

CCPC Environment Group Action Notes
In Person Meeting 16 February 2023 7.30pm
Mortons Manor Hotel

Present – Helen, Richard, David and 14 members of the public.

Apologies received from 3 people.

1. Introductions

Helen welcomed everyone, introduced herself and the members of the Environment Group core team, and then introduced our speaker, Ben Pears

2. Speaker, Ben Pears, from the Department of Geography & Environmental Science, University of Southampton
“The Past is the Key to the Future - The Importance of Determining Historic Environment Baselines”.

This talk was very popular, attracting members of the public from outside our parish!

Ben covered three topics, Environmental Warnings, Environmental Protection and Environmental Understanding.

In Environmental Warning, Ben described how Medieval names of watercourses and places can help Richard Hughes, supported by Christine Bowman Hill, speaking about the Corfe Common Butterfly Survey Transect - where they survey, how long they have been doing it, how the results are recorded and changes in the results over the years, including which butterflies are declining and which are increasing in numbers.

In Environmental Warnings, Ben described how the Flood and Flow project used medieval names of watercourses in specific areas to categorise them, with example categories being Idlers and Aggressors. Place names were also studied and mapped to the watery landscape at the time of naming, along with a geological survey. As the early medieval time was a time of climate warming, it is a good comparator to help understand how watercourses might now behave.

Environmental Protection covered the restoration and rewilding of chalk streams, focussing on the Norfolk Rivers Trust's Stiffkey River catchment rewilding project. There are lots of historic sites along this catchment, which were used to identify where the original river may have flowed. A transect across the river was selected, and sediment sampling carried out. This showed three different channels, indicating how the river changed over time due to changes in climate, human impact, etc. This data is guiding the Trust with how best to carry out their project, which seeks to change the river to meander more, but also needs to protect historic sites and address conflicts with current land use.

In the Environmental Understanding topic, Ben talked about research into the history of agricultural terraces, or lynchets, on hillsides, examples of which can be seen in Worth Matravers. Using DNA from soil sediment samples, data about the number and diversity of plant species shows how this changed over time, one example being a significant increase due to the acceleration in cultivation in the early Medieval period.

Ben then spoke about Corfe Castle's own dig in the garden of a home on East Street, where a metre pit was dug, and soil samples taken at 10cm intervals and analysed for chemical elements by the University.

The homeowners also spoke, describing how a TV program, The Story of England with Michael Wood, had inspired them to excavate this pit and catalogue the artifacts found. One interesting finding was there were quite a lot of pieces of Purbeck marble, despite the marble workings being thought to be nearer to West Street!

Contact us if you would be interested in excavating a similar pit in your garden!

3. Review of Jubilee Tree Planting Project progress and discussion about deferring tree planting to Autumn 2023

Helen explained that despite requesting quotes from 3 nurseries for the 16 Jubilee trees, she had only received one (one nursery only had whips available and the other didn't reply). She also explained that the spoil heap in Gods Acre is going to be reshaped as it is encroaching on some of the graves. As the tree planting season ends in mid to late March, she asked for people's thoughts about deferring the planting of the 16 trees until the autumn. It was agreed this was the best approach.

4. Feedback on recent events and last EG Meeting actions, including future meetings and events

Helen advised that at the tree giveaway events (on after school at the primary school and two during village hall / Double Act coffee mornings, people came and collected 169 free tree plants from us to plant in their gardens or other land, mostly in Corfe Castle but also all over Purbeck with a few going further afield in Dorset. Following the last coffee morning, a group of us joined some National Trust volunteers to plant trees along the southern fence line in Our Secret Field, protecting or planting 190 trees in total. We have one more planting event scheduled before the end of this planting season.

Helen advised that she has done a comparison of St Edwards Church Lawns species count in 2021 to 2022. In 2021, the whole of the church lawns were surveyed, and a total of 60 species were identified. In 2022, only the No Mow areas were surveyed, and a total of 34 species were identified, which include 9 species not seen in 2022!

David advised the No Mow areas will be retained for 2023, and that he is still working with others on plans for environmental improvements to be carried out across all churches in St Aldhelms Benefice.

