



MSDC Biodiversity Action Plan

Will Burchnall from Mid Suffolk District Council's Public Realm team presented their Biodiversity Action Plan. It was very exciting to see the plans Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC) have for the future of Stowmarket's biodiversity. Stowmarket Town Council (STC) will now liaise with our local community groups and residents to identify potential tree planting and rewilding locations across the Town in order to pass this information on to Will and Mid Suffolk District Council for consideration as part of their Stowmarket Biodiversity Action Plan. [The Biodiversity plan can be found here.](#)

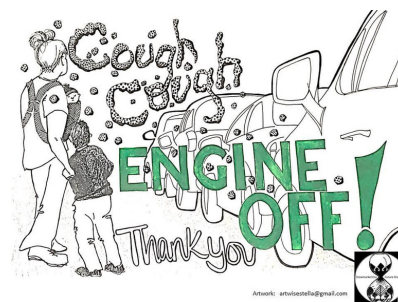


Suffolk County Council (SCC) Highways and Ecology teams have been looking at supporting communities take more management control of their local environment through the [SCC Highways Community Self-Help Scheme](#). There is a lot of potential for the community taking on management of sections of verge in low speed residential environments. Any proposal submitted to SCC would need Town Council support, and the volunteer group must sign up to the Self Help scheme which provides training about working safely on the street, PPE etc.

Local Action

Campaign Against Idling Engines – Stowmarket Eco Futures Group (SEFG)

Sharri McGarry presented the [Stowmarket Eco Futures Group](#) campaign against Idling Engines and how it will be supporting the reduction of localised air pollution caused by motorists leaving their engines running when parked. A local artist has designed an engines off poster which on approval from Stowmarket Town Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council will be displayed at identified areas across Stowmarket.



Stowmarket Town Council litter picking projects

Stowmarket Town Council will be launching a Keep Stowmarket Tidy Campaign from 22nd until the 28th March to discourage litter dropping and encourage the correct disposal of litter. As part of this the popular virtual Superhero themed litter pick will return on Saturday 27th March.

On Saturday 30th October at the Recreation Ground STC will be hosting a Community Litter Pick which will bring the community together for a common cause of cleaning up our local area.

Community Tree Planting and Community Trees Audit 2021

In 2018, the Town Council commissioned Hallwood Associates to undertake a canopy cover survey. The results came back that Stowmarket had a below average 14% canopy cover. The national average is 16% and the ideal is between 20 – 30%.

The Town Council has pledged to raise the canopy cover to an above-average 22%, and the first step of which has been the commitment to plant 1000 trees within the town. Since the survey, the Town Council planted 60 trees in 2019 and 180 in 2020. This is not including separate planting projects that have taken place within the town. Our aims this year are to:

- Provide volunteers with I-Tree Training in May or June (dates TBC).
- Undertake tree surveys from June to September – (easier to identify trees when in leaf).
- Identify sites suitable for tree planting and liaise with respective local government agencies (Mid Suffolk District Council or Suffolk County Council).
- Plant 100+ trees within areas identified across the town.
- Engage the community in a tree planting day on Thursday 2nd December.



Biodiversity 2021

A Biodiversity policy which records the approach and practical measures that will be implemented by Stowmarket Town Council was presented at the Full Council meeting in February. We will share the approved policy with the Environment Forum at the next meeting, along with the Environmental Protection and Carbon Reduction plan which was also presented to Full Council in February.

To coincide with the introduction of this policy, we will launch our “Bio 100 Project”, where we pledge to create 100 new wildlife habitats on Town Council land in 2021. A community action event to help install these habitats will take place on Saturday 18th September. We will keep everybody up to date on our community action events via the environment forum, our website, social media pages, local magazines etc.

Project Updates

Museum of East Anglian Daily Life (MEAL)

Jenny Cousins, Director of the Museum of East Anglian Life shared their recent successes and future plans, which includes;

- Aspirations to plant 200-250 trees by the river to create a new woodland.
- Creating a sculpture trail and further accessible pathways.
- Clearing Himalayan Balsam by the river with Kickstart employees, and volunteers.
- Looking to produce a community food growing area.
- Rewilding the woodland area they have acquired by the river.



[Visit the Museum of East Anglian Life website for more information.](#)

Pickerel Project

On behalf of the Pickerel Project Chair Keith Scarff, Michael Marriott provided the following update;

- Volunteers continue to litter pick, partially maintain and survey the Gipping River path.
- In December they planted Woodland Trust saplings along with the Town Council.
- 900kgs of rubbish was collected in 2020!

The Pickerel Project welcomes any new person wishing to join. For more information email pickerelproject@stowmarket.org.



Rattlesden River Valley Network and Stow Stories

Judith Thompson provided a short history briefing about both of the groups and an update which included;

- Moth trapping events in 2020 saw the group catch 425 different species including; two on the nationally scarce B list, one never found in the area before, and one found only twice in Suffolk since 1939.
- There has been a notable increase in flooding, with 2020 being the wettest year since 2009.



[More information can be found here.](#)

Red Gables

Colin Lay, Assistant Manager at Red Gables informed us about their latest environment news;

- The crisp packet recycling scheme is going well with the minimum limit almost reached.
- They recently installed six raised beds for growing native tree species.
- The 'spinnny' wooded areas between Red Gables and the Fire Station was awarded to Red Gables on a 30-year lease. They will now seek ideas from the community regarding ideas for the area.



To get involved with the environment projects at Red Gables [take a look at their website](#) or email colin.lay@redgables.org.uk.



Stowmarket Rewilding Group

Tom Peer represented the Stowmarket Rewilding Group to update us about their plans to become a formal group and to encourage and undertake the planting of wildflowers in Stowmarket.

If you are interested in joining the Stowmarket Rewilding Group email forageandfolklore@gmail.com.

Stowmarket Tree Wardens

Patti Seaward updated us about the disease resistant elm that was planted at the Recreation Ground to celebrate 30 years of the Tree Council's Tree Warden network.

The new elm is pictured to the right. We all look forward to seeing it grow!



Funding

Stowmarket Town Council offer grant funding support to local community groups and organisations; supporting projects and initiatives which will directly benefit Stowmarket. Three types of grant applications are able to be considered by the Town Council:

- Stowmarket Communities Grant Scheme
- StowFund
- The Stowmarket Environment Fund

[Read more about each grant](#) on the STC website. [Locality Funding](#) from your Mid Suffolk District Councillors is also available. To apply get in touch with one of your Councillors [who can be found here](#).

Dates for your Diary

Events

Monday 22nd March–Sunday 28th March – Keep Stowmarket Tidy Week.

Saturday 27th March – Virtual Superhero Litter Pick.

Saturday 18th September – Community Biodiversity 100 day. Community action event to help provide 100 wildlife habitats on STC land in 2021.

Saturday 30th October – Community Litter Pick at the Rec.

Thursday 2nd December – Community Tree Planting Day.

Next meeting

Topic: Environmental Protection and Carbon Reduction Plan 2021-2030.

Date: Tuesday 15th June 2021, 7pm.