

LIFE FORCE

Nov
2022

THE CLIMATE PROJECT

ISSUE 1 // £5.00
Epping Forest District

SENSORY WALKS

THE WORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE

**HOW NATURE IS RECLAIMING
INDUSTRIAL WASTELANDS**

ART WORKSHOPS

and more...

***OUR PLANET NEEDS
OUR HELP!***

LETTER

From the Editor...



Hi, I'm Chloe...

I am the designer and editor of this first issue of Life Force magazine. At the moment, I am studying Public Relations and Design in college. I have been involved with Life Force since the beginning as part of young people's input to the project.

This publication is to showcase our Climate Project created by the Epping Forest Sunflower Group and funded by Let's Get Connected. The project aims to create awareness of climate issues that are endangering our planet. As you flick through the pages you will see content that covers the various aspects of the work we have been doing in the local district and also to combat some of the struggles that Covid-19 inflicted on communities. These include isolation, physical and mental health and well-being.

We have worked locally with The Sunflower Group (page 18-19), ACE Activities (page 26-29), Chigwell School (24-25) and Young People (page 22-23). I hope you enjoy this first issue and it gives you inspiration to help combat the dangers our planet faces.

Thank you to the many contributors who have made this first issue possible.

Epping Forest Sunflower Group



CONTENTS

TABLE OF

4. LIFE FORCE

6. CLIMATE CHANGE - GLOBAL AND LOCAL

7. WELCOME TO SUNFLOWER

8. JACQUE WOOLLEY
LETS GET CONNECTED

9. MIRKA MARRI
FIND YOUR ACTIVE

10. A VISION OF BRITAIN

13. 3FOOD4U

14. CLIMATE ISSUES, WHAT NEXT?

16. TREES AND HEDGEROWS

18. EPPING FOREST SUNFLOWER GROUP

20. SENSORY WALKS

22. YOUNG PEOPLE

24. CHIGWELL SCHOOL

26. ACE ACTIVITIES ARTWORK

28. ACE ACTIVITIES GARDENING AND RECYCLING

30. THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

32. NATURE RECLAIMS INDUSTRIAL WASTELANDS

34. GRANGE FARM

36. THE BATTLE FOR GRANGE FARM CENTRE
GWENDOLINE TEMPLETON

38. PLAYING, WALKING, CREATING, LEARNING

39. CLIMATE CHANGE 'WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE'



Tricia Moxey - Local Environmental Campaigner and Tree Warden

LIFE FORCE

The Climate Change Project has been created to highlight how the world's climate is changing and affecting all living organisms that share our planet.

The title of this project is **LIFE FORCE** because life is very important for all organisms on this planet and our planet itself is special, should be respected in its own right and is a force of its own as it travels around the sun within our solar system.

Our planet provides suitable conditions for a fantastic range of living organisms, big or small, all of which interact with one another as they live out their lives. We exist in a challenging time, named the Anthropocene, when human activities are destroying forests and polluting the air, rivers and seas with toxic waste reducing the availability of suitable habitats for so many forms of wildlife. The average global temperatures are rising, bringing massive changes in the weather patterns with more stormy conditions, widespread droughts or floods which have an impact on all living beings including us!

1. The **LIFE FORCE** project was developed to encourage groups, schools and others to help them become really aware of how climate change is affecting our planet. Through a variety of activities, there will be



Lack of rainfall and hot weather produced this large crack in the ground in Epping Forest

opportunities for participants to learn about some of the causes of climate change and the likely impact of higher temperatures around the world on its inhabitants.

2. The **LIFE FORCE** project aims to give people the opportunity to learn about ways in which we as a species can appreciate the size of our impact on the natural world, how to find ways of reducing this and then adopt suitable changes in our behaviour.

Over many centuries artists have depicted the importance of plants and animals in their lives and this is something which resonates with all of us today. Thus using art, in its many forms, is a core activity of the

LIFE FORCE project to help participants express their feelings about our planet and the importance of our collective role in protecting it from further damage.



A tough Hawthorn bush survives in dried grassland

3. The **LIFE FORCE** project gives people the opportunity to ask questions and then use various media to express their responses to the answers with the opportunity to exhibit their findings to a wider audience. This can take the form of paintings, photographs or videos. These are uploaded to the website: <https://www.sunflowergroup.uk/climate project/>

4. The **LIFE FORCE** project also enables participants to engage in an active way with the natural world which enhances their personal well being. Individuals can take part in a range of activities including led educational sensory walks and creative workshops in art, music, podcasts and video recording. Being outside and visiting new locations helps to improve mental and physical health and encourages social interaction too. A constant theme in all these activities is how individual actions can help reduce human impact on the natural environment.

Our aim is also to encourage businesses to come on board and give their opinions or new green ideas which the community may know or not know about.

*It is important that **LIFE FORCE** has a broad spectrum of participants from within the local community. Additional funding will be required by the Sunflower Group for them to continue this project.*



Rubbish like this dumped in Epping Forest costs hundreds of thousands of pounds to clear each year!

GREEN BELT, NATURE AND WELL-BEING

The Green Belt is protected for various reasons:

- To protect specific natural areas from development
- To divide areas e.g. by creating buffer land between towns and villages which help to soak up flood water from overflowing rivers and heavy rain.

Widespread flooding has now been happening much more due to over excessive building and climate change.



A photography group enjoy the beauty of Epping Forest



Young trees planted to create a new area of woodland in Theydon Bois

The total area of the district is 339 km² and its population rose by 8.3% in the 2021 census to 135,000 who occupied 54,600 dwellings. At the present time 93% of the area lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, but once the draft Local Plan is approved, this will be reduced to accommodate the planned new homes. Published in 2020 the National Statistics data on land use revealed that just under 9% is developed with residential gardens covering 6%. 70% is farmed, 1% is water and 10% woodland.

