

WFGA Newsletter January 2025

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Saturday January 4th. Kidderminster Repair Café. The Youth House, Bromsgrove Street. All at Kidderminster Repair Cafe hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and New Year. Our skilled volunteers will be ready to repair your items at our first Repair Cafe of 2025 on January 4th from 10am till 1pm. Donations only. If you have garden tools to sharpen ready for Spring, or you've split the seam in your coat, or you have something techy that is doing what it shouldn't, or anything else that needs our attention, bring it down. Please ensure all items are clean, and none contain fuel. See you there!

Monday 6th January, 10.30 – 12.00 Warm Space monthly coffee mornings in Trimpley Village Hall run by Holy Trinity Church – no charge –

Monday 6 January Green Drinks 7.30p.m. for 8.00p.m. start Bewdley Rowing Club (bar open).

“INSPIRATION!” Where does it come from? How does it change the world? Join us at our next GREEN DRINKS session with your example of ‘Inspired Action’. Be inspired (!) to take the long historic view OR tell us about your own experience. Either way, you have just 3 minutes to make your case for the most ‘Inspired’ change you can find or have experienced. Are there common factors; or are all the cases unique? Who knows what we might learn through our ‘inspired’ conversation!

Thursday 9th January – Wildlife Recording – 10.00am – 3.00pm Bishops Wood Centre. – join the group and learn about the wildlife here at Bishops Wood. All records get loaded onto iRecord and help towards our site management and increasing biodiversity.

Saturday 11th January - Conservation volunteering – 10am-2pm. Bishops Wood Centre. this month we are coppicing. Book in with Billie 01299250513 or email volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org

Wednesday 15th January – 12:30pm – 3:30pm Create a pond St.Peters Church, Meredith Green, Kidderminster. – come and learn about how to create a wildlife pond with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust at St. Peters Community Church, we'll be digging a wildlife pond in the allotment, laying the liner and adding plants. Many hands make light work! Location: No need to book, feel free to join us for all or part of the event.

Saturday 18th January Bewdley Repair Café at St Georges Hall. 10.0 – 2.0 (last entries 1.0 pm)

We look forward to seeing you with your items for repair or sharpening. As usual, no need to book, other than for bikes (john.rhymer50@gmail.com)

Sat 18th January - WFGA Greener Energy Fair.

Trinity Methodist Centre, Kidderminster

This vitally important event informing people on ways to move away from fossil fuels will soon be here! Do come along. With seven short (5-10 min) pop-up talks to enliven the day! Visit our website

Find out why changing to greener energy matters and what the options are.
Plus short pop-up talks. Free parking, entry, and tea/coffee.
Organised by Wyre Forest Green Alliance

www.wfgall.org.uk
for full details

Greener Energy Fair 10am - 2pm, Sat 18th Jan, 2025
Trinity Methodist Centre, Kidderminster DY10 2JL

at <http://wfgall.org.uk/event-gef.html> for latest update on stall-holders and talks.

The WFGA is planning a **leaflet drop for the Greener Energy Fair** on the first two weekends in January. Can you help? If so, please contact the drop co-ordinator Ronnie Lee at ronaldanthonylee@gmail.com who can provide the latest information. And remember to put the GEF date in your diary!

And can you display a poster, possibly at your organisation's venue? Download a printable PDF from our website, above

Saturday 18th January 8.30am. Meet at Hillditch car park **Hartlebury Common Local Group** are holding a **Bird-ringing demonstration** on the Common . Opportunity to see birds in the hand and learn more about the information gained through ringing. Wrap up warm and bring a hot drink. Details: mike2dewberry@hotmail.com

Sunday 21st January West Midlands Butterfly Conservation has a conservation task in the Wyre Forest meeting on Earnwood Copse car park on the B4194 Bewdley-Kinlet road (just beyond Buttonoak village) at 10am. Light refreshments and tools provided. Bring a packed lunch if staying all day. All welcome. Details: wmbutterflies@gmail.com

Wednesday 12th February 7.0 - 9.0 pm. AGM for Wyre Forest Green Alliance.

We hereby give notice of our next AGM which is to be held at St Michaels and All Angels church, Stourport.

We invite nominations from all member organisations to nominate members of the WFGA Steering Group. Any organisation can nominate up to 2 people. Please let me have nominations for Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and steering group members by 31st January. Our current Treasurer intends to step down at the AGM. Please note that though members of the Steering Group are nominated by individual member organisations, their role on the Steering Group is to contribute to the running of the Alliance as a whole rather than to represent the interests of an individual member organisation.

Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM, to hear about the inspiring and award winning "Newtown Green Community Project" in Worcester. Nominated representatives of each member organisation get to vote for the Steering Group.

