

## DIARY DATES

Hull FoE meetings are usually 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in every month, 7pm for 7.30pm start at Blondes vegan café, 106 King St Cottingham HU16 5QE.

**Due to Coronavirus and the requirement to isolate, at the time of writing we have no way of knowing when Hull FoE meetings and events can start up again. If you are a Hull FoE member, we will try to let you know, or go to our website, facebook or twitter sites, or email or ring any of the contacts; all details on the back page.**

★ **Meanwhile here is a demo we can all do:**

**Up to Wed 22 April**

Do a #AxeDrax demo from your home and post your photos on Wed 22! See page 4.

★ **Thurs 2 July**

Next ECO! Get your articles, news, photos etc to Hilary before this date to go in our next edition.

★ **August**

Stall bookings for next Green Fair 21<sup>st</sup> November at Cottingham Civic Hall. Contact Hilary.

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## It's still a Climate Emergency

So we thought that the biggest emergency we faced was the Climate Emergency, didn't we? That is still the case, of course. But a fatal virus directly affecting us now is always going to grab our attention like nothing else.

Now we know what measures the government can take when they really believe they face an emergency, don't we? And that funds can somehow be found to pay for the economic costs. When the money is paid out let's try to make sure it doesn't go to the fossil fuel industries and the gas-guzzling airlines.



Philip Heselton appreciating our garden.

PHOTO: Hilary Byers

Meanwhile, marooned at home, I seem to appreciate the small aspects of nature most. Is it me or do the birds seem to sing more enthusiastically? A blackbird flits to and fro in front of my window with beaks full of nesting material. I really appreciate every small change in the trees as they put on their spring green leaves. Those of us lucky enough to have a garden, even just a few plants in pots, notice every new shoot and bud.

Nature is already reclaiming some of the land no longer visited by people. Goats and deer are coming down from the hills to reclaim the streets. It will be fascinating to see what changes take place on our roads and verges.

I really appreciate my local shops; we need to remember they need our custom during the good times as well as the bad, don't we?

The crisis has reminded us that we have so much to relearn. We need to grow more of our own food in this country (a lesson we had to learn in wartime too). And we ought to be able to organise to pick it ourselves too.

We've learnt whose jobs we rely on most; NHS workers certainly, but also carers of all kinds, even those who just keep a friendly eye on their neighbours. And the most essential jobs are so often the least well paid.

When things return to 'normal' let's try to ensure it's a better normal.

Hilary

# ECO Chit Chat

## 'Escape' from lockdown with Hull ECO!

There are some excellent writers and illustrators amongst you, and whether you send us a brief 'snippet', a full-length article, a photo, a drawing, a recipe or a book review, your contributions are always appreciated. If you've time on your hands, send us something for next issue out in July.

You won't be at all surprised to hear that all [Hull FoE meetings](#), [litter picks](#), [film shows](#) and [stalls](#) at events are cancelled or postponed for the time being. It's a great pity, because we were getting some good turnouts for our meetings.

We were intending to have the AGM at our May meeting. Now it is likely to be August or later, so we can let you know about it in the next ECO.

The [Green Fair](#) is booked at Cottingham Civic Hall for Saturday 21st November 2020. We certainly hope that by then we will all be OK and enjoying meeting up. All being well, I hope to start taking stall bookings in August.

In the meantime, we will do our best to keep in touch with you, through [emails](#), [facebook](#) and [twitter](#). I'm aware groups are finding different ways of having meetings over the internet so who knows, maybe we will manage it!

If there is anything you want to know or anything you think we can help with, [get in touch](#) with one of the people named on the back page. For my part, I'm happy to just have a chat!

And don't forget, [www.friendsoftheearth.uk/campaigns](http://www.friendsoftheearth.uk/campaigns) will take you to all Friends of the Earth's great campaigns, with lots of things you can do from home. This might be just the right time to cut back on meat and dairy foods and change to a green energy supplier. \*

[Send us your photos](#) of you doing the demo against Drax with your tree, shrub or pot plant! We hope to use them in next ECO.

Look after yourselves and the people around you, and we hope we all come out the other side even more determined to save the planet.

**Hilary**

\* Phillipa reminds us that: Ecotricity have over 300 electric vehicle charging points around the UK with cheaper than half price charging for Ecotricity green energy customers.

