



GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

newsletter

June - August 2022

www.guildfordenvironment.org.uk

Chairman's Report to the GEF May 2022 AGM

Last month Alastair Atkinson, the Chair of GEF welcomed over 20 GEF members to the 2022 AGM of the Guildford Environmental Forum, which was held live at the ZERO Centre in North Street, Guildford. This was followed by an excellent presentation by Sarah-Jane Chimbwandira, CEO of the Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT), which is covered by a separate article in this newsletter.

The minutes of our last AGM had been published in the June 2021 newsletter and these were approved. Alastair started by reminding the audience of the GEF Mission, which is as follows:

"To encourage and help Guildford's Leaders, Residents and Community to live and work sustainably within our share of our planet's resources for the benefit and wellbeing of people and our environment in present and future generations."

Bumble Bee by Raymond Smith



Scan me with your phone to visit our website

...How do we do this?

through a programme of campaigns, events and communications focused around three core areas:

- **Cherish** – Working to protect and improve our natural environment
- **Engage** – Engaging our local leaders and influencers to help them drive change
- **Inform & inspire** – Raising awareness of the issues and inspiring each individual to play their part

Alastair showed the below recent image from Paris, which summarises the urgency of the Climate Emergency that we all face..



Alastair went on to outline the plan for the future of the Climate Group, which can be summarised as follows:

- **To restart meetings next month**
- **To support and speed up the decarbonisation**
- **To engage with GBC and Surrey to support the following.**
Net zero planning and delivery
Policy consultation
Planning of major developments
Car free day
- **To engage with Surrey Climate Commission**
- **To collaborate with other groups**
- **Campaigns**
'What Could Good look like'
- **Community Decarbonisation – living lab style project**

On Biodiversity, the team have been particularly active over the last year as follows:

- The team recognised the threat a year ago of the possible loss of a 37 acre rare chalk downland site to developers and supported the purchase of the site by a community group for over £1m. The Pewley Downs Project is now actively working with SWT to restore the site to meadows and public access for the next 500 years, with strong GEF representation on the management team.
- The successful campaign for Guildford to be a pesticide free town.
- Building the Rosamund Community Hub at the Garden site in Longdown Rd. Completion of this major project is planned later in 2022.
- Completed the construction of a much-improved Compost Loo and new Pond on the community garden site with the help of some 35 volunteers, who have also produced much amazing food for the community.
- Rolling out the swift home project with about 200 swifts homes installed across Guildford – many thanks to Sarah Davis and her team
- Designed and developed (together with SWT) the Biodiversity Action Map and Board – in Zero – which is attracting new volunteers for the many projects advertised.
- Developing a Guildford Biodiversity Partnership
- The successful Small Blue Butterfly project & Peregrine projects have advanced and continue to attract new volunteers.

Membership

Alastair reported that GEF membership had grown by 62 members since the AGM (accounting for the 30 members who haven't renewed memberships this year) in May 2021 despite the impact of COVID-19. GEF now have 370 members, compared with 142 some five years ago. The addition of 92 new members in the last year was a record for GEF.

Accounts

Adrian Thompson, Hon Treasurer, described how the General Fund (effectively the ongoing operations of GEF) had benefitted from the increased membership over recent years. He highlighted the following key points:

- Subscription income had increased by £940 last year to £2,865 and donation income was also higher at £544.
- Ongoing expenses had increased only slightly with higher newsletter and insurance costs and additionally GEF had incurred costs of £306 in respect of the successful Pesticide-Free Campaign and Under Restricted Funds, GEF had made the initial grants totalling £2,500 to Zero Carbon Guildford (fully financed by restricted donations from GEF members) and also encouraged members to support ZERO's critical crowdfund campaign. This had been crucial in enabling ZCG to secure the site of the Climate Emergency Centre in North Street. For more about ZERO, please see <https://www.zerocarbonguildford.org/>.
- Despite the extra expenses, the General Fund had shown an ongoing surplus in the year of £405, taking the General Fund to £5,030.
- The GEF Restricted Funds had shown a very large inflow into the Rosamund Community Hub project in 2021 of £16,285 and, despite delays (partly due to COVID-19) in the building of the hub, £5,855 had been spent in the last year and the balance of these grants was expected to be fully spent in the current year.
- New Restricted Funding had also been received this Spring, totalling nearly £3,000 for further projects at the Community garden and work is continuing at some pace to complete all these projects. Should anyone wish to volunteer for any of these projects or to have any of the accounts numbers clarified, Adrian invited current or future members to contact him at

adrian@lampcottage.net.

