. We won't know the full success of our/your swift boxes installed last year until they return in May. Will any of the youngsters have made a note of the boxes before they left last August?

Fingers crossed but we have to be patient.

Banks" project. He is a great ambassador for this important organisation.

He is a regular volunteer and organiser at conservation work parties on the North Downs for the Small Blue Project and spoke at our AGM in May 2017. The project has been supported by GEF from the start and continues weekly with help from GEF members. He always champions best practice habitat management and advice from the Health and Safety Executive.

He led work to understand the distribution of the White-letter Hairstreak in the Branch area using a rigorous methodology and engaging a band of volunteers. Thanks to Bill, we know that this butterfly is widespread across the area, including SW London.

Bill coordinated surveys for the Grizzled Skipper and winter egg surveys for Brown Hairstreaks. Less glamorous, though no less important, Bill worked hard to ensure the Branch is GDPR compliant.



Left to right:
Nigel Symington, National Treasurer of BC;
Karen Goldie-Morrison, National Chair of BC (incoming);
Jim Asher, National Chair of BC (outgoing);
Bill Downey;
Julie Williams, Chief Executive of BC.

HEAT PUMPS

Can they help us move away from fossil fuels for domestic and commercial heating?

Adrian Thompson

IN THE WRITER'S VIEW, the answer is a resounding yes, but they are more suitable for some than others. I have owned and used an air source heat pump for 10 years and, as with buying an electric car, it is important to be aware of some key issues, some of which are set out below.

Firstly:

What are heat pumps?

There are several different types such as **AIR SOURCE**, **WATER SOURCE** and **GROUND SOURCE** heat pumps. They work by using refrigerant phase change and mechanical compression of a substance to provide temperatures adequate to work with domestic and commercial heating and hot water systems. The difference lies with how each gathers the required energy from the environment. All heat pumps work by changing a refrigerant from a liquid to a gas and back to a liquid again in a closed refrigeration cycle. It is the ambient temperature taken either from the ground or air that boils the refrigerant in the first instance.

What are their big advantages?

1. The UK Government wants to phase out the gas network almost completely by 2050. It has recently announced that from 2025 it will be **ILLEGAL** to install gas boilers in new-build homes.
2. The biggest advantage is that, if you do not have a gas supply (eg some villages), then there is no need to burn oil (one of the key fossil fuels that we need to get rid of to fight the climate emergency) to provide heating and hot water requirements.
3. The government encourages the installation of heat pumps and offers generous Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) grants to help offset the relatively high initial outlay over a period of years.
4. Heat pumps are relatively easy and cheap to maintain.
5. They can increase useable space in a house. We have an old 3-bed house and we doubled the size of our airing cupboard (by moving the hot water tank to the garage) and created space for a fridge in the kitchen by removing the oil boiler.
6. Existing radiators can usually be retained, although even better paybacks can be obtained from inclusion of heat pumps in a new build, especially if combined with underfloor heating.

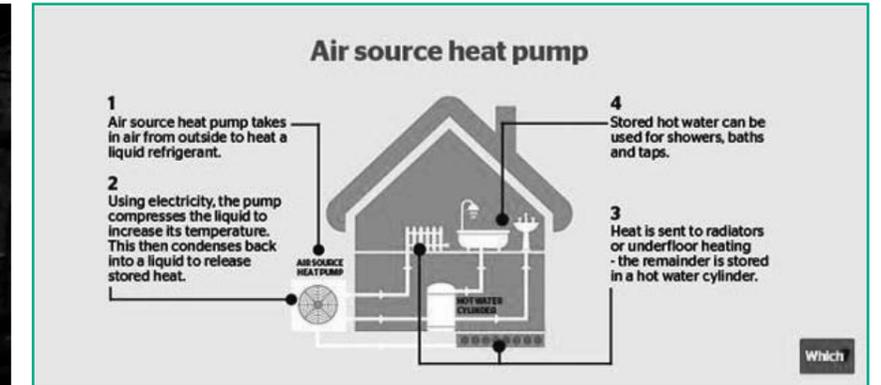
7. Oil theft from outdoor tanks is an issue for many and our village has had to operate night patrols at times to reduce the level of theft (often £1,000 a theft).
8. The payback period for the initial investment can be as low as 6 years. There are few long-term investments that offer anything like that return these days.