<https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/for-the-road/our-electric-highway>

Ecotricity have always been against fracking and have provided help to anti-fracking groups around Britain. <https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/fracking>

## OTHER NEWS



### Design-your-garden courses

Carla Moss, with a permaculture training, is offering quick design-your-garden courses, fee £7. One is on Friday April 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm-9:15 (includes a 15 min break), but if you miss this get in touch with her as there might be more. She says sign up via my website <http://carlamoss.co.uk/Art/Events/index.php>



### Eat-well blog

At the beginning of 2020 the **Hull Food Partnership** put together a selection of [blog posts](#) <https://hullfoodpartnership.org.uk/happynewyear2020/> to kick start the New Year with a healthy theme delivered by three authors from different nutrition-based backgrounds: Holly Stephenson, Milena Minichiello and Victoria Clifton. The blog posts featured topics on eating well for less, incorporating a rainbow of fruit and vegetables into the diet, and tips and tricks on how to get your children to eat more vegetables. The Hull Food Partnership have recently unveiled their [Veg Cities programme](#) for 2020 <https://hullfoodpartnership.org.uk/vegcities/> after the success of last year, featuring activities such as plotting, growing, the 5-veg cooking competition, and the veg bowl challenge.



### ABP's solar power project

ABP has announced it is to invest almost £7m at the Port of Hull to install the region's biggest roof-mounted solar project. Once completed, the 6.5MW scheme will more than double the Humber Ports' renewable energy generation.



### Rathlin starting West Newton B well work

Rathlin restart: It has been announced on 29th March that Rathlin Energy UK Limited have given 14 days notice to ERYC of its intention to start work on the construction of the service road and well pad at the West Newton B well site. Recent photos suggest work on site is already underway.

# Give peat a chance

In the late 1980s, Friends of the Earth, in conjunction with the charity Plantlife, launched a campaign to end the harvesting of horticultural peat from Hatfield and Thorne moors and thereby preserve the biodiversity of what was left of the Humberhead Levels, the largest area of lowland peat bog in England. The campaign owed much of its eventual success to the enthusiasm of botanist and TV personality David Bellamy, who sadly passed away last December.

Thus began a drive to reduce the use of peat by gardeners, which has become more urgent now that the contribution of peat bogs in storing carbon and thereby reducing global warming is understood. In 2011 the UK government set voluntary targets to phase out peat use in gardens by 2020, and by the professional horticulture industry by 2030. Manufacturers in the UK responded by introducing composts derived from forestry and agricultural wastes into their products, and by also declaring the remaining peat content on the bag. Both the Royal Horticultural Society and the National Trust, as well as major retailers such as B&Q and Homebase, have promoted peat-free compost as a growing medium.

**Why, then, did an investigation by Friends of the Earth last year find that the use of peat for garden compost in the UK—mostly now imported from Ireland or the Baltic states—actually rose in the last decade, and is now around 2 million cubic metres annually?**

From my recent experience inspecting five garden centres close to where I live, the answer seems pretty clear—they are doing their level best to ignore any targets. The majority of the compost available was from Irish manufacturers (eg Erin/Molloy, Growmoor, Bord na Mona) who either do not declare the composition of their (100% peat) product, or even boast of it

being “highest quality Irish moss peat”. Other pure peat brands included Vitax and Premier. These were always the cheapest composts available, typically around 8 pence per litre.

All but one of the centres also had composts from English manufacturers (eg Westland, Levington, Miracle-Gro,) which are part peat (40-90%), at around 9-12 pence per litre, depending on pack size. Their bags mostly have a bar chart showing the percentage peat content, but that’s assuming you can read the labelling in the first place—in all the garden centres I have visited, compost bags are stacked on pallets with their label-side down, so that you have to turn a bag over yourself to see any information at all about its content. **The “John Innes” formulations of compost, whether numbers 1,2 or 3, and regardless of the manufacturer, contain 45% peat.**

Four of the five centres had completely peat-free compost available, either **Miracle-Gro Peat Free** or **Westland New Horizon**, at 11-12 pence/litre. In one of the centres, their solitary peat-free compost was the only stack of bags without a price tag above it: when I enquired why this should be, I was told “well, we don’t sell much of that”.

I’ve sometimes used pure coir, available in brick-sized dried blocks, as a growing medium, but it dries out easily, and I have to concede that the newer peat-free formulations are better. This year I’m trying out a peat-free compost called **Melcourt Sylvagrow**, which has a great “feel” to it, and is highly rated by Which? Magazine— but for this I had to drive to the Cross Road garden centre in Hollym, near Patrington, the nearest supplier to Hull.

Friends of the Earth predicted from the outset that the garden and horticulture trade would not voluntarily end its addiction to peat, and is calling on the government to ban peat use in compost altogether.

Visit <https://friendsoftheearth.uk> and enter “peat” in the search field for a full discussion of this topic in FoE’s 2019

briefing paper and, when you next stock up at your local garden centre, check the label carefully.

**Please, unless you are specifically growing lime-hating plants, give peat a miss.**

Rohan Lewis

*Ed: Do you have experience of growing in peat-free compost? Tell us what makes or types you would recommend.*

## THE JOY OF KALE

Kale is a nutritious, cheap and easy-to-grow winter vegetable, but plain boiled kale can be harsh in flavour and sometimes tough. I get round this by using the following recipe from Veronica Sekules’s *Friends of the Earth Cookbook*, published by Penguin Books in 1980.