Litter

In the last financial year Epping Forest District Council had spent £29,782 to clear 268 fly tips from roadsides. Over 600 fly tips were reported on Forest Land costing £320,000 to clear them. The City Corporation successfully prosecuted 14 people for fly-tipping, with the majority receiving criminal records.

CLIMATE CHANGE - GLOBAL AND LOCAL

Tricia Moxey - Local Environmental Campaigner and Tree Warden

The Earth's climate has changed over time due to volcanic eruptions, the movement of tectonic plates, fluctuations in solar radiation and alterations to its orbit round the sun.

Ancient scribes noticed that cutting down many trees changed the weather patterns so that areas became uninhabitable and communities either had to migrate or died out.

The Earth's atmosphere extends to the Kármán line, 100 km (62 miles) above its surface. The sun emits the energy that supports life on Earth, but 30% of this solar energy is reflected back into space and 70% passes through the atmosphere to be absorbed by the land and seas to warm our planet. This heat is then radiated upwards in the form of invisible infrared light, but 90% of this is absorbed by greenhouse gases, and is then redirected back towards the Earth keeping it warm. As the concentration of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere increase, the temperature of the air rises.

The main greenhouse gases are water vapour H₂O, carbon dioxide CO₂, methane CH₄, nitrous oxide N₂O, and ozone O₃. Without these greenhouse gases, the average temperature of Earth's surface would be about -18 °C rather than the present average of 15 °C

The Industrial Revolution commenced about 1750 as coal was burnt to heat homes, smelt metals and drive machines. The extraction and use of two other fossil fuels, gas and petroleum, increased rapidly in the 20th century and continues today. Burning these has increased the atmospheric concentration of CO₂ by over 50%, from 280 ppm (parts per million) in 1750 to 421 ppm in 2022.

Over 200 years ago, with the advance of meteorological investigations and improved intercontinental communication, scientists and others became increasingly concerned that our plundering of the world's finite natural resources, the burning of fossil fuels and the widespread destruction of forests were contributing to major changes in weather patterns.

It is only recently that this concern is being addressed by global leaders with ambitious plans try to halt this rise in air temperatures. This follows the warning from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that an increase of warming by 2°C by 2050 would be disastrous. Hopefully there is still time to limit climate

change by sustained reductions in emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases as more than 190 countries have adopted the Paris Agreement. This is a legally binding international treaty on climate change reached at COP21 in 2015 and aims to keep a rise in global temperatures to below 2°C from pre-industrial levels. The operational details for the practical implementation of this treaty were finalized at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021.

The warmer atmosphere holds more water vapour which leads to changes in rainfall patterns, with some areas receiving much more rain and others much less. Warmer air increases the frequency of devastating storms with more lightning strikes, and much stronger winds that cause large scale destruction of trees and property in vulnerable areas. As the air warms, the ice caps and glaciers melt more rapidly, resulting in a rise in sea levels so that low-lying islands are being swamped, and many major cities will become flooded.

The high temperatures and lack of rain experienced this summer across Europe reduced the yields in many crops, reduced the flow in rivers and many water bodies dried up causing a shortage of water supplies and habitat losses for aquatic lifeforms.

Wildfires occurred in parched areas with at least 80 being extinguished by the emergency services in the Epping Forest area between late June and mid August 2022.

Vulnerable humans suffered too, with reported numbers of excess deaths due to the excessive heat.

A noticeable feature of climate change is the earlier bud burst on trees and many flowers in bloom in March as the growing season is becoming longer. Some birds and insects are changing their behaviour to cope with warmer springs by breeding earlier in the year. In



warmer winters certain pest species may thrive, but the hibernation patterns of bats and hedgehogs are disrupted.



The Sunflower Group at the community garden at Grange Farm, Chigwell

FUNDED BY - LET'S GET CONNECTED



Introduction

Life Force is an art and crafts project looking at a broad range of activities on the theme of "Climate Change." This project provides opportunities for special needs groups to work together with schools, community and businesses.

The aim is to encourage our members and others to become more aware of climate change and the role they can take in both learning and promoting the need to care and understand the importance of our planet and our immediate environment.

The project consists of a range of activities including sensory walks, themed art classes, climate games, gardening and tree planting, learning skills in social media, interview skills, debates, photography and film editing. Future Interviews hope to include the views of people in the district such as museum officials, councillors, artists, students, seniors, historians and other prominent people.

Training in media:

These new skills will enable participants to promote their ideas and concepts to a wider audience via our website, YouTube, social media and exhibitions.

WELCOME TO LIFE FORCE



Life Force is the name we have chosen for both our magazine and our project on climate and the environment.

Life Force embodies the idea of a balanced, natural life or one of extremes of heat, floods and freezing temperatures caused by climate change.



Chair, Linda Southwell

The Epping Forest Sunflower Group has been running for many years and is established at The Grange Farm Centre in Chigwell, Essex. The group meets on Friday mornings and welcomes disabled people and carers who are looking for opportunities to meet others, make new friends and engage in our activities.

Activities comprise of arts and crafts, indoor and outdoor games, sensory walks and outings.

Find out more about The Sunflower Group at our website:

www.sunflowergroup.uk

TEL 0791 3236673



JACQUE WOOLLEY

...LET'S GET CONNECTED CO-ORDINATOR

“The Let's Get Connected project is a 14-month project, which aims to improve social connectedness, physical and mental well-being of communities most impacted by Covid-19”

The project spans West Essex (Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford) and we have commissioned 13 activities focusing on culture, physical activity and the natural environment – the diverse projects range from yoga and seated exercise, musical groups and art groups with a focus on nature. All activities are free for participants in order to ensure that there are no financial barriers to access and to facilitate a reduction in health inequalities. We have been monitoring changes in well-being as part of the project and have had some great feedback that participants have really enjoyed the sessions, and in some cases, have also been inspired to continue the activity at home. For a great majority of the participants, an increase in their well-being as a result of the sessions has been a very positive outcome.