Issues to watch out for

1. The first investment should be in the insulation of the house itself (especially roof, windows, doors and walls), regardless of the quality of any heat pump installed.
2. It is crucial that an installer is recommended by satisfied clients. The initial capital investment is much higher than for oil or gas boilers, even if the subsequent operating savings are significant.
3. It is recommended that the installer should be technology and brand independent, so that once the heating requirements are specified the installer can recommend the most appropriate manufacturer and type of heat pump. When installing renewable energy systems the long-term performance and running costs are critical. A poor quality solution or a poorly designed or installed system will cost many times more to run than a well designed and installed system. High quality equipment and small design details can make a big difference.
4. It is recommended that the installer provides a complete turn-key solution that is designed, specified, installed and commissioned so that the installation team takes complete responsibility for the outcome.
5. MCS accreditation and full PI insurance of the provider are strongly recommended.
6. The location of the heat pump should be carefully considered and account needs to be taken of the noise level (and potential vibration) from an air source heat pump – especially regarding proximity to neighbours. We took our next door neighbour to hear the proposed pump to ensure that she was happy and even then added some inexpensive fencing to dull any possible noise.
7. Excellent pipe insulation is needed both above and below ground to reduce heat loss before it reaches the radiators.
8. It is vital that the provider assesses the load required of your project before you choose



Adrian Thompson



How an air source heat pump functions

My own reliable 10-year-old air source heat pump

RUNNING COST COMPARISON

The table below shows the approximate costs of various forms of fuel. A note of warning: fuel costs can vary by large amounts over short periods of time and always depend on the agreements that you have been able to negotiate and may also depend on your usage and region of the country.

Fuel	Price	Cost/kWh	Efficiency of consumption	Cost/kWh
Electricity cost	12 p/kWh	12 p/kWh	100%	12 p/kWh
Heating oil	52 p/litre	5.3 p/kWh	80%	6.6 p/kWh
LPG	60 p/kg	5.2 p/kWh	85%	6.1 p/kWh
Natural gas	4.0 p/kWh	4.0 p/kWh	85%	4.7 p/kWh
Ground SHP*	12 p/kWh	12 p/kWh	400% (SPF**=4)	3.0 p/kWh
Air SHP*	12 p/kWh	12 p/kWh	300% (SPF**=3)	4.0 p/kWh
Wood pellets @ 8% moisture	£ 230/tonne	5.6 p/kWh	85%	6.6 p/kWh
Wood chip @ 30% moisture	£ 150/tonne	3.5 p/kWh	85%	4.1 p/kWh

* SHP = Source Heat Pump
 ** SPF = Seasonal Performance Factor (System Efficiency – often referred to as COP or Coefficient of Performance)

which technology you opt for, as both ground and air source have their limitations.

9. The system works at very much lower temperatures in both radiators and hot water pipes. Ours is set so that no cold or lukewarm water is added to a bath.
10. The choice of energy supplier will dictate the total carbon saving.
11. The quote should include a full payback calculation that includes the correct RHI grants. A payback of 6 years is achievable (inclusive of RHI) and few investments today can achieve anything like that. Much of the initial investment could also have a minimum 25-year life.

Conclusion

We were delighted with our supplier (and happy to recommend) and after over 10 years have never had to use the immersion heater that we had installed in our water tank. The initial installation was more complex than having an oil boiler installed, as we had to arrange our electricians, contractors to dig the pipe trenches and for the old oil tank to be emptied and taken away. However, investing in a heating system powered by electricity from a proven renewable energy supplier has worked for us and, once installed, has saved money and been very easy to maintain.

