



WEG Newsletter

Edition One

June 2020



About our Aims

Covering the area Winterbourne, Hambrook and the wider Frome Valley area. We are passionate about the environment and building a strong inclusive community. We are committed to addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency and working towards regional ambitions of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Our aim is to improve the local environment and community and protect it for the future generations to enjoy. We also aim to increase local resilience for food and energy and support initiatives that move towards this.

Please consider donating money to WEG to assist in progressing our many objectives and projects.

[WEG PayPal Donations](#)

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, if you have any feedback or suggestions for local actions we could be taking please get in touch.

Email : winterbourneenvironmental@gmail.com

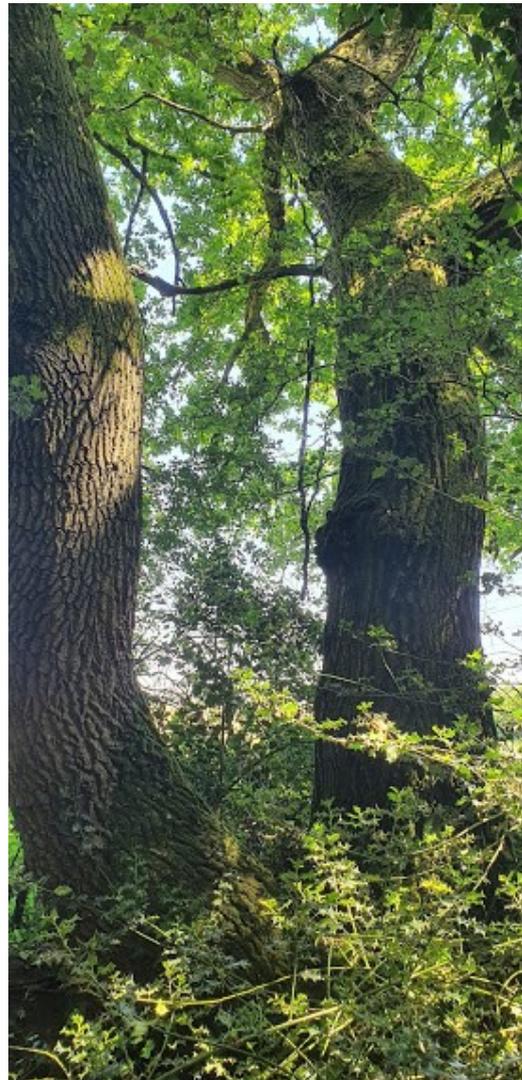
In addition, if you would like to subscribe to receive future e-mails and notices via e-mail and share your views on local environmental issues please complete this questionnaire.

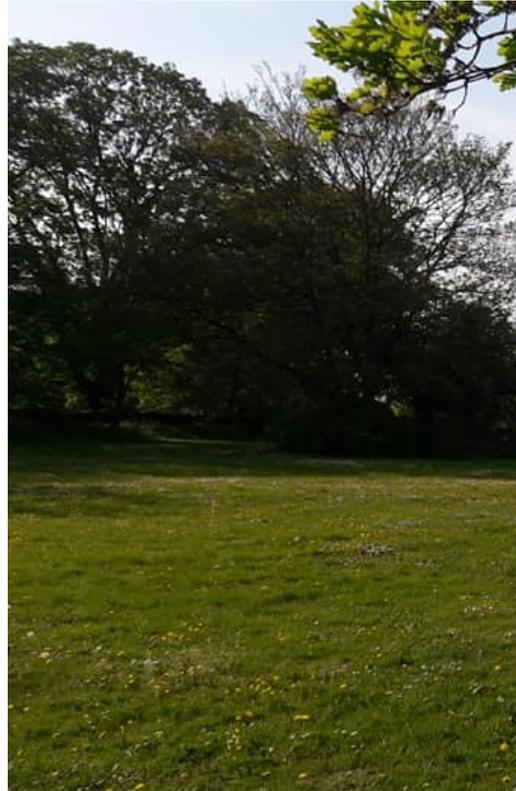
Subscribe : [WEG Questionnaire – Click Here](#)

Please follow us on Facebook to keep up with current news and any events being planned.

Facebook : [@Winterbourneenvironmentalgroup](#)

Thank you to UWE for the grant funding for our rewilding projects and for assisting us in the research on Whiteshill Common.





Rewilding

Rewilding is a progressive approach to conservation. It's about letting nature take care of itself, enabling natural processes to shape land and sea, repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes.