Here is a small selection of individual comments:

‘I find it easier to leave the house more’

‘My worry has decreased because of the warmth of this activity’

‘I’m now more conscious about the beautiful park I have nearby’

‘At the end of the course I can express what I’m feeling through my own creativity’

‘The activity has allowed me some time to be mindful and relax and give my children a better version of me.’

It’s been great working with the Epping Forest Sunflower Group as a part of this project, particularly with the group’s emphasis on the important theme of climate change. Even a small change in well-being can make a huge difference to a person’s confidence and their ability to contribute to positive change, which is hugely important as global warming in conjunction with an increasing global population means that each individual’s response to the crisis on our planet becomes critical.

On a personal note, I really like the collage artwork created by the group and have been very pleased to visit beautiful Epping Forest for the first time in such informative and stimulating company.



I'M MIRKA MARRI

...and I am a Community Connector for Active Essex in West Essex (Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford)

I am passionate in encouraging and supporting people to be more active, especially as it is essential for one's health and well-being. For me this has been made evident during the pandemic, whereby we have all experienced periods of isolation and loneliness. My job excites me daily as I feel I can inspire people to try all-inclusive activities which perhaps they were not aware were in their area.

The **Active Essex** campaign **'Find Your Active'** celebrates the fact that everyone can enjoy the huge benefits of movement for all ages. There are multiple ideas for activities and sports. I believe that it is so important for individuals to participate in an activity which they enjoy as it is more likely that they will undertake it regularly. It doesn't matter what your ability level is; we can all do something to be more mobile. I will find an activity suitable for you. This can be by me signposting you, or I will participate with you.

My role also involves connecting with different services in West Essex (Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford) and helping to promote their sessions through word of mouth, and social media. I have enjoyed being invited to The Epping Forest Sunflower group and ACE Activities sensory walks, craft groups etc.

I hope to get more people in West Essex to tap into the fantastic activities which are already helping so many. Whatever you feel you would like to try, I am here to participate and connect the community to have fun! We can all learn together.

Mirka Marri

You can follow me on:

FaceBook - Find Your Active – West Essex
Instagram - find_your_active_west_essex

Email: mirka.marri@westessexcan.org
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A Vision of Britain CIC

Looking back, how it all began

A Vision of Britain was a local Community Interest Company for 12 years. Based at **The Gytha Centre** in Waltham Abbey, the team completed many projects. In 2021 the members decided to merge their activities with **The Epping Forest Sunflower Group** - a charity they had worked alongside for several years. This enabled both organisations to combine and benefit from their own health and well-being specialities.

By exploring the natural environment and using art, photography, video and other forms of creative media, A Vision of Britain CIC encouraged many individuals to develop an active, healthy lifestyle, while learning technical skills in photography, video production and design. They were able to benefit from Health, Well-being and Fitness programmes and were guided to appreciate local history and the wonders of the natural world.

John Price leads an Autumn photography course at High Beach in Epping Forest



Tony O'Connor Waltham Abbey Museum officer and dignitaries at one of the many historical events held in the grounds of the church



ACE Activities and friends enjoy a picnic and games at Grange Farm Nature Reserve



David Hogg works as a fitness instructor and continues to run seated exercise programmes for senior people



The Favourite Trees exhibition at Waltham Abbey District Museum



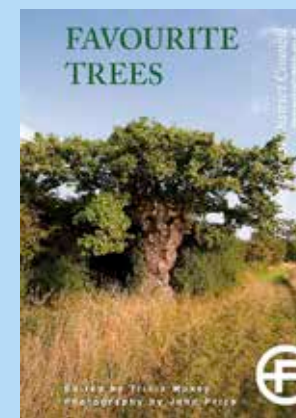
Photographing fungi in a decaying tree trunk in Epping Forest



John Price with some of his photographs and drawings exhibited at the Visitors' Centre, High Beach, Epping Forest



The YES Partnership at the Marriott Hotel, Waltham Abbey. A schools programme for youth career opportunities



AVB CIC worked closely with the Epping Forest District Council's Tree Officers and the team at CountryCare who care for the nature reserves and trees in the district. There was active involvement with record photography, followed by designing publications which included Local Tree Strategies and 50 Favourite Trees, which cumulated with a book and an exhibition of the project.

Working alongside the Health and Well-being Team, AVB CIC produced a Seated Exercise Programme for seniors which included a DVD to play at home.



Measuring the girth of an ancient tree to estimate its age as part of local tree surveys

Teaching local art and photography included running classes based at the Field Study Centre at High Beach. There were opportunities to engage with pupils from local secondary schools who were taking part in the YES Partnership away days which offered career advice as part of the local Youth Employment Strategy. These training sessions were held at the Marriott Hotel in Waltham Abbey and a photographic record and video of the activities were presented to each school as a record of the pupils' achievements.

Photography workshop for the public at Loughton Methodist Church



The Men's Shed Group at Waltham Abbey attending a photography course in the area



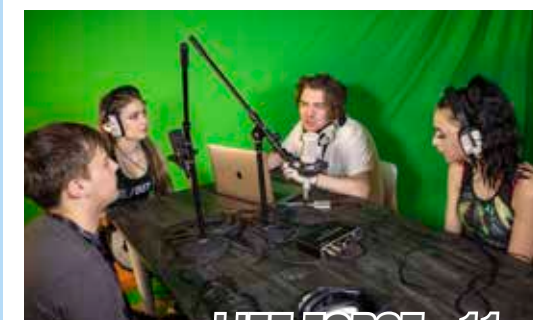
A music group plays at an evening event at one of the District's nature reserves



Photographing a recent Ukrainian event at the Civic Centre in Epping



Students learning broadcasting skills at LYP Radio





3FOOD4U.org

FREE FOOD FOR YOU!

