



Sustainable Marshfield

Monthly Newsletter 14 March 2021

We are a local group aiming to raise awareness, encourage discussion and stimulate practical action to ensure we develop into the future as a thriving and sustainable community that responds positively to the big environmental and social challenges facing us all.



“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.” Charles Dickens from *Great Expectations*



Earth Hour Marshfield Parish Council has joined other public authorities to recognise the Climate Emergency. We can show our solidarity without leaving our homes, by joining in Earth Hour **at 8:30pm on Saturday 27th March**. For one hour, turn off your TV and lights and enjoy an hour by candlelight, maybe for a romantic dinner or just to play cards or a board game. Started in 2007 by the WWF, you can be part of this global movement dedicated to showing our support for the planet www.earthhour.org

Ringswell Common Update Discussions continue about the future of Ringswell Common. At the Marshfield Parish Council (MPC) on 16th February there was broad approval for a management plan for the Common. However Councillors raised specific concerns about the proposed plan and rejected it by a majority vote. Peter Munro-Davies, Chair of MPC, has now circulated an open letter seeking to clarify the MPC position. You can view the plan as it was proposed on the MPC web site: Marshfield Parish Council. You can also make views known to the Parish Council.



Hedges galore! It's been a fantastic winter for hedge planting. Between November 2020 and the end of February 2021, more than 6,500 hedge whips have been planted in Marshfield Parish. That translates into 2 kms of new hedgerow. Species include hawthorn, field maple, hazel, guelder rose, crab apples, and even wild roses. A number of oak whips also have gone in, some of which will be left to grow into trees. Lots of people have turned out to help, and it's been fun. Well, perhaps not a lot of fun in cold wet December, but a sunny Saturday in late February took some beating. There are another 4,000 to be planted before the end of March!

Big thanks go to our local farmers for making this happen and to the many people who have contributed time and energy to getting the planting done. Most have been local, but people from Chipping Sodbury Rotary Club also came across to help.



Farming diary by Dawn Brooks from Field Farm

At this time of year on our farm we are looking at the grass sward as it begins to grow. We have two quite different parts to our farm. Along Ayford Lane we have well established species-rich grass that has not had pesticides or fertilizer applied in at least 25 years - except for what the cattle produce.

On Rushmead Lane we have now re-seeded with grass after many years of intensive farming. We are hoping to produce a more natural environment with many native species including: Agrimony, Cowslip, Heath Bedstraw, Meadowsweet, Salad Burnet, Sheep's sorrel, Kidney vetch, Oxeye daisy, Ragged Robin, Red clover, Rough hawkbit, wild carrot, Wild thyme, Harebell.



Based in Bristol, The Green Register trains construction professionals from all disciplines to build better, more sustainable buildings. They cover all aspects of sustainable building practices from healthy buildings and passivhaus to retrofitting older buildings. If you are in construction, you could start here: <https://www.greenregister.org.uk>

Pond life Amphibians are already finding ponds, including those newly created in the village last summer. They shelter in protected dry spots and head for ponds when the weather warms. If you come across a toad or frog on land, just leave them but if they're in the road, move them to the side in the direction they were going: pick them up gently (not if you've recently used hand sanitizer as that may harm them). Leave frog/ toad spawn where you find it to prevent spreading disease.



Thumbs up for community solar! It was so encouraging to see 50 people at our Green Drinks session online session on Thursday Feb 18th. Steve Mewes, chair of Wedmore CPC, told how they got approval for and installed a 1MW community-owned solar array. There were so many lessons shared as the MCLT seeks government funding for a feasibility study to install an array for Marshfield. At the end of the session an informal 'show of hands' showed great support for exploring this further. For more information contact Tony Kerr tony@kerr105.com



Ash Dieback -Dan Smith updates on an unfolding ecological tragedy that is impacting Marshfield



Ash Dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) continues to spread in the local area, presenting a major threat to the local landscape. A number of reports had provided some comfort suggesting that diseased trees could be left to allow some of the population to acquire some resistance to the disease. However, it seems that strategy is no longer being followed with Westonbirt Arboretum embarking on a major clearance programme. Wiltshire County Council has followed a similar line felling mature trees in a number of locations. The photo shows the results on the Tormarton to Burton road. It looks like the policy will be the same as that which followed in the wake of Dutch Elm disease 40 years ago. Sadly we'll witness many mature trees disappear completely from our landscape in the next few years.



Sustainable Marshfield Green Drinks on-line, Thursday 18th March at 7.30pm for an hour of catch-up chat via Zoom. The link will be emailed out and put on the SM Facebook page.

Growing Sustainable Marshfield membership with your help.

We want to grow our free membership, connecting up households in and around Marshfield who are interested in taking local action for sustainability. Please encourage friends and neighbours to join.

Email your name, address and phone to: membership@sustainablemarshfield.org

All other correspondence to news@sustainablemarshfield.org

Join over 370 people on the **Sustainable Marshfield Group** on Facebook for daily updates.