### Kale Roast

Serves 4 to 6

500g cooked kale, allowed to cool and chopped	3 tbs cooking oil or margarine
1 egg, beaten	½ tsp pepper
3 tbs liquid in which kale was cooked	3 sticks celery, chopped
1 tsp salt	125g wheatflakes (optional)
2 tbs chopped onion	
1 tbs flour	

- 1 ... Sauté the onion and celery in the oil and stir in the flour.
- 2 ... Add the kale liquid, stirring well, and then all the remaining ingredients.
- 3 ... Allow the mixture to cool and place in a greased baking dish.
- 4 ... Bake at 200°C for 30 minutes.

Rohan



Unfortunately Hull FoE has had to postpone the planned **local** showings of the film 'Burned'; however, here's...

### **AN EASY DEMO YOU CAN DO FROM HOME!**

While many aspects of everyday life have ground to a halt during the pandemic, forest destruction and the climate crisis are unfortunately continuing. Drax Plc is still importing wood pellets from biodiverse forests and monoculture tree plantations, burning them in its Yorkshire power station and calling it sustainable energy. Drax recently announced online that it had imported its largest ever shipment of pellets.

Biofuelwatch will be taking online action against Drax on the day of their AGM. It won't be the same as seeing allies and supporters on the street for a demonstration, but it will be a fun and easy action you can take from home while physically distancing.

Please help us share this call out widely, by sharing our Facebook events page:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/908031049632444/>

or our webpage:

<http://biofuelwatch.org.uk/2020/love-trees-axe-drax/>

## **How to take action on 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

1. Make a banner or placard saying "#AxeDrax not trees" or "Love trees, #AxeDrax".
2. On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, share a photo of yourself with the banner. We suggest that, if possible, you include a garden tree or house plant in the photo. If you would prefer to not be in the picture yourself, feel free to display the message in another creative way.
3. **EITHER** upload the photograph to Twitter or Facebook tagging @biofuelwatch and including #AxeDrax or #LoveTreesAxeDrax in the post,  
**OR** email it to [biofuelwatch@gmail.com](mailto:biofuelwatch@gmail.com) and we will share on our social media channels. Watch our website, facebook or twitter for posts you can share between now and then and for a link to a social media pack for the day.

### **Film screenings ahead of the**

### **Love trees, #AxeDrax Day of Action**

We are also planning **two online screenings** of the biomass documentary "Burned: are trees the new coal", each followed by a short presentation and discussion with campaigners from Biofuelwatch and other allies.

**These will be on 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> April.**

### **Please book your free ticket with Eventbrite here:**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/film-screening-of-burned-with-speakers-and-qa-tickets-102083819452> and share the **facebook event** <https://www.facebook.com/events/908031049632444/>

Many thanks for your ongoing support. We hope to see you online in the coming weeks.

The Biofuelwatch Team



Protect forests  
and the climate  
22 April 2020  
#AxeDraxNotTrees

# Let's push now for a sustainable future

*This is the right time to start pushing hard for a sustainable future. The answers to problems now are the same as for Climate Change.*

We need jobs repurposed for a renewable future and people working on the land. More land turned back into organic for healthier food and better immune systems. It's time for alternative economics and localised manufacturing like **3dprinting\***. More people cycling and decentralized energy systems.

The structure of intense consumer-based capitalism has broken under the pressure but we already have the

answers. We need to be heard now at this time when nobody knows what to do.

We have no better chance to reclaim our future while the air is cleaner and the wasteful fossil fuel behemoth has come to a grinding halt.

All needs to be underpinned by Universal Income to stabilize society and provide a safety net.

Because the pandemic is not the only enemy we face.

*\* there is a global mobilisation of people printing headbands for visors and parts for ventilators on 3d printers. In Hull, NFire Labs at C4Di is working with the University to print PPE for the NHS.*

Lee-ann

## STOP HS2

**Chris Packham is fighting to save the 5 ancient woodland areas being destroyed RIGHT NOW by HS2 construction workers even during the lockdown!**

In total HS2 will destroy over 700 wildlife sites and 100 ancient woodlands. His legal case failed but we must continue to support him and his work.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) states that one of the factors helping to increase the emergence of Zoonosis (diseases which jump from animals to humans) is deforestation.