A collage of 12 photographs showing various community events, food distribution, and group photos of volunteers and staff. The photos are arranged in a grid-like fashion, overlapping each other. The images depict: 1. Three people (two men and one woman) standing together, one holding a certificate. 2. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 3. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 4. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 5. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 6. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 7. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 8. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 9. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 10. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 11. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van. 12. A group of people in orange vests standing in front of a white van.

**LIFE FORCE 13**



"Preserving our green spaces and wildlife is more important now than ever before"

CLIMATE ISSUES, WHAT NEXT?



The Life Force project is designed to give people the opportunity to communicate and develop ways or ideas on how we can help one another, find solutions to these issues and improve our lives.

To do this, arts and crafts was considered to be a prime medium for those with special needs and others to express their thoughts and focus on the problems of climate change.

Nature and animals were deemed to be important and were included in the artwork as so many species are becoming close to extinction.

Protection of our natural environment is so important. Sensory walks play an important role in discovering local nature and enjoying our natural surroundings. We must work together with nature and not against it.

Trees and hedgerows

The natural world is our best ally in reversing climate change as healthy soils and thriving vegetation holds the key to absorbing and storing carbon.

The local countryside is a cultural landscape shaped by centuries of human activity which exploited its woodlands, grazed its grasslands, and harvested crops from tilled fields. Originally an extensive Royal Hunting Forest, Epping Forest now covers just 2,500 hectares, managed for recreation and enjoyment by the City of London. It is protected by the 1878 Act and is surrounded by 730 hectares of Buffer Lands. In 2005 part of Epping Forest was designated a Special Area of Conservation and also is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. With over 55,000 veteran Oak, Beech and Hornbeam pollards, it holds the UK record for the largest collection of such trees, each one provides habitats for millions of specialised creatures which thrive in crevices or rotting wood. They support a fantastic array of fungi too. Fallow and Muntjac deer are present and Tawny Owls and bats fly by night. Cattle grazing in the Forest has been carried out for centuries and now the cows are herded by electronic signals from satellites which beam messages to collars round their necks to control where they wander.



Hedges need to be sensitively managed

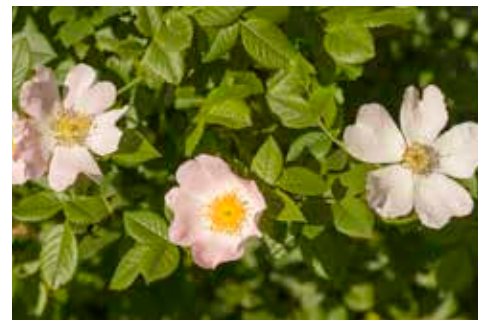
There is an active programme of street tree planting and a team of volunteer Tree Wardens who help monitor the local tree health.

Epping Forest District Council has declared a Climate Emergency aiming to produce net zero emissions by 2030. In 2017 its annual carbon contribution across all sectors was 2,048 CO₂ (kt) with 61% generated from traffic movements and 27% from buildings. The Council has produced guidance notes to aid homeowners and developers meet these sustainability objectives, through retrofitting or enhanced design features for new builds. It is also looking at ways to encourage people to walk or cycle or use public transport and is installing electric charging points too.

Three Essex Wildlife Trust reserves and nine local nature reserves provide varied habitats for wildlife and residents can participate in organised sports or visit playgrounds too. They can walk along many footpaths, tend allotments, and enjoy the produce from community orchards. Nature themed events are arranged by several organisations and a range of organised walks help people get out and about in the company of others.

Trees within hedges are an essential feature of the local farmed landscape.

Many hedges were established in the Tudor period, but some are much older. Carbon is stored within their vegetation and supporting soil. They cool the surrounding areas, intercept precipitation reducing flood risk, give off oxygen, capture air borne pollutants and provide the backdrop for human health and well-being. The details of over 5,300 significant trees have been listed on an extensive database– most are Oak, but Ash, Hornbeam, Field Maple and Black Poplar are recorded. Older hedges support a greater number of species and have locked up significant amounts of carbon. Letting them grow taller and wider increases their ability to soak up carbon and enhances their biodiversity potential.



Celebrating and recording the local trees has been recognised by the Council with the production of several Tree Strategies and the 50 Favourite Trees book.

Active management to encourage biodiversity is carried out within the special habitats of the district and individuals can play their part too by planting wildlife friendly flowers in their gardens, creating a pond and installing bird boxes.



Beech trees in Epping Forest



Cool shade in Epping Forest



Orange growth of the alga Trentepohlia

Funded tree planting is a popular community activity and creates new woods such as the Woodland Trust Wood at Theydon Bois or the 20 year old plantations on the Buffer Lands. More planting is planned. An alternative to planned planting is to allow natural regeneration on suitable patches of land. Some seeds will be blown by the wind and others dispersed by animals. This autumn is mast year for acorns when jays will collect and bury them in open grassland where they will germinate and if left alone for a couple of decades, grow in their thousands to form a new wood! This has the advantage that natural selection will ensure that those that survive are the right trees in the right place and can cope with the likely changes in the weather patterns.

Research has shown that the grazed wood-pasture parts of Epping Forest is effective in locking up carbon, but only if the ancient trees remain in good condition. Once they die, CO₂ will be released as they decay.

Trees within gardens or alongside roads enhance the views and are aesthetically pleasing. They provide shelter from wind, shade from bright sunshine and reduce excessive summer temperatures. They provide sustenance for assorted wildlife and help to keep us healthy in mind and body. Epping Forest District Council has a strong team to help maintain existing street trees and help plant suitable new ones where required.

Concerns about Poor Air Quality

Traffic movements on the M25, M11 and A414 generate significant levels of pollutants, and these are mixed with the locally generated pollutants from local road traffic and domestic boilers as well as those produced by industrial processes and the construction industry.

