

Greener Brockenhurst Annual Report

November 2024

1 Introduction

The Greener Brockenhurst committee brings together a band of committed and enthusiastic residents keen to promote sustainable living in and around our village. We also have a committed band of hard-working volunteers who work on our various sub-projects.

Our work over the past year is briefly described in following sub-sections.

2 Recycling Shed

The Recycling Shed continues to be well used by the community. We currently collect 11 different types of waste that are currently not recycled by New Forest District Council. We are hugely grateful to our loyal team of volunteers who help run the shed. For details of exactly what is being collected, please visit <https://www.greenerbrockenhurst.org/re-cycling-shed>.

3 Making Space for Nature

3.1 The wildlife-friendly garden at St Saviour's:

Over the past few years, volunteers from Greener Brockenhurst have worked hard to transform an ordinary patch of land, dominated by laurel, into a flourishing haven for wildlife by creating microhabitats including a bog garden, shaded woodland, open grassland, pond and log piles. From planting wildflowers and bulbs to installing bird houses, hedgehog boxes and insect hotels, every element of the garden was designed with nature in mind. The garden now boasts a rich tapestry of native plants, providing essential habitats and food sources for local fauna. This project serves a crucial role in encouraging pollinators like bees and butterflies, essential contributors to our ecosystem.

This space is not just a sanctuary for animals and plants; it was planned as a source of inspiration for the entire community. The Making Space for Nature team hopes that this initiative encourages residents to create their own wildlife-friendly spaces at home. Whether a sprawling garden or small balcony there are numerous ways to support local wildlife. In addition, the garden has provided an educational focus for groups of children, including the school Eco Committee, who have helped plant wildlife plugs and bulbs and learnt about the minibeasts they found under logs and in the vegetation.

3.2 Attendance at events

Making Space for Nature had a stand at two events this year, the first at Wilder Lymington in May and the second at the Beaulieu Estate's Family Conservation Day at Bucklers Hard in June. Both were very successful with lots of interest shown in what can be done for wildlife

and how to get involved.

3.3 Future possibilities

Brockenhurst Church Eco team is meeting once a month to help maintain the church grounds including the wildlife garden which is a great support to our small Making Space for Nature team.

Church yards are a rich source of habitat for biodiversity and the Eco Church has invited our team to join them in looking at how best the churchyard up at St Nicholas can be maintained while still protecting and encouraging the biodiversity there. A first step is to meet shortly with an officer from Hampshire Wildlife Trust with an expertise in churchyards. It is very much hoped that members of the Parish and the community will join us in this enterprise.

4 Nappy Library

The Nappy Library was set up to promote the use of cloth nappies by giving parents and carers the chance to ‘try before they buy’. This year has been somewhat slower than last year. We have had a total of just 7 bookings (compared to 15 last year), this despite attending 2 Little Pickles Markets during the year and distributing over 200 leaflets. However, it not all bad news ... The vast majority of our clients have feedback that they intend to continue using cloth nappies either full or part time with their babies. Given that each baby using cloth nappies saves a whopping 4000 disposable nappies from landfill, this still feels like a worthwhile project. We have a fantastic team of experienced cloth nappy user volunteer mums, spread across the Forest, who ‘hand-hold’ clients as they try out using our kits.

5 Repair Café

This is our fourth year of running Repair Cafés and they are going well and seem to be much appreciated by our community. We have held 3 Repair Cafes this year, the last of which was just last month in October. This was our eighth RC and they are becoming an established event in the village calendar. We are incredibly grateful to all our volunteers, some of whom are committee members and some I have press-ganged but who now ask for the date of the next one!

The most recent RC was not as well attended as previous RCs, with only thirteen items for repair, although again we had a very high success rate.

We were joined by the NF Heat Project who had a lot of interest and a lot of information was provided.

At the April RC this year our sewing team made a metre of bunting which was sent to the Netherlands to be joined up with all the other bunting from RCs all over the world and used to decorate the meeting hall for the 15th Anniversary Repair Café in The Hague!

6 The Great Brockenhurst Clear Off

The inaugural Village-Wide Free Cycle / Garage Sale Event, aptly named “The Great Brockenhurst Clear Off” held in April, was a successful community initiative aimed at

reducing waste and promoting sustainability whilst also fostering community bonds. The event saw enthusiastic participation from around 30 residents spread out across the village, who embraced the opportunity to clear out unwanted items while supporting the village's eco-friendly ethos. Plenty of local residents as well as visitors from the surrounding area were seen walking or cycling around the village, going from house to house in search of useful items. Feedback from both contributors and visitors was highly positive

The event was a positive step towards fostering environmental awareness and may well become a regular fixture in the Greener Brockenhurst calendar.

7 Plastic Free Brockenhurst

Back in June of 2023, Brockenhurst was awarded "Plastic Free Community" status by the charity, Surfers Against Sewage, having managed to pull together key organisations and businesses in the village to commit to try and reduce the amount of single use plastic items they use in their day-to-day activities.

Of course, Brockenhurst is very far from being actually free from single use plastic, but that was a first step along the way on this campaign to challenge our throwaway culture and protect the environment.

This year, however, it is sad to report that progress has somewhat stalled. Whilst we have tried to sign up new local businesses to be "Plastic Free Champions", we have had little success. Nevertheless, we have had a couple of successful events – an awareness raising stall at the Village Christmas Fair and 2 Litter Picks, one held in partnership with Brockenhurst College Students – see below for details.

8 Working with our Village Primary School

Having help set up the primary school pupil-led Eco Committee, we have been delighted to continue to support them over the past year. We have held two assemblies at the school this year led by Dawn and plan to have another one closer to Christmas. In addition to the Eco Committee's visits to the wildlife garden, we introduced them to the Wildlife Trust's #30DaysWild challenge in June.