Adrian summarised by advising that the GEF Balance Sheet shows healthy reserves, which are needed to finance the significant projects at the Community Garden and the swift projects. GEF is thriving financially and growing despite the COVID crisis.

In conclusion the accounts were approved.

Election of Executive Committee

Alastair thanked all the members of the Executive Committee for their work over the last year. In particular he thanked the three members who were not re-standing for election, who were Caroline Scott, David Stokes and Richard Waters. Alastair then welcomed James Sinclair who had agreed to stand for election to the Executive Committee.

The following were then duly elected to be the Executive Committee for the coming year and Alastair closed the meeting, thanking all those who had attended to enable the votes to be carried out.

Alastair Atkinson - Chair

Keith Chesterton

Colin Cross

Helen Harris - Biodiversity and Rosamund Community Garden Chair

Sunethra Mendis

James Sinclair

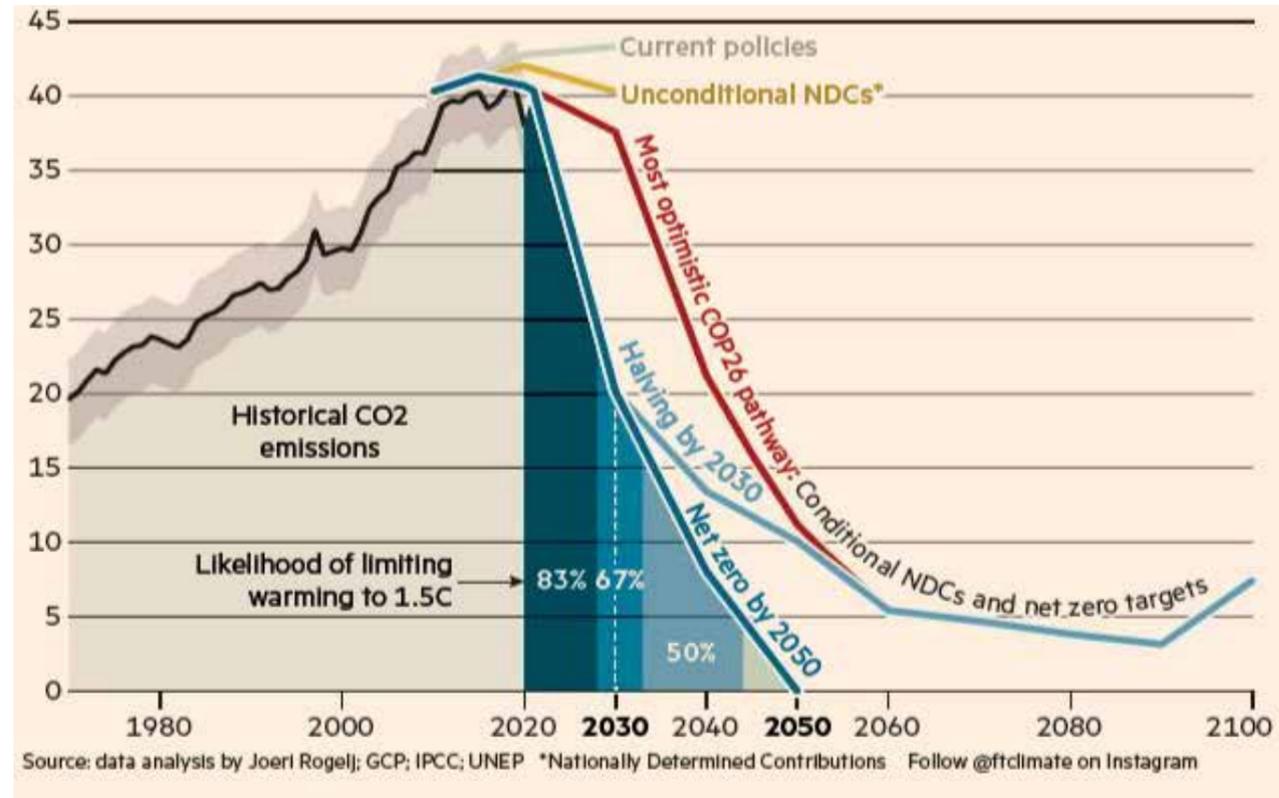
Richard Seymour



Climate emergency is here now - by John Bannister

The Stark Facts:

Fig 1 shown below, taken from the Financial Times for 13.11.21, shows the historic global CO2 emissions rising steadily on the left-hand side from pre-industrial levels, up to 2020, the last year for which data was then available, followed by the sort of very steep decline in carbon emissions required if the world is to keep within an average atmospheric global heating of no more than 1.5 degrees C. 1.5C has been shown by the IPCC as the limit in global average temperature rise the planet can stand if it is to remain habitable avoiding even worse climate disasters than those we are already seeing. We are already at 1.2C global



heating and no sign we have turned the corner. The other thing 1.5C is intended to avoid is tipping points being exceeded where once reached nothing can be done to reverse the situation. One tipping point that shows signs of starting is melting of the permafrost around the Arctic with the release of methane trapped in the frozen ground. Methane bubbling to the surface is already visible.