**To find out more, go to <http://stophs2.org/>**

Lee-ann

## Energy Works, Hull—latest update

**Energy Works has been building a plant on Cleveland Street to produce energy from refuse for several years; it is behind schedule. Here is an update:**

- ▶ The Cleveland Street plant is now up and running, generating electricity from Refuse Derived Fuel [RDF], but as yet only at 30%-40% of rated capacity, as they are still "tweaking things to make them run better".
- ▶ EnergyWorks Hull are still in charge during this commissioning phase, with handover to the final operators planned for the summer. ENGIE, the French company who were due to operate the plant, have pulled out,

and their staff on site have transferred to a new company, BISL.

- ▶ No problems with the supply of RDF at present, either from the domestic or commercial sectors. We are not sure whether it includes domestic non-recyclable waste from our Councils yet; it is planned to do so.
- ▶ The plant, built initially by M&W and then completed last year by Black & Veatch, has proved noisier in operation than anticipated, and this has led to complaints from local residents. Energy Works Hull have called in external noise reduction consultants to address this and are in the process of altering equipment and procedures in response to their recommendations.

Rohan

HFOE representative on the Community Liaison Panel

## Green activities in 'lockdown'

Hi All

**Since our last Hull FoE meeting our life has changed; all of our 'sitting' bookings have evaporated.**

Predicting the long haul, I invested in seeds, beans and greens planting out in containers and sheltered beds. These are early days but my seedlings are showing

promise. All of the planters are in the shelter of the warm rear wall, a nightly duvet of bubble wrap and wood tops by way of protection from possible frost. It's a gamble but it's paying off. I've kept back two thirds of seed for future planting.

Also, I've split and forced our rhubarb. I've thinned last year's land cress and rocket. All

of this using our own compost! Many years ago, Paul built two large crates for all our green waste; these quickly became wormery with the writhing red variety.

**Our garden is blooming,** the rear lawn is crammed with cowslips. Also, I've noticed evidence of hedgehogs; we always hoped that they would

find the under-studio space a safe haven. Hopefully, they'll sort out our slug issues. At least we're around to join the nocturnal slug patrol!

**Stay safe and we'll see you all soon.**

Best wishes

**Chrissy and Paul** (recently joined Hull FoE)

## Organic farming: can we keep up our food supplies?

IN AN ARTICLE IN ECO SIX MONTHS AGO ('WHY BUY ORGANIC? IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SOIL' ECO OCTOBER 2019), I DISCUSSED THE ORIGINS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN THE PERIOD AFTER WORLD WAR 2, WHEN THE ILL EFFECTS ON THE SOIL OF AGRICULTURE'S NEW-FOUND RELIANCE ON SOLUBLE CHEMICAL FERTILISERS WERE BECOMING APPARENT.

Since then, the introduction of synthetic chemicals to control pests, diseases and weeds has further increased crop yields, while biodiversity has declined drastically due to the unforeseen effects of these chemicals on non-target species. In the case of organochlorine insecticides, the decimation of birdlife in the 1950s and 60s was evident enough to the general public to force the abandonment of these chemicals, and our birds of prey have thankfully recovered. But this is an exception: less conspicuous wildlife has gone. Many insect populations are in severe decline, and to a botanist, the fields of Holderness are now (in the words of one of them) "as interesting as a digestive biscuit".

**SO HOW DOES ORGANIC FARMING, HAVING RENOUNCED THE USE OF CHEMICALS, MANAGE TO MAINTAIN FOOD PRODUCTION?**

**Soil fertility is the easiest problem to solve:** most soils have adequate reserves of Potassium and Phosphorus—the limiting factor is making these elements available to the plant, and the microbes in organically managed soil, where crop residues are returned to it, do this. Nitrogen is added by growing members of the bean/clover family, whose roots contain bacteria which draw down nitrogen from the atmosphere. On mixed farms, livestock is integrated with arable by means of hay, pasture or grazing regimes and the application of farmyard manure,

though some people doubt whether raising animals for food can ever be made completely carbon-neutral.

**Pests and diseases are harder to control,** as the somewhat wacky list of older biocides permitted by the Soil Association "on a restricted basis" testifies, but effective techniques do exist, and more are under investigation. An understorey of flowering plants in an orchard, or of annual weeds in an arable crop, helps to control aphids by providing pollen and nectar to the insects which predate them. Careful attention to crop rotation and the time at which soil is cultivated is used to reduce weeds and slugs. And organic crops have been shown to be less attractive to insect pests because of the lower concentration of nitrate in their leaves. Research continues worldwide on biological and physical control measures, and I am looking forward to a new edition of Nicolas Lampkin's classic 1990 textbook "Organic Farming" which is due out this year.

**The high retail price of organic food is a major obstacle to its success,** and has two main causes. Firstly, organic farms are more labour-intensive, though the impact of this is reduced somewhat by the use of volunteer labour through schemes such as World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms ([www.wwof.org.uk](http://www.wwof.org.uk)). Secondly, organic farms, being mostly small, do not benefit from the economies of scale that large ones do.

