

LIFEFORCE

THE CLIMATE PROJECT

ISSUE 2

2024

SENSORY WALKS

CLIMATE MUSIC FESTIVAL

**WORKING TOGETHER WITH
LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS**

ART EXHIBITION

and more...

CLIMATE CHANGE

“WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

LETTER

From the Editor...

Hi, I'm Chloe...

I am the designer and editor of this our second issue of Life Force magazine. At the moment, I am studying Public Relations and Design at the London University of Arts. 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 2nd Climate Project created by the Epping Forest Sunflower Group and funded by the Lottery Community Fund, The Essex Community Foundation and The Grange Farm Trust. The project aims to create awareness of climate issues that are endangering our Epping Forest district. 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 and loneliness, physical and mental health and well-being.

We have worked locally with The Sunflower Group, ACE Activities, The Men's Shed in Waltham Abbey, The Waltham Abbey Photography Club, Buckhurst Hill Community, Chigwell School and Young People.

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 and supporters who have made this second issue possible.

Epping Forest Sunflower Group



3FOOD4U



AROUND NOON.

WAITROSE & PARTNERS



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LIFE FORCE

The Climate Change Project now in its 2nd year has been created to highlight how the world's climate is changing and affecting all living organisms that share our planet.

Tricia Moxey - Local Environmental Campaigner and Tree Warden

The **LIFE FORCE** Project celebrates a second successful year with expanded engagement with many local groups highlighting how the world's climate is changing and affecting all living organisms that share our planet.

Welcome to the second edition of the **LIFE FORCE** Magazine which showcases the many varied ways in which this project has been able to inform local community groups about the wonders of the natural world and the various ways in which humans are impacting on it. The project aims to create awareness of climate issues that are endangering our area and to encourage local residents to discover more about the local wildlife through observations, various art forms and music to take note of what is there and how to modify their behaviour to minimise their impact on the natural environment. Learning new skills is actively encouraged as is social interaction as a means of reducing loneliness.

This expanded **LIFE FORCE** project has been possible with funding from the **National Lottery** and **The Essex Community Foundation**. We are very grateful to the team members at **Grange Farm Trust**, Chigwell for the provision of a base for regular indoor meetings and



Excess rainfall this Winter has caused roads to flood

space for the productive community garden project as well as encouraging access to the nearby Chigwell Meadows for outdoor physical activities and wildlife observations.

The **LIFE FORCE** Project continues to be spearheaded by the **Epping Forest Sunflower Group** and during the past year has been working alongside a number of other organisations including **Voluntary Action Epping Forest**, **ACE**, **The Waltham Abbey Photography Club**, **Waltham Abbey Men's Shed**, **Buckhurst Hill Community**, **Chigwell School** and **Young People**. In addition, the project team is grateful for the support of sponsors **Waitrose**, to **AROUND NOON** for tasty food at meetings and to the teams at **3FOOD4U** for their work in assisting those who need additional support for everyday necessities and help with learning new skills.



A local nature group in the Roding Valley nature reserve

Access to the natural world is so important for physical and mental wellbeing and the Sensory Walks in the accessible parts of Epping Forest and other venues continue to be popular. Attendees at the Men's Shed in Waltham Abbey have used their DIY skills to produce bird boxes and insect hotels, now installed at various locations to provide additional habitats.

In the following pages there is information not just about wonders of the district but also a celebration of the achievements of those involved in the **LIFE FORCE** Project.

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.

The **LIFE FORCE** project encourages the use various media to express individual concerns about climate change and gives an opportunity to exhibit their findings to a wider audience. Participants are encouraged to capture their thoughts in various ways via writing, art forms, photography or video and these can be sent to the Sunflower Group to be uploaded to the website: <https://www.sunflowergroup.uk/climateproject>

*It is important that **LIFE FORCE** has a broad spectrum of participants from within the local community. Additional funding and support 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!

Fly Tipping

During the past year an average of 60 large heaps of either domestic waste or builders rubbish has been left by fly tippers on various sites in Epping Forest. Clearing these costs the City of London at least £4,000 per month. Many other fly tips are dumped elsewhere in the district.

Last November a combined operation was carried out by teams from the City of London, Epping Forest District Council and Essex Police as they checked on licenced waste carriers to combat fly-tipping

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 avenue of trees in Debden

CLIMATE CHANGE - GLOBAL AND LOCAL

Tricia Moxey - Local Environmental Campaigner and Tree Warden

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

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. Today, the Earth's atmosphere is heating up and many communities across the globe will struggle to survive excessive heat, droughts and damage from increasingly severe storms or extensive wildfires. They will need to migrate to survive.

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. Concentrations of nitrous oxide in the atmosphere rarely exceeded 280 ppm prior to the 1920s, With the continued rise of burning fossil fuels, levels of nitrous oxide reached a new high of 334 ppm in 2021.

Substantial scientific evidence has been gathered from meteorological data, monitoring of polluting atmospheric gases and research into changes in vegetation all of which demonstrate that the plundering of the world's finite natural resources, the burning of fossil fuels and the widespread destruction of forests are contributing to major changes in weather patterns.

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change continues to warn that an increase of warming by 2°C by 2050 would be disastrous. Although there is some progress, many countries are finding it difficult to reduce their emissions to the agreed levels.

Higher summer temperatures and drought impact on yields in many crops. Changes in rainfall can impact the flow in rivers either causing floods or cause a shortage of water supplies and habitat losses for aquatic lifeforms. In the first months of 2024, Gerrit, Henk, Isha and Jocelyn were the named storms which battered the UK with strong winds and prolonged rainfall which brought down trees and caused widespread flooding.

Monitoring devices are used to measure levels of toxic chemicals in air alongside roads. Lichens are sensitive to certain air born pollutants and the bright orange alga Trentepohlia thrives on tree bark which captures nitrogenous chemicals from the air or rain. Such rusty coloured tree trunks occur throughout the Forest and elsewhere in the district showing that this pollutant can travel some distance from the local motorways or other roads.



A sign or nitrogenous air pollution from traffic fumes



The Sunflower Group at the community garden at Grange Farm, Chigwell celebrating the Lottery Community Fund award

FUNDED BY - THE NATIONAL LOTTERY, THE ESSEX COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, ACTIVE ESSEX AND THE GRANGE FARM TRUST

Introduction

Life Force now in its second year 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 in the Epping Forest District.

Our 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 interested in local climate issues and consequences.

Training in media:

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 2



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

After last year's successful edition this is our 2nd with more pages and more collaboration with external partners in the district.

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

Charity number 1087907



National Lottery

...SPONSORS OF THE CLIMATE PROJECT

"The project over 12-months aims to engage with local groups in the Epping Forest District to work together on the theme of climate awareness"

Initially supported by "Let's Get Connected" in Harlow the Climate Project originated from the idea of running sensory walks in Epping Forest with the Sunflower Group. Covid presented an obstacle and limited the communication between special needs groups. This funding enabled these groups to recover and continue the walks as well as develop new artwork and other activities at the Grange Farm Centre in Chigwell, Essex.

This year the Sunflower Group was fortunate to receive a Lottery Community Fund grant as well as support from The Essex Community Foundation and The Grange Farm Trust.

This funding enabled the group to partner with other local groups and provided equipment and materials to advance the project using film, photography, art and sensory walks.

The Climate magazine has been a major vehicle in demonstrating the work that everyone has contributed within the project. This has also introduced and enabled other professional people to write and support the magazine with articles on climate issues.

The Sunflower Group has also received help from companies and organisations who are keen to support our efforts on climate awareness and health and wellbeing especially with special needs groups.

Our aims are to continue producing this magazine on a yearly basis and promoting the work of all the groups participating by running art exhibitions and other events throughout the year.



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
Work mobile: 07568 227918

EPPING FOREST SUNFLOWER GROUP

Epping Forest Sunflower Group meet Fridays 9.30 to 12.00 am at Grange Farm in Chigwell, Essex.

Epping Forest Sunflower Group members and volunteers have been busy designing and creating new pieces of artwork, again based on the ongoing Climate Change project. The art work created by members range from clay tree sculptures, leaf, flower and insect collages, tree bark rubbings, shields and swords and dream makers. These will be shown at the next Life Force climate exhibition on 3rd May 2024 at the Grange Farm Centre.

The Epping Forest Sunflower Group and volunteers, when they are not working on art and crafts, also engage in other activities that give its members opportunities to do both indoor and outdoor activities. These include bocchia games, armchair exercise, sensory nature walks and parachute climate games. These provide for wheelchair members and their support workers who help their clients to take part in these activities. The group enjoys going outside to explore the forest and countryside on sensory walks on fine weather days.