I don't need to itemise all the kinds of disasters being seen across the globe today covered as they are every day in the media. The longer we wait to reduce global CO2 emissions the harder the task becomes and the steeper the downward net zero by 2050 line will have to be in Fig 1. So the reduction in CO2 required will have to take place at something like 15% per annum and continue at that rate for 10 or more years. Real hardship would result.

But the world seems stuck on business-as-usual with everyone enthusing about cars, kitchens,

flying, cruising, fossil fuel supplies and new homes. Here we are nearly halfway through 2022 and global emissions of CO2, methane, nitrous oxides, chlorinated hydrocarbons, etc are still rising. What can we possibly do? We can invest in new technology such as carbon capture and storage (CCS) – proposals are in the pipeline to make a start, but it may not be before 2027 before the major UK plants have been completed - and electrical heating on a very large scale but there is really no alternative but to radically change the way we buy and behave to get our carbon footprints way down. That is saying we have to completely stop doing anything that is non-essential. We share this responsibility in so many ways.

Prof Tim Jackson Economist and Ecologist at Surrey University has his own remarkable way of looking at things. In 2009 he did a calculation of the amount of CO2 that was emitted for every US\$1 of global GDP. In 1979 it was 1000g of CO2,

by 2009 through technical efficiency improvements it had fallen to 700g, but this rate of improvement is nothing like what is required if we are to stay within the 1.5C limit identified by the IPCC. To do that according to Tim Jackson we will have to get down to a mere 3g of CO2 per unit of GDP if global growth continues at the present rate! Is this even possible in a managed way? It does show the enormity of the task we face if we are to avoid the worst predictions of global heating.

