



Spotlight on

Stowmarket Eco Futures Group - Climate Month

For Climate Month Stowmarket Eco Future Group are organising a series of workshops, talks and screenings to showcase how everyone can do their bit towards the climate crisis.

Venues across Stowmarket including the John Peel Centre and St Peter's Church Hall will be taking part. Whether it's getting involved in a Manga Character workshop with artist Chitan Garden, or watch a screening of the Lorax or princess Mononoke- there is something for all ages. There will be talks throughout the month from notable speakers including Professor Robert Read (UEA). For more information about what's going on, visit Stowmarket Eco Future Group Facebook page or website.

In the run up to March, Stowmarket Eco Future Group are aiming to deliver a leaflet to every house in Stowmarket to promote the events.



Local Action



The Old Allotment Site in Combs Ford

The Food Museum have coordinated three community clear up days at the old allotment site in Combs Ford, they have proved very successful with much of the site cleared. Sun Skips kindly donated two skips for the days, which were quickly filled with plastic and general waste found along the hedgerow. On the third Community day they managed to collect 1.36 tonnes of scrap metal including chicken wire and old metal poles.

This space will become an urban wetland, creating a new space for nature to thrive. In the future the Food Museum hope to apply for grant funding to build a bridge connecting the site to the main Museum land increasing the amount of wildlife that can access the wetland. The funding would also allow benches and a boardwalk to be built to allow access to the public.

Project Updates

Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC)

MSDC have been busy planning wildflower meadows across the town and ensuring maintenance teams at Mid Suffolk are onboard with the plans. New signage has been created for new sites to inform the public. The approach is to continue finding new suitable sites and see how the public respond.



Many towns and villages nearby, including Needham Market have requested reduced cutting and wildflower schemes as a direct consequence of what they have seen in Stowmarket. They have also seen an increase in applications for wildflower seeds and trees across the District.

An Interactive map can be found on Mid Suffolks website, showing where wildflower meadows are, this is being updated weekly and can be accessed - <https://bmsdc.cloud.cadcorp.com/WebMap/Map.aspx>

Their Biodiversity action plan is being revised, looking forward into the next five years. The plan is to look further than tree planting and wildflower meadows alone, and start looking into other habitats like wet meadows and woodlands, which are of equal importance but are not necessarily as glamorous to the general public.



Pickerel Project

The Pickerel Project have recently carried out an invertebrate survey of the river fly, they did see an uprise which is good new but are concerned about the availability of oxygen. At their recent litter pick at the beginning of February they managed to collect a large amount of litter from the river.

Rattlesden River Valley Network (RRVN)

RRVN have started the monitoring of moths this year and have found evidence of early moths. They are continuing to work closely with Stowmarket Eco Future Group, Red Gables and Nuture Together to make connections to help make change and action towards the climate crisis.



Stow Stories are working on an art trail quest with other venues in town to celebrate the importance of Biodiveristy and the heritage of the town including the river valley.



Red Gables & Volunteers of Stowmarket

Red Gables have carried out an assesment of their building and conclude that improvements can be made to make it more eco friendly. They have applied for a grant to replace all lighting in the building with LED lighting which will be a longer term cost saving. More signage will be installed in the building to encourage people to turn off lights and close doors, alongside this they hope to recieve funding to buy a hand dryer and stop using paper towels. Products used inside the building will be switched to eco friendly ones, where they will work closely with the Food Museum who have already made a switch.

In the grounds they are increasing hedgerow coverage along the front of the wall and trying to increase the amount of native species of trees around the Red Gable site.

Volunteers of Stowmarket twice monthly recycling stall, supported by Stowmarket Eco Future group, is continuing to be very successful with high numbers using the stall. So far 240 waste sacks have been saved from going to general waste schemes. The Repair Cafe has also been very well attended with 78 items repaired since it started - 83% success rate.

Stowmarket Eco Future Group

Stowmarket Eco Future Group became thermal imaging camera champions for Suffolk County Council. At the moment they are loaning it out to other groups to gather useful information. They will have access to the camera again next year.



Food Museum

The Food Museum are continuing the fencing project around the Museum, focusing this month on the new allotment site on Combs Lane - a large amount of litter was cleared whilst doing this.

Stowmarket Town Council

The wild area initiative will continue again for the third year, it's popularity has grown year on year and they will be encouraging more local residents to give a piece of their gardens back to nature. A wild area sign will be given to those who wish to take part in the initiative.

Keep Stowmarket Tidy Week is returning in the first week of April, where we will be dedicating our social media to sharing information about the environment and fighting litter. Our annual litter picking event, Team Up to Clean Up will be happening on Tuesday 4th April from 10.30am, where community groups and residents are invited to join.

Biodiversity action day will take place in September and Community Tree planting day will take place in December - further details to be realised nearer the time.

Stowmarket Environment Conference

Proposals to hold a Stowmarket Environment Conference in October were discussed. The event would hopefully attract an audience of 180 people and have key speakers including specialists in Climate change and local action. The event is very much in the early stages of planning, the Environment Forum discussed what the event would look like and how it would be promoted to attract audiences. Considerations made to ensuring we find the right speakers and how the event could give back to an ongoing environmental project in the town.



Dates for your Diary

April 3rd - April 9th - Keep Stowmarket Tidy Week

April 4th – Team Up to Clean Up

Next Meeting

Tuesday 13th June 2023 at 7.00pm, at Stowmarket Town Council, John Milton Room.

If you would like to know more about the Stowmarket Environment Forum please email Head of Community Services, Karl Daniels: karld@stowmarket.org.

