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## Newsletter

### **Friday 1st December 10 -1pm “Natural Wreath Making Sessions” at Bishops Wood Centre. DY12 2PJ:**

Are you beginning to feel a little festive? Maybe you would like a sprinkle of outdoors in your festive period. For the adults we have this wreath making workshop £35 This includes a walk around the grounds to collect your own materials and see the site. Then warm up in our cosy room with refreshments and create your natural wreath. To book “Adult Wreath Making”: <https://www.field-studies-council.org/.../natural.../>

**COP28 – Climate Cop-out.** To remind us all that the COP28 talks in Dubai are set to be dominated by the very people responsible for maintaining our reliance on damaging fossil fuels Wyre Forest Green Alliance is encouraging local organisations to put on events between 30<sup>th</sup> November and 12<sup>th</sup> December. 28<sup>th</sup>. This is the 28th attempt by Governments to agree a strategy for tackling the worst effects of climate change. St Anne’s Church will be hosting COP28 bulletin update boards during this period.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1.0 – 2.0 pm Wyre Forest XR** singing alternative **green Christmas carols** at the Bewdley Lights switch on celebrations and at St Anne’s Church Christmas Fair.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December Kidderminster Repair Café** 10.0 – 12.0 At Kidderminster Youth House, Bromsgrove Street. Please note the early finish.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December. 8.0 pm. Green Drinks.** join us at Bewdley Rowing to consider ‘unintended consequences. We are aware at least in principal that all things are interconnected. Yet we can still be taken by surprise at what happens when apparently separate events come together. We’ll use the recent UN Report on environmental Tipping Points as our starter. Exactly how do Space Junk, Insurance and Melting Glaciers overlap as examples of interconnected potential tipping points? And can we identify potentially positive tipping points? Oh yes, they do exist!"

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December. 7.15 pm Transition Bewdley are showing the film "Once you Know"** followed by a facilitated discussion at St Georges Hall Bewdley. *Free but donations requested to cover costs*

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December. 5.0 pm St Anne’s Church** bells will “**Ring out for the Climate**”. Wyre Forest Green Alliance invite you to meet by the Baldwin statue, Load Street, Bewdley at 4.0 pm to support this event. Bring bells and lanterns to process to the riverside at 5.0 pm. Expect information stalls and eco themed carols.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December St Georges Hall, Bewdley. Doors open 7.30pm “Rebel and the Banned”** will perform with 2 other bands entitled "**Cop Out Christmas**". Details <https://www.copout productions/when.html>

## Other events.

**Sunday 10th December 10 - 2pm Winter Family Nature Day at Bishops Wood Centre DY12 2PJ.** £5 per child. This includes Christmas crafts to take home, a winter elf trail and stories around the fire. Santa is very busy at this time of year so won't be at this event but looks forward to hearing all about the children playing in the woods. We hope you can join us. Booking link below:

Winter Family Nature Day: <https://www.field-studies-council.org/.../eco-adventures.../>

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December. Bewdley Repair Café 10.0 -12.0** Last chance to get carving knives sharpened before your Christmas lunch, buttons sewn back on your elf costume your Christmas decorations checked and repaired and even your bike serviced ready for a Boxing Day ride! All your usual items as well. We will finish at 12.0 so that our volunteers can enjoy some seasonal refreshments later. To book bikes email [john.rhymer50@gmail.com](mailto:john.rhymer50@gmail.com)

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Volunteer work-party,**  
Meet at Blackstone Picnic Place, Bewdley, DY12 1PU

**Learn new skills**

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Volunteering will help you learn skills and meet new people.

Come and join us at one of our **upcoming work parties**:

- Friday 22nd December
- Friday 26th January
- Friday 23rd February
- Friday 22nd March

**Where?**

- Blackstone Picnic Place, Bewdley, DY12 1PU

SCAN ME

Find out more  
[bit.ly/volunteering-heathlands](https://bit.ly/volunteering-heathlands)

Protecting wildlife where you live

Photos by Wendy Carter

## SustFest 2024. 27<sup>th</sup> April – 12<sup>th</sup> May

SustFest is a 2-week long celebration of sustainable events happening throughout the Wyre Forest. We encourage you all to host activities, workshops, talks and events over the two weeks with one or more of the [one planet principles](#) in mind and we put it all together in a printed programme, online publications and shout about it. We also host a launch event to kick off SustFest and share all about the upcoming two weeks ahead. In 2024 this will take place on Saturday 27th April at Stourport Riverside Meadows.