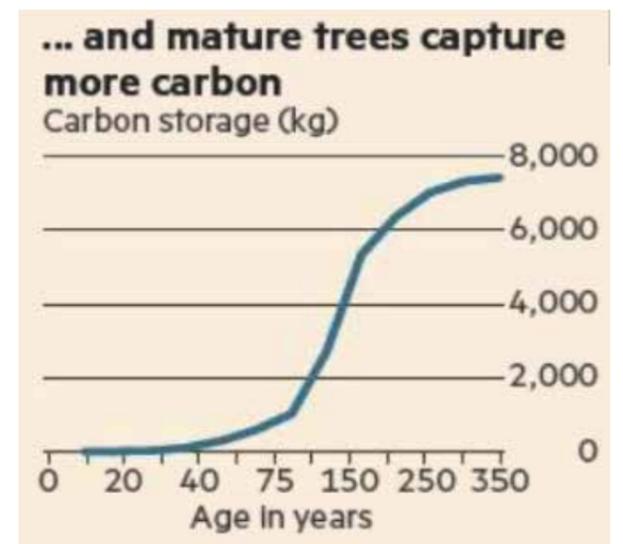
One message is clear - we have to stop our pursuit of endless growth on our finite planet and focus instead on saving ourselves and helping the poorest people on the planet to reach a decent living standard and at the same time cutting back spending on the well off.

Higher taxes on the rich has to be one part of the solution. Using cars as an example in my road where I've lived for 51 years there is currently one family with a Bentley, several with Teslas, Jaguars, Porphes and Volvos galore, mostly SUV's, and some families with two cars. Like many families after the war we never had a car and we walked or cycled everywhere from Primary school onwards. So if you are looking for signs of people doing their utmost to hold down their emissions in the face of the threat of global heating right across the globe you won't find it in my road.

I have managed without a car for over 25 years and wouldn't want one if you gave it to me. Cars adversely affect the rest of us and the price paid for a car, for example, nowhere near covers all the externalities arising from their production.

Trees: Planting trees is seen as one positive solution for global warming, but we must ask ourselves is this a winning formulae? I'm all in favour of trees and have planted many whips to create new hedgerows and plug existing ones to help wildlife. But as Fig 2 indicates trees have to reach a certain age before they start to take up significant amounts of carbon and have to reach an age of something like 150 years to reach peak carbon uptake. That is according to Treeconomics Ltd. as reported in the FT. What we have to take into account also is that we are tearing up our ancient, wonderful, highly biodiverse tropical rain forests in the Amazon, central Africa, Indonesia and elsewhere and I worry that are we creating a net loss of carbon absorbing trees globally.

Brazil accounted for more than 40 % of global primary forest loss in the tropics last year, fuelled by the demand for cattle ranching. This phenomenal rate of clearance is facilitated by the expansion of



roads across the Amazon. The Amazon rainforest is vital for the regulation of the world's climate and rainfall in particular. When the Amazon ceases to become a net oxygen emitter and flips to a net oxygen consumer is another of the tipping points I fear by not addressing global warming. And signs are the Amazon is right at this tipping point.

As this forest destruction is linked so closely with meat consumption you will recall the EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet and Health published in 2019 which suggested that a sustainable diet would include no more than 98g of red meat, 203g of poultry and 156g of fish PER WEEK. The average US American consumes 653g of red meat, 1353g of poultry and 1307g of fish PER WEEK, which is just one reason why Americans have by far the biggest carbon footprint of any developed nation in the world.

The UK and the rest of the world should avoid emulating the USA but be warned 95% of all British chicken reared for meat is produced in industrial units and there are also some 200 vast industrial farms in the UK producing pork.

What keeps me going are people like Jonathon Porritt and his writings, Prof Tim Jackson, Greta Thunberg and the others motivating our young people, Caroline Lucas MP, the Centre of Alternative Technology and their Zero Carbon Britain work with local authorities, the Financial Times for their coverage of the environment and the arts, Energy4All for the renewable energy Co-operatives they have created, Satish Kumar and Resurgence, who like Caroline and Jonathon has kept going for many decades without deviating, and the people who are prepared to protest in public over the lack of progress, and the many others across the world who are committed to do something about global heating.

Surrey is England's most wooded county, and our residents are blessed with many beautiful green spaces to explore and enjoy. We have a lot to gain from our 'natural capital' - all the elements of nature which directly or indirectly provide value to the human population. Unfortunately, in Surrey, as in the rest of the world, our 'natural capital' is being over-exploited and placed under so much pressure as to threaten it with total collapse.