LIFEFORCE *Exhibition 2023*

This was the second LifeForce climate exhibition at the Grange Farm Centre following on from last year's successful launch. This year the exhibition has been supported by the National Lottery, Essex Community Foundation and the Grange Farm Centre



The LifeForce 2023 Exhibition was opened by Sir Trevor Johnson, Grange Farm Centre Trustee, Councillor Stephen Murray and local botanist Tricia Moxey



OUR SUSTAINABILITY PROMISE

Nourishing Communities, Preserving Our Planet

Our impact goes beyond bringing great food to the table. We've put a lot of time and effort into understanding our impact as a food manufacturer and together, we have come up with a robust strategy for the future. We want to become the go-to sandwich manufacturer for quality, innovation and operational excellence. In doing so, we know that we have a responsibility to mitigate our impact on the planet.



Our sustainability journey started back in 2018 when we realised the importance of waste segregation. The Around Noon Soho team had just moved to their new facility in North London following a rapid growth. It was then that Operations Manager Luciano was tasked to look into a comprehensive waste management system which would include the implementation of recycling bins for paper, plastics, and tins, along with a mill-size cardboard baler compactor.



Food waste was another key focus for the team. To tackle the challenges that come with a food manufacturing facility, they partnered up with a local farmer who comes collect bread ends from our factory three times a week. These are used to feed his sheep.

Additionally, our food waste is collected by a company called ReFood who are experts in Anaerobic Digestion. This natural process breaks down organic material to generate biogas, a combination of methane and carbon dioxide. After this process, the remaining liquid is transformed into ReGrow bio-fertiliser for local farming and agricultural use.



In 2023 alone, our efforts resulted in diverting 520 tons of waste from landfills, saving an estimated 250 tonnes of CO2 emissions. Moreover, our food waste generates approximately 20,000 Kw Hours annually and is transformed into cleaner, greener energy to power businesses and communities across the UK.



Our corporate social responsibility is at the core of everything we do. As part of our roadmap to Net Zero, we are committed to having a positive impact on our communities and we've partnered with local charities such as the North London Action For The Homeless, The SDA Church in Edmonton, ADRA, Sunflower Group, and Vision Charity. Through donations and employee engagement, we actively support their events and food banks, making a tangible difference in the lives of those around us.



Sustainability is a promise we uphold every day. From reducing waste to actively supporting our local communities, every action we take is rooted in our commitment to build a greener, more sustainable future. We invite you to join us on this journey towards a world where nourishing communities and preserving our planet go hand in hand.

Interview with Luciano Viana, Operations Manager at Around Noon Soho:

Interviewer: Thank you Luciano for sharing the inspiring work that Around Noon Soho is doing to promote sustainability and support local communities. I understand you have a personal initiative coming up. Could you tell us more about it?

Luciano Viana: Absolutely. In April this year, I'm setting off on a 13-day trek to Cambodia that will not only encompass an exciting and challenging 100K trek but also support the sustainability of an Eco Bungalow Construction project within a Cambodian community, leaving a positive footprint behind. Alongside supporting this Cambodian project, I am raising funds to help The Springboard Charity continue to support unemployed people of all ages and backgrounds to find sustainable employment in the hospitality, leisure.

Interviewer: That sounds like an incredible endeavour, Luciano. How can people support you in this initiative?

Luciano Viana: Anyone interested in supporting this cause and helping The Springboard Charity can scan the the QR code on the right. Any contribution, big or small, will make a meaningful impact in supporting individuals to build brighter futures through employment opportunities.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing this initiative, Luciano. We wish you the best of luck on your trek and fundraising efforts.

Luciano Viana: Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure discussing our sustainability efforts and this upcoming journey. Thank you for highlighting our commitment to sustainability and supporting important causes.





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**If you require urgent support please contact us:
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Working in Partnership with:



Fighting hunger, isolation and climate issues

Chair Pesh Kapasiawala

3Food4U started at the beginning of the first lock down in 2020. The founder, Pesh Kapasiawala, says, "I had a vision to make the mountains of industry surplus foodstuff available to the public, where we could directly reach vulnerable people in need, but most importantly without requiring a referral or an assessment. With so much surplus food and the stress and delay that assessments cause to the people who need it, there was no need. If people are brave enough to ask for help, we will support them. Traditional support can be embarrassing and undignified especially when you have been self-sufficient all your life. We are not labelling this as a food bank, but a community surplus hub, as much of what we are distributing would be sent to landfill. We are currently supporting over 2000 families each week equating to over 4500 individuals, 18,910 people were fed in 2023. Together we have stopped food, clothing and household essentials being sent to landfill by large businesses and the public, 2,350 tonnes of surplus food were saved in 2023. We have distributed the equivalent of 279,000 meals in 2023 a 55% increase on the previous year, saving 100,000s of tonnes of CO₂ going into the atmosphere.

One in four adults feels lonely some or all of the time. There's no single cause and there's no one solution. After all, we're all different! But the longer we feel lonely, the more we are at risk of mental health problems. Some people are also at higher risk of feeling lonely than others. We work with and support the critical and vital work of the NHS, and in particular Epping Forest & Loughton Mental Health Service. The team offers therapeutic interventions, and we offer volunteering opportunities within a non-judgemental socially inclusive environment." Jo from LMH said, "It creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation. For example, volunteering and helping others can help us feel a sense of belonging, make new friends, and connect with our communities. Face-to-face activities such as volunteering at a food bank like 3food4u can also help reduce loneliness and isolation. They have been fantastic for the mental health and well-being of clients referred to them."

We have community surplus hubs accessible 7 days a week (Waltham Abbey, Loughton, Chigwell Row, Ongar and Tottenham). We are the largest emergency food support agency in Epping Forest District, Essex and North London.

**Contact us for more details or to support our work
Pesh Kapasiawala Chair of Trustees
3FOOD4U**

Registered Charity in England and Wales.

Registered number: 1192310

Tel.: 01992 842642 | 07973166940

Email: info.3food4u@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.3food4u.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/3food4u/>

3FOOD4U.org

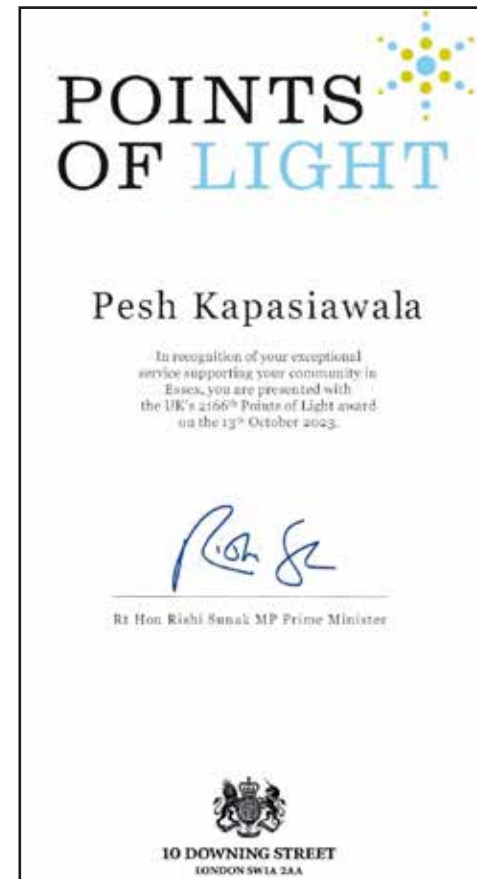
This local charity started by Pesh Kapasiawala has gone from strength to strength over the last few years winning local, regional and national honours.

The charity has over 300 volunteers who work tirelessly to support over 2,000 families every week 52 weeks of the year, including Christmas day and Bank Holidays. They never close!

In 2021 they were awarded the Loughton Town Citizen of the Year. In 2022 they won the BBC Essex 'Make a Difference Award' and have been invited on to the judging panel for the 2024 awards. Honoured with The British Citizen Award (BCA) in 2023.

Awarded The Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's 'Points of Light Award' in 2023 with a visit to 10 Downing Street. Awarded The High Sheriff of Essex Award 2021, 2022 & 2023 and nominated for Kings Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) which is the highest accolade for voluntary organisations equivalent to a MBE with the decision being made in November 2024.

In 2023 & 2024 sponsors of the Epping Forest Sunflower Climate Change Project. 3Food4U is stopping food, household essentials and clothing going to landfill, saving the environment and feeding the community. Recently they partnered with The Soho Sandwich Company (purchased by Around Noon) to save surplus food going to landfill and feed the community.



Nick Knowles, Pesh Kapasiawala BCA, Katie Proctor, Places for People



High Sheriff of Essex Awards 2021-23



Loughton Town Major Cllr Rose Brooks awards Citizen of the Year 2021 to Pesh Kapasiawala

Epping Forest

The ancient woodlands of Epping Forest are conserved by the City of London Corporation and are protected by the 1878 Act of Parliament. The Forest is designated as a European Site of Special Scientific Interest and is a Special Area of Conservation. Its cultural landscape of trees, streams, water bodies and Iron Age Camps are enjoyed by as many as 10 million visitors each year.