Your event(s) could be for one hour or one day and can be free or chargeable or you can ask for donations.

We invite your organisation or small business to submit your 2024 events via our online form. These events will feature in the printed programme and online. Contact [sustfestwyreforest@gmail.com](mailto:sustfestwyreforest@gmail.com) to ask for the link to the form or [click here](#) .

If you are stuck for ideas also email to receive some suggestion sheets based on some of the "One Planet Principles"- There are LOADS of really great ideas for events that you might host.

**If possible, please get your events submitted via the form by Friday 15th December please.**

See our wonderful new website <https://www.sustfestwyreforest.org/>

### **Is your wood burning stove harming your health?**

" Geo Meadows has produced a blog of two recently developed Raspberry Pi based air particle monitor systems. The aim is to identify problem areas so that action can be taken to minimise the health risks. There is particular emphasis on wood burning stoves and the dangers they can present within the home. Essential reading for any stove user." [Click here](#)

**Adopt a Street.** Wyre Forest District Council are appealing for volunteers to adopt a street and carry out a litter-pick at least 3 times a year.

[https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/adopt\\_a\\_street](https://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/adopt_a_street)

- Do you love where you live and would like to help keep it looking clean and tidy?
- Join the Adopt a Street scheme on your own or as part of a group and make a difference to your community.
- All you have to do is sign the online pledge which includes:
- Telling us which area of land you would like to adopt (public land only unless you have permission from the landowner)
- A promise from you to litter pick your chosen site at least three times a year on dates of your choosing and at your convenience
- The area you choose to litter pick can be as small or as large as you like. The scheme is open to individuals, schools and community groups.

**Leave the leaves? A seasonal blog from Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.** Now is the time to start tackling those leaves that have fallen from trees into our garden. Follow this link for ideas for autumn leaves, creating log piles and composting our garden waste. <https://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/blog/wilder-communities/mulch-or-not-mulch>

**Potential funding opportunity.** Councillor Doug Hine writes "Kidderminster Town Council still have £10k made available by WFDC to support events in Kidderminster. The events need to take place in this budgetary year (i.e. up to April '24) and be of benefit to the public (educational, entertainment etc.). If you want to put on bigger or extra events in Kidderminster using these funds, please prepare an email with specific details of what you will be spending the money on, send to me, then I can get this moving. [doug.hine@kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:doug.hine@kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk)

## “We Make Tomorrow”

A report by Malcolm Currie of Transition Bewdley of a Conference that he attended on Sunday 12 November 2023 at Mac Birmingham.

Organised in anticipation of COP28, this conference involved a wide variety of NGOs; protest movements; including War on Want; XR; Birmingham FoE; Faith Groups and a range of Climate Justice campaigners and **Trade Union** reps. Capacity bookings of 120.

## THEMES

### CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT

There

were some telling eye witness accounts of climate change impacts in:-

**Pakistan; Greece; Philippines.** These were first-hand accounts, rather different from some of the media coverage and government pronouncements where blame for wild fires was placed on a) local people and then b) immigrants (very nasty case in Greece with immigrants killed).

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

**Asad Rehman**, Director, **War on Want**, gave a powerful account of the impact of climate change and biosphere degradation on the Global South. At the core of his message was the assertion that we cannot tackle climate issues without promoting SOCIAL JUSTICE. Without a Living Wage; without ‘Warm Homes’; without adequate Health and Education services, **for all globally**, our efforts are little better than *whistling in the wind (my words)*.

### STARTING POINTS

We have to start where people are, not where we think they should be. For example, concern over fuel and heating costs can be tackled in part with retrofitting and insulation, without mentioning climate change.

### COLLABORATION

This was a strong theme throughout, and with particular reference to the Trade Union movement. For example, energy policy is of concern to all, not just to those working in the energy sector. We should climb out of our silos and spend more time working with others. “Ownership” of issues and of actions may inhibit effective change.

### ACTION

A major action is planned in Birmingham for **9<sup>th</sup> December**, which is about half way through COP 28. Details from **Brum Climate Justice Coalition**, [brumclimatejustice@gmail.com](mailto:brumclimatejustice@gmail.com) . Repeat of “We Make Tomorrow” conference in London on 25<sup>th</sup> November. War on Want Festival in London on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

### COMMENT

On the positive side, it was good to see such a wide range of activist groups, NGOs and organisations collaborating over the arrangements for this event. The MAC contributed by waiving hire charges. I counted some 14 different organisations plus a range of individuals from different sectors, all participants in Brum Climate Justice Coalition.