Wyre Forest Towns local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) 2025 Have your say on Worcestershire County Council's approach to providing walking, wheeling and cycling(active travel) improvements in the Wyre Forest Towns: [Wyre Forest Towns local cycling and walking infrastructure plan \(LCWIP\) | Worcestershire County Council](#) The public engagement ends on January 10th 2025. This is your opportunity to influence making active travel accessible and safer for everyone.

Also Worcestershire County Council has launched a new **community-focused streetscape survey**, giving residents and stakeholders a voice in shaping the county's streets. Have your say in making our streets more sustainable and better places to live.

This simplified survey complements the technical version released last month for developers and planners, ensuring everyone can contribute to the vision for greener, cleaner, and more accessible streets. The engagement period runs until 27 January 2025, offering a chance for the community to share their ideas and help refine the draft Streetscape Design Guide. This guide sets a fresh standard for highway design, aligning with the latest government policies while respecting Worcestershire's local character.

Councillor Marc Bayliss, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, highlights the importance of public input,

"This isn't just a guide for planners and developers; it's a vision for the streets we all use every day. We want Worcestershire's streets to be places that reflect our shared aspirations -green, accessible, and thriving. By launching this additional survey, we're ensuring that everyone's voice can be part of this transformative process." The draft guide aims to deliver high-quality, sustainable spaces that meet the needs of all users, whether they are walking, wheeling, cycling or using public transport.

The vision is to create places that are safe, practical and attractive whilst incorporating green spaces such as street trees and open areas. Additionally, the guide emphasises the need for designs to be sensitive to the local heritage and conservation areas, ensuring streetscapes are not only easy to maintain but are built to last for future and local communities to enhance the quality of life across Worcestershire.

To participate and share your views, visit our [Designing Worcestershire's streets and highways' infrastructure pages](#).

Eco-Homes Trail – your help needed!

We intend to hold an Eco Homes Trail in the Spring and would like to hear from people who are willing to open their homes to share their experiences with others who might be thinking of going down this sort of path but would like to hear about lived experiences.

Have you adopted energy saving and environmentally friendly practices? Do you have solar panels, batteries, air/ground source heat pumps, electric cars or have you reduced car use completely. Do you organically grow your own produce at home or on allotments in a nature friendly way?

If you would like to share your experiences with others, please contact Janice Bell j_c_bell@talk21.com to find out more about this proposed Eco-Homes Trail.

Update on Haye Farm Market Garden During storm Darragh we saw winds of 60mph and I am sure



you will remember seeing many trees down and roads closed as a result. It was very gusty here on the farm too. The polytunnel in the garden was unfortunately one of the many things damaged by the storm. The wind pulled it out of the ground, twisted it up and caused it to fall onto the deer fencing. This resulted in 4 of the support posts being broken too. That stormy morning was spent dismantling the mangled tunnel frame in the wind and rain, trying to prevent any further damage.

Afterwards, we stepped out of the rain and took stock of the situation over a cup of tea. It was quite shocking to see the strength of the wind and not the best end to a difficult growing season. The idea came up to start a crowd funder to replace the broken parts. So, I shared what had happened in a newsletter and told people about the crowdfunder. Then something incredible happened - everyone came together to show their support and the £500 target was reached in under 24 hours! The total is now at £950, almost double! The £500 will cover the tunnel parts and the additional funds will be used to fix the fencing, plant wind breaks and make sure the tunnel is far more secure. (It will also be moved to a more sheltered spot). There is lots of work to be done, but I have been spurred on by the number of messages that have been received, full of kindness, encouragement and inspiration. All of this has proved just how powerful we are together and what a difference we can really make. I want to say a huge thank you to all of the people who have supported me and the garden along its journey.

Updates will be posted here on the gofundme page <https://gofund.me/34eed564> as well as in our newsletter.

Wyre Forest Cycle Forum

Why not start 2025 with some New Year revolutions - and cut your CO2 emissions fast

Cycling in January is a great way to help get any New Year's fitness resolution going. The days are finally starting to get longer - just keep an eye on the weather forecast to avoid icy surfaces.

In the UK, transport emits more greenhouse gas than any other sector. If you have a car then cutting down on how much you use it can be the simplest way to quickly reduce your emissions.

Most car journeys are only for short distances - cycling is a great alternative. It may well not take much longer - especially at rush hour - and unlike driving it can also help to keep you healthy.

More health benefits

Wyre Forest district is the most physically inactive population of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. Knock-on health effects are huge. Active Travel will help tackle this.

Long-term research in Scotland shows cycling to work halves the risk of death from illness including cancer and heart disease. Commuting by bike or on foot also lowers the risk of being prescribed medication for poor mental health.