Its soils support over a million trees, some of which are up to 1,000 years old. There are 50,000 ancient pollards of beech, hornbeam, and oak. Such trees support a wealth of insects and fungi including many rare and vulnerable species.

A recent report by Natural Capital Solutions, calculated that the Forest's health and recreation benefits alone are worth £50.7 million every year to society, and its ability to capture carbon from the atmosphere is worth £4.1 million annually.

The ongoing Carbon Removals Project is a vital part of the City of London's Climate Action Strategy. Over the coming years this project will include protecting the biodiversity of existing habitats as well as creating new habitats to increase their carbon removal capacity. The project will include work such as natural flood management including leaky dams, regular grazing of wood-pasture and wild flower meadows as well as the planting of new hedges and reed bed creation.

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

THE FUTURE OF EPPING FOREST

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, art and photography was considered to be a prime medium for those with special needs and associated groups to express their thoughts and focus on the problems of climate change.

Tree sculptures and ocean life 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.

The Four Seasons

Tricia Moxey 2024

The seasons are changing and as the cycles of growth are closely linked to the prevailing weather conditions, living organisms are responding in various ways to these alterations in the ambient temperature of their surroundings. All have evolved strategies to overcome such problems as freezing conditions, too much heat or lack of water. Deciduous trees shed their leaves in autumn, reducing the need for water uptake when soils were frozen. Hedgehogs, bats, reptiles and amphibians hibernate in as their food supplies are less available during the colder winter months.



Since the 1960s the average minimum winter temperatures have been increasing. Snow fall is now a rarity and frosty days much less frequent. The current growing season is almost a month longer than 50 years ago. Primroses and other flowers are opening earlier. In fact, researchers recorded that the first flowering of some 406 plant species has advanced by almost a month since 1986!

This has a knock-on effect for the time of emergence of pollinating insects such as bees and hover flies. Trees are leafing earlier, providing food for so many hungry

caterpillars, ideal food for nestlings, assuming that their parents have managed to breed earlier too! Frog spawn has appeared about two weeks earlier this year, but the developing tadpoles remained vulnerable to any late frosts.

In spring as day length increases, the days start to get warmer and plants respond as buds on trees unfurl, many insects appear and birds pair up preparing to breed.



The seeds of many trees will not germinate unless they have been chilled and thawed several times, a process known as stratification. This softens the seed coat enabling germination to take place. Thus, after a warmer winter there may be a reduction in natural regeneration, essential for woodland continuity. Chilly nights also seem to be required for the successful production of flowers in bulbs such as bluebells.

With increasing air temperatures, the pattern of rainfall has changed with more episodes of longer

spells of rain, often with heavy downpours leading to localised flooding. Drier and hotter summers cause drought conditions with ponds drying up with the loss of some aquatic creatures. Wildfires are more likely to occur in areas with dry vegetation.

With milder autumn days, many deciduous trees do not shed their leaves until mid-November and many summer flowering plants continue to flower some persisting until the end of the year – providing pollen and nectar for some insects. Hedgehogs and bats are tending to hibernate later in the year too.



Images are of Epping Forest through the seasons

ACE Activities Artwork



VAEF ACE Art Group meet on Tuesdays 1-3pm at the Grange Farm Centre

The ACE Art group and volunteers have been very busy this last year creating new art and craft work for the ongoing climate change project and the future Lifeforce climate exhibition at Grange Farm planned for 2024.

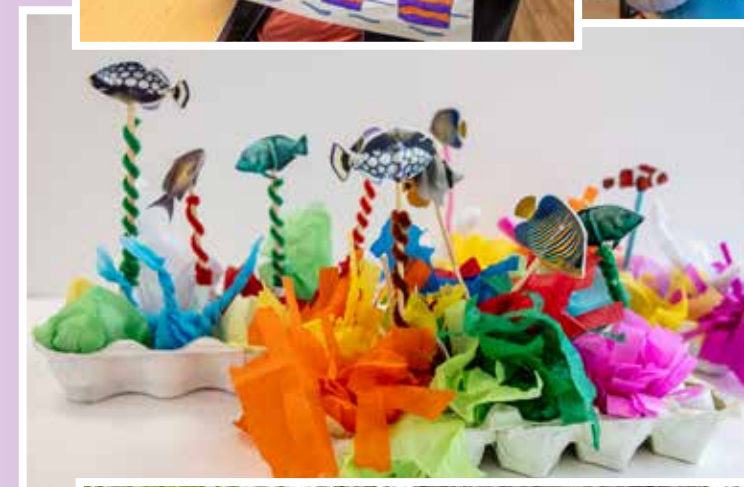
The art work created has ranged from tree bark rubbing, coral structures, art collages of nature including insects, bees and birds and wood reindeer sculptures. Recycled materials were used including plastics, wood, fabrics and clay to make collages and paintings of butterflies, coral reefs and fishes.

Leaf collections and identification became a relevant part of the project with discussions on the benefit of trees in our landscape.

With the Sunflower Group and other ACE groups, The ACE art group has worked on projects which consider the climate issues we face today. With the support of volunteers and support workers, the group has engaged together creating friendships and a harmonious environment at the centre.

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.

Other art included Australian aboriginal paintings of wild life.





ACE Activities Gardening

The Climate Project includes working with the ACE Gardening and the Upcycling Groups. The group grow a variety of fruit and vegetables on a purpose built allotment site with raised beds and a large poly tunnel.

Activities for the Gardening Project include

- Planting young trees at Grange Farm for hedgerows
- Growing organic vegetables in the community garden
- Making raised beds for the community garden
- Weeding and general gardening maintenance
- Creating a wild flower garden
- Growing and maintaining a fruit garden
- A new pond is being created

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

This year's project, making 6 new raised beds

Why do we want all this grass? It was a good question. We had ideas for developing our community garden, but little did we realise that this question – from a horticultural visitor - would lead to a programme of sustainable change.

We reduced the expanse of grass – and created larger beds for growing our veg. We were keen to build raised beds and sustain these by tapping into the natural resources around us – the fields and woodlands as well as local farms and stables – so we started to research our options.

We sourced reclaimed wood – from Butlin's stage no less! We used plant friendly preserver on the wood for our first raised bed, raw linseed oil for the second, and 'Shou Sugi Ban' for the third. This is an ancient Japanese wood charring technique, where heat from a blow torch is used to scorch the surface of the wood. A layer of carbon forms and the natural oils are drawn to the surface - leading to a natural preservation effect. Like any good research, there should be a 'control' – so the wood of our fourth raised bed is in its natural state so we can compare how it fares over the following years.

We have also been experimenting with soil enrichment. We collect soil improver from local farms as well as manure from the stables at the end of our lane – the latter being the ideal source as it uses less fuel to collect. Our hope is to become self-sufficient in creating our own soil improver from their manure – a process we've already started using recycled pallets as clamps.

We plan to use our compost for a 'no-dig' trial in future – filling the beds and revitalising them but without digging them up, which is thought to allow soil microbes to better develop. A 'Hugel Kulture' trial is also on the cards - an approach to filling the beds using different materials to reduce the amount of topsoil required – meaning we don't have to import as much.

We're looking forward to seeing the results of our work, and continuing to experiment in ways that maintain and preserve the natural resources available to us. Soil is key, and we need to treat it well to maintain a sustainable way of growing our food.

www.aceactivities.org.uk



ACE UPCYCLING



Members of ACE UPCYCLING are part of ACE Activities and supported by volunteers, design and construct bird boxes, bird feeders, window boxes and many other garden items from recycled and surplus timber supplied by Riverside Timber Recycling Project. As well as making goods from recycled timber, the group also up-cycles old pieces of wooden furniture giving them a new lease of life!

Members benefit from following a structured programme of learning following an Asdan accredited course chosen to tailor the specific needs to advance their skills.

They are based in Epping and Abridge and welcome new members.



ACE UPCYCLING sell their products at Riverside Timber Recycling Project, local shows and events in the Epping Forest District. Chigwell Show, Swaines Green and Christmas markets are popular venues for the group to raise money for their charity. Items are sturdy and well made at affordable prices.



Happy customers at Swaines Green May Fair

The Abridge Garden Centre also supports them by selling and promoting their garden products. Team members were also proactive in constructing a large bench for sitting on at the ACE Community Garden Group at the Grange Farm Centre in Chigwell. This was constructed by re-using hardwood bed headboards and legs and converted this into a beautiful sitting area. See products on the website www.aceactivities.org.uk

The Upcycling Group selling their garden products at the Swaines Green Fete in Epping



ACE HANDS UP FOR MUSIC

The ACE Hands Up for Music Group meets at the Grange Farm Centre every Friday afternoon from 1-3pm.