Through **rewilding**, wildlife's natural rhythms create wilder, more biodiverse habitats.

Rewilding encourages a balance between people and the rest of nature where each can thrive. It provides opportunities for communities to diversify and create nature-based

Whiteshill Common Project

At a time when good news is needed here it is, WEG have still been working hard behind the scenes at various projects during the lockdown. Our major project has been rewilding the Small Common at Whiteshill Common (Hambrook) – this is the smaller section to the right as you come off Bristol Road onto Worrell's Lane. In early April, Winterbourne Parish Council gave the group the go ahead to start planting the wildflower meadow and look at options for a natural play area. Due to the lockdown the play area will be on hold for the time being.

It was agreed with Winterbourne Parish Council that the Small Common would not be mown in the centre to allow wildflowers to grow and this year will give us an idea of what to expect, so we can then see what to plant to encourage further natural wild flowering. It has helped that May was NO MOW MAY <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/take-part-in-the-no-mow-may-challenge> set up by the National Trust.

The idea will be to look at perhaps a few gentle paths mown through the meadow so people can walk through and engage closely with the wildlife if they so wish. With many a volunteer in the local area to help out with the digging and planting it was all action over the last month and now there are a variety of wild flowers and an abundance of insects and birds.

Probably most interesting is the natural pattern in which the flowers have taken to grow in a circular pattern. What has been most interesting to watch is over the last month there have been a lot more walkers and cyclists due to the exercise regime, with people sitting down to rest and take photos of the flowers and wildlife there.

We also have Blue Hearts set up in the meadow to advise people that the meadow is being left to grow wild on purpose, to benefit the birds and the bees. More information on this campaign can be found here <https://bluecampaignhub.com/about-us>

Thanks to donations from the Woodland Trust, hedging trees have also been planted along the edge of the Small Common, as well as many handed out to local gardens and community spaces. The current drought conditions in May took their toll on the grass growth, but research from the City Nature Challenge in April showed that there were already several species hidden in the grass. Cerastium, Chickweed and Ribwort Plantain all provide great habitats and nectar for pollinators to improve our local biodiversity.

Winterbourne Seed Swap

Our vegetables and flowers often provide surplus seeds which can be collected and stored. This is an amazing free resource, please consider saving some seeds for an autumn local seed swap.



Can I get involved?

The most important thing you can do is rewild your own patch. Leave the grass to get long in parts of your garden, it is amazing what dormant plants and flowers we have lurking that show when given the opportunity.

The next most useful activity would be to promote rewilding, our verges and open areas are mown regularly and kept immaculate this makes them almost useless to our bugs, bees and butterflies. Write letters, send e-mails, encourage rewilding where there is an opportunity.

We are working on several projects and, when possible, we will put the call out for volunteers on our Facebook group or Facebook page. We are hoping to have tree planting in the autumn with trees supplied by the Woodland Trust.

If you want to garden to encourage and support wildlife in your own garden there are a few key things to consider doing :

- mow less!
- grow climbing plants
- make a pond of any size, even as small as a baby bath
- build a bug hotel
- create nature highways
- install a water butt
- grow a tree for wildlife
- propagate seedlings to share
- grow a wildflower meadow



For more details or other exciting ideas to suit the size of your outside space see

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/>



Rewilding Research

If rewilding has raised your interest, then you might like to take part in research from UWE Bristol. A Masters student working with wildflower expert Dr Helen Hoyle is keen to conduct interviews with residents to find out your views on wildflowers in community spaces.

The research would involve a short interview via telephone or Skype, between the 13th June and 4th July. If you are happy to participate, please contact Tristan Goldsmid on Tristan2.Goldsmid@live.uwe.co.uk





Winterbourne Library When we started looking for spaces in the area for carrying out rewilding activities, we initially spoke to the Parish Council about verges and the triangle roundabout near the Co-op, these options require a bit more investigation and discussion with the contractors who currently mow them. Therefore we started looking at areas which were separately managed and spoke to Winterbourne Library about the area in front of the library where they have a large amount of grass. We had a positive reply very quickly and before lockdown took effect we managed to put some

planning in place and did a very quick preparation of the area involving scarifying and mowing, followed by seeding with meadow grass and wildflowers. Although rewilding is actually just leaving nature to take its course, we have chosen to assist by seeding in some areas. These seeds improve coverage year on year and need to be left to seed naturally before the grass is cut, we are planning to do this towards the end of August. The library mini-meadow is looking amazing with many flowers already showing through and hopefully we will get a chance to continue this year on year.