**Subscribing to a local "box scheme"** helps to overcome this, particularly at a time when the centralised food distribution systems are currently under threat from COVID-19, and may be challenged again in a year or so's time by Brexit.

Rohan Lewis

## Carbon capture in the Humber

Before we got used to seeing Chancellor Rishi Sunak telling us all to stay at home, you might remember he delivered a budget. This promised an £800m pot for carbon capture and storage (CCS), with the Humber Region a likely recipient of a large chunk of it. The idea, under the Zero Carbon Humber banner, is for a pipeline to be built to collect CO<sub>2</sub> from Drax, the steelworks at Scunthorpe and the petrochemical industries along the Humber, and deposit it in gas caverns under the North Sea.

The project is strongly backed by the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) with the creation of highly skilled jobs as a claimed benefit. (Although, personally, I can't see that many jobs will be needed once the pipeline has been built).

How many projects of this sort will survive the economic fallout of the coronavirus, I wonder?

Hilary,  
with information from 'Business Live-Yorkshire and Humber'

## Signs of change?

Is it a tale of two halves? I go for my "socially distant" morning walk, take a deep breath and I can almost feel nature healing. This may be psychological, I get that, but the air seems fresher, the birds singing that much louder. Are we taking the deep breath before we plunge more deeply into the depths? Or is it the calm before the true storm. Or is it a sign of change?

Our world has turned upside down because of COVID 19, and there are so many things that people have had to adapt to in these strange times. But for me, my sincere hope is that people will start to see the benefit of nature and simplicity. Perhaps our addiction to cars will wane, when people experience the subtle interest of what is on their doorstep. I have heard many people say "I didn't realise we had such nice walks around here", "It is the first time I have explored the paths nearby", "We will all be experts in the local area!" "We are saying hello to each other now, albeit from a distance".

There is a danger that when we start to return to "normality", whatever that may be, that people may just shrug and carry on as if nothing has happened. I worry that the phrase "life is too short", will become more commonplace—driving more consumerism and bucket list excursions as people strive to make up for lost time. This would be devastating for our planet. My hope is that people will take time to look at their surroundings and see the joy and beauty of Mother Nature, and that it is worth saving. For when all is said and done, we are part of the earth and the earth will nurture us if we care for it in return.

Claire Gribben





'We'll dance again' at Pickering Road Community Orchard. PHOTO: Hilary

## Coping on our Community Gardens and Orchards

If you remember, in February we were dealing with floods [seems a long time ago!]. Then the Coronavirus struck. How are our community gardens and orchards managing?

### Pickering Road Community Orchard

We have had to cancel the May Day event (was to have been Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> May).

The water has finally subsided and we have barrowed applewood chippings onto the path in the wildlife garden. The labyrinth has survived being 50% submerged in flood water. We have lost most of the bulbs we planted last year and possibly the year before. Some daffodils were planted on a raised bit of ground at the back of the wildlife garden and they along with the primroses have done well.

The old fritillaries in the wildlife garden are really tall this year so they loved the water. They tend to be found in damp places but not lakes. In December, Wendy and Peter planted some fritillaries in some raised planters near the cabin and they've done very well.

The flood water has reshaped to land where the maypole goes and I don't know what to do about that yet; we may have to spread top soil on the ground to even it up a bit. No damage to the trees. The pears, damsons, plums and cherry are in flower but the first thing to flower was the crab apple!

The foxes have survived OK and have been very quiet of late. We've seen a few Brimstone butterflies about, which is good news. This Covid 19 is invisible to the green world and I am enjoying the peace and quiet while all of my aged volunteers self-isolate.

Yvette

### Rainbow Garden

We have closed completely to clients and volunteers. However, one of us is maintaining the garden on a regular basis thus avoiding social contacting.

We will carry on growing food for as long as we are legally allowed to go out.

One member of staff is keeping in regular contact with our vulnerable clients and volunteers.

With regard to allotments, someone told me, but I am not sure if it is true, that we are still allowed to visit our allotments. I have been going and just staying on my own plot. It is quite easy to do social distancing if people are sensible.

Brenda

### Constable Community Allotments

We are not open to the public, but just two essential workers are keeping things going, well spaced out. We have sown seeds in the hope of having some food supplies available later in the year.

Our Veg box scheme was popular last year so we hope we can do something similar later in the year. In the meantime, **we would really appreciate it if our supporters could continue to pledge £5 a week**, with the hope that veg boxes will be your reward as soon as possible, hopefully from July onwards.

Please get in touch if you've any questions; at present I find myself talking to the birds!

