

WFGA Newsletter July 2026

Saturday 4th July 10.30 -12pm and 2-3.30pm. Two [River related Photography Workshops](#)

Monday July 6th. 8.0 – 10 pm [Green Drinks](#) at Bewdley Rowing Club
“Lessons from the year 2,000”

Tuesday July 7th 7.30-9pm. [Wyre Forest XR group](#) meeting

Tuesday July 14th 7.30-9pm. [Wyre Forest Climate Choir](#)

Friday 17th July 4-6pm [Poetry in rivers](#), creative writing. (tickets £10)

Saturday 18th June. 10.0 – 1.0 [Bewdley Repair Café](#) at St. Georges Hall.

Tuesday July 21st. [Daytime XR event](#) in Birmingham from 11am-3pm

Tuesday July 21st. 7.30-9pm. [Wyre Forest XR group](#) meeting

Thursday 23rd July 6.30-8.30 [Rights of Rivers](#) Workshop & Boat of Hope

Tuesday July 28th 7.30-9pm. [Wyre Forest Climate Choir](#)

[Recycling. Lessons Learnt](#) from EnviroSort Visit

Former [Green Party Leader coming to Bewdley Festival!](#)

[Natalie Bennett](#): A Life in Green Politics

Wyre Forest [Cycle Forum](#)

Saturday 4th July 10.30 -12pm and 2-3.30pm Two River related Photography Workshops
(tickets £20) . Meet at Studio @ 31 Load Street, DY12 2DW and then down to the river to create your images.

Suitable for all (with own camera or smartphone) Led by local professional photographer Terry Livesy.

After this you could enter your best photographs (including ones you have previously taken) to the River Festival competition. Entries in by noon on 7th July.

<https://severncarp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Photography-Competition-Brief-Entry.pdf>

Monday July 6th. 8.0 – 10 pm Green Drinks at Bewdley Rowing Club
“Lessons from the year 2,000”

What lessons can we learn (about human behaviour and authority response) from a perceived crisis which is **fixed in time**?

Y2K was just that - 1] a fixed date in the calendar and also 2] a clearly defined area of potential catastrophe. Malcolm Currie undertook a commission from the then Bridge Trust to examine both individual and collective response ahead of Y2K. He was able to log a range of human responses and also to check on readiness by both central governments and also UK local authorities. We will discuss how this can inform our present situation, faced with several very real but less perceived crises!

Tuesday July 7th 7.30-9pm. Wyre Forest XR group meeting at Quaker Meeting House Lower Park Bewdley DY12 2DP.

The Earth's vital organs are in a critical condition. We will be discussing how we can use our Planet Medics street theatre to a wider audience. Just turn up or contact Dave on 0747 1207181

Tuesday July 14th 7.30-9pm. Wyre Forest Climate Choir meeting and rehearsal at Offmore Church Hall Gray Close Kidderminster DY10 3YE

After our appearance at the Kidderminster Greenshoots event, where will we appear next as we highlight the climate crisis through song. We sing locally and as part of the national Climate Choir movement. Contact Hilary at hilarymueller@hotmail.com

Friday 17th July 4-6pm Poetry in rivers, creative writing. (tickets £10)

Rise Cafe, 10 Severnside North. DY12 2EE

A workshop for adults run by Sabrina poets Pete and Faith Thompson. No experience needed, just bring your imagination and an open mind, to explore the river through words.

Saturday 18th June. 10.0 – 1.0 Bewdley Repair Café at St. Georges Hall.

After a break in June, our wonderful volunteers will be back, ready and raring to try and repair your broken items and sharpen garden tools and kitchen implements. Our talented garment repairers will be poised with sewing machines and needles to mend garments and much-loved soft toys and much more besides. During SustFest we provide one of the activity bases for over 150 Cubs and their leaders at a mini-Greener Living Fair. The Cubs marvelled at some of the large range of items that we regularly mend at the Repair Café. We hope to see some of them and their parents at our next session.

Tuesday July 21st. Daytime XR event in Birmingham from 11am-3pm drawing attention to how some **insurance companies** are ensuring our demise by insurance the fossil fuel industry. Contact Dave on 0747 1207181.

Tuesday July 21st. 7.30-9pm. Wyre Forest XR group meeting at Quaker Meeting House Lower Park Bewdley DY12 2DP.

Just turn up or contact Dave on 0747 1207181.

Thursday 23rd July 6.30-8.30 Rights of Rivers Workshop & Boat of Hope (donations)
Bewdley Baptist Church, 61, High Street. DY12 2DJ

An inspiring and practical workshop led by Josh Levene (global advocate for rights of nature and director of Love our Ouse)

Learn how to develop a local river, charter and council motion and explore the emerging role and importance of river guardians.