Sarah Jane Chimbwandira, CEO of the Surrey Wildlife Trust, explains that lowering consumption and increasing the health of Surrey's nature can bring our 'natural capital' back above the critical threshold which is needed to support the survival of all species,



including humans. This is a huge task; currently Surrey residents consume 3 planets' worth of resources, higher than the national average of 2.5 planets' worth, and the SWT manage only 3% of the county's land.

Speaking at our Annual General Meeting, Sarah Jane explained to GEF members that while the SWT has approximately 100 members of staff, including their education centre in Nower Wood, real action for the local environment comes from community engagement and volunteer effort. This is why one of the SWT's key aims is to engage 1 in 4 Surrey residents in some kind of environmental action, campaigning through existing communities such as parish councils and schools, as well as organisations



The Future of Biodiversity in Surrey: Net Zero, Nature Positive

A Talk by Sarah Jane Chimbwandira at GEF's AGM

like GEF and Zero Carbon Guildford. They run a number of projects for volunteers to get involved in real restorative work, such as hedgerow building and river water testing. There are currently a number of barriers to community involvement in Surrey, as only 23% of residents have access to a green space within walking distance. This is a particular problem, Sarah Jane points out, for young people, who are often very enthusiastic about the environment but simply unable to attend events or projects due to travel restrictions.

Of that 3% of county land which the SWT manage, Sarah Jane stressed the importance of wetlands and other waterways for carbon storage and future sequestering, such as the Cranleigh Waters Community River Project - areas which she explains are often overlooked for environmental repair, in favour of more well-known environments like forests. The SWT do a lot of research into the economics of climate change and repair, as they know that it will most likely be economic factors which drive real change. A 2019 Eldon Trust survey found that 75% of respondents looked to business leaders to drive change over political or community leaders. Chobham Common provides £934,000 in annual revenue from its 322,000 visitors, while simultaneously storing 141k tonnes of carbon and sequestering a further 3,698 tonnes each year. Economically, Sarah Jane explains, it is clear that while the cost of repairing our natural environment and restoring our 'natural capital' is high, the costs of failing to do so will be far higher, as we lose the huge - and free - benefits to human health, infrastructure and resources that come from our environment.

Looking to the future, one of SWT's key goals is to increase the total area of 'connected land supporting nature' - that is, not necessarily SWT-managed land, but all land in Surrey that is protected and managed for the benefit of nature - to 30% by 2030. This increase would greatly improve our ability to meet the 'natural capital' threshold, allowing our natural environment to recover and provide us with everything we need without having to destroy it in the process. When asked about re-wilding, a method for restoring natural spaces which is becoming increasingly popular across the UK, Sarah Jane clarified that Surrey is not the ideal candidate for

I have just been reading 'Lost Woods' a book of the essays and letters of Rachel Carson, famous author of 'Silent Spring', the conservation classic issued in 1962.

Carson was a marine biologist and author of three wonderful books about the sea. The first was 'Under the Sea Wind', a highly original book that told the story of the sea from the perspective of a sandpiper, a crab, a mackerel, an eel and several other animals.

Her imaginative stories from the animals' perspective provide a new perspective on our own lives. They are wonderfully written. Carson writes lyrically and poetically about her topic. Her other ocean books were 'The Sea Around Us', and 'The Edge of the Sea' - must reads for anyone who loves the sea and the sea shore. Carson

A review of the works of Rachel Carson by Colin Summerhayes

loved the sea and its life and was keen to convey that love to a wide audience eager for knowledge about the 72% of our planet's surface and its mysterious life. She was a latter-day Thoreau, but with an oceanic bent. She sparked a global interest in conservation, attempting in her own way to address public ignorance and public apathy through tales of the magic of the sea and its denizens.

"There has never been a greater need than there is today" she wrote "for the reporter and interpreter of the natural world....The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and the realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for the destruction of the human race". That

re-wilding as it is too small. Instead, the SWT prefer to focus on optimising each individual area for biodiversity, by whichever method is most suitable.

