

2019 Annual Report: Will 2019 go on record as the year the public woke up to climate change and biodiversity collapse? Greta Thunberg and the youth strikes gave us back feelings of hopefulness, but the actions of the US, Brazil, Australia showed us that the message was deliberately being ignored in much of the world. Where hope remains in the UK is at the local level with hundreds of councils declaring Climate Emergencies.

Locally the pace of our campaigning is increasing and our group is becoming more involved with Transition Bridport, Beaminster Area Eco Group, Turn Lyme Green and Extinction Rebellion. Most actions we take are either jointly taken or supported by other groups. There are the beginnings of better coordination with both Town and County Council, and school strikers. We will need to increase the number of actively involved members to keep up with the demands.

Fracking: most of the protests by our group against fracking activity happened in 2018. Our group had protested on the streets and in letters to MPs and councilors. The specific planning change we were protesting against was never implemented and quietly dropped by the government. As the earthquakes in Lancashire continued the Government called for a moratorium on fracking.

This is not a ban but short of an abrupt turn towards the US model, it would appear unlikely to be part of the UK energy mix in the near future.



The Green fortnight: Our group held a stall during Transition Town's Green Fortnight on "Food, farming and the future".

Climate Emergency: Our group organized a letter writing campaign to every newly elected councilor in May. We asked a number of local Dorset Groups to send similar letters to urge the adoption of a declaration of climate emergency. The group letter was sent to every

newly elected councilor and letters by individuals were sent to their councilors. When the day came for speeches before the council, the councilors were well prepared as XR had performed a die in on the steps prior to the meeting. Inside the meeting the spokesperson for XR would not let the council shut her down, insisting that she needed an answer to the question why the council could not approve a declaration right then. WD FoE also spoke for the declaration and the council, against all precedent, did as requested.

Since then our group has sent documents to the executive action panel, the result being that the “33actions “ document from national has been used extensively in compiling an action plan. Recently we sent a letter reminding the council that deferred action gave the same result as those who professed to deny climate change: delay.

Groundswell Bristol: June 15th three WD FoE members attended this all day meeting (1+2 who have become members since). These are good tonics for campaign burnout. We got a chance to share our climate emergency cooperation with XR.

Elections x2: We sent questions to the candidates in both elections. Both constituencies (West Dorset and Yeovil) yielded responses from all parties save the conservative party, which consistently didn't reply.

Trees: There is an active and growing campaign to plant trees in and around Bridport. This is part of FoE's campaign to double tree cover, and is a joint campaign between our group and a local group formed recently: Bridport Tree Planting Campaign. The launch was at Bridport's Apple Day and since then those involved has risen to 80+. Funds are coming in and trees are arriving soon. We hope to gain a nursery site in Riverside Park to house saplings awaiting planting. An event and planting day is being arranged for March.

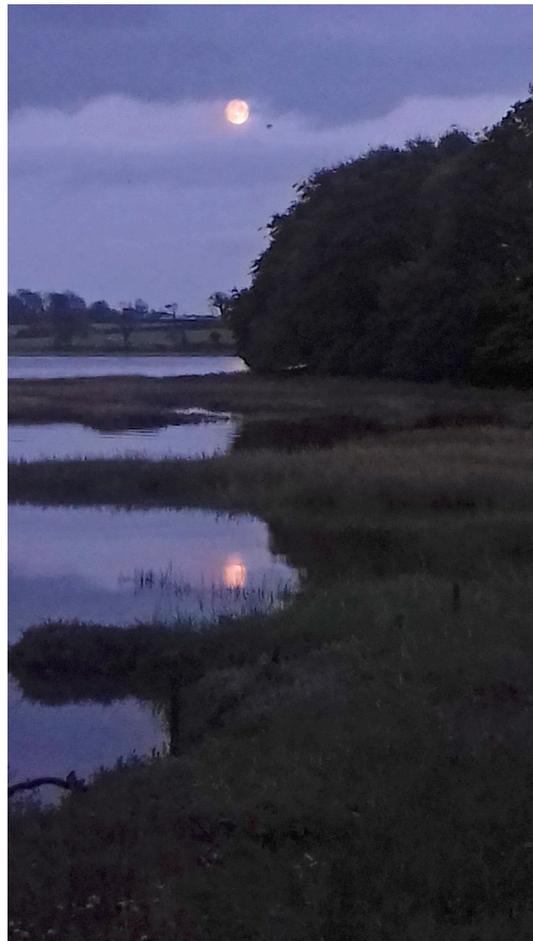


Plastics were not actively campaigned on this year. The reports of plastic pollution in our seas, land and air are chilling and each new

paper paints a somewhat darker picture. This hasn't changed the push of our national campaign to curb plastic production at source and not rely on the imperfect art of recycling plastic, which is technologically challenged and being implemented poorly. With the help of our allies, TT Bridport and Turn Lyme Green, we are now looking to get involved with attaining "plastic free" status in Bridport.

Our group: not just a talk shop. Several volunteers have responded to requests from the group for help. Importantly we have had positive responses from someone to be our point of communication with the Dorset Council and someone who is willing to organize lists for speaking to schools and keep our mailing list up to date.

While there are serious impediments to our planet's healthy future, both Dorset County Council and Bridport Town Council appear to be taking their climate declarations seriously. It is up to us now to share our fervor.



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