The gas Nitrous Oxide N₂O is the most common pollutant from burning fossil fuels in motor vehicles and domestic boilers. Air Quality monitoring across the Forest demonstrates high levels of N₂O as well as particulates, but these will vary according to the level of traffic movements along busy roads and the prevailing wind direction which is frequently from the west. Recent research is indicating that the standard accepted level for damage to vegetation has been set too high as damage to sensitive vegetation occurs at much lower levels. Plants absorb N₂O via the stomata in the leaf surfaces, but this toxin causes a reduction in growth so less carbon is captured.

The Epping Forest SAC supports habitats of a high nature conservation value, and these are harmed by pollutants. The Forest's varied tree cover and other vegetation is supported by an extensive underground network of beneficial mycorrhizal fungal species which work symbiotically with these plants, supplying minerals and vital water to the roots of their host plants in exchange for manufactured food. This fungal network is known as the Wood Wide Web and includes species such as the Fly Agaric and the Penny Bun but there are many others. The well-being of all the Forest's habitats depends on the efficiency of the Wood Wide Web to assist healthy vegetative growth and its water gathering capacity is vital during periods of low rainfall.

Woodland soils which have a well-developed, healthy mycorrhizal network store eight times more carbon than disturbed soils. Compacted soils and air borne pollutants will fall to the ground or be washed in by rain and are impacting on the well-being of the Wood Wide Web which in turn is likely to limit the well-being of the trees themselves as they are more vulnerable to damage by parasitic fungi and insect pests so their life span may be compromised.

Pollution levels are monitored at roadsides where they are highest, but lower levels of this contaminant are blown right across the whole Forest. Observing patches of the orange growth of the alga Trentepohlia on tree trunks across the Forest shows how far the N₂O travels as this sensitive biological indicator only grows in the presence of N₂O.

SENSORY WALKS



Health and well-being starts by enjoying nature and exploring the creative possibilities that nature offers us!

Sensory walks give everyone the opportunity to explore our countryside, woodlands, nature reserves and places of special interest.

They are a gentle form of exercise giving people a break from the stresses and anxieties of everyday life.

Our walks are led by professionals who are able to provide insight into the surroundings and useful tips on how to take photographs of plants, trees, fungi, and other exciting subjects.

Videos of the Climate walks can be seen on our website >>

For more information about our walks please contact:
Tel: 07913236673
Email: rayharris06@yahoo.co.uk

or visit our website:
www.sunflowergroup.uk



LIFEFORCE *Young People*

Part of the concept of Life Force is to introduce both the Sunflower Group and ACE Activities to engage and work with young people on climate issues.

Working together gave the groups the opportunity to share and express their views and consider how the climate may affect their future....

Some of the activities they have been involved with include Sensory Walks, the Jubilee Celebration artwork, school interviews, photography and art made from recycled materials.

Climate games and community gardening were part of Chigwell School's Community Awareness Week, when two groups of students came to help and engage with the special needs members.



As part of the Climate project, members of the *ACE Activities Group* were invited to Chigwell School to participate in a video discussion with some of the senior students and question them on their views on climate issues. These interviews can be seen on the Sunflower website.





"My name is Roujia Wang. I am a Year 13 student currently studying at Chigwell School, and I am originally from China. Growing up in China, there is a general sense of promoting sustainability from the governmental policy level, but the public's attitude towards the climate crisis is one that is distant and ineffective, as there is not enough awareness of what the climate crisis really is about, nor any activism related to raising awareness. I became interested in a more sustainable way of living after seeing the rural village, where my mother came from, benefiting from energy generated by solar panel attached on top of their roofs, and the villagers were about to have heated water system for the first time.

My passion for climate activism was truly ignited during my time at Chigwell, as I became more familiar with working around the topic of climate crisis in the CBAC, the Climate and Biodiversity Action Committee in our school, where I oversee communication and promotion.

I have two approaches when incorporating climate change

into my art: first is an educational approach, and second is an experimental approach. I have produced illustrated posters which promoted Chigwell School's Biodiversity for the Climate Action Week in school last year, and this summer I became interested in mixed media works with a sustainable aim, so I started to experiment with recycled materials and objects collected from different places, trying to work them into my art. Because the artworks usually evolved around the objects found, they take an extensive amount of time to evolve into a complete piece as I would be constantly searching for new bits and pieces to put into the work. The outcome really depends on what I can find, so the unpredictability is always fun. My inspirations usually come from what I see and events I attend. My cardboard box installation piece was inspired by the 'Back to Earth' exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, whereas the posters come from one of the talks I attended in Chigwell.

Climate change is such a broad topic, and I have just started experimenting with it in my art. I am sure there is much more for me to explore."



Chigwell School is located in Chigwell Village, Essex next door to St Mary's Church, both being situated 10 miles out of London. The school's history dates back to the 1500s. It became a free school, founded in 1629 by Reverend Samuel Harsnett who was once Archbishop of York and the vicar of Chigwell from 1597 - 1605. One famous student was William Penn founder of

Pennsylvania State, USA. The school has provided an excellent education to many students in England and from abroad.

The school has supported students in dealing with climate change issues and encourages them to participate and express their concerns and offer solutions.

Photos: Roujia Wang



ACE Activities

Artwork

With the Sunflower Group, ACE Activities has worked on artwork which portrays the climate issues we face today. With the support of volunteers and support workers, the group developed a theme on wildlife in its habitats.

Using recycled materials including plastics, fabrics, bottle tops and old magazines, they made collages and paintings of birds, fishes and wild animals.

Discussions about climate were important to the group, enabling them to express their concerns about global warming and pollution and how they can effect change.

A variety of games was played to encourage learning about climate and its global and local effects on our environment.



ACE Activities Gardening and Recycling

The Climate Project included working with the Community Gardening Group, the Upcycling Group and Chigwell School. The garden is a celebration of all of these skills and efforts.