The group performs a variety of songs including using sign language for the hard of hearing. They use a variety of musical instruments and soundtracks with the help of musicians and signing. For more information contact Sally at ACE Activities, spanrucker@vaef.org.uk



Hands up for Music group are seen here performing for a variety of celebrations including open days at Grange Farm Centre for senior citizens, the LifeForce Climate Exhibition and VAEF volunteer days.

Drumming and singing workshops are part of the routine along with individual performances by members of the ACE Hands Up to Music Group.

The members love to express their feelings through song and music, creating friendships and harmony in the group and with the wider public.



ACE 'COOKING WITH CONFIDENCE'

Ace 'Cooking with Confidence' Sessions came from an idea that sprung from the Covid Pandemic of 2020 that resulted in the temporary closure of our service. We were determined to keep contact with our members and jumped on the fast-growing Zoom bandwagon to deliver regular sessions.

The Cookery sessions were particularly popular and people kept asking if that was something that Ace Activities could offer at Grange Farm once the pandemic was over. After a time of research and fundraising, we were at last able to offer a new

service, 'Cooking with Confidence'.

Members learn how to cook a healthy nutritious 2 course meal that they get to enjoy together at the end of the session. An added bonus of the project is that we are able to use produce fresh from the Ace Gardner's allotment at Grange Farm cutting our carbon footprint and our cookery budget! 'Cooking with Confidence' demonstrates that good basic cookery can be simple, economical, healthier and much tastier than processed foods and enjoyed by all.



WALTHAM ABBEY MEN'S SHED



The Men's Shed in Waltham Abbey is part of the Climate Project. They engaged in a series of sensory walks around the Abbey gardens taking photos of the natural world for the exhibition at the Grange Farm Centre. They used photography to record climate images for their work in the

exhibition. Members of the Men's Shed also made the picture frames for the exhibition.

They constructed insect hotels to hang up in the Grange farm garden and woodland to support the wildlife.

The Men's Shed consist of a group of local men who come together and share common interests and hobbies. They are based at the museum in Waltham Abbey on Wednesday afternoons 2-4pm. For more information please contact:

Nick Robinson: nrobinson@vaef.org.uk

WALTHAM ABBEY PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

One group included to take part in the Climate project is the Waltham Abbey Photography Club, based at the Gytha Centre in Waltham Abbey. The group has been running several years and was founded by photographer Clive Simpson as a way of recording local events and projects. These photographs are just some of the ideas the group produced on the Sunflower's theme of Climate

in the Epping Forest District. They include studio shots of water droplets, fire, rubbish and nature walks in Epping Forest as well as many natural wildlife images of insects, bees and birds which were displayed at the September 2023 Climate exhibition at the Grange Farm Centre. Currently the group are working on the next exhibition and a video of their work.



The We Don't Care Water Companies

*Our rivers run riot with ullage and crap
And wastes from the farmlands around
And sewerage that should have been treated
That turns the clear waters to brown.*

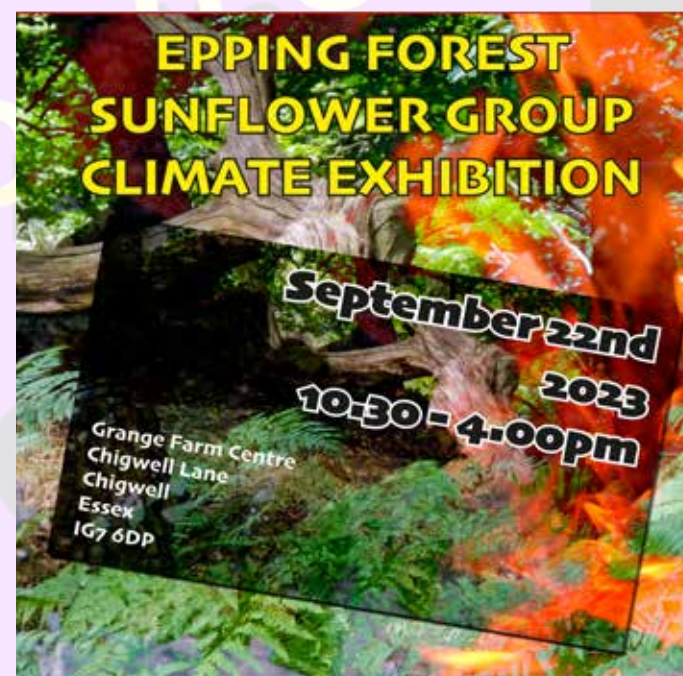
*Our seas are another waste outlet
Where once we could paddle and bathe
But the filth and the waste that is pumped in
Is a sure act of the water boards scathe.*

*For they've taken our money falsely
That we've paid them to keep rivers clean
They've divided it between their directors
It was this greed that was never foreseen.*

*The damage they caused is now widespread
It's our coastline and rivers abused
By a deliberate act of negligence
Pocketing the money we paid them to use.*

*We have been treated like total idiots
As they flush in the crap year by year
While their bosses live it up on our money
As the state of our waters brings fear.*

Tony Gorman



For more information contact:
jprice@avisionofbritain.org

Remembering Clive Simpson



Clive Simpson 1935 - 2023

Clive Simpson was a professional photographer and local historian who lived in Waltham Abbey and created the Waltham Abbey camera club featured in this edition.

Clive started his own photography business after leaving the RAF and worked for many newspapers meeting celebrities and gathering memorabilia which he stored in his archives. One of Clive's heroes was Bobby Moore who played for West Ham and was captain of England's world cup team in 1966.



Waltham Abbey Church



King Harold

Clive had many interests including local history, wildlife and nature. He was a member of the Waltham Abbey Historical Society. He became very interested in Waltham Abbey church and its history that dated back to King Harold. Clive inspired local residents, schools, businesses and organisations to learn more about King Harold and his family especially his daughter Gytha who escaped England to Denmark to Ukraine to marry the Prince in Kiev, escaping from William the Conqueror also known as William Duke of Normandy.

Clive encouraged his Photography Club members to participate in many of the events that were taking place in Waltham Abbey teaching them how to use their cameras and helping to record the events which would be valuable for archival reasons. He called his studio The Gytha Centre.

Recycling was also important to Clive and one of his later projects was to build a photographic studio using recycled wood and other materials for the club members to use. He also campaigned on local litter picking encouraging many people to support.



In later years even though he was unwell he retained his passion for helping others and encouraging them to continue his inspiration for local history.

Clive was made Freeman of Waltham Abbey for all his Voluntary contributions, his enthusiasm and passion for the town he loved.

He was a man who was much respected in his community and adored by his family.



Jack the Donkey and Eliza

Hi, my name is Eliza Mulligan and I am 9 years old. In November I asked my Grandma if we could adopt a donkey. So after a while we looked on a few websites and found Folley's Farm. There were many donkeys to choose from and it was very hard to pick one. But in the end we chose Jack. We chose Jack because he looked sweet and early on in April 2023 my grandad passed away, he was called John Mulligan but everyone called him Jack. Me and my family are very happy that Jack is healthy and well looked after. In summer we are hoping to visit him.

Jack by Eliza Mulligan



FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF MUSHROOMS...

I was inspired to do these drawings as they were based on nature in its true splendour around us as seasons change each year. I decided to place myself into understanding the environment and its importance for wildlife in general. As an Artist I tried to put into these drawings how we view nature in its wonderful forms and to display varieties of mushrooms and fungi in the Forest. I wanted to show how we and nature interact and what this means for Climate Change. As much changes around the globe, we have to remember and protect what's here now and enjoy the beauty nature has to offer.



By Crystal Smith

A Story of the Piano

The piano not only could be considered as a piece of furniture, for some people it's a musical instrument to play tunes on, to others the most complex mechanical device so unique that it has 10,000 parts within it.

Did you know one of the earliest known keyboards was the hydraulis called the water organ which was used in ancient Greece around the 3rd century BC.

This instrument used wooden sliders and a reservoir of air kept under compression by a head of water. Each of the organs pipes had a valve which opened when the slider was pushed in, allowing air to flow from the wind chest through the pipe.

What a great example of man using the natural elements wood, air and water to construct and produce a instrument to create a joyous sound for every one to hear.

Sam Gregory

Piano Consultant

Tuning · Restoration · Repairs
Technical Advice · Valuations

Mobile: 07847 842117

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



FOREST FOLKLORE: COMPOSING FOR ECOLOGICAL PASTS AND FUTURES

RÅ: coming to Epping Forest in 2024

Early autumn 2024 will see the release of a new large-scale orchestral work created by London-based composer Benedict Gordon in collaboration with Mat Gregory, composer and artistic researcher at Konstfack University of Arts, Stockholm. To be recorded and released as a full-length orchestral album, the work draws inspiration from the history of Epping Forest, exploring how our past (and, in particular, our folklore) might help us rethink our relationship with nature, specifically within the context of the climate emergency. It will be marked by a special performance event planned to take place in Epping Forest later this year.