In terms of action from GEF members, Sarah Jane asked us to sign the petition on the SWT website titled 'Demand Better for Nature', which is asking the government to reconsider its current nature recovery plan, a plan which is so conservative in its planned implementation as to actually result in less nature in England in 20 years time than we currently have. She also recommended that all members demand our pension providers seek high standards in biodiversity net gains.

In Surrey, a huge amount of the natural land is private, and ultimately inaccessible to the SWT. This is why the charity put so much focus into campaigns such as No Mow May, to encourage residents to manage their gardens in the way which is best for biodiversity. If you have a garden or are involved in the management of a private green space, try visiting the Surrey Wildlife Trust website to discover tips and advice on how best to manage it in line with their biodiversity and climate repair goals.

Write up by Isabel Davies

was written in 1952 at the height of the Cold War, but she was also extremely aware of and sensitive to the immense damage that our greedy activities were doing to our planet and its life - a thread that runs throughout her writings and is especially prominent in 'Silent Spring' the tale of how the mindless use of DDT was thinning egg shells and contributing to a serious decline in America's bird population.

Her work is just as germane today as it was when she was writing in the 1940's, 50's and early 60's. 'Lost Woods' was published in paperback by Canongate in 2022.

Thoughts from the Chair **A road to Net Zero**



It's all too easy to have a feeling of impending doom when watching the news, or reading reports about climate change. I still remember the headlines in the paper after the last IPCC report in April, 'Now or never if the world is to stave off climate disaster' (www.ipcc.ch).

Reports like these often ignite a feeling of helplessness and a lack of agency, as the problems seem too large and our individual contributions too small. As a reaction too many people respond to the climate crisis by looking to technology and consumer decisions. According to this line of thinking, we have to change only a little about ourselves; instead, we'll need better, more climate-friendly gadgets.

Don't get me wrong - I'm as worried as the next person about the severity of the situation and fully understand the challenge of the task ahead of us, but **I feel it's important to look how far have we come and where we started, whilst being cognisant of the road left to travel.**

I count our membership as those who are environmentally enlightened and believe in the wider cause, but it's worth reminding ourselves that the majority of us have lived almost our entire lives in a culture with values that are increasingly at odds with what we now understand to be a sustainable world. Think back to where we have come from in just a few years... a world in which the science was regularly challenged, not necessarily because people disagreed with it, but rather because it challenged the societal cultures and values which they held precious.

There is a parallel with Covid-19, a global threat which has affected every one of us slightly differently, and which has left a lasting cultural impact on society. The journey to a decarbonised world will present similarly seismic changes for society, with every individual on a slightly different path. Culture is one of the hardest things to change and it can take a long time; time we do not have. We must accelerate the process.

What can we do as individuals? We can take charge of things we are in control of, think about how we can do things differently right now, and be honest with ourselves about whether these constitute baby steps or giant Olympic sprinter strides as we all go on this journey together.

To support this, we will be running a series of talks covering all aspects of this journey from carbon footprinting to "green marketing", as well as exploring how travelling differently can make a difference (e.g. start by missing one car journey /week) and we will be running a campaign to see how much carbon emissions we can collectively reduce.

Our local institutions are changing: Surrey County and Guildford Borough Council are putting carbon reduction plans in place, and our economic institutions are now being viewed through a decarbonisation lens with businesses and employers now being required to declare their carbon emissions which include those produced in their supply chain.

So why am I still positive about the future? Honestly, I don't think we have a choice. Martin Luther King once said, "Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant an apple tree." We will continue to support the Council in making the right choices, and in going faster along its journey, by supporting the residents of Guildford to do their bit and plant their own apple tree.

Alistair Atkinson - GEF Chair

Volunteers needed!

Could you help to support two new growing projects in Guildford?

The Guildford Environment Forum is a Surrey based organisation with a 28 year history in Guildford, which works closely with ZERO in Guildford. We work to make our community a more sustainable place by educating, informing, cutting energy use, reducing ecological footprints, helping wildlife and tackling climate change. We also run various hands-on projects that take action on the environment within our local community. To find out more about our work to date, please visit

guildfordenvironment.org.uk.