Sequel to **A RACE WE MUST WIN** (in our last newsletter)

by Forum member Michael Tanner

I STARTED TO WRITE THIS SEQUEL on the very day this year that a US President and a teenage Swedish girl had taken their seats in the same room in Davos, Switzerland, to address an international assembly. It was the 21st of January. They each restated their view of Climate Change and how to respond to it. There were no surprises in what they said; the world already assumed they occupied diametrically opposed positions. A reasonably intelligent child could have summarised the views of Greta Thunberg in five minutes or so and found little to disagree with. The same child would have been able to better the President in a Junior Debating Society competition.

Despite enormous global advances in communication, or because of that, we inhabit a world of deafening noise and noxious pollution, literally and metaphorically, and simultaneously a local, 'domestic' world where, behind the scenes, we try to devise where we are and where we are going. We try to find something solid to hang onto, and end up clutching at metaphors to depict our dilemma: it helps to see the enemy and to sense you have a weapon in your hand.

I didn't invent the metaphor of the Doomsday Clock which was thought up by atomic scientists in 1947. In 1962 the metaphorical minute hand was only 7 minutes to apocalyptic midnight, easing off to 12 minutes in 1963. In 1991 it was 17 minutes to midnight. The very latest reading was 100 seconds! The calculations are based on many factors, and currently these are chiefly the likelihood of nuclear war and Climate Change. These days, of course, access to relevant information is enormously greater than 30 years ago. It may comfort some, of course, that Stephen Hawking regarded the system with considerable reservation.

Everyone is entitled to pick or invent his/her own metaphor as a way of coping, but every day that is becoming more difficult both nationally and on a global scale. A chain of climate-related disasters has been given dramatic coverage on the media: fires in Australia, California, Brazil, Indonesia; flooding by fresh or salt water in Mozambique, Bangladesh, the Maldives, the States, the UK; drought and lack of fresh water in countries bordering the Sahara, the Middle East, California; hurricanes or tornadoes almost anywhere. And every day there is more discouraging news about events which make social cohesion on a local and global scale more difficult: devastating earthquakes, the breaking up of glaciers as big as countries, a threatening pandemic, our own country's trading economy, so many respects.

In such times as we live, to whom or to what should we turn for guidance? The list of candidates does not really change. The wisdom that has been handed down and/

or the wisdom of the living: statesmen; commanders-in-chief; scientists; religious leaders; economists; bankers; philosophers; historians; environmentalists; directors of Silicon Valley. The list of mantras is equally long, ranging from *'It's the Economy Stupid'* and *'Might is Right'* through many interesting possibilities to the paradoxical, the profound, and ultimately the apparently unquestionable and very uncomfortable *'Love thy neighbour as thyself'*, which entices the questions 'Who is my neighbour?' and 'Suppose I do not love myself?' But one thing seems to become clearer from day to day: any solution must be governed by an ethical approach, not by any necessity attached to a specified religion or political ideology but definitely attached to a fundamental and informed compassion towards all life on this planet.

Perhaps we should all stay at home and cultivate our gardens 'in this best of possible worlds'. Was

In 1991 the Doomsday Clock was 17 minutes to midnight. The very latest reading was 100 seconds!

that Voltaire's Pangloss or Donald Trump? Many of us would like to follow the quietly but firmly pronounced wisdom of David Attenborough and an impressive growing group of others; but how many still don't really care about Climate Change enough to DO anything about it, even as little as becoming acquainted with the facts. The answer is far too many. The facts shout that we don't have time for GRADUAL conversions.

It is probably a FACT that the inevitable destabilising effects of Brexit have shifted the focus away from Climate Change for a while. What proportion of the public is even aware of the COP 26 international conference scheduled for this November in Glasgow, and being led by the UK and Italy? How many are concerned about the apparent disorganisation in its setting up and about the sacking of its appointed chief organiser, Claire O'Neill, on January 31st by Boris Johnson when she seemed to be ideally equipped for the task?