David gave an update from the recent Coronation Meeting – on the 8th May will be the Village Big Lunch, and the May Fair will be on 29th May as usual. **ACTION** Luke to advise if the EG would like to have a stall. David also advised that the Coronation Committee are hoping to be able to plant a tree on the Church Lawns.

Sharon had sent Luke an update prior to the meeting asking if anyone else would like to join in with saving seeds for the Seed Circle. It was suggested that the Gardening Club would be the place to start, which Sharon already had in mind to do when she returns to Corfe in a few week's time. Jenny advised the next Gardening Club meeting is on 2nd March in the Village Hall. It was also mentioned that Aquarius is holding a sale on the morning of Saturday 25th March, and that they are hoping to have seeds available. **ACTION** Sharon to contact Chris about this sale to see if it can be used to get the word out about the Seed Circle. **ACTION** Richard to contact Sharon about helping with the Seed Circle Design work (Seed Circle logo design and engagement with the school / the public in a competition to design pictures of plants / veg for the envelopes). **ACTION** Sharon and Chris about using old Brownie shed at the village hall for storing Seed Circle seeds and Chris's coffee jars.

March Meeting about Butterflies – We have three speaker slots of 10-15 mins each plus Q&A:

- Richard Hughes, supported by Christine Bowman Hill, will be speaking about the Corfe Common Butterfly Survey Transect - where they survey, how long they have been doing it, how the results are recorded and changes in the results over the years, including which butterflies are declining and which are increasing in numbers.
- Corfe Castle's own Martin Warren will give a talk about Gardening for Butterflies.
- Sarah Spurling from Sustainable Swanage will be speaking about the process of setting up new butterfly survey transects on the Downs and at Prospect Green, the progress made over the last two years and any interesting findings.

April event about Energy – Richard advised that PEG have agreed to hold a joint Purbeckwide event. It was suggested that this should be an event with lots of stalls providing advice, with some short speeches of 3 minutes of so. Ideas for speakers / stallholders were Will Bond about the local Wind Farm, etc; Ridgeway Energy (who provide Dorset Council's Healthy Homes service), Dorset Community Energy, Citizen's Advice, an EV retailer, Purbeck Cider & Purbeck Ice Cream and Suttles, who have both completed energy generating / saving project for their businesses. Proposed date is Saturday 22nd April, but could be in May if needs be. **ACTION** Helen to follow up with Lucinda. Richard also reported back from the PEG meeting that Ridgewater Energy, who provide the Healthy Homes scheme which was advertised in the PEG leaflet, had seen a 100% increase in calls from Purbeck since the publication of these leaflet, so this initiative is considered to be a success.

May event about foraging - Luke advised Guiseppe from Cat's Eye Corner would be pleased to lead an event. This would need to be in spring when the plants suitable for foraging can be found, so it is proposed we hold an outdoor event in April or May, depending on when the Energy event is held.

June Meeting about Waste – ACTION Helen to ask Dorset Waste Services if someone would come and speak to us (e.g. Darren who spoke to Sustainable Wareham).

July Meeting provisionally about the Seed Circle.

August event at St Edwards Church Fair – Agreed we will have a stall again. **ACTION** David to book stall.

5. Sharing your ideas, and AOB

It was suggested that No Mow and other environmental improvements be carried out at the East Street cemetery. The EG had previously raised this and were advised it might be too complicated to get permission. It was then suggested that it might have been deconsecrated, based on a Historic England statement about the war memorial. **ACTION** Helen to ask Michelle if she has any advice.

6. Dates of next meetings and events

- **16th March** – Butterflies topic
- **April date to be advised** – Purbeckwide Energy event with Purbeck Energy Group (could swap with May's event)
- **18th May** – Outdoor event - Foraging with Guiseppe
- **29th May** – May Fair stall – possibly?
- **Provisional date Sat 22nd April** – Energy event
- **15th June** – provisionally Waste topic
- **20th July** – provisionally Sharon's seed circle video
- **10th August** – St Edwards Church Fair stall

CCPCEG Core Group members; Josey, Helen, Tom, Luke, David, Richard

Contact us via the clerk (Michelle) at: environmentgroup@corfeacastleparishcouncil.gov.uk