9 Active Travel

The promotion of active travel (walking and cycling) has always been one of our aims, so we were very pleased to be approached to collaborate with not one, but 3 local initiatives addressing this issue over the past year. It is still early days, but we are working with / supporting:

- FOB with their Intra Brockenhurst Safe and Pleasant Walking /Cycling Routes initiative
- Lymington Transition Cycle Group who are doing brilliant work on trying to establish safe cycle routes between towns and villages in the south of the forest.
- The National Park Authority Cycle Working Group who are working to increase the number of permitted off road cycle tracks with the Verderers, alongside trying to devise ways of discouraging people from cycling where they should not. In October, Greener Brockenhurst made a presentation at the Verderers Court in support of the proposed new

routes which join up existing routes and make it more likely that cyclist will stick to permitted tracks.

10 Library of Things

A "Library of Things" is a community-driven initiative that allows people to borrow items they might only need occasionally, rather than purchasing them. These libraries typically include items like tools, kitchen equipment, gardening supplies, camping gear, electronics, and more. The goal is to promote sustainability, reduce waste, and save people money by encouraging a sharing economy.

Greener Brockenhurst is taking the first step of gauging interest / support of the idea locally by setting up a page for locals to register their support for the concept – At least 500 people need to vote for it before it can be taken any further. Currently the number of registered interested locals stands at around 85.

If you are interested, please vote here and spread the word!

<https://www.libraryofthings.co.uk/heatmap/brockenhurst>

11 Working with our Parish Council

11.1 Parish Council Village Centre Strategy Group

In September of this year, we were delighted to be asked to join the Parish Council Village Centre Strategy group. This group was established to look at how our Village Centre could be improved. It is still early days for this, as to date there has been just one meeting, but we are glad to have the opportunity to be a voice speaking up for a more pedestrian and cycle friendly Village Centre.

We continue to be in dialogue with the Parish Council over the loss of the cycle racks outside of Tesco.

11.2 Presentment to the Parish Council asking for a Climate Emergency to be Declared

In March of this year, Greener Brockenhurst attended a Parish Council meeting to deliver a Presentment, asking them to consider declaring a Climate Emergency.

We pointed out that Central Government, Hampshire CC, and NFDC have all now declared Climate and Nature Emergencies, leaving just our local government tier as a break in the chain. We tried to give examples of what such a declaration might achieve, but sadly, our ideas were not taken on board and PC has decided not to declare such an emergency.

12 Eco Fair

We planned to hold an Eco Fair in July 24. Rather than hold it in the Church grounds, as we have previously, we decided to hold it in Brookly Road. We hoped that this would achieve a dual aim of:

- a) Attracting more people and
- b) Showcasing how a more pedestrian friendly high street might look.

A significant amount of effort was put into these plans but we found some traders in the road were concerned about the impact on their businesses. Whilst we predicted that the fair would actually draw more footfall, in respect of their views we nevertheless decided to move the date from a Saturday to a Sunday, when the vast majority of businesses in the road are closed. We still encountered concerns from the Brockenhurst Business Association and, in the end, we ran out of time to resolve these issues leading to the decision to cancel the fair, with a view to trying again next year.

13 Other standalone Events & Activities

13.1 Christmas stall

We had a stall at the Village Christmas evening, where we were able to publicise Plastic Free work and engage with the children with a variety of environment related games and activities. We were very pleased to win the “best dressed Christmas tree” award at this event.

13.2 Talk on Native Reptiles and Amphibians

In March, as a contribution to the New Forest Awakening Festival, Greener Brockenhurst hosted a very well attended talk about our native reptiles and amphibians presented by the Education Officer from the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust and a member of the team from the Freshwater Habitats Trust.

13.3 Community Litter Pick with Brockenhurst College

We were delighted to welcome the then president of Brockenhurst College Students Union to one of our meetings in the early part of this year. This contact led to us organising a Community Litter Pick in partnership with students in March of this year. This was well attended, but there was certainly no shortage of litter to be collected!

13.4 Walk and Talk events held in partnership with Forestry England

This year we have held two well attended “Walk and Talks” in the Forest in partnership with Forestry England.

The first was a “Christmas Deer Walk and Talk” held just days before Christmas and the second, held in the February half term, was a “Walk & Talk on the History & Facts of the New Forest”.

13.5 Support of the Clean Rivers Campaign in Partnership with the WI

Having supported the Brockenhurst WI Clean Rivers Campaign in September 23, we were delighted to join them again on their Clean Waters Campaign Walk in September 24.

Our most recent step was to join with them in organising an awareness raising March through the village in solidarity with the national march for Clean Water taking place in London at the same time (3rd November)

14 Treasurers Report

Greener Brockenhurst accounts - financial year ending 30 September 2024

	£	£	
	2024	2023	
Bank balance	3,125.27	3,361.56	
Paypal balance	275.84	198.53	(after deduction of depos

Income statement

INCOME:

Events	66.36	205.32
Grants	145.25	772.08
Donations	365.47	237.82
Nappy rental	150	283.31
	727.08	1,498.53

EXPENDITURE

Nappy library	72.69	350.42
Repair café (venue hire)	311.25	287.25
sundry	17.98	0.00
Eco-gardening event	0.00	430.34
Insurance	312.14	289.03
Donations	100.00	0.00
Venue hire		65.40
Bank charges	72.00	72.00
	886.06	1,494.44

SURPLUS IN YEAR -158.98 1,721.69

Available cash		
in Bank	3,125.27	
in paypal	275.84	(after deduction of depos
Available cash	3,401.11	