But all is not gloom and doom and increasingly not in the UK. Was it not our government which asserted in June 2018 that we are the first major economy in the world to legislate for net zero carbon emissions and affirmed that commitment in its Conservative manifesto? Since then the president of Microsoft has outpledged our government and put his money where his words are: *'Carbon Neutrality is not enough'*. Microsoft would remove as much carbon as they had created – a very expensive operation for

any organisation. Such a pledge will hopefully entice competitors who welcome investment in the right direction and encourage others to think and act in a less pusillanimous fashion.

That takes me onto the matter of carbon storage and the storage of energy itself, both areas where rapidly improving technology and practices, after initial and vital subsidy by government and others, can make more rapid progress than was initially foreseen. Many recognised that the year 2050, allocated almost as a knee-jerk reaction by many as the point by which carbon emissions had to be dramatically reduced, not merely stabilised, was a high-risk gamble and that 2030 or earlier had to be the aim if changing climate patterns and weather extremes were not going to unhouse populations to an extent the world could not manage. The careful analyses of current carbon emissions right across the globe make it quite evident that emissions are still increasing, that it could still be years before we even reach what we carelessly thought was the start line. Analyses are not optimistic or pessimistic – how capable we are of responding to them effectively should determine that factor. Are we capable in this country? Are enough countries capable, technologically, financially and in their social organisation and cultural ethic? What of any note seems to be happening here? Does the promising overshadow the menacing?

Well, in the UK in several key areas, cards have been put on the table: ambitious plans have been outlined by a number of large conurbations, in particular Glasgow, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester. All

What proportion of the public is even aware of the COP 26 international conference scheduled for this November in Glasgow, and being led by the UK and Italy?

these cities suffer from huge problems of congestion, pollution and transport, demands on energy which are hardly less present in other cities. There's no doubt that the efficacy of these clearly stated plans will be closely observed by councils of other cities and by government which cannot avoid being closely involved.

Despite good knowledge of the huge expense and obstacles involved, there is in many cities, and especially in Birmingham, a reassuring note of sympathy for brave plans. In the case of Birmingham these involve sweeping changes to road systems in and out of the city, and the denial of parking facilities in central areas. In Glasgow one major plan is for the replacement of gas, in at least one large residential area, by electricity, generated from wind turbines already existing close by, where improved battery storage will make the enterprise viable. That needs subsidy!

It seems we're already involved in a system where the largest conurbations (including Manchester and Liverpool) can demonstrate to government and the rest of us that ambitious goals can be specified and probably achieved – goals which ultimately create

Ambitious plans have been outlined by a number of large conurbations, in particular Glasgow, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester.

healthier and less wasteful circumstances for everyone. Similar ambitious stirrings are happening throughout much of Europe.

The media in this country and in particular the BBC (long may it last!) are giving these initiatives increasingly intelligent space. They daily give detailed and accurate information about the plans and the obstacles and have created programmes which invite participation by the public in intelligent question and debate. The BBC environment analyst Roger Harrabin has become a pivot of information. The government itself has endorsed a Citizens' Assembly of 110 members whose remit is to consider how carbon emissions can be reduced to net zero by 2050 (one supposes they don't wish to ruffle too many feathers at the outset by revising this date). The remit fortunately does not allow discussion of the scientific consensus that Climate Change is Dangerous. Still, this set-up might be little more than a publicity stunt. What teeth does it have?

Increasingly the voices of unenlightened capitalism seem to be recognised for what they really seek. The money exists, the technology is rapidly evolving, the public is willing to engage and educate itself – all these are, it seems, producing an air of expectancy which coincides with the calendar spring.

