

Dealing with Climate Grief

February: Reforest the Earth

Forests form self-sustaining systems. They transport moisture from the soil to the sky where it forms clouds and rain. Trees communicate with each other across hundreds of thousands of miles (the “Wood Wide Web”). Forests create soil which absorbs water, slowing down run-off into streams and rivers thus preventing flooding.

Since the dawn of agriculture, humans have cut down half the trees on earth. In Worcestershire, most of the forest clearance happened over 1,000 years ago, starting in Neolithic times, resulting in our County having the lowest percentage of woodland of any Shire County in Britain. In turn, Britain is one of the least forested countries in Europe.

This destruction of forests is continuing in other parts of the world due in a large part to demand for beef, soy, palm oil and timber. It is estimated that we could feed the world adequately by making certain improvements in agricultural productivity, reducing food waste and making changes to make our diets healthier. All without destroying any more nature.

Just by planting trees in sufficient numbers we could help reverse the impacts of climate change. Forest soils and trees absorb and store carbon dioxide. They provide an economical and effective way of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

It is estimated that around the world, over 900 million hectares of land is available for reforestation. When these forests mature, they would absorb 70% of the carbon dioxide produced since the start of the Industrial Revolution.

Trees support bio-diversity and make our planet more beautiful. In towns and cities they can help reduce temperatures (by up to 10 degrees Celsius) , produce fruits and nuts for food and have a profound impact on human well-being and mental health. They absorb pollution and increase property values in the area.

What can we do?

Personal action.

- Help plant trees (look out for the tree-planting opportunities in this area which we will be publicising on our Facebook page)
- Help tend and safe-guard urban trees
- Plant a tree in your garden if there is room
- Grow trees from seed or pot on suitable seedlings from your garden and give them to friends, neighbours and local schools.
- Donate to charities supporting tree planting schemes in other countries.

Use your consumer power.

- Boycott products that contribute to deforestation, eg those that contain palm-oil, soy fed beef, tropical timbers
- Use recycled or locally grown timber from sustainable sources.

Learn more.

- Spend time in woodland. It will aid your physical health and well-being.
- Find out more about deforestation and products that contain palm-oil.
- Support the Wyre Forest Green Alliance “Tree Forum” (details will be announced soon).

Lobby.

- Ask your local Councillors to oppose planning applications that lead to loss of natural woodland.
- Ask that developers are required to create woodlands or other bio-diverse habitats as well as buildings.

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