St Michael's Church Winterbourne - an Eco Church



It's good to report that Winterbourne Environmental Group is not the only local group working to improve our environment and tackle climate change. Did you know that the Church of England has set itself the target of being carbon neutral across all its activities by 2030? And that our local church St. Michael's next door to the medieval barn has joined this scheme? To help it on its way church members are undertaking a survey to assess how it's doing now as a starting point for future action. The survey looks at the buildings (the church itself, the church hall on the High Street and the rectory where the priest lives), its land (the churchyard around the church) and asks how well it is getting the message about the climate and environment across to its congregation and the wider community. All the changes that will be needed are a big challenge but the church is committed to this task.

Next time you pass the church, why not take a diversion into the churchyard, many people do, finding it a tranquil oasis amongst the hustle of their lives. There is a covered arbour to shelter from the weather and if you walk around the church building you will be able to explore the part of the churchyard that is maintained with wildlife in mind - like the rest of the churchyard it is managed by a small but enthusiastic band of volunteers. So far this spring, over 50 different species of wild flower have been found there and this will not be a full count! The area will be cut back later in the summer when all the flowers have seeded, so get there soon.



Impact of Litter

Litter can be harmful to people, animals and the natural environment, as it can threaten their existence and evolution. The major impacts involve the danger to public health, the risk of fire hazards, endangering, or even killing wildlife, and the serious damage to waterways. Furthermore, litter directly and indirectly affects the tourist industry and our quality of life. As a result of this irresponsible pollution, protecting the environment from litter requires significant resources, which instead could have been used for environmental preservation or development.



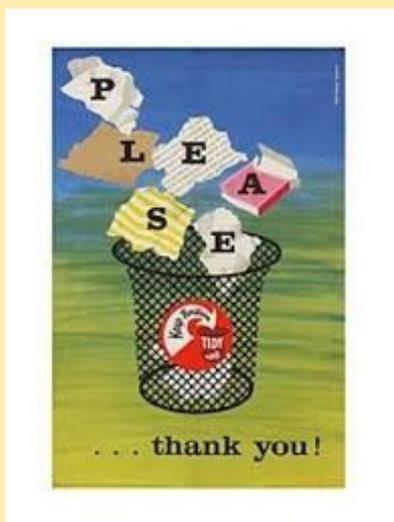
Group Litter Picks

As a group we started at the beginning of the year to have monthly litter pick in Winterbourne and Hambrook, due to Covid 19 this was curtailed.

As soon as we are permitted we will resume these sessions.

It was quite staggering just how much litter was on our roads and open spaces. Volunteers collected over 25 large bags in just over an hour on the March pick up.

Let's hope we can make our area a cleaner and greener space for us all to enjoy.



Individual Efforts During lock-down, we've been encouraging local residents to use their daily exercise to litter sweep the area. By teaming up with South Glos Street Care, we've been distributing adult and child grabbers, bag hoops, gloves and bags to helpers across the village, to help them pick up litter safely. We know from feedback that many of these helpers have been filling many large sacks from parks, roads and footpaths, while reporting fly tipping to the council. South Glos are supporting us by collecting bags of litter from our houses. We hope the sight of more local residents picking up litter will encourage people to pick up their own litter.



Share and Repair Café

In January 2020, WEG launched the new Share and Repair Café in collaboration with All Saints Parish Church. The café was a great success, with 10 skilled locals keen to contribute their time and skills to repair everything from bikes and jewellery, to patching clothes and mending electricals.

The café is linked to the Bristol Repair Café network, which aims to reduce waste by helping local residents to maintain our beloved possessions. So many household items end up in landfill when they could easily be fixed, or find a new lease of life in someone else's home.

Our partners were All Saints Church in Winterbourne Down, who aimed to encourage community spirit and connection to reduce loneliness. They kindly donated

the Church Hall as a venue so we could hold the monthly cafes at no cost.

Sadly, Covid19 brought the café to a temporary halt, but our repairers are ready and waiting to go once it is safe to meet again. Perhaps the community spirit developed during our time of need, plus the spontaneous household street giveaways will actually encourage more sharing and repairing once we are back in action!



Traffic concerns in Winterbourne

WEG has been working closely with our linked group – Winterbourne Safer Cleaner Roads. Laura Fogg-Rogers (WEG Chair) and Duncan Porter (Roads Chair) have been corresponding with our local Councillors with the aim of keeping the quieter roads we have enjoyed during lockdown.