Lausanne

07816 141169 [www.constableallotment.org.uk](http://www.constableallotment.org.uk)

*Dawn Woodmansey takes us on a virtual tree-planting holiday!*

# THE LAST TREE STANDING

How ordinary people are using their holidays to plant extraordinary forests

**M**any people are cancelling the cheap flight abroad, signing up to Flight Free UK and turning to adventure closer to home through a growing number of reforestation projects. The Northern Forest is underway, aiming to plant a million trees from Hull to Liverpool. What can we learn from projects like Trees For Life, who have been restoring the Caledonian Forest for over thirty years? With no direct experience, the founder, Alan Watson Featherstone, decided he had to do something. "I began going out into the Scottish Hills and getting to know my own country. That's when I became aware that the forest was dying out." Since then it has become an award winning charity, with a dedicated staff and hundreds of volunteers, planting close to two million trees. It has numerous sites and a nursery that grows up to 60,000 trees per year.

The vision is long-term at 250 years—the lifespan of a Scots Pine. It attracts people from all over who come to live in the forest, learning how to plant and protect a forest. You don't need to be Bear Grylls to get involved, either.

Dawn Woodmansey, shares her tale of leaving city life behind to go into the wilds of Glen Affric, one of the UK's remaining rainforests.



## Trees for Life: A volunteer's perspective

### ARRIVING

There are twelve of us this week. Amongst us, a boat builder, students, house designer, retired nurse and Royal Navy soldier, and our guides Kate and Dominic. There's a real mixture of experienced ecologists and those, like myself, who are new to reforestation.

Our accommodation, Althamulloch Cottage in remote Glen Affric is nestled between woodland, Munro Mountains and river. A stunningly beautiful place. As evening sets in, a family of deer graze by woodland that didn't exist a few years ago. It's old-school; no electric sockets, no phone reception, no shower. The day begins with collecting water and washing in the stream. It's a thrill to be feral!

### TREE SURVEYING

We set out walking, following deer tracks to the north of the estate. Winding past waterfalls, lochs and old trees ripped up from their roots during storms, we stop under old Scots Pines. It's explained that our surveys will be given to the Forestry Commission as evidence of the difference

between the regenerating side with a deer exclusion fence, and this side. We count thousands of saplings that are no bigger than six inches despite being five or six years old. Because deer eat the tops, they'll never grow.

### TREE PLANTING

We set out the next morning high into the hills. We have come so high up, so that the seed from the Eared Willow, Woolley Willow, Downy Birch and Dwarf Birch will spread downhill and regenerate themselves. Kate demonstrates planting so that roots are covered even when blasted with Highland rain, and in the right ground conditions.

Barbara, a retired nurse came after she'd made a donation for her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. **"It's reconnected me to my childhood and my parents' love of being outdoors. The trees we plant this week will be here after I'm gone, hopefully, leaving a legacy."**

On the third day we finish planting, putting in a total of 730 trees. Not being in optimum health, I was concerned about keeping up. But I had nothing to

fear. One of the things I notice about Trees for Life, is that everything is done with such care—the way we're treated and in the trees being planted sustainably. It's different to some other projects, that are rushed, in plantation-style rows, with no ongoing project to look after the trees. It's reassured me immensely, the heart at the centre of everything they do.

### OUR GUIDES

Kate and Dominic came to this work, after volunteering here. Brimming with knowledge and friendliness, we learn about micro-moths, plant and animal life around us, and of course, trees. Prior to this, Dominic was responsible for planting up to 60,000 trees a year at the nursery in Dundreggan. **"What I say is—be outside every day. Take time for yourself, learn about the land and how it shouldn't look this way. It's bare. There is nothing for insects and dragonflies."**

### NON-NATIVE TREE REMOVAL

Today we learned to tell the difference between native and non-native trees.



The Forestry Commission changed tack when they saw the plantations of Sitka Spruce and Lodge Pole Pine weren't working. That was twenty years ago and we still find plenty. At first it feels strange to cut down a healthy tree but then it becomes clear why. A Scots Pine stands within ten centimetres of a Lodge Pole. It towers over taking nutrients and light. It has no predators and doesn't provide habitat for the birds and insects that are reliant on it. It provides nothing. Not even fungus food. We discover many more so we come back for a second day to cut, pull and fell, seeing in action consequences of bad planting decisions.

## GOING HOME

Our week happened to fall on the seventh anniversary of the millionth tree being planted. What an incredible achievement for Trees for Life and a great week for us, full of laughter and friendship. I'll be returning as soon as I can.

### Dawn Woodmansey

\* A condensed version for FoE. For the full version contact me at [www.fullcirclehull.org.uk](http://www.fullcirclehull.org.uk)

PHOTOS: Dawn Woodmansey

*This is the beginning of a series of articles on local and national Reforesting Projects, so look out for the next article, focusing on other projects you can get involved in.*



Our accommodation Althamulloch Cottage in Glen Affric



Hiking past the loch to the Tree Surveying site



Eating lunch under Great Granny Scots Pine.