Don't miss a unique opportunity to make a real difference to the future of cycling locally: Infrastructure Plan Consultation now open – but only until 10th January 2025

If you do just one thing this month please help to improve the quality and amount of cycling and walking infrastructure locally. Simply respond to the consultation on our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Visit [Wyre Forest Towns local cycling and walking infrastructure plan \(LCWIP\) | Worcestershire County Council](#). Don't miss out!

The key to unlocking infrastructure funding, (which this Government is committed to increasing), for our area, is to have a well thought through plan that genuinely meets the cycling and walking travel needs of local people. This is our one big opportunity to really influence what Active Travel (walking/cycling/wheeling) Infrastructure will look like here over the next 5 to 15 years.

Why not join us?

Wyre Forest Cycle Forum works to improve cycling infrastructure across Wyre Forest district. The next Wyre Forest Cycle Forum Meeting will focus on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

Plan consultation. The meeting is on Thursday 2nd January 2025, 2pm – 4pm Wyre Forest House, Kidderminster Room(probably), Finepoint Way DY11 7WF

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

CARP UPDATE

I'm writing this on 7th December as Storm Darragh rages outside. Why mention the storm? Most people are now aware that water companies (like Severn Trent) are legally allowed to discharge untreated sewage into rivers and seas during heavy rainfall. Unfortunately, there are other times when illegal spillages occur. CARP (Communities Against River Pollution) is monitoring all these spillages and now has an alert system set up to ask trained volunteers to test the river water for pollution levels if there is a spillage. Bewdley Rowing Club are also part of this alert system to ensure that they can assess whether rowing is safe. This alert system runs alongside our monthly testing at 4 different sites in and around Bewdley which we have been doing for almost a year. Test results are sent to The Angling Trust for analysis and also analysed by one of our members who has the appropriate skills.

Another of CARP's members has just produced a detailed report which thoroughly reviews how plant life in the river has changed over the last twenty years. It shows how the disappearance of water weed, like the water crowfoot, is now total. The report also details water quality monitoring information collected by CARP. The report was sent to a wide range of organisations, including the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water plc. asking for a response.

We know that the Environment Agency acknowledges the damage done to our river by sewage discharge and agricultural run-off but there doesn't seem to be a focus on the impact that these are having on the river's ecological health.

What else has CARP been up to?

We have joined Save Our Severn - a campaigning group based in Shrewsbury who are concerned about the deteriorating health of the river and have planned meetings with decision makers to seek changes.

We are writing to all local politicians and political parties to see what they are doing about pollution in the river.

We have joined The Sewage Campaign Network, a national community focused body, which aims to work to save rivers, lakes and seas from sewage pollution. Its current focus is to lobby parliament to make critical amendments to the Water (Special Measures) Bill.

If you're interested in joining CARP, or you wish to receive a copy of the Worcestershire Severn plant and water quality report, please contact severncarp123@gmail.com.

Dee Edwards

Rare Earth on Radio 4.

At a time of feeling pretty pessimistic about the environment and the future, I was delighted to hear some positive views on Radio 4's "Rare Earth" programme on Friday 27th December. "Could 2025 be a year of progress on climate change and the nature crisis? Tom Heap and Helen Czerski search for some tentative green shoots with former Green MP Caroline Lucas, editor in chief of "Business Green", James Murray and climate comedian Stuart Goldsmith. [Link](#)

Elaine Halford-Bishop of WFDC is organising a **Local Group Community Showcase Event – Thursday 13th of March 2025, 9.30-11.30am** at St Anne’s Church Bewdley. Please let Elaine know if you’d like a free table to promote your group. Elaine.Halford-Bishop@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Spotlight on Bewdley Litter Pickers

Festive litter pick brings people together



Volunteers wore Santa hats and Christmas jumpers as they took part in a community litter pick on the streets of Bewdley earlier this week.

The get-together is a joint-initiative organised by St Anne’s Church, Wyre Forest District Council and Jackson Civil Engineering, the company who is overseeing construction of a flood wall in the Worcestershire town on behalf of the Environment Agency.

Litter pickers set off in different directions around the town before returning to the church for coffee and cake.

Elaine Halford-Bishop, who is a community builder working for Wyre Forest District Council, said the litter pick serves a number of purposes.





She said: “Not only do we help keep Bewdley litter free, it’s a chance for people to get out and meet others. We are helping the environment and tackling social isolation at the same time.”

The litter pick is held monthly and has been running for six months. The organisers want people to spread the word to anyone interested in attending future picks, and are encouraging litter pickers to also meet up independently throughout the year.