We have contributed to consultations from South Gloucestershire Council about future social distancing measures, and we are keen to develop local campaigns such as 20's Plenty – advocating for a 20mph speed limit in residential areas.

It's an aim backed up by local research – in a survey of 294 residents in 2019, 79% of respondents felt that the quantity and speed of traffic using Winterbourne's roads is not acceptable. Furthermore, 65% of respondents were in favour of traffic calming measures

and nearly two thirds of school run drivers would reduce their car use if the roads were safer.

We have lodged all our concerns on the new website '[Widen My Path](#)', and we're inviting all WEG members to 'like' any suggestions you agree with. The West of England Combined Authority is keen to encourage more active travel and so now is the time to act. Let us know if you would like to help raise the profile of road safety or cycling and walking locally.



Traffic Reduction and Cycling Safety

A residents survey has already been carried out in depth and so this is now at a point where we can make suggestions based on the responses., areas people were concerned about :

- problem hot spots to be reviewed (See list)
- Improve cycle infrastructure
- Speeding—reduce to 20 mph

Known hot spots :

- ⇒ Damson footbridge
- ⇒ Harcombe Hill footpath is too narrow
- ⇒ Church Road pavement parking
- ⇒ Worrells Lane footpath
- ⇒ School Road footpath is too narrow and pavement parking

Party Packs and reusable cups



Thanks to a grant from UWE Bristol and the Quartet Foundation, WEG is taking action on plastic waste. We have developed three party packs for the local community, which are ready to use in our village halls as soon as Covid19 restrictions on gatherings are lifted.

The packs include 30 plates and bowls, 30 cups, and sufficient cutlery for a children's party. The aim is to stop plastic waste by reducing the need to throw away party utensils. Each plastic cup thrown into landfill will last for 450 years – that's as long ago as when Queen Elizabeth 1 was on the throne!

Unfortunately, PPE measures for Covid19 mean that we are seeing an increase in plastic waste again. While these barriers are necessary to save lives from this awful disease, we are keen to reduce disposable waste as much as possible. WEG is keen to start plastic campaigns again as soon as it is safe to continue – please contact us if you would like to help.

Winterbourne Environmental Group aims to connect with other local groups who have similar goals and we work together where we can to assist each other.

Frome Valley Growing Project is a local project to grow and produce food for members and the local community from a site rented just off Swan Lane in Winterbourne. The group are growing food as a community in a more sustainable way that depends less on fossil fuel and uses permaculture growing methods, working with and supporting nature.



Frome Valley
GROWING PROJECT



Permaculture is a set of design principles centered on whole systems thinking, simulating, or directly utilising the patterns and resilient features observed in natural ecosystems. It uses these principles in a growing number of fields from regenerative agriculture, rewilding, and community resilience.

Frome Valley Growing Project

We are a local not for profit organisation in Winterbourne. We began in February 2020. We grow and produce food for our members and the local community from the site we rent on Swan Lane. We work together using the individual skills we all have to make food growing more accessible and to provide a strong sense of community.

We have designed the site using permaculture growing principles. This means we grow in a more sustainable way that depends less on fossil fuels and more on taking care of the land and the resources we have. We recycle, re-use and re-purpose as much as possible and mimic systems we see in nature to encourage biodiversity.

Our main aims are to;

Grow and produce fresh local food for our members and the local community.

Provide a sense of community for our members, their families and volunteers.

Learn and support each other to understand more about growing food in a sustainable way that depends less on fossil fuels and mono-cropping.

To make growing food more accessible to our members and volunteers by working together and sharing our different skills.

We rely heavily on donations and we are currently looking for a cover for our polytunnel which is 12x10ft. We are always looking for donations of things like pallets, gardening equipment, manure and Heras fencing. Please do get in contact if you can support us if obtaining any of these things.

Unfortunately we are not taking on any volunteers at the moment due to the Lockdown restrictions but we are looking forward to having a big opening party once we are able to!

Please click on the link below and like us on Facebook to follow our progress and get involved when it is possible to do so.