It seems to me that the recent clear statements by several major city councils about their ultimate aims and their plans for on-the-ground action are the most encouraging aspects of what is happening in the UK. The costings of these bold plans seem more realistic than recent costings by senior politicians in other directions, and there is evidently a consensus of approach which central government needs to heed and not hinder. On the contrary, the Treasury and the banks and the Chancellor can now play a vital role in seeing that the money which does exist helps those who are more interested in improving the daily lives of their citizens than keeping the indiscriminate investor happy.

In the final analysis, there does seem to be a suitable guiding mantra: *'Love thy neighbour as thyself'* and for the most part in this country 'neighbour' means 'fellow citizen', fellow 'townsman', fellow 'countryside dweller'.



Environmental issues associated with wildfires

by Richard Seymour, GEF executive member and President of the Guildford branch of the Geographical Association

WILDFIRES IN AUSTRALIA have been in the news recently and have resulted in loss of life and massive damage to property and wildlife. The prolonged drought in parts of Australia linked to climate change has exacerbated the problem. Wildfires tend to occur in hot areas where there is an extended period of drought together with strong winds which cause the fires to spread rapidly.

The causes are both natural and as a result of human activities; however, it's thought that 90% of fires are caused by humans. Some of the *natural causes* include **lightning strikes, spontaneous heating and volcanic eruptions**. The range of *human causes* of fire are varied and involve **arson, fireworks, slash-and-burn agriculture, BBQs and campfires, broken glass magnifying the sun's heat, sparks from train wheels and machinery, electrical sparks and fire from discarded cigarettes**.

News reports from Australia have highlighted the loss of life and injury to people living in the areas affected, as well as the fire fighters. Property and possessions have been destroyed which clearly has both tangible and intangible impacts on the communities involved. The intangible impact of this and other hazards includes the fear and anxiety that people experience after the event, which is very real and difficult to measure. Vegetation and crops have been destroyed and in the affected areas ecosystems have been severely damaged and will take time to recover. It was interesting to see signs of new life appearing in some of the burnt areas of New South Wales.

It should be remembered that the smoke from these fires causes environmental health problems due to smoke inhalation, and this could cause longer-term problems. With the destruction of the vegetation cover, soil erosion can increase as the vegetation no longer holds the soil in place. Other issues relate to increased insurance costs, loss of jobs and livelihood, as well as the contribution to climate change due to the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from burning.

Bush fires in Australia began earlier than usual due to the very dry spring and low rainfall, in fact 2019 experienced the hottest average temperatures and driest conditions – clearly signals of climate change. It has been estimated that 520,000 square miles of bush has been burnt, with billions of insects, birds and animals killed. In addition more than 30 people have lost their lives and over 2,000 properties destroyed. It's the intensity and scale of these

wildfires that is unprecedented, with temperatures that can exceed 1000°C and strong winds that can transport embers 25 miles. Unique ecosystems have been decimated with the destruction of valuable habitats. It's possible that 700 species may have become extinct and those that have survived face the challenge of no food, water or habitat resources. Natural ecosystems provide valuable services such as clean air and water systems: these have been lost in the short term.

Australia has the highest rates of species loss in the world and researchers fear that rate could increase as the fire disaster continues. *'The scale of these fires is unprecedented'* said Dieter Hochuli, an Environmental Scientist Professor from the University of Sydney. *'There is substantial concern about the capacity of these ecosystems to rebound from the fires.'* Bush fires are sending a stark warning to the rest of the world about climate change.

Many in Australia believe that not enough is being done to address issues relating to climate change, and the future remains unclear. Australia produces over 500 million tonnes of coal each year and much of this is exported to Asian economies – a source of greenhouse gases when it's burnt!