# More money for trees: an update from HEYwoods – April 2020

## Northern Forest Update

Hull and East Yorkshire Woods [HEYwoods] successfully delivered its programme of tree planting under year 2 of the Northern Forest during 2019-2020 with 17,800 trees planted across Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire specifically under the Defra capital grant programme. The work was fully completed by the end of March, and great credit must be paid to Trust for Conservation Volunteers [TCV] for being able to finish the work amidst the increasing restrictions on activity, movement, social distancing, etc. This year's delivery ensured that HEYwoods was again able to fulfil its 25% share of the total Community Forests' tree planting activity this winter. HEYwoods has a provisional allocation of 25,000 trees to plant next season.

## Nature for Climate

HEYwoods has been working alongside the other nine Community Forests in England to develop a business case to Defra to deliver part of the Government's recently-announced Nature for Climate programme. A significant share of the total £650m+ fund has been provisionally earmarked for the Community Forests, and the project has the potential to fund the establishment and maintenance of new woodland on a significant scale, especially in the East Riding of Yorkshire and Hull. It should enable the creation of multipurpose sites that can capture benefits such as carbon offsetting, biodiversity, access, health

and wellbeing, water management, etc. The proposed funding levels also have the potential to be more attractive to landowners, with opportunities for them to change their land use activities in ways they might not have considered before.

## East Riding of Yorkshire Community Tree Planting Fund

In March, the Leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council announced plans for £200,000 to be allocated to tree planting projects in the area, building on the successful work of HEYwoods over many years. A proportion of this money is to be spent through a new HEYwoods grants programme, which will see £30,000 committed to tree and woodland activity each year for the next three years. The fund will launch in April, and will welcome applications from public and private landowners, community groups, Town and Parish Councils, etc. The deadline for submissions will be the end of July.

## Other Matters

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council has replaced the pasture-side fence at Burton Bushes. Working with the Pasture Masters and Natural England, the work was completed in March, and includes the full upgrading of all access points to kissing-gates, rather than some stiles that used to be present.

- A new West Wolds Catchment Management project is being set up to cover the area around North Cave, South Cave, Hotham, etc. This work is looking at issues that create the conditions for flooding incidents in the villages in recent years. A cross-sector partnership is being developed to look at the key issues, identify opportunities, and look how proactive initiatives could be used.
- Around 2,200 willow cuttings were planted at Dane Park Playing Fields in Hull in mid-March. These were planted on the woodland creation site that has been subject to routine vandalism for the past two years. The donor cuttings were taken from Newland Community Allotments with the help of Down 2 Earth, and were prepared by volunteers from the University of Hull Student Union Association, who also helped to plant the cut material.
- The seven HEYwoods Tree Planting Funds are currently starting to receive claims for this year's planting work. Around 10,000 trees will be planted under these grant programmes during 2019-2020, with projects from farmers, Parish Councils, community groups, etc. Two new programmes – based around Carnaby and Gallymoor (near Holme upon Spalding Moor) – will both open for business in April.

Summarised from information from HEYwoods.

Artist:

**Debbie Lomas**



<https://www.change.org/p/help-save-britain-s-hedgehogs-with-hedgehog-highways>

# Air quality in 'interesting times'

How is air quality in Hull responding to there being much less traffic and industrial activity during Coronavirus 'lockdown'? David White, Air Quality Officer with Hull City Council, shows that things are not always what you expect:

## *May you live in interesting times...*

That was one of a number of lines in a list of statements that sound like a compliment, but can equally be a curse.

I think the current situation emphasises this well, and I hope anyone reading this is managing as best they can in these difficult times.

At the time of writing, there's a lot of uncertainty on how things will turn out. By the

time you read this, I hope that there is more certainty.

From an air quality perspective, the reductions in industry and transport present an opportunity to see what the impacts are in a real situation, and also how pollution levels change without their influence.

During the early stages of 'lockdown', monitored pollution levels didn't immediately fall; in fact some actually increased quite notably, which seems counter-intuitive. This was more noticeable with small particulate matter, which isn't just dust, it also contains particles created by reactions between gases, especially in strong sunlight. What it highlights is the influence of local weather on air quality.

The first period of the restrictions on movement coincided with sunny, clear days with very little wind. This meant that what pollution was around, stayed around, and reacted due to light energy from the sun. With no additional pollution inputs, this left the individual particles reacting in a way they perhaps normally wouldn't.

Over the next weekend, the sky started to cloud over, and the wind picked up, which led to an immediate drop in monitored levels, which was then helped by rain flushing the atmosphere.