<https://www.facebook.com/FromeValleyGrowingProject/>



Winterbourne Medieval Barn have been good enough to connect with WEG and have allowed us to hold meetings in their meeting rooms as a related community interest group. They attend meetings and we are hoping to plan some events at the Barn in the future when restrictions have eased. We would like to thank them for their support and look forward to working together more in the future



Winterbourne Medieval Barn



Photo ; Ryan Chubb

If you've been past the Barn lately you will have noticed that we've been busy finishing off landscaping works as the final part of our big building project. We're delighted with the new appearance and are looking forward to welcoming visitors in the not too distant future (we hope!). The works have seen the West Barn completely renovated into heated seminar rooms with much improved facilities, modernisation of the byre studio spaces, and a new link corridor that will house historical interpretation.

Our original plans for re-opening the Barn have shifted as we consider how we can safely run socially distant events. All events have been postponed until September

when we plan to take part in Heritage Open Days. This is a national initiative where heritage sites open their doors to the public with a programme of free events. We'll be taking part on the weekend of the 12th and 13th September. We hope to be able to run some bookable Barn tours across that weekend but will also have a host of online events that you can take part in from the comfort of your sofa.

We should have more news about our events programme soon. Follow us on social media for all the latest news or if you want to get in touch email Jasmine, community engagement officer, on Jasmine.Loveys@southglos.gov.uk.

Links for the Barn : <https://www.facebook.com/winterbournemedievalbarn/>

<https://www.winterbournebarn.org.uk/>



You can support this amazing group by signing up for annual membership for only £5 for the whole year. There are many other ways to support the Barn as well <https://www.winterbournebarn.org.uk/membership/>

Why reduce plastic?

Reducing plastic waste is important because plastic production requires an enormous amount of energy and resources. This causes carbon emissions and contributes to global warming. Recycling plastic is not efficient – only 9% of plastic ever produced has been recycled. About 60% is discarded in landfills and oceans.



Tips to Use Less Plastic

- Stop using plastic straws**, even in restaurants. If a straw is a must, purchase a reusable stainless steel or glass straw
- Use a reusable produce bag**. A single plastic bag can take 1,000 years to degrade. Purchase or make your own reusable produce bag and be sure to wash them often!
- Give up gum**. Gum is made of a synthetic rubber, aka plastic.
- Buy boxes instead of bottles**. Often, products like laundry detergent come in cardboard which is more easily recycled than plastic.
- Purchase cereal, pasta or rice in **bulk bins and fill a reusable bag or container**. You save money and unnecessary packaging.
- Use a **reusable bottle or mug** for your beverages, even when ordering from a to-go shop
- Don't use plasticware at home and be sure to request restaurants do not pack them in your take-out box.
- Make fresh squeezed juice or eat fruit instead of buying juice in plastic bottles. It's healthier and better for the environment.
- Make your own cleaning products** that will be less toxic and eliminate the need for multiple plastic bottles of cleaner.
- Pack your lunch in reusable containers and bags**. Also, opt for fresh fruits and veggies and bulk items instead of products that come in single serving cups.
- Use a razor with replaceable blades instead of a disposable razor





Hambrook Primary School Eco Club



St Michael's Primary



Hambrook Primary Eco Club

Eco Clubs

All Councils in the West of England have committed to achieving net zero by 2030 – this is a hugely important task given that the International Panel on Climate Change has warned that civilisations may collapse if temperatures rise above 1.5C globally.

This becomes even more pressing when we consider that an 8 year old today will be just 18 in 2030. They have their whole life ahead of them, but it's our actions now that will secure their future.

That's why WEG is working with the local primary schools in the Winterbourne area to ensure that environmental issues form part of the curriculum. Hambrook Primary School has set up an Eco Club and has an Eco Committee working towards Bronze status for Eco Schools. St Michael's Primary has also established an Eco Club, who have worked hard to develop rewilding on their local grounds, and are linking with the Eco Church initiative. Elm Park Primary School

is also setting up an Eco Club, and is sharing advice with our network of schools.

In February, a group from the 'WEG Climate Action Schools' went into central Bristol to see Greta Thunberg speak. It was inspirational to see so many young people pledging to do something about climate change, and calling on the elder members of our community to act now for their sake.

WEG will continue to work with our local Councillors to make our community safer for our young people. We have run an anti-idling poster competition, and are connecting to road safety campaigns to ensure the quiet streets we have experienced in Covid19 lockdown will continue. We are also working with South Gloucestershire's Climate Change Committee so that community voices continue to be represented.

Hambrook Primary School has set up an Eco Club and has an Eco Committee working on environmental changes. ***They have just achieved the Eco Schools Bronze Award - so well done to the school!***