Folklore: learning from an older understanding of nature

Marked by loss of diversity, fossil fuel burning, mass extinction, and extreme weather events, late capitalism has positioned the natural world and its resources as inert and lacking in agency, with human activity the most significant factor driving environmental and geological change. Folklore has often emerged from, and reflected, complex tensions between human habitation, the landscape, the other-than-human, and a fragile ecological balance: a web of relationships within which nature is not framed as other, and where all things - human and other-than-human, animate and inanimate - have agency. With this in mind, might folklore have the potential to lead to a new understanding of the climate crisis based upon a much older, largely forgotten, understanding of the natural world?

In seeking transformative models based upon stewardship of the planet - of care taking rather than taking - the orchestral compositions in this project explore folklore as a means through which to re-imagine and rethink the relationship between the human and non-human, contributing new insights and perspectives through which we might rethink our relationship with nature. What can be learned from the role the supernatural had in shaping society's attitudes to nature, and how might this have the potential to spark new ways of thinking about the climate emergency?

From Hävla to Epping Forest

The roots of this project began two years ago in the wild forests of Sweden, a country comprised of 70% forest land. Mat, a former London resident and regular visitor to Epping Forest, moved to Sweden a number of years ago. It was deep in the forests around Hävla that he and Ben spent a period of writing, composing, and establishing the foundations of the project. Building upon the writing of Swedish poet and collaborator Karin Bergström, their interest centred upon the legend of the skogsrå - the anthropomorphic female forest spirit in Swedish folk imagination, and ruler of the forest. In old Swedish tales, the skogsrå often appeared as a young woman with a back like a hollowed-out tree, leading foresters, hunters and charcoal burners astray, and punishing those who over-exploited the forest and its animals.

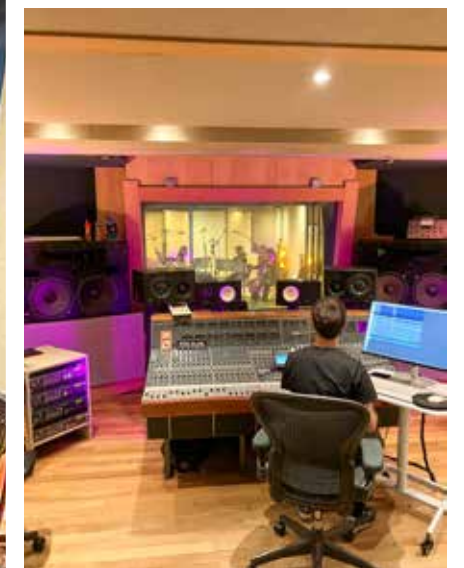
As a mediating presence - a steward or caretaker enforcing balance between the human and non-human - the folklore of the skogsrå was something that guided Mat and Ben when returning their focus to London, and to the ancient trees and woodlands of Epping Forest. For Ben, a long-time resident of London, Epping Forest is an essential haven of reflection and inspiration, especially during periods of writing. With this in mind, it became clear to Ben from early in the project just how closely this new work resonated with the history of Epping Forest, with its rich folklore, connections to Viking history, roots in the environmental movement, and the work being done by current residents towards climate action. Through the composition of the music, questions emerged about what could be learned from Epping Forest's own intricate history and folklore, and how this might contribute to new insights and perspectives on the growing environmental crisis.

Re-imagining our ecological pasts and futures

The difficulties faced in changing behaviours on a scale large enough to stop climate change are clearly apparent, but music has the capacity to help create change and communicate with people in ways that other media cannot. Rather than addressing the vast, long-term, global implications of the crisis directly, this project situates the climate emergency in a local and historical context, in the intergenerational notions of nature, place, and community often embodied in folklore. It is

through this that the forthcoming album, RÅ, and its performance in Epping Forest aim to help uncover and collectively explore our ecological pasts and futures together. What knowledge of nature can be reclaimed from our folklore, and what understanding can this provide in responding to the climate crisis? How might this shift of perspective contribute to a rethinking of human and non-human relations, and a more balanced, reciprocal, and sustainable relationship with our fragile environment?

We invite you to look out for further information about the album's release, and join us for the première performance of the work at a special event in Epping Forest later this year.



Trees in Gardens in the Urban Landscape

Robin Hellier EFDC Tree Officer

Trees are a vital part of our urban and suburban landscape. Many are long lived and represent long term assets providing environmental, social and economic benefits over many generations. They help reduce the impact of flooding and soil erosion and have immense salubrious amenity and aesthetic value across villages, suburbia, towns and cities. They are vital for wildlife too, providing homes and food for birds, insects and mammals. They absorb pollutants protecting water quality and act as a store of carbon which helps mitigate climate change. They reduce heat island effects by providing cooling and protective shade. They diffuse and shelter buildings from high winds and provide privacy and screening from light and noise pollution.

However, our trees, hedges, shrubs and lawns are under threat from a growing priority for more cars, pressure washers and low maintenance frontages over the traditional aesthetic residential suburban soothing greenery of old. The number of hard surfaced frontages is rapidly increasing as new and particularly electric cars demand off street parking with security electronic gates, railings, and walls, not to mention turntable and underground garaging solutions to accommodate large collections of otherwise vulnerable high value vehicles.

As the rainstorms flood the roads and ditches, my thoughts turn to drainage systems and their capacity to accept and process high intensity accumulations that are now commonplace. My role as a landscape officer takes me to suburban streets to inspect planning proposals to either fell or prune trees deemed incompatible with enlarged designs. These inspections give me access to properties and of particular interest, the front areas from roadside to front elevation. The accelerating decline of the front garden, where grass lawn would dominate with shrubs, flowerbeds, hedges and occasional trees make a traditional vision of suburbia, is giving way to hard surfaced car parking aprons and drives. The permeability of these engineered and usually large areas, is limited in comparison to open ground.

Despite porosity requirements, with debris build up, the ability of tarmac or block paving to drain into compacted substrate becomes severely compromised. Runoff inevitably flows into street drains and increasingly overloads often dated systems not designed to accommodate growing volumes from former absorbent gardens.

The divergence in wealth in society seems to mirror the style of front garden treatment, where expensive hard landscaping designs are preferred by new residents that have been flowing into this verdant, semi rural district. Those unable to dig up their drives display dwindling remnants of the traditional front gardens that were once prized and nurtured.

I often look on in consternation as leaf blowers blast petrol driven gusts of leaves out of driveways onto roads or into neighbouring gardens, where hedges and shrubs save picking up leaf debris and composting it. The wind blows all the leaves back into the property and undermines the time and fuel expended in this futile and ill-conceived operation. Such an attitude corresponds with not considering the impact of increased runoff into old drains and under capacity sewerage plants. It does not take a scientific survey to link the increased number of sewage releases into our water courses with the combined effects of heavier rainfall events and increased run off from new front drives, increased roof capacities from new builds and extensions and even outbuildings and garages that all deflect rain from entering the ground.

I fear that the front lawn battle is sadly lost, where a lack of awareness and more disappointingly an active antipathy towards greenery is rapidly transforming our neighbourhoods into bleak, grey, hard and hot car parks, dominated by bunches of bins, big black cars and industrial quality security gates and more railings.



Robin Hellier

Tricia Moxey

Epping Forest Countrycare

Since its establishment in 1986, Epping Forest Countrycare has been Epping Forest District Council's award-winning countryside management service. Its team members continue to be actively involved in arranging and carrying out practical conservation works within the nine Local Nature Reserves and several other designated Local Wildlife Sites, with the specific aim of maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity potential of these special areas. Regular volunteer working parties have been supervised to carry out a range of tasks from tree planting, bridge building, path creation, pond maintenance, coppicing and scrub clearing on these sites. Visitors are encouraged to use these sites responsibly so they can observe the various plants and resident animals within these habitats.

Other tasks have included the installation of several bird boxes at Abbots Wood in Waltham Abbey and the Nazeing Triangle LNR as well as the creation of log piles and bee hotels at several sites to augment the naturally occurring habitats for a range of creatures.

The team also carry out regular wildlife monitoring of specific sites. During the monthly Wetland Bird Surveys at Thornwood Common Flood Meadow LNR the team were delighted to observe a record number of 25 jack snipe last February. The recent use of a trail camera has highlighted the importance of ditches as wildlife corridors with records of various mammals using these sheltered locations as they search for food.