With a minimal input from traffic and industry, what we should now be able to determine is just how much of an influence the weather has

on the change of monitored values. What I expect to see is levels rise when the sun comes out and the wind drops, fall when the opposite occurs, and, like the Grand old Duke of York, be neither up nor down when it's somewhere in between.

As for what happens when we get back to whatever form 'normality' takes, that remains to be seen, but hopefully, the information we gather during this period will help us to continue improving air quality by helping get an even better understanding of the dynamics of the local atmosphere.

I hope you are all able to continue helping us to achieve this. We really do value your input and comments.

**David White**

## Easy Vegan Fruit Cake

If, like me, you have used 'lockdown' to make a start on cleaning out your store cupboards (a rare treat for them), you might have found some dried fruit left over from Christmas (or the Christmas before?!). This recipe has no added fat or sugar and, of course, no eggs. You do need the dates because that's what holds it together, but for the rest of the fruit you can use whatever dried fruit you happen to have in. If it's very dried up, you might want to soak it for an hour or so in the liquid.

I often make it for the Green Fair and get favourable comments.

### Ingredients

**8oz/259g/2cups** dates with stones removed

**10fl.oz/300ml/1¼ cups** of water (If you just happen to have the brandy or sherry open you could substitute it for a ¼ cup of the water).

**6oz/175g/1¼ cups** of flour (preferably wholemeal or a mix)

For decoration you can add nuts, such as walnuts, pecans, brazils and almonds, or you can ice it, or I just leave it as it is.

**1lb/450g/3cups** mixed dried fruit (including lots of apricots works well)

**2 teaspoons** of baking powder

**1 teaspoon** of mixed spice

**4 tablespoons** of orange juice

### Instructions

- 1 Heat the dates and water until the dates are soft. Remove from heat and mash well. Add all the other ingredients and mix well.
- 2 Spoon into a well-greased 2lb cake or loaf tin (you might want to use a greased greaseproof paper lining to make it easier to get out) and level the top. If using the nuts, place them on top of the cake prior to cooking.
- 3 Bake at 170C/340F/Gas3 for about 1¼ hours or until a skewer pushed into the cake comes out clean. Once cooled, the nut topping can be glazed with a little syrup.

It should be wrapped, stored in the fridge and eaten within one week.

**Hilary** Recipe from [www.veganfamily.co.uk](http://www.veganfamily.co.uk) years ago!

Community Gardens & Orchards  
continued from page 7

## Down 2 Earth

We have been awarded £9,500 from Awards for All which we will use for:

- ▶ Shed
- ▶ Notice Board
- ▶ 26 volunteer/workshop sessions on site
- ▶ Tools
- ▶ Solar panels on container and shed for lighting, recharge drills etc

We received this news just before the Covid 19 Lockdown with the aim to start on 1st April. Now, everything is on hold.

We are going down to the Plot individually to check the site and act on any emergency issues but our insurers advise that we are closed for volunteer sessions and workshops. It has also brought building the polytunnel to a halt; - frame built and ready for the covering.

The plot is looking great;- we have newts in the pond that we dug out and lined last year, I have seen Brimstone Butterflies, we have violets, abundance of cowslips, bluebells about to flower and leaves/buds forming in the tree nursery.

Hope all is well with you and yours.

**Karen**





# Hull Friends of the Earth

## HULL FOE MEMBERSHIP

Contact details		Payment details	
		<b>Please note: the membership year runs from 1 April to 31 March each year.</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Mx <input type="checkbox"/>	I enclose:	
<b>Address</b>		Membership fee (£10 waged, £5 unwaged)	£
		Donation	£
<b>Postcode</b>		<b>Total</b>	£
<b>Telephone</b>		Please make cheques payable to: <b>Hull Friends of the Earth</b> , and send to: Membership Secretary, Hull Friends of the Earth 121 New Village Road, Cottingham HU16 4ND	
<b>Email</b>			
<b>How do you want to receive ECO?</b> <i>Please tick as appropriate</i>  By email (in colour) <input type="checkbox"/>  In print by post (black and white) <input type="checkbox"/>		<b>I WANT TO PAY BY STANDING ORDER</b> We encourage members to pay by Annual Standing Order. Cheques are being used less and less frequently and a standing order helps you to remember to pay and saves us sending reminders.  If you wish to pay by standing order please instruct your bank to set up the payment to: <b>Hull FOE Sort code: 05-05-25 Account no: 27534801</b>	
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I hereby give my consent for Hull Friends of the Earth to store and use the data provided above for business purposes. I understand that I have the right to see the data stored at any time and that I can request its removal at any time. SIGNED _____			

### SHARE YOUR NEWS?

Hull ECO welcomes news and views of all things environmental in Hull and East Yorkshire.

**Deadlines are the first Thursday in January, April, July, October**

Please send to Hilary (details below).

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