Activities for the Gardening Project includes

- Making bird boxes and plant boxes out of recycled timber
- Planting young trees at Grange Farm for hedgerows
- Growing organic vegetables in the community garden
- Making signs for the garden by Chigwell School students
- Weeding and general gardening maintenance
- Creating a wild flower garden
- Growing and maintaining a fruit garden

Visitors invited to Grange Farm are welcome to visit the community garden with authorisation.



ACE Activities offers a full range of activity and training programmes for adults with learning disabilities, autism and anxiety disorders. Want to learn a new skill? Meet new like-minded people? At ACE we are here to support those wanting to achieve, connect and enjoy new experiences and skills. If you are an adult with a learning disability or a support worker looking for extra curricular activities for your service user, we are here to help.

We are glad to say that all of our activities are back up and running after intermittent periods of lock downs. Not only that but we have expanded our up cycling project and now have services in Stapleford Abbots in addition to the one in Epping!

We have also just started a new "Cooking with Confidence" course.

Please call for further details!

ASDAN accredited courses available from April 2022

ACE Activities is coordinated by Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) as an approved provider for Essex County Council.

We are currently working with a number of partners including Grange Farm Trust to provide a variety of activities for those with learning disabilities in the Epping Forest District area. To see what activities and training programmes are available, visit the 'Activities & Training' section of our website.

We are always on the look out for people to join our team. If you would like to offer a helping hand and find out more about our available volunteering roles, visit the 'Get Involved' section of our website.

www.aceactivities.org.uk



THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY

PLATINUM JUBILEE



Prince Harry's Oak at High Beach, Epping Forest, with members of the Sunflower Group and Find Your Active, West Essex



Queen Victoria's Red Oak at High Beach, Epping Forest, planted in 1882 when she dedicated The Forest to "The People"

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invited people from across the United Kingdom to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee". Following the death of Her Majesty The Queen, and the wishes of our Patron, His Majesty The King, The Queen's Green Canopy initiative will be extended to the end of March 2023 to give people the opportunity to plant trees in memoriam to honour Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Sunflower Group, together with A Vision of Britain, VAEF and ACE Activities, have planted over 75 different species of trees within the Grange Farm grounds. These include Oak, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Blackthorn and Hazel which will create new hedgerows and canopies in the coming years. More tree projects are planned for the future.

Our Sensory Walks include discussions about the importance of trees for our well-being. These walks give people opportunities to enjoy the countryside for activities, exercise and mental health.

It is a known fact that by walking in the countryside and forests, we are breathing cleaner air and the endorphins

that are given out by trees and plants provide a "feel good" factor that is most beneficial to people.

A large area of Epping Forest, often referred to as "The Lungs of London," lies within the Epping Forest District.

We must protect and respect our green areas, including gardens, meadow lands and forests, which are vital for ourselves, future generations and our wildlife. New sciences and technologies are regularly discovering plant derived medicines that benefit our lives.

It is now a very important time for us all to work together and find better, cleaner, safer, sustainable and positive ways to help protect our planet.



FSC Autumn Photography Course at High Beach



Sensory Walk on the easy access route at High Beach

The Corporation of London

The Epping Forest Act was passed in 1878 when the Forest came under the jurisdiction of The Corporation of London. The Forest is a popular place for special needs and disabled people as it has easy access routes around Connaught Waters and High Beach. If improvements could be made, accessible toilet facilities and one or two more easy access routes would be welcomed.

Epping Forest Visitor Centre

The Epping Forest Visitor Centre is situated at High Beach and has facilities for disabled people. The Sunflower Group has used the Centre for art exhibitions and listened to forest talks by the staff.



Waitrose, Buckhurst Hill

Representatives supported the Sunflower Group's Art Exhibition and enjoyed one of our Sensory Walks at High Beach, Epping Forest.



Some of the Sunflower Group outside The Visitors' Centre, High Beach



Art exhibition showing tree photographs by John Price in the Visitors' Information Centre at High Beach



The Falcon's Flight drama at High Beach, Epping Forest. This was a Zero Carbon Footprint Production for the community.



Shield and axes, part of the artwork on display at Loughton Methodist Church. These were used in the Gytha plays.

NATURE RECLAIMS INDUSTRIAL WASTELANDS



Penallta Colliery

In 1930-1935 Penallta Colliery extracted nearly 1 million tons of coal in these years alone, a record for a European coal mine. It closed in 1991.



Views of the old pit wheels and buildings as they are now. Years ago, mines such as this dominated the South Wales valleys, providing work for thousands of people - but polluting the air and land!

Photos © John Price



Penallta Colliery in the South Wales valleys is one of the very few coal mines that is still visible. In the last century the valleys were full of slag tips, mines and industrial workings. Coal and steel were the major industries. The coal mines provided fuel for power stations, heating and the steel industries. Carbon dioxide and other deadly gases generated by these activities have gradually polluted the atmosphere and depleted the Earth's ozone layer.

This build up of greenhouse gases has finally sunk in to our minds as a danger to both our health and our very existence.

In Wales and other mining areas, great efforts have been made to clear old mine workings and replace them with nature reserves, parks and cleaner environments, resulting in better places to live and work. This has also encouraged more tourism where visitors can appreciate these beautiful natural habitats.

Nature has started to reclaim the old colliery site. Trees and plants are growing in crevices and walls. Eventually most of this site will be demolished and turned into new homes, adjacent to the local Penallta nature reserve.





Rob Draper - Site Manager

GRANGE FARM

Grange Farm Centre is a 90-acre community facility and charity located in Chigwell, Essex.

The scenic site is extremely popular with residents from Essex and North London, who

hold. As with all our work, energy consumption is key and the well-insulated fabric combines with solar panels and ground source heat pumps reducing energy demand substantially. 'Makes a real difference to our bills.'