This workshop is open to the whole community and those who wish to support or be involved in achieving rights for the River Severn.

All ticket money supports Community Against River Pollution.

Tuesday July 28th 7.30-9pm. Wyre Forest Climate Choir meeting and rehearsal at Offmore Church Hall Gray Close Kidderminster DY10 3YE

Tackle the climate crisis through song. We sing locally and as part of the national Climate Choir movement. Contact Hilary at hilarymueller@hotmail.com

Recycling. Lessons Learnt from EnviroSort Visit. A SustFest event that Transition Bewdley organised in June was a visit to the EnviroSort Centre near Worcester. I always learn something new when I take groups there. This time, I was horrified to find that some people are still putting their recyclables inside bin bags before putting them in their green bins. This means that the items cannot be separated into different recyclables and are automatically rejected. Another worrying issue is that disposable coffee cups are almost impossible to recycle and are also a source of micro-plastics. I feel a campaign coming on to ask local coffee outlets to persuade their customers to bring their own reusable cups. Watch this space! *John Rhymer*

Former Green Party Leader coming to Bewdley! Bewdley Festival is a member of Wyre Forest Green Alliance and is putting on this event in support of WFGA and our important work in the District and beyond.

Thursday 15th October, 2.0 pm, St Georges Hall Bewdley

Natalie Bennett: Change, Climate and the Future of Britain

Join us for an afternoon with Natalie Bennett, one of the UK's most influential Green thinkers and campaigners. A former Leader of the Green Party of England and Wales (2012–2016) and now a Member of the House of Lords, Natalie has spent her career challenging conventional thinking on the environment, democracy, economics and social justice.

An accomplished journalist, author and public speaker, she brings insight, passion and practical ideas to some of the biggest questions facing society today. Her latest book, *Change Everything: How We Can Rethink, Repair and Rebuild Society*, explores how we can create a fairer, greener and more resilient future.

Whether you are interested in politics, climate change, community action or the future of our democracy, this promises to be a thought-provoking and engaging afternoon with one of Britain's most distinctive political voices.

Tickets on general release from 5 July - £15 from [Bewdley Festival | WhatsOn](#)

Natalie Bennett: A Life in Green Politics

From the Guardian Weekly to the House of Lords - and why her ideas matter more than ever

Natalie Bennett is one of the most distinctive voices in British and international politics. She is a former Fleet Street editor, a one-time volunteer in Bangkok, a two-term leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, a member of the House of Lords, and now a published author whose books are shaping how a new generation thinks about the environment, economics and power. What runs through all of it is a consistent and urgent argument: that the way we currently organise society isn't working, and that we have both the ideas and the capacity to do things very differently.



An Unusual Path to Politics

Natalie was born in Sydney, Australia, and studied agriculture at the University of Sydney; a background that gives her work a grounding in the natural world that sets her apart from most politicians. She later added degrees in Asian studies and mass communications, and spent five years in Bangkok, working as a volunteer for Thailand's National Commission on Women's Affairs and as a UN consultant on women's and children's issues. It was a formative period, and one that gave her a global perspective on poverty, inequality and the connections between them.

She moved to Britain in 1999 and built a career in national newspapers, writing for the Telegraph, the Times and the Independent before becoming editor of the *Guardian Weekly*, a role she held for five years. On 1 January 2006, she joined the Green Party. She has described it as a new year's resolution to stop reporting on the state of the world and start trying to change it.

Leading the Green Surge

Natalie was elected leader of the Green Party of England and Wales in September 2012, replacing Caroline Lucas. What followed was one of the most remarkable periods of growth in the party's history. Between October 2014 and May 2015, membership more than tripled: from under 20,000 to over 60,000. This became known as the Green Surge, a genuine grassroots movement driven largely by younger voters who felt that no other party was taking the environmental and social crises seriously.

In the 2015 general election, the party polled over 1.1 million votes — quadrupling its national vote share to 3.8%. Natalie stood on the national stage with real authority, appearing in the first televised leaders' debate alongside David Cameron, Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage, where she challenged Cameron directly over Britain's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. A photograph of her sharing a warm embrace with Nicola Sturgeon and Plaid Cymru's Leanne Wood at the close of the second debate became one of the defining images of that election: three women, three progressive parties, and a very different kind of politics.

She stepped down at the end of her second term in 2016, having done more than any previous leader to establish the Greens as a serious national force.