We are looking for further volunteers, who would be available typically for about 2 to 3 hours a week and are passionate about our natural environment and community work. In this way you would be contributing significantly towards raising the profile of our work with the aim of reaching out to more residents in Guildford. The roles that we have currently are...

Community Fridge Volunteers, based in the ZERO Climate Emergency Centre and joining a team of #volunteers led by Julie Dickson collecting surplus food from supermarkets locally and give the food out to the public for free from the Zero premises.

The Community Fridge is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays – so we are looking for help on those two mornings: collectors with cars for about one hour of work between 9 and 10am and for volunteers to work inside Zero weighing and displaying the food for about 1½ hours work between 9:45am and 11:15am. We can reimburse fuel expenses and provide basic training in food hygiene and handling.

Across Guildford, Sarah Davis has established a hugely successful team who are building nest boxes to save our declining swifts. Their homes are being lost to modern building practices and loss of insect populations. Swifts have been visiting Surrey for thousands of years but have declined hugely over recent years.

Sarah is in need of a **Swift Project Volunteer** to set up and run a facebook page with news and information (Sarah can provide the news), producing leaflets, creating a display in ZERO, and building a seasonal team to monitor swift sightings and box uptake in and around Guildford, creating a database of that information. If you have a few hours a week to spare to help Sarah, please contact Sarah at swift2saveswifts@gmail.com

We are also in need of a **Newsletter Editor**, who would take over or help the production of our quarterly newsletter. Anyone looking to build design experience would be especially welcome

These are volunteer roles but expenses will be covered. More detailed information on each role is available. If you are interested and able to volunteer for GEF in any one of the above capacities then please do get in touch



House Sparrow



Blue Tit



Dunnock

Is Roundup, the world's most popular weed-killer, dangerous?



Visit any garden centre and you are sure to walk past shelves stacked floor to ceiling with bright red plastic cans of Roundup, a weed-killer produced by the chemicals giant Monsanto. Roundup is a glyphosate. Back in 2019, the Guardian reported that "In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) ruled that glyphosate – the active chemical within Roundup and many other popular weedkillers – was "probably carcinogenic". However, numerous other international agencies, including the European Chemical Agency and European Food Safety Authority (Efsa), continue to declare glyphosate as safe, and there are many scientific studies which have found no association with cancer. An estimated 6.1 billion kilos of glyphosate-based weedkillers were sprayed across gardens and fields worldwide between 2005 and 2014 (the most recent point at which data has been collected). That is more than any other herbicide, so understanding the true impact on human health is vital. This report is now 3 years old. Are there risks? During 2019, the Guardian reported that, "three US universities reported that individuals with particularly high exposures to glyphosate-based herbicides, for instance those spraying it, could have a 41% increased relative risk of developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma... [But] a two-decade-long analysis of data of nearly 45,000 farmworkers who applied glyphosate-based herbicides to their crops, conducted by the US National Institute of Health,

showed no association with non-Hodgkin lymphoma or overall cancer risk".

Even so, there is some evidence that glyphosphate residues on plants may adversely affect bees. Use of glyphosphate has now been banned in some European countries. And according to healthline.com "Glyphosate disrupts a pathway that is important for the friendly bacteria in the digestive system". However, healthline also reports that "Roundup contains more than just glyphosate. It also contains a lot of other ingredients, which help make it a potent weed killer ... Several studies have actually found that Roundup is significantly more toxic to human cells than just glyphosate". Indeed, the Ecologycentre.org reports that "The surfactant ingredient in Roundup is more acutely toxic than glyphosate itself and the combination of the two is yet more toxic." You would know surfactants as something like soaps – they enable the glyphosphate to stick to plants. The Ecologycentre.org also reported that "Glyphosate is acutely toxic to fish and birds and can kill beneficial insects and soil organisms that maintain ecological balance."