Could WFGA provide a similar cross sector collaborative base for action?

Perhaps we would benefit from a broader conversation on the purpose of direct action and street protest and whether ‘direct action’ can achieve the change we desire. And:-

- a) Do we have a clear transition plan to go with the demand to cease using fossil fuels;
- b) Will ‘transition’ produce a win-win for all (working class) people with no job losses\*\*;
- c) Is a life-style change required or do we maintain our version of business as usual?

The commitment to collaborative action and the emphasis on social justice were the main positive messages to take away from this event.

*\*\* (Trade Union delegates were understandably concerned about unfair comparisons being made with the shutting down of the coal industry.)*

Malcolm Currie [info@globallylocal.net](mailto:info@globallylocal.net)

## **Spotlight on Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion**

*Dave Whiting explains the contributions that WFXR has made to the Wyre Forest Green Alliance and how the national approach has changed.*

### **Who are the dangerous radicals among us?**

Sometimes labelled “crusties,” “tree huggers” and “dangerous radicals,” what role does Extinction Rebellion (XR) play within the Wyre Forest Green Alliance? And are they “dangerous radicals”?

Locally, Wyre Forest XR have been instrumental in devising the successful Art 4 Planet Earth exhibition which saw hugely creative entries from across the spectrum of ages, with exhibitions from school and college students, local community groups and individuals, on a theme of “showing politicians, local and national, our deep concern for this incredibly wonderful planet”.

We have members heavily involved in the planning of the annual Wyre Forest Sustainability Festival. We have provided music through XR Rhythms drummers as a focus of the launch days, and street theatre through our “Planet Medics.” Not medical medics, but environmentally concerned citizens, our Planet Medics attempt to resuscitate the Earth, using a blow-up globe on a stretcher and fake defibrillator. A recorded narrative highlights the ills that the human race is inflicting on our planet. You may have seen us in Bewdley drawing attention to pollution levels in our rivers, through our involvement in the “Dirty Water” campaign. You might have filled in one of our citizens’ poll boards, asking for your views on your concerns about the failure to act on climate and protect nature.

And you might also have attended one of the “Climate conversation” events we ran for the Green Alliance where we discuss what can be done to tackle the twin crises of climate and nature.

What you won’t have experienced is significant disruption locally as a result of XR activity.

### **But XR is all about causing disruption, isn’t it?**

XR burst onto the scene nationally in 2019, with a strategy of non-violent disruptive action (NVDA). And it certainly did cause disruption in London and other towns and cities. Someone had to call out the emergency and XR did it, since politicians and “business as usual” were failing to do so.

XR’s initial demands included a call for government and the media to “tell the “truth” About the climate and ecological emergencies. We now know that 75-80% of the population are concerned about climate change, and XR has played a part in raising that awareness.

Our strategy has changed. We can look back on 40 years of lobbying by environmental groups and see that the situation has continued to get worse and, indeed, is accelerating. We believe in non-violent action. And we still believe that only by disruptive action will Government and the major polluters take note. So, our

current strategy is to target polluters and those who fund them or permit them to operate with impunity. For the rest, we need ordinary people to speak up and be prepared to act.

**So, who are the dangerous radicals?**

The major Governments of the world that signed up to the Paris Agreement do not deny that global heating is caused by methane and carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Nor is this denied by the gas and oil industry itself. Yet they continue to exploit gas and oil reserves, even after the International Energy Authority, an employers' body, says no new oil fields should be opened.

So, who are the dangerous radicals? According to Antonio Guterres, Secretary general of the United Nations *"Climate activists are sometimes depicted as dangerous radicals. But the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels."*

**And what of XR?**

We see our role as calling out the polluters and those that support them. We want clean air, clean water, healthy food and an alliance with nature. And we will continue to demand it, through innovative and creative activities and, where necessary, disruptive action to those who threaten our children's future.

**For more information about Wyre Forest XR, or to join our new community climate choir, text David Whiting on 07471207181 or email [wyreforest.xr@gmail.co.uk](mailto:wyreforest.xr@gmail.co.uk)**