

## WFGA September Newsletter

Urgent appeal for volunteers to help deliver leaflets in Areley Kings and on The Walshes estate in Stourport to promote the Greener Living Fair and to assist at the fair. Please contact Ronnie Lee [ronaldanthonylee@gmail.com](mailto:ronaldanthonylee@gmail.com) if you are able to help.

### Events and Contents

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September [Kidderminster Repair Cafe](#)

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 8.0 pm [Green Drinks](#) at Bewdley Rowing Club.

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September 7-8.30pm [Greener Living Fair](#) at Areley Kings Village Hall.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September [Bewdley Repair Café](#)

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September [Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth open letter to Mark Garnier MP](#)

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September. Transition Bewdley visit To [Black Country "Makerspace"](#)

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September [Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth meeting](#). Environmental Concern in Wyre Forest District

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September [World Rivers Day](#). Bewdley**

#### [Water Quality Survey](#)

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 10.30 The [Pickup Artists'](#) monthly litter pick on Hartlebury Common, Lower Heath.

[SustFest 2024](#) Join the planning group

[What If?](#) Imagining ways to solve the Climate Crisis

[News from Wyre Forest District Council](#) Litter picking + Energy help

[Job Opportunity – Sustainability Project Officer with WCC](#)

[Spotlight on St Anne's Church](#), Bewdley

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September Kidderminster Repair Café. The Kidderminster Youth House 10.0 – 1.0** Join the wonderful volunteers who will not only help mend or sharpen your items but also serve you tea and cake! All for free, but donations welcomed.

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 8.0 pm Green Drinks at Bewdley Rowing Club.** Transition Bewdley invite you to come and join in an open discussion over a drink or two. Our starter topic will be, **"Let's talk dirty - dirty water!** How clean is our river? There's lots of talk about the poor quality of our rivers but what do we know about the actual evidence? How can we find out for ourselves? Groups around the country are collecting data on the quality of their local rivers. Could we do this for our stretch of the River Severn? How could we make use of the evidence once we collect it?

**Thursday 7th September 7-8.30pm Greener Living Fair at Areley Kings Village Hall.**



**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September Bewdley Repair Café 10.0 – 2.0 St Georges Hall** (last entry 1.0 pm) Our amazingly skilled repairers will sharpen your garden tools and kitchen knives, assess and try to mend your household appliances, garments, clocks, bikes etc. No booking required except bikes (book bikes by contacting [john.rhymer50@gmail.com](mailto:john.rhymer50@gmail.com) )

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth present an open letter to Mark Garnier MP re The Climate and Ecology Bill . outside Bewdley Town Hall at 10.30 am**  
Over the last year Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth have been collecting signatures on an open letter to Mark Garnier asking him to support the Climate and Ecology Bill (CE Bill). We now have over 350 signatures to the letter from local people, businesses, voluntary organisations and religious bodies.

The Bill is a plan to:

1. Make sure that the UK commits fairly and fully reduce its emissions to stand the best chance of keeping the temperature rise to the minimum possible.
2. Make sure the UK reverses the destruction of nature by 2030
3. Involve UK citizens in deciding the fairest way forward.

The Bill has been written by scientists, economists and policy experts and now has the support of MPS and Peers from every party. In November the Bill will have its second reading where MPs will decide whether it will progress further. It would be great if we could get Mark to consider supporting the Bill.

Please join us on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September outside Bewdley Town Hall at 10.30 am for the hand over. It will only take up 15 minutes of your time. If possible, bring an appropriate poster or placard. For more details on the CEE Bill <https://www.zerohour.uk/> Contact Phil Oliver for more information.

[phillip.oliver4491@gmail.com](mailto:phillip.oliver4491@gmail.com) 07969177987

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September. Transition Bewdley visit To Black Country “Makerspace” Based In Walsall**

*An opportunity to visit a Makerspace, where people have access to a range of technical and crafting equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, cnc machines, vacuum formers, lathes, looms, overlockers etc. They can be used by hobbyists of all ages or professionals etc. We will consider the possibility of developing something similar in Wyre Forest District.*

All are welcome. For further information and to reserve a place, contact Malcolm Currie : email: [info@globallylocal.net](mailto:info@globallylocal.net) mobile: 07923014694

## **On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth meeting. Kidderminster Baptist Church Environmental Concern in Wyre Forest District**

Barry Walmsley of U3A will talk about the Environmental Concern Group. Everyone welcome. After Barry's talk there will be a chaired discussion to determine the ten things of greatest environmental concern in the Wyre Forest District. It will be up to us to decide what we want to do with our list of the ten most pressing issues, but we hope it can be put to good use.