The recently created pond in Linder's Field LNR, at Buckhurst Hill, is a welcome addition to this site and will help to retain water within the reserve. The existing population of slow worms has been augmented with the translocation of some animals from a local development site. Sheltered hibernacula have been created so these cold-blooded reptiles can overwinter in flood and frost-free locations. Appropriate wildflower seeds have been sown to add to the array of wild flowers on this site.

The team are also responsible for co-ordinating the district's Tree Warden Scheme and were able to plant a new hedge in Home Mead Local Nature Reserve during the 2023 National Tree Week.



Fungi

Tricia Moxey

Fungi play a crucial role as decomposers and recyclers and their combined activities underpin and shape the nature of habitats occupied by other organisms.

As decomposers, different species utilise the various substrates found in fallen branches, leaves, fruits or dung, breaking down complex molecules by enzyme action and releasing nutrients which are then available for reuse by plants or other organisms including soil bacteria. Vast numbers of fungal species are present in the upper portion of healthy soils, many not yet unidentified.

Most fungi produce fine microscopical threads or hyphae which spread into their food, releasing the necessary enzymes and absorbing the nutrients and water so they can grow and reproduce. Whilst many fungal species produce a recognisable fruiting body, others do not and can only be identified by DNA profiling.



Clustered Bonnet on rotting wood

The hyphal threads of species found within soil help to retain moisture and reduce erosion by binding the mineral particles together. They along with other soil organisms play a crucial role in locking up carbon so helping to mitigate climate change.

Many of these soil fungi have a helpful or symbiotic relationship with trees and other plants ensuring that they thrive. Some have spectacular fruiting

bodies which appear in autumn, producing spores to ensure continuity of species. These fruiting bodies are tasty food for deer and other woodland creatures. These symbiotic species spread their hyphae far and wide through the soil in search of water and essential minerals which they pass to their host trees in return for manufactured food. This fragile network links up trees with each other and is called the wood wide web and appears to provide communication routes between them.



Fairy Bonnet in moss



Parasol in grassland



Bracket Fungi and spores



Scalycap on rotten wood



Fly Agaric

Woodlands have many varied habitats and most areas of Epping Forest have supported trees continuously for about 10,000 years, providing habitat stability over many years. Within its boundaries some 1,600 species of fungi have been recorded over the past 150 or so years. Many species are small and difficult to identify, but at least 400 of the larger ones are threatened by increasing levels of soil compaction, erosion, pollution, habitat changes, climate change and illegal foraging.

Some specialist fungi are associated with rotting wood within old standing trees, feeding on the dead central wood, creating hollowed trunks which seem to provide some stability to such trees, enabling them to withstand damage from high winds. Such trees may lose some branches, but new ones can grow from these battered trunks! These older trees store large quantities of carbon within their tissues and ensuring their continued well-being within the Forest is an important aspect of the Conservators' management plan.



Saffrondrop Bonnet



Bracket Fungi



Fairy Bonnet



Deer Shield on rotten log



A troop of Fairy Bonnets inside a hollow tree



GRANGE FARM

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



Rob Draper - Site Manager

find the facility an ideal setting for sporting, recreational and educational pursuits. The four top-quality football pitches are in high demand, the Pelican Playground is extremely popular with local parents and children, whilst walkers and wildlife enthusiasts come from all across Essex to explore the Chigwell Meadows and Roding Valley Nature Reserve. There is lots to do!

An architectural award-winning pavilion nestles in the heart of Grange Farm and is an impressive venue where clubs and groups can meet. Home team, Colebrook Royals Football Club, always receive compliments from the opposition on the first class playing surfaces and beautiful landscapes.

In 2011, Tooley and Foster (the architects for Grange Farm), won a Green Apple for the environmentally friendly design of the new community centre.

The centre is heated by a Ground Source Heat pump that takes its energy from the ground, under the back lawn. There is also a living roof which helps with insulation. The 'green' roof provides a habitat for wildlife while reducing CO₂, it regulates rainwater discharge and reduces the chance of flash flooding that is becoming increasingly commonplace as climate change takes

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.

Deborah Overton, Grange Farm Centre

Deborah Overton a popular person at the Grange Farm Centre has worked for 12 years, cleaning and gardening around the site including the Chigwell Meadows and Pelicans playground.

Deborah, born in Collier Row, Romford, moved to her home in Hornchurch 33 years ago. She enjoys gardening, walking, swimming and reading. One of five siblings, she has two grandchildren and is surrounded by a large family.

Deborah has finally retired and is planning to move to Norfolk where she will start a new life with her husband Chris who also will be retiring from his job as a bus driver.

Deborah has made many friends whilst working at Grange Farm and has been a very important member of the staff. On her leaving day she said how sad she is to be leaving Grange Farm and her time at the Centre had been very happy and enjoyable and she will miss her many friends.



Rob, Deborah, Tom and Ernie the dog

THE BATTLE FOR GRANGE FARM CENTRE



Author Gwendoline Templeton

By **Gwendoline Templeton**

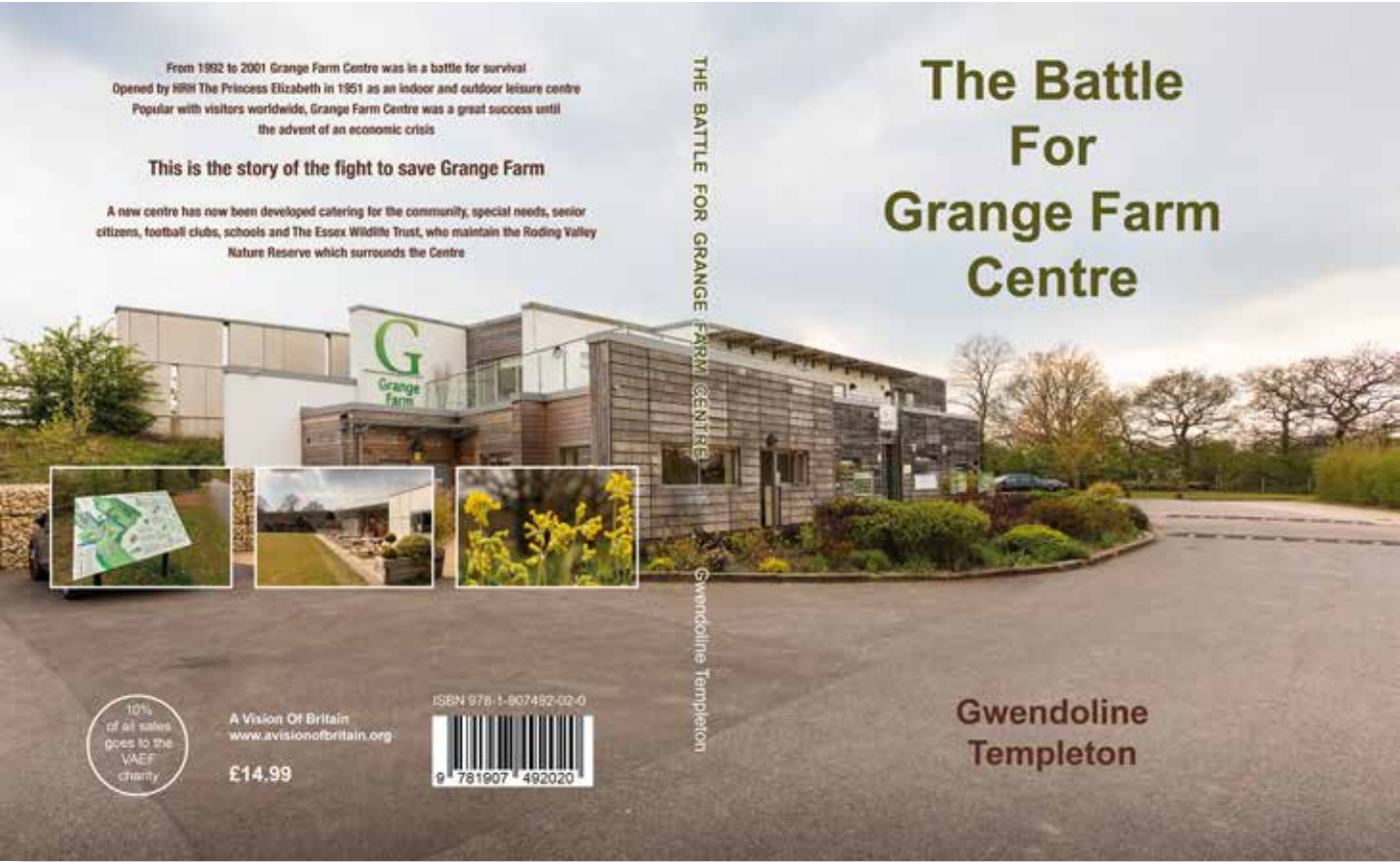
NOW ON SALE

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



COLEBROOK ROYALS

FOOTBALL CLUB



FOOTBALL FIELDS AND THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Football and football fields provide outlets for the community providing well-being stimulation by keeping fit, healthy, engaging with others learning and enjoying soccer.