The green roof, oak elevations and low-level design follow the contours of the site and the surrounding land that bloom and blossom impressively in the summer.

The pavilion has two meeting rooms which are perfect for meetings, classes, corporate events, presentations, exhibitions, team building, workshops and corporate days. Grange Farm Centre is a Charitable Trust that was established in 1984. The Trust has an endowment and from the income that is generated it assesses applications and distributes grants for the leisure and recreational benefits of the community.

The Trust's endowment generates the income to run the site but also funds a grant giving scheme. Since 2005 Grange Farm has donated approximately 1.5 million pounds. Depending on the surplus, somewhere between 50-100k per year can be allocated to the grants scheme.

Spreading across the area of benefit, Grange Farm Trust has supported a variety of organisations. The grants tend to range from £3-8k with a maximum of £10k per application. In some cases, the funds provided have been used to secure larger amounts of money.

Grange Farm is proud of its continued partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust. Not only does Grange Farm employ Essex Wildlife Trust to manage Roding Valley Nature Reserve, they also work with them to deliver wildlife events and classes. Most recently a Forest School area has been developed, allowing families to enjoy the outdoors at Chigwell Meadows within the safety of the professionally run sessions.

Educational Visits

Bring your nursery, school or college to the Grange Farm Centre to explore the great outdoors and develop practical skills through programmes linked to the curriculum.

Our meadow and the nearby Roding Valley nature reserve provide a fantastic resource for activities such as orienteering, bush craft, habitat exploration such as pond dipping and mini beast surveys. Our activities can be adapted for a wide range of groups.



With the re-development of the Grange Farm Centre the Trust has taken responsibility to support the whole site and ensure that it is sustainable and a thriving place for the community.



THE BATTLE FOR GRANGE FARM CENTRE



Author Gwendoline Templeton

By Gwendoline Templeton

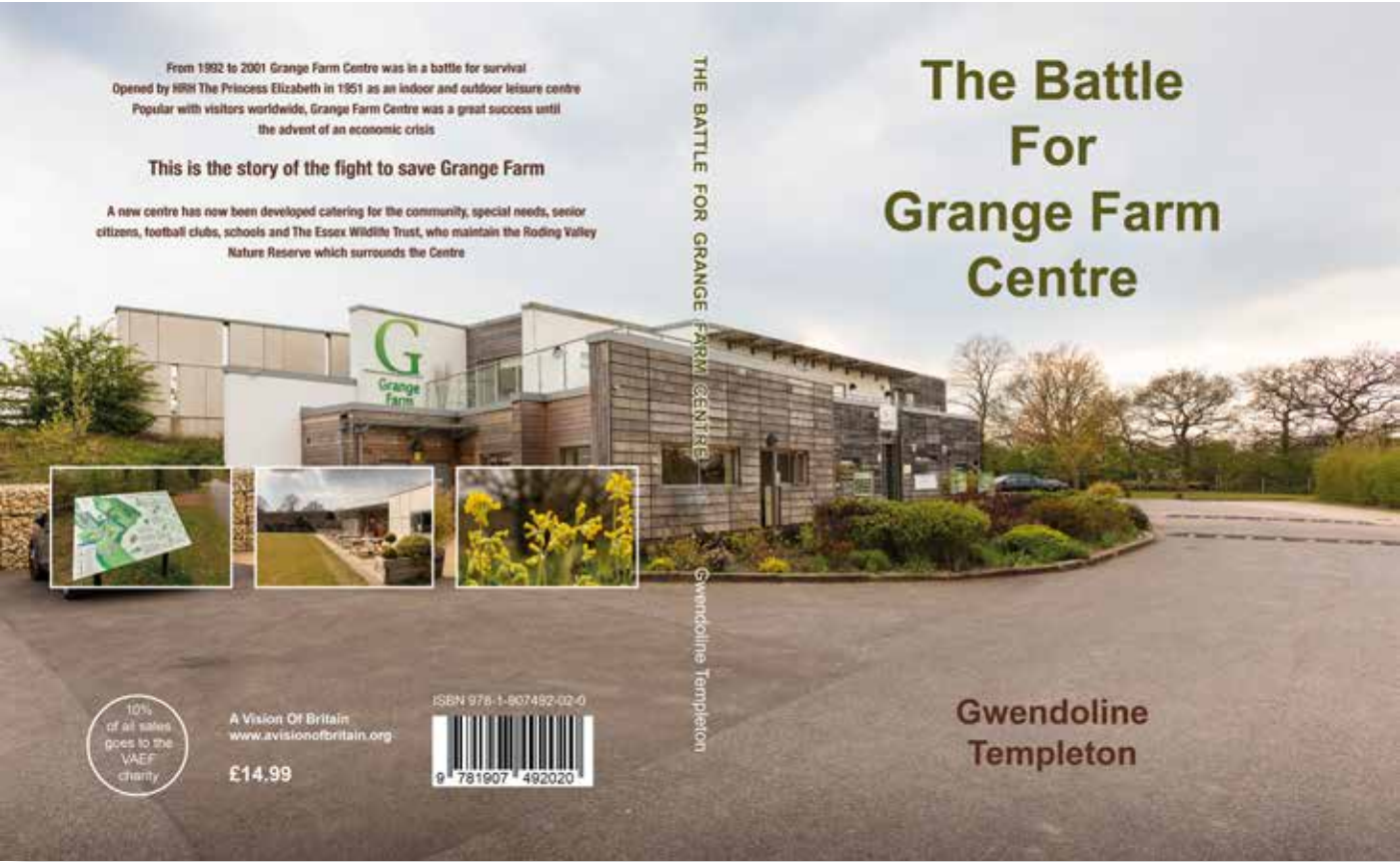
NOW ON SALE

From 1992 to 2001 Grange Farm Centre was in a battle for survival

Opened by HRH The Princess Elizabeth in 1951 as an indoor and outdoor leisure centre Popular with visitors worldwide, Grange Farm Centre was a great success until the advent of an economic crisis

This is the story of the fight to save Grange Farm

A new centre has now been developed catering for the community, people with special needs, senior citizens, football clubs, schools and The Essex Wildlife Trust, who maintain the Roding Valley Nature Reserve which surrounds the Centre



To purchase this book email Ray Harris: rayharris06@yahoo.co.uk

Activist and Author: Gwendoline Templeton

Gwendoline was one of many people who helped set up a group called the Beneficiaries, a large group of people from all walks of life and professions. This group campaigned vigorously for many years to defend the centre for the communities it once provided a service for in the past.