Doors open at 19:00hr for a 19:15 start, and we will conclude by 21:00hr. Donations welcome. For more information, please contact Roger on [meaderoger7@gmail.com](mailto:meaderoger7@gmail.com) . See you there!

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September World Rivers Day.** Bewdley to promote the Water Quality Monitoring Project (see below). There will be Information boards and children's activities in the Museum forecourt and other activities along the riverside. We hope more people will sign up to take part in the project as a result of the day.

### **Water Quality Monitoring Project**

There has been much concern expressed nationally about the parlous state of our rivers and many have seen evidence of sewage effluent in our own local rivers. Whilst we are aware of the number of times water companies have output sewage into our rivers, we don't really know the extent of these episodes as there is no indication of how long the incidents have lasted.

In addition to sewage emissions there are other factors that affect the quality of our river water. Run off from agriculture and from urban areas directly impacts the river quality.

To have an understanding of the impact the sewage emissions have on our rivers, we need consistent and regular monitoring of the quality of the water. The Environment Agency is the organization tasked with this work but their funding has been cut by 75% and they are unable to monitor the country's rivers as frequently or consistently as is necessary to be meaningful.

This has resulted in groups of locals throughout the country stepping forward and doing their own testing under the Citizen Science model. The Severn Rivers Trust and the Angling Trust have worked with such groups and have gathered data from the River Severn. They have not, however, undertaken any testing in the Wyre Forest catchment area and so our group has been formed. Currently it comprises members of Transition Bewdley, Friends of the Earth, Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion and the U3A Environmental Concern Group. A good example of how the Wyre Forest Green Alliance can help groups to work together on an issue of mutual concern.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 10.30 The Pickup Artists' monthly litter pick on Hartlebury Common, Lower Heath.** Meet outside Brian Norton Autos on Sandy Lane Industrial Estate. All equipment can be provided. A great walk for dogs and well-behaved children.

### **SustFest 2024**

Following this year's successful SustFest, we are looking to convene the **Planning Group for SustFest 2024**. A new website is being developed and this year's Planning Group has been working with Hannah, our Coordinator this year, to evaluate this year's event, put in place the planning process for next year including working on funding options, and engaging with WFGA members to support you to be involved next year.

We would like to broaden the Planning group to include a wider representation from member groups. The main task areas of the group are:

- Setting overall tasks and targets
- Key messages, programme, publicity, target groups and invitations, budget
- Engagement & Support of member groups

If you would be interested in being involved or know any of your members who might be interested, please let Peter Miller know and he would be happy to talk further about what is involved. Peter Miller [peterimiller10@gmail.com](mailto:peterimiller10@gmail.com)

**what if?** What if every country promoted electric cars like Norway, reforested like Costa Rica, promoted cycling like Holland, invested in renewable energy like Paraguay and ate a vegetarian diet like many people in India? Could this solve our climate crisis? See link below to Neil Kitchings blog. <http://www.carbonchoices.uk/index.php/blog/blog-47>

### **Some news from WFGA member, Wyre Forest District Council**

New volunteer litter picker scheme, WFDC can now provide litter-picking equipment to community groups/schools, see: [Community volunteer litter picker | Wyre Forest District Council \(wyreforestdc.gov.uk\)](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

Home Upgrade Grant scheme, energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating to owner occupied/private rented households not heated by mains gas, with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) between D and G and with a combined gross annual income of up to £31,000 or on means tested benefits) OR in specific postcode areas listed on the web page: [Home Upgrade Grant | Wyre Forest District Council \(wyreforestdc.gov.uk\)](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

[Energy Advice Training Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) online training by Act on Energy- focus is on fuel poverty- for frontline workers/volunteers who may come into contact with people living in fuel poverty.

### **Job Opportunity with Worcestershire County Council Project Support Officer – Sustainability**

**Salary:** Scale 6

**Contract Type:** Permanent

**Contracted Hours:** 35 Hours

**Location:** Worcester (County Hall) – Hybrid working

*We have an exciting opportunity to work within the County Council's Sustainability Team as Project Support Officer.*

*As part of a supportive team, you will work alongside enthusiastic colleagues helping organisations and residents across Worcestershire to cut carbon emissions, improve environmental impact and save money. The team offers advice and access to grant funding through a range of different projects. The team is also working to deliver the council's own net zero carbon plan aimed at cutting the council's carbon emissions and works with colleagues at the Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver the Worcestershire Energy Strategy.*

*You will be required to assist project managers in the operational delivery of their sustainability programmes. This varied work will include tasks such as:*