Bearing all this in mind, French authorities banned the sale, distribution and use of Roundup 360 in early 2019 and announced that France would eliminate the use of glyphosphate by 2021 except in special circumstances where no alternative was available. They are not alone. On the Baum Hedland Law web site (<https://www.baumhedlundlaw.com/toxic-tort-law/monsanto-roundup-lawsuit/where-is-glyphosate-banned/>) is a list of 39 countries where the use of glyphosphates is banned or restricted. It also features a list of the UK boroughs and townships that have issued bans or restrictions on pesticides and herbicides, including glyphosate. These include Guildford. However, banning municipal usage still leaves the door open for widespread use by consumers at home, who may not understand the issue.

Knowing what you now do, would you ever use Roundup again in your garden?

By Dr Colin Summerhayes



A walk on the wild side...

In the spirit of biodiversity month and support of our own biodiversity projects this months photo theme was local wildlife. The pictures on the left and on the previous page were taken by GEF Member Raymond Smith.



Bee (L) Hoverfly (R)



House Sparrow

The mystery of blood rain or dirty rain

Blood rain is defined as ' phenomena of reddish coloured rainfall, caused by dust particles that have been lifted up from arid areas and carried long distances by winds before being washed out in precipitation. Saharan red dust sometimes occurs as rainfall over parts of Europe, even as far north as Finland.' - Dictionary of Earth Sciences.

On the 16th March 2022 there was an episode of blood rain linked with Storm Celia and associated fronts spreading from west to east across Southern England. Dust storms over North Africa moved Saharan dust 2 kms up into the atmosphere and with winds moving across Spain and France the dust was deposited with the precipitation over much of the country. The sky was tinted orange by the Saharan dust giving the local skyline an almost apocalyptic appearance. It is possible that the dust may have originated from the Bodélé depression, a dried lake bed in Northern Chad which is one of the most active sources of wind blown dust in the Sahara Desert.

The Bodélé depression is the lowest point in Chad and is 500 kms long and 160 kms wide so covers a large area which is exposed to winds blowing out of the region. As the dust was in low concentrations the impact on human health was limited, however, higher concentration of the dust can be detrimental to human health especially those who suffer from respiratory problems including asthma. The Sahara desert is a major generator of atmospheric dust and vast plumes of dust can blow out from North and West Africa even crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean. Millions of tons can be moved and transported thousands of kilometres away.



Scientists believe that the smallest dust particles can remain in the atmosphere for up to three weeks. There was also a slight lowering of surface temperatures as the incoming solar radiation was reflected away from the ground. The image above shows the dust particles on my car which illustrates the very fine nature of the dust. Two large supermarkets that import fruit and vegetables from Spain advised customers to wash these products well, before they consumed them as some were covered in dust. In addition window cleaners and car wash companies saw increased trade due to the ubiquitous distribution of the dust following the blood or orange rain event. There was also some localised disruption to air services, but this was limited. There are some impressive images of Saharan dust plumes at independent.co.uk and for those readers interested in unusual weather phenomena I would recommend Paul Simons' book on Weird Weather which is a compendium of strange weather events.

By Richard Seymour



CALENDAR

All the forum's meetings are open to the public.



Why did the hedgehog cross the road?

7:30pm on 7th July at ZERO Carbon Guildford

No - not the beginning of a bad joke, but a serious question about the impact of the built environment on the nation's favourite animal! Hugh Warwick's illustrated talk about hedgehogs will be full of information about how we can help - and you might find it funny too!

Community Orchards

a space for people, a place for wildlife

7:30pm on 21st July at ZERO Carbon Guildford

A talk exploring the role of community orchards in bringing people together in green spaces, sharing skills, and enhancing it for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity. Includes a brief 'how-to', first steps for anyone looking at creating a community orchard on a green space near them!



GUILDFORD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

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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 or emailed to you four times a year. Forum membership is only £10 per year or £15 for a couple, while for age 21-25 it's £5 and for under 21s it's free. New members are warmly welcomed.

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

Guildford Environmental Forum's newsletter is published in March, June, September and December. Please send contributions for the next issue to Adrian Thompson (details above) by 8th August 2022.

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