This book is fully illustrated, showing the past history and how it was first used between the 1960s to the 1980s. The book covers the years of campaigning from the time of closure in the 1980s and 1990s up to the present time.

Gwendoline Templeton gained inspiration to write the book, as she felt that it was important to let people know how vital leisure and recreation facilities are for communities, for well being, exercise and keeping fit and healthy.

It was also important for the community to help defend the Green Belt which is constantly under threat from development.

Gwen, a youngster from Clifton Street, Moorgate, lived through the dangers of the 2nd World War. She had to adjust like so many other youngsters during this time who all had to invent their own recreational activities to keep themselves entertained. Most of these activities were played outdoors on roads, pavements or bomb sites: games such as hop-scotch, spinning tops and swinging on lampposts. She remembers when at 5 years of age, she fell down a broken drain on a bomb site. The fire brigade was called and they eventually got her out safely.

These were hard times with people on food rations and having to pass down clothes from one to another. Money was scarce. A holiday would have been a luxury!

To purchase The Battle For Grange Farm Centre, please email: rayharris06@yahoo.co.uk

The first time Gwendoline visited the countryside was to Paddock Wood and Horsmonden in The Weald of Kent, the centre of hop picking for beer making. She would spend about 4 weeks helping to pick the hops and eating blackberries and apples. Her parents Raymond and Anne Templeton, would make this a yearly outing along with many other families who wanted to earn a few shillings as wages. She also remembered the Land Girls who looked after the farms while the men were away at war.

This comradeship she developed as a child with other families who shared and helped one another during these times remained with her for the rest of her life.

When campaigning for the Grange Farm Centre that same energy began to emerge again! Other friends and beneficiaries of Grange Farm have many more stories to tell about the place. This book contains just some of these intriguing insights!

I would like to thank this LIFEFORCE magazine for helping me to promote my book to a wider audience. For every book sold 10 percent will go to Voluntary Action Epping Forest Charity who do fantastic work in the Epping Forest District, working with people with special needs, senior citizens, volunteers and other community groups. www.vaef.org.uk



PLAYING, WALKING, CREATING, LEARNING!

The Sunflower Group and ACE Activities have been learning about the climate and other environmental issues, using games, sensory walks, gardening and art projects to develop their understanding.

Below are some of the questions and points raised:

What causes the Arctic ice to melt?

What is the cause of sea level rising?

Name two types of greenhouse gas?

Name two types of air pollution?

Name two types of sea or water pollution?

Name three types of green energy?

How many different types of plastics are there?

What are two gases you find in the Sun?

What is the protective layer around the Earth called?

What the three main gases in the Earth's atmosphere?

Did You Know?

1. A fully grown large tree gives out enough oxygen to support ten people.
2. The Amazon rainforest creates its own atmosphere and climate.
3. A large oak tree can have as many as 1 million leaves.
4. A large oak tree can support over 300 hundred different species of insects, birds and other life.
5. Trees communicate through their roots and the natural fungi beneath them. Scientists have shown that neurons similar to the ones found in our brains exist in these underground networks.
6. If you measure the circumference of a tree trunk, every 1 metre represents approximately 70 years of age, so a tree with a girth of 3 metres would be around 210 years old.
7. Ancient woodlands have been growing for at least 400 years.
8. Ancient hedgerows and woodlands sustain the lives of many thousands of species of fungi, plants, insects, birds and other animals.
9. Trees and plants give off endorphins which provide a "feel good" factor which can be why walking in the countryside is good for your physical and mental health.
10. Trees and woodlands provide shelter and shade on hot, sunny days.



Groups play one of the climate games



The sensory gardens at Grange Farm

Climate Change "We can make a difference!"

Our countryside, our way of living and our futures are under the threat of Global Warming.

We cannot carry on the way we are, destroying valuable resources, threatening the extinction of many species, including wild animals, insects and bees without whom we would not exist.

We have seen floods and heat-waves with temperatures changing in ways that we have not seen before.

The Problems:

- Higher CO₂ levels, plastics that pollute our land and seas, burning of forest lands and abuse of our planet.
- Dumping rubbish in Epping Forest, roadside litter, throwing litter out of car windows.
- Forest fires damaging habitats and industrial waste giving off harmful toxins.
- Vehicle pollution, industrial processes and domestic boilers contributing to global warming, floods and soil erosion.
- Plastic bags, water bottles and packaging clogging up our land and waterways.

The Life Force magazine and exhibition have been produced to create awareness and importantly, to show how small actions can make a change for the better!

Solutions:

Simple things can be achieved by **our** being responsible and not littering our towns and countryside, recycling waste products, including food, paper, plastics and items of clothing.

Planting more trees, cutting grass less frequently and allowing wild flowers to grow and provide food for insects and bees.

Re-using shopping bags, sharing car journeys, picking up litter, taking local holidays instead of flights abroad, exercising more and eating healthily.

Local authorities need to construct energy saving buildings, create safer cycle paths and provide more recycling bins and signs to create awareness. Large stores must continue to replace plastic packaging with paper bags for fruit and vegetables....

Small actions by each one of us can add up to make a huge difference!



BIN IT!