A Voice in the Lords - and Beyond

In 2019, Natalie entered the House of Lords as Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, democratically chosen by the Green Party membership. True to form, one of her first actions was to introduce the House of Lords (Elections and Reform) Bill; a bill designed, in effect, to abolish her own job. Since 2020, she has contributed more interventions in the Lords than any other peer, speaking on climate, health, inequality, animal welfare, housing and democracy.

Her influence now extends well beyond Westminster. She is a regular speaker at international forums, a frequent presence in media and podcasts across the world, and part of a growing network of thinkers, activists and politicians who are trying to build a coherent alternative to the economic and political status quo. Her connections with figures like Kate Raworth, Jason Hickel, Tyson Yunkaporta and Robin Wall Kimmerer place her at the centre of a genuinely global conversation about what a different kind of future might look like.

The Books

Natalie has put her thinking into two substantial books. *Change Everything* (2024) set out a practical manifesto for remaking British society, covering everything from universal basic income and a four day week to land reform, mental health and democratic renewal. Her second book, *Green Thinking* (2026), goes deeper, arguing that our crises are not just practical but intellectual: that we are still running on ideas about human nature, science and economics that have long past their usefulness, and that genuine change requires us to rethink from the ground up. Both books have been widely praised for being clear, ambitious and genuinely readable.

The Foundation Zack Polanski Is Building On

The extraordinary growth the Green Party is experiencing under Zack Polanski's leadership has not come from nowhere. When Natalie took over as leader in 2012, the party had fewer than 20,000 members. By the time she stepped down in 2016, that figure had more than tripled. She built the infrastructure, the credibility and critically, the argument that green politics was about far more than the environment: it was a complete alternative to the economic and political mainstream. Polanski has inherited that foundation and built rapidly on it. Since becoming leader in September 2025, membership has grown to over 225,000, the party won its first parliamentary by-election in Gorton and Denton, and it now controls councils in London, Norwich and Hastings.

The ideas Natalie spent years articulating , that cooperation matters more than competition, that the economy must serve people and planet, that politics belongs to everyone, are precisely the ideas that are now driving one of the most remarkable periods of growth in British green politics. She planted the seeds. What we are watching now is them coming into flower.

Why It Matters

It is easy, in a moment of political cynicism, to dismiss green politics as idealistic. Natalie's career is a useful corrective to that impulse. She has operated at every level of political life: from community organising to national leadership, from parliamentary debate to international advocacy, from journalism to academic publishing. She understands how power works, and she is not naive about the scale of the challenge. What she argues, consistently and compellingly, is that the challenge is not a reason for despair but a reason for a different kind of ambition - one rooted in cooperation, in ecological reality, and in the recognition that the current path is leading us nowhere good.

John Frost

Wyre Forest Cycle Forum

Creating safer routes for local people

Ever been going somewhere local and thought: 'this would be better by bike'?

When you visit other towns and cities you may well have come across bikes for instant hire. So called 'Beryl bikes'. These days, these are increasingly electric assist bikes - you do need to pedal, but they're much easier and quicker up hills.

There is a scheme up and running in Worcester which was cut back earlier this year due to less use than envisaged. A significant issue for the scheme in Worcester is that cycling is not allowed at all in the centre of the City. This has hampered the scheme there from the start. For people who just want to pop on a bike occasionally, it can make simple, real world trips complicated.

Wyre Forest Cycle Forum calls for Beryl bikes in our area

In Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport there are no travel restriction orders: cycling is allowed through - and between - the three towns. The fact that the town centres are all around 3 miles apart creates a unique opportunity to replace local car journeys with bikes here.

Clive Prince, Chair of Wyre Forest Cycle Forum said: "Beryl bikes based at key points across our area, including Kidderminster train station, could help transform our car-clogged streets, keep people moving and help improve everyone's quality of life. Those electric-assist Beryl bikes could be a real game-changer for our hilly local area."

Across Worcestershire a shared admin system and 'hub and spoke' arrangement could provide a cost-effective way to extend the scheme successfully. The Wyre Forest Cycle Forum is campaigning for this and other improved cycling opportunities locally.

Why not join our next meeting?

The Wyre Forest Towns Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is now finalised. It is due to be published at any moment now on the Worcestershire County Council website - [Wyre Forest Towns local cycling and walking infrastructure plan \(LCWIP\) | Worcestershire County Council](#)

We aim to discuss it and related issues at the next Wyre Forest Cycle Forum Meeting:

Thursday 2nd July 2026, 2pm at Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way DY11 7WF

To find out more email: info@wyreforestcycling.co.uk