*Assisting with monitoring and reporting on progress of the council's Net Zero Carbon plan. Researching and helping to set up new projects. Assessing environmental impact of new projects. Helping to administer projects, assisting with procurement and working closely with service providers. Assisting with the planning and delivery of events and marketing of programmes. Assisting with delivery of staff training on environmental sustainability issues.*

*The successful applicant should have excellent numeracy, literacy and communication skills; a relevant degree; an eye for detail; experience of working as part of a project team; and an understanding of the issues relating to sustainability that affect organisations and residents.*

#### **Disability Confident**

*We are inclusive – this is really important to us and we are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer.*

*Disability Confident is helping us recruit and retain great people to meet our workforce needs. If you have a disability and require reasonable adjustments, please let us know.*

#### **Applying**

Go to [WM Jobs](http://www.wmjobs.co.uk)

[Project Support Officer - Sustainability job with Worcestershire County Council | 171225 \(wmjobs.co.uk\)](http://www.wmjobs.co.uk)

*If you would like any additional information or an informal discussion, please contact Liz Alston [ealston@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:ealston@worcestershire.gov.uk)*

## Spotlight on WFGA Member St. Anne's Church, Bewdley International Justice and St Anne's Church

### Trade Justice

International justice is a passion at St Anne's. When Traidcraft was formed as a pioneer of the fairtrade movement some 45 years ago, St Anne's became an early adopter, with the church's council investing £200 to buy stock to start a local business based in the church building in the centre of Bewdley. Elaine Barbour took over its running some 35 years ago and expanded the business into becoming a regional hub supporting Traidcraft sales across the local area as well as in church. Astonishingly from that initial £200 the business turned over some £0.75 million over the years. In this way it supported countless farmers and craftspeople in the developing world with fair prices for their goods leading to sustainable and dignified work. A highlight of each year was the Traidcraft Christmas sale in early November when the whole church community turned the interior of the building into a venue for an incredible showcase of fairly traded goods. Townspeople and



visitors attended in force and also enjoyed lunch and cakes...all with fairly traded ingredients.

Elaine also gave talks about fairtrade at

numerous groups across the West Midlands and this work continues. People are always

astonished as to how little of the cost of so many of the goods in our weekly shop actually goes to the producer. Jesus once told a story about a tiny seed which grew into a great tree that sheltered birds in its branches. This is a good image for how the business grew in St Anne's, and also how the whole fairtrade movement grew across our nation and indeed the world. Traidcraft as a company has now ceased, and while this seems sad it's largely because the cause of fair trade has now taken its place on supermarket shelves with consumers having the choice of buying fair trade as part of their regular shopping.



### Care for the Planet

From its earliest days, Traidcraft and the fairtrade movement have been concerned with sustainable and eco-friendly practice. Through its charity arm, initially called the Traidcraft Exchange, it guided farmers and craftspeople into eco-friendly and where possible organic production methods. Happily, this work continues as the charity arm remains active under its rebadged name of Transform Trade.

### Climate Justice

Lockdown provided opportunities for groups to meet on-line. During Lent in 2021, 26 of us in the parish met each week for six weeks to discuss the environment and especially climate change. We looked at how groups across the globe are being affected and how they are engaging with the issue. We also explored the Bible's teaching on care for our planet. As a result we formed an Ecology Justice Group, which has met regularly since. We try to do three things:

- Get our own house in order. We are pleased that St Anne's has now been awarded Silver in
- 



the A Rocha Eco-Church initiative.

*The Bishop of Dudley presents the Silver award*

- A feasibility study is being commissioned for reordering the interior of the church and this will consider how to make the building carbon neutral.
- Share experience. We have had sessions on topics such as heat pumps, electric vehicles and pollinators. The idea is to share collective experience. We were pleased to host an open meeting on Bewdley's traffic with the Baptist Church as part of SusFest 2023. Our conclusions have rather been overtaken by the bridge closure!
- Learn and campaign. We have had regular sessions on the state of the planet and the developing COP agenda. We were pleased that Mark Garnier MP came to discuss with us.

### **Looking to the Future**

We are developing our programme for 2023/4 and will provide detail in the WFGA newsletter. It is dispiriting how much of the damage to the planet is well outside our control. China and countries in the Far East continue to open coal-fired power stations at an astonishing rate. Across our world we are on course to burn more coal by the end of the century than has been burned in the whole history of humanity. At the same time China dominates the production of solar panels, but there is increasing evidence of the use of forced labour. The COP process itself seems to be moving more under the control of oil companies. It would be easy to retreat into despair or meaningless ideological positions. Messily and painfully, we must all try to build coalitions that actually save our world. We'll try to do our bit...