Many parts of the world suffer from fires including California, Russia, Brazil and Indonesia as well as the UK. Moorland fires have been problematic recently, such as Saddleworth Moor and in the drought of 1975-76 the military training areas around Surrey suffered from fires. The largest fire in Berkshire's history happened in May 2011 in Swinley Forest near Bracknell. The fire affected 300 hectares of coniferous forest and was described as one of the biggest seen in the south-east since the end of the Second World War. The fire burned for nine days and it was fanned by strong easterly winds from Europe which made the fire burn hotter. More than 200 fire fighters fought the blaze. Today evidence of the fire can be seen in the blackened trunks of the trees that survived, as well as the increased size of the fire breaks which have been designed to prevent the spread of future fires. Over 67,000 trees have been planted with more fire-resistant species such as Western Oak and Atlas Cedars.

Bearing in mind that Surrey has a very large area of woodland, it's particularly important that people are aware of the risk of fire, and care should be taken to avoid fire damage in these times of climate change.

FACTS & FIGURES

Cruising

The cruise industry transported over 26 million customers last year, and this number is projected to grow steadily. Cruise ships are often described as floating cities, and they are at least as polluting as cities on land. A passenger's carbon footprint triples in size when taking a cruise and the emissions produced can contribute to serious health issues. On top of the pollution caused by their exhaust fumes, cruise ships have been caught discarding rubbish, fuel and sewage directly into the ocean.

(Source: *Forbes.com*, 26 Apr '19)

Dirt cheap

Hundreds of vans belonging to John Lewis, Waitrose, Asda, Argos and Hermes will be powered by cow manure from 2021. The biomethane made from manure slurry is carbon neutral.

(Source: *i Weekend*, 9 Nov '19)

"I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by."

Douglas Adams

End of an era, start of a new one: an appreciation of Clare Windsor

IT IS NEVER EASY to get members of a community group to step up and take on an Officer role, as every chairman knows. GEF has several positions that have been vacant for some time, but I want to draw your attention to one in particular, which is about to become vacant, that of the Newsletter Editor.

We owe an enormous debt of thanks to Clare Windsor, who is about to step down after over 16 years as our Newsletter Editor. She created from the very beginning GEF's first proper newsletter. When she joined GEF in 2003 she came with an impressive track record having worked for 10 years as Publications Officer for Surrey Wildlife Trust. This included the art editorship of a series of Surrey wildlife atlases which she continued for some years after retiring and becoming our editor.

So the March 2020 publication, which you are now reading, will be Clare's last.

Everyone raves about our newsletters – how good they are and what a huge part they play in representing GEF and growing our membership, which continues to rise. So much of this has been down to Clare's skill as editor, her professionalism, her layout skills and artistic flair, her limited use of colour to keep costs down, her relationship to local printers and their environmental standards, and her own input. It was Clare's idea to start the 'Facts & Figures' and the 'Good News Bad News'



always worked closely as a team and it shows in the product Clare produced issue after issue. The photo, taken by Raymond Smith, a past chairman, shows Clare and Paul at GEF's 25 anniversary talk in October 2018 in the Council Chamber. I wish them both well.

John Bannister

As well as goodbye from me . . .

. . . I want to pay a tribute to those wonderful individuals who have succeeded in making Guildford Environmental Forum the influential force for good that it is today.

Of course the people who have united together since 1993 to promote the Forum are legion, but I don't know them all so there are inevitably many who should feature here but are absent. Speaking then purely personally, I raise a glass to three in particular.

Firstly to John Bannister, who appeared to me those years ago to be the prime mover, ever coming up with new ideas, and bringing the Forum's name and activities to the public's notice. All around us in Guildford (and Woking) is evidence of John's input, from the Town Mill

Hydro to the Peregrine and Swift Projects – and much, much more besides.

Secondly to Raymond Smith, another capable chairman, who created and maintains that invaluable tool, GEF's website. Raymond's environmental knowledge, and his skill in conveying it through film and talks, has been immeasurable.

Thirdly to our current chairman, Adrian Thompson, whose enthusiasm and energy has already seen expansion of the membership, and the inclusion of local communities in tackling climate change.

GEF will surely thrive, due to the efforts of good people like these. And I wish it a bright future.