Research as shown that football fields, golf fairways and other sports turf areas are proving to be the good guys helping to bring down the earth's carbon footprint.

Researchers at the Colorado State University, Fort Collins Study have proved that established turf does great things for carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration is simply the long-term storage and is necessary as part of controlling climate change. CO2 can be stored either geologically or in terrestrial ecosystems, so Colorado state in the United States is very important to the sports turf industry.

Also Their studies have shown undisturbed turf will lock one metric ton of carbon per hectare per year, this is about 0.44 tons of carbon per acre annually.



Pictures show some of the pitches at the Grange Farm Centre and trophies won by the club

For example a one acre football or soccer field removes carbon equivalent to driving a car over 3,000 miles.

Tearing a soccer, golf or any large area of field up and building on the land will release great quantities of carbon into the atmosphere and destroy the valuable carbon sink.

This research also shows how important undisturbed green fields or green belt sites are, including nature reserves and meadows. They are not only pleasant to observe, provide habitats for wildlife and fauna, but also help to maintain the balance of the ecosystem and the carbon footprint.

It's up to us to make sure that our future generations can use these important venues for exercise, creativity and adventure far into the future as they are beneficial not only for the human race but also the earth itself.



Colebrook Royals, based in Chigwell at the Grange Farm Trust facility, have worked tirelessly to ensure there is a pathway for youngsters at the club, with a number of initiatives in place to guide the players of tomorrow through their youth age groups. The club has seen huge growth during a quarter of a century, alongside support from the Essex County FA.

Colebrook have benefited from Football Foundation grants, giving them access to high-quality grass pitches, and this backing has provided them with solid foundations for further growth. Since moving to Grange Farm, they've expanded from twelve teams to the 40 they have lining-up for 2023/24.

One of the club's many coaching initiatives is the 'Royals Futures' Programme, which aims to put young players through their coach and refereeing qualifications, to eventually help out at the club. They have already boasted success from this programme, with referee Alfie Cheal winning the Nationwide Community Award for refereeing.

Royals also benefit from strong Links with Leyton Orient FC, through mutual connections. They are in partnership with The O's to run their development programme for players aged 7-12, and they've seen several prospects sign-up to the academy. In the last five years, the club has also provided support to children the year before they are eligible to play more structured football, through their 'Soccer Sixes' Programme, which helps the players to prepare in the Under 7s age group.

The club has found itself linked to a variety of former professional footballers, who assist in numerous ways. These include Joe Cole, Jay Bothroyd and Alan McCormack, who played as Colebrook Royals triumphed in the 2022/23 Essex Sunday Junior Trophy Final. Former Premier League footballer David Kerslake has also lent his knowledge to coaches and players alike.

"I work alongside teams each week, to give them some advice and support, and chat to the players



about their weekend games," David explained. "But, most importantly, I offer the coaches ideas from my experience so they can develop themselves. The coach and manager development days I've delivered have been a real inspiration for me. To give something back into grassroots football is definitely worth it. Here's to the next 25 years!"



Chairman John Eagleton

Chairman John Eagleton has reflected fondly on the club's first quarter-centenary, whilst also looking forward to the future. "My own journey started in 1997 as a coach when Colebrook had just two teams playing at Willingale Playing Fields in Loughton," he recalled. "My progression to Secretary, then Chairman, has been a great experience. There have been many challenges along the way, but I can reflect on my own personal path in grassroots football as a very enjoyable one."

The club's growth and development has been a real highlight, with a few milestones to note. These include travelling to parts of Europe for young teams to play football overseas, and gaining Football Foundation funding to enable the club to move to their own home ground at Grange Farm in 2012. "We have an excellent small army of volunteers who make football happen for the 40 teams at Colebrook, from Under 7s to Men's Veterans," John continued.

"We have a thriving Saturday Soccer School and a 'Royals Futures' Programme we are very proud of. Giving young people the opportunity and the chance to follow a pathway in the sport they love is something very special. We look forward to the next 25 years and the next generation of young players enjoying grassroots football in Essex."

If you'd like to take part in Essex grassroots football as a player, coach, referee or volunteer please see our website.

www.colebrookroyals.com

You can also interact with @EssexCountyFA on Twitter/X and search for 'EssexFootball' on Facebook.

Accuro's Loughton Youth Group and the Environment

Disability charity, Accuro (Care Services) support people of all ages with a disability in West Essex.

Loughton Youth Group, for young people aged 11—19 with a disability, meet once a week at Loughton Youth Centre during term time. Like many others of their generation, members of the Youth Group are interested in the environment and in April of this year, member Sophia remarked that Earth Day was coming up. This gave Club Co-ordinator Luisa the inspiration to incorporate environmental themes into Club sessions. She started by devising a recycling activity that involved transforming kitchen rolls into marble runs!

In June, the group made a visit to Epping Forest in High Beach and took a walk around the beautifully maintained easy access path, on a lovely sunny evening. For some members, it was their first trip to the wonderful Forest, and everyone enjoyed exploring in nature. They then sat down for a picnic behind the Epping Forest Visitors Centre and played some games before taking all their rubbish home and leaving the space as they found it — putting into practice their learning about how to care for the environment.



Marble run activity



In September, the enthusiastic group went a step further and took part in a successful litter picking walk. Members started at The Youth Centre on Borders Lane and walked towards the new Wellbeing Centre and back. They were helped by Epping Forest District Council who kindly provided all safety equipment and high visibility jackets.

The group collected two huge bags of rubbish in just 45 minutes! A couple of members also collected leaves and acorns on the journey for a later activity. Despite a few members being hesitant at first, once out on the walk, everyone relished the experience, gained confidence, and learnt a new skill.

Back at the Youth Centre, members warmed up with hot chocolate, celebrated the successful outing, and made some beautiful leaf paintings from the collection of leaves.

About Accuro

Accuro is a small charity supporting local children, young people and adults with disabilities in West Essex by providing services that are fun, safe and inclusive. These services reduce social isolation and empower members by providing accessible social and leisure opportunities that allow members to develop life skills, gain confidence and self-esteem, and make friends.

For more information about our projects, services and fundraising, please visit: www.accuro.org.uk

Little Heath School

In the serene landscapes of Essex, an inspiring narrative unfolds as students from Little Heath School, a secondary school in Romford, serving students with a variety of special needs, have worked tirelessly to take the lead in sculpting a sustainable and environmentally conscious future. Focussing their efforts on their school site, and further afield at the Lambourne End Centre for Outdoor Learning, they have made a meaningful and beneficial contribution to the environment in which they live. Beyond the boundaries of innumerable challenges, these young changemakers are weaving a story of resilience, innovation, and a profound commitment to nurturing the planet.



Lambourne End

But the impact doesn't stop there...

The initiative extends to wood chipping, where fallen trees find a second life as protective mulch for saplings, simultaneously enriching the soil with vital nutrients. The ethos of sustainability resonates through every action, from composting natural resources to cultivate apple trees on-site to the

At the Lambourne End Centre, sixth form students from Little Heath School have embarked on a transformative journey, breathing new life into their surroundings with a project anchored in sustainability. The Lambourne End Project stands as a testament to their unwavering dedication to environmental responsibility. By repurposing fallen trees and branches into a natural barrier—a 'dead hedge'—these students have not only created a visually appealing boundary but have also contributed to local biodiversity. Unlike traditional fences, this innovative approach fosters sustainability, serving as a sanctuary for various flora and fauna.



Little Heath School Sensory Garden

conscious clearing of an entire orchard, with the recycled weeds becoming nourishment for the resident pigs. Each undertaking at Lambourne End reflects a harmonious blend of environmental consciousness and practical action, leaving a lasting imprint on the local ecosystem.



Little Heath School Sensory Garden

Closer to home on the grounds of the Little Heath School, a once derelict outdoor space has blossomed into a vibrant haven through the collaborative efforts of students across the school and the determination of the Science Coordinator and Science Technician. The creation of the Sensory Garden stands as a beacon of inclusivity and environmental stewardship. Within this meticulously curated space, a symphony of scents greets visitors, emanating from aromatic blooms like jasmine, carnations, lavender, fennel, and rosemary. The taste zone invites interaction with edible delights, including homegrown fruits, vegetables, and herbs such as potatoes, tomatoes, dill, parsley, and rosemary. The carefully orchestrated sound zone features a water feature and an interactive windpipe sound bar, creating an immersive auditory experience. Visual splendour abounds in the form of vibrant, colourful plants strategically placed to attract insects for a bug hotel, while the feel zone invites tactile exploration with textured plants, including evergreens like lemon cypress trees and soft banana plant leaves.