Clare Windsor



Guildford Environmental Forum aims to improve the environment in and around Guildford for wildlife and for people and to build a sustainable future.

Join us in our work for the town and have this newsletter posted to your door four times a year. Forum membership costs only £10 per year or £15 for a couple, and new members are warmly welcomed.

Please contact Adrian Thompson on 01483 222687 or email adrian@lampcottage.net



CALENDAR

All the Forum's meetings are open to the public



Tuesday 17th March

Geographical Association of Guildford.
Talk by Mr Sam Lee-Gammage, of Waitrose:
"Sustainable Food Supply"
1730. The Great Hall, Royal Grammar School,
High Street, Guildford GU1 3BB.

Thursday 23rd April

Guildford Environmental Forum AGM.
Talk by Mike Waite MCIEEM, Living Landscapes
Manager, Surrey Wildlife Trust:
"Action for Insects"

Mike will discuss Surrey Wildlife Trust's 'Action for Insects' campaign. He will cover the recent research into insect populations, the drivers of their decline, and the various actions we can all take to change the future for insects".

1830 to 2100. The Council Chamber,
GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

Wednesday 29th April

"What Can Guildford do about The Climate Emergency?"

What are the facts? What can we do?
Guildford Environmental Forum, in collaboration with The Guildford Society and Holy Trinity Amenity Group (HTAG), bring the series of public meetings on this issue to a climax in the town centre. Henrietta Stock (GEF and Al Gore's Climate Reality Project) will present the facts, and we will discuss what the people of Guildford can do about climate change.

1900 to 2100. The Council Chamber,
GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

Thursday 14th May

Talk by Dr Barbara Hammond MBE, CEO of The Low Carbon Hub IPS & CIC, introduced by Dr Nina Alpey.
"Developing Local Community Energy"

Barbara brings experience of a 25-year career in sustainable development and energy, including stints in local and central government, the private sector and academia. She is a pioneer in developing local, collective responses to climate change.

1900 to 2100. The Council Chamber,
GBC Millmead Offices, Guildford GU2 4BE.

Sunday 24th May

Farnham Community Farm's Sustainability Fayre

Hot food, wildlife talks, children's events, games, delicious fresh produce. Our stall will showcase various GEF projects including our Swifts Project. Please come and support us.

1100 to 1600. Gostrey Meadow, Farnham GU9 7RT.

Saturday 30th May

Scything Course for Beginners and Improvers

Mark Allery is back again to teach us. Learn or improve your scything skills while managing our grass at the Rosamund Community Garden. Everything is provided, including refreshments, but please bring a packed lunch and wear suitable clothing.

Cost £35 per head, discounts available.

1000 to 1600. Meet at Rosamund Garden, top of Longdown Road, GU4 8PP. Park along grass verge. Please register with John Bannister on 01483 570468 or 07443 914347 to discuss arrangements.

GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Chair – Adrian Thompson

Tel: 01483 222687 Email: adrian@lampcottage.net

Transport – Alastair Atkinson

Tel: 07929 138650 Email: bags@btinternet.com

Community Projects – John Bannister

Tel: 01483 570468 Email: johnwbannister40@gmail.com

Biodiversity – John Bannister

Tel: 01483 570468 Email: johnwbannister40@gmail.com

Food Group with Transition Guildford – John Bannister

Tel: 01483 570468 Email: johnwbannister40@gmail.com

Waste and Recycling – John Bannister

Tel: 01483 570468 Email: johnwbannister40@gmail.com

Treasurer & Membership – Adrian Thompson

Tel: 01483 222687 Email: adrian@lampcottage.net

Marketing & Communications – Matthew Ambrose

Tel: 07856 930344 Email: mambrose360@gmail.com

Newsletter – Position vacant

Guildford Environmental Forum's newsletter is published in March, June, September and December. Please send contributions for the next issue to Adrian Thompson by Monday 13 May.

The views expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of its contributors and Guildford Environmental Forum.