Edible fruit, vegetables, and herbs adorn the garden, not just appealing to taste but forming a self-sustaining cycle as compost from the chicken coop enriches the soil. A bridge with varying heights invites physically challenged students to navigate and explore, fostering inclusivity. Recycled materials, such as old tyres repurposed as planters and sand pits, underline the commitment to sustainable practices, turning what might be considered waste into valuable resources.

In addition, another impactful project sees students taking on the care of rescued battery chickens. The initiative transcends the humane treatment of animals; it intertwines with sustainable practices and instils a sense of collective responsibility among the students. The construction of a spacious chicken hutch not only provides a more conducive



Little Heath School Chickens

environment for the feathered inhabitants but also demonstrates a commitment to ethical practices.

The chickens' eggs, sold within the school, contribute to a reduced carbon footprint. The compost generated at the chicken coop completes a virtuous circle, finding its way into the sensory garden's vegetable plot. Here, students witness firsthand the interconnectedness of sustainable living—caring for animals, cultivating produce, and closing the loop on waste.

In the tapestry of these three projects, a common thread emerges: a dedication to creating positive environmental impact through innovative, inclusive, and sustainable practices. These initiatives not only empower disabled students but also serve as an inspiration for the broader community to embrace a more conscientious and harmonious relationship with the natural world. The accomplishments at Lambourne End and Little Heath are more than just projects; they are a testament to the transformative power of passion, inclusivity, and a shared commitment to a greener, more sustainable tomorrow.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SYLVAN HIGHWAYS AND ECOCULTURAL HISTORY OF EPPING FOREST 1800 - 2023

When choosing to write a dissertation on Environmental History, there could not have been a more appropriate topic to discuss, than about the place I have spent my whole life surrounded by: Epping Forest. The bike rides, picnics and school trips of my childhood built the foundations of my love for the Forest and I look back at those memories with immense fondness and gratitude that from such an early age, I felt connected to nature around me. Little did I realise the history of conflict that laces such trees I spent time beneath. Likewise, those who drive or take a walk through the Forest often do not realise that it is so much more than just trees.

My dissertation explores the intertwined history of nature and the people within Epping Forest and how it lies up against the M25. Our artificial boundaries have carved up nature, destroyed habitats and obstructed migration routes. I therefore felt compelled to study this in the context of Epping Forest and the M25. Whilst its construction must not act as a precedent for inflicting the unnatural on the natural, environmental consideration did play a part in its construction and so some see their relationship as cohesive.

Arguably, there is no other green space in Britain that is comparable in importance to the nation’s history. I also felt it was important to unpack the Forest’s history of endurance and adaptation to road expansion. The 19th century fight for Forest land has taken on new forms. Visiting archives and interviewing those involved in the fight for preservation, highlighted how we must never become complacent and take our green spaces for granted. This is especially important as we head even further into the age of technology, where it has become even harder to connect young people to the natural world around them.



Josie Nelson

RHINO WALK

My name is Kelly and I love rhinos. I feel very sad about them being killed by poachers for their horns which are used for different things such as Chinese medicine, so I decided I wanted to do a sponsored walk to raise money and awareness for them and help them as much as possible. Rhinos are lovely animals and are so cool that they need to be protected.

The Monday sports and garden ACE Group helped me raise money on a fundraising walk on the nature reserve

at Grange Farm Chigwell Essex on 31st October 2022. The ACE team walked 4 miles from Grange Farm Centre over the motorway bridge towards the Roding Valley Nature Reserve along the River Roding and back up the old drovers path back to Grange Farm Centre where we had lunch and talked about our walk. We raised over £200 pounds for the rhino charity...

We would like to do more charity walks in the future.

Kelly Whitbread, ACE Activities volunteer and member

LONDON ZOO - ANTON HAYNES

As waterways operative, Anton Haynes explains: “Every year, the maintenance team here on River Stort, in Essex and Hertfordshire, needs to cut back fast-growing and overhanging willow, poplar or ash branches from the canal, which can obstruct the tow-path or navigation.

Normally, we would just leave them to rot down to create habitats for invertebrates and other small mammals. But this year, the heavy rain combined with warm weather, means we’ve got even

more vegetation to deal with and more than we need to protect biodiversity by the canal.

My wife used to work as a veterinary nurse at ZSL London Zoo, and through her connections we discovered a new way to recycle the excess branches and leaves. What is waste vegetation to us, is actually a tasty treat for all kinds of grazing animals from around the world. It adds variety, enrichment and nutrition to the feeding regime for all kinds of antelopes, llamas and other hoofed animals.

Thanks to friends like you, all sorts of plants, insects, birds and animals are thriving along our canal banks, but did you know that your support reaches even further to feed the camels, giraffes and zebras at London Zoo?



Willow branches and leaves feed the animals

So now our colleagues on the Regent’s Canal are starting to bring in more leaves and branches by boat all year round. It’s really helped that our maintenance teams have been given some powered pole saws and been trained to use them safely. That means we can clear much higher vegetation and create food for the zoo even faster. “Who knew that we could help protect wildlife at home and abroad, simply thanks to a few extra power tools?”

PLANE CRASH SURVIVAL SESSION: CREATED BY ACE ACTIVITIES AND ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST FOREST SCHOOL Thursday November 30th 2023 Forest School Area Grange Farm Chigwell

The plane crash survival session was organised by ACE Garden Group and Forest School, Essex Wildlife Trust. The session was based around a plane crash in which survivors of the plane crash have to try and find the best way to survive in the woods. This involved collecting equipment and materials from the plane, crossing a river with the equipment, erecting tents and learning to cut wood and build a fire.

The staff and volunteers were on hand to aid the members of the group if they were in need of help in making survival decisions. The ACE group enjoyed the day although it was very cold. Everyone worked as a team and loved the marshmallows and chocolate biscuits. The session was very successful!

Organisers:
REBECCA BRIGHT Forest School EWT
RAY HARRIS ACE Garden Group



The group enjoy some toasted marshmallows

Field Studies Council High Beach - Courses

Working together with City of London to deliver education in Epping Forest.

Field Studies Council Epping Forest, is situated in the heart of Epping Forest, an area of around 2,400 hectares of wood-pasture, stretching from Manor Park in East London to just north of Epping in Essex. Two thirds of the Forest have been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The purpose built, fully accessible centre has six classrooms, and associated facilities, with direct access into our teaching sites which include woodland, grassland, heath and river. Most of our teaching sites are fully accessible. The centre is just a few minutes from the M25 and Loughton Tube Station.

The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre are dedicated to raising awareness of and funds for our work at the centre.
Please contact us for more information.
Epping Forest Field Centre
Paul's Nursery Road
High Beach
IG10 4AF
Tel 020 8502 8500
Email enquiries.ef@field-studies-council.org



Discover how to capture glorious seasonal colours and achieve interesting photographs of the Forest's woodland flora and fauna on our photography courses.

Lead by local photographer John Price, he will teach participants how to achieve the best results with their cameras and inspire you, the reader, to take creative and stimulating images as well as learning about the wonders of the Forest.

To book on these courses contact John Price at jprice@avisionofbritain.org or contact the Field Studies Centre for a list of their courses <https://www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences>



Scan to book courses at the FSC website



Thanks, achievements and successes

Working together, Epping Forest Sunflower Group wishes to extend its thanks to our associates, ACE Activities, The Waltham Abbey Photography Club and The Men's Shed for their enthusiastic engagement and support in working together to produce this year's successful Climate Project. Also to thank and appreciate the

many sandwiches provided by the AROUND NOON Sandwich Company for our events which include our last Christmas party, the Asdan Awards and our Climate exhibitions. Finally a big thank you to the Grange Farm Centre for their continued support and to our funders for enabling these special events to happen.



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 water-ways.

The Life Force magazine and exhibitions have been produced to create awareness, engage with other similar minded groups 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!

Man Made Climate Change's

**Mankind has devastated earth
With greed and warring ways
Abusing the defenceless
In a world dominance craze
We talk of climate change
As the Ozone's growing weak
It's caused by all the wars on earth
It's peace from this we seek
With bombs and killing gases
Ascending into the atmosphere
Are all our leaders blind to this
As an apocalypse draws near
For they look at emissions on our roads
to stop the climate change
While idiots with rockets and bombs
Are not mentioned in this range
But these aggressors should be accountable
For the damage scientists see
In our weathers unpredictable
From how it used to be
We curb the use of fossil fuels
And change to electric cars
While warmongers sell weapons
That inflict our Ozone's scars
When will mankind get the message
That it's them that caused all this
By the greed and hate that devastate
Is the truth we can't dismiss**

Tony Gorman