

RE-B MAGAZINE

Raising awareness
of sustainable practices

Autumn 2022 Issue #1



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Welcome to the very first issue of RE-Betchworth Magazine which we are aiming to publish four times a year—once for each season. Our aim is to appreciate a celebrate our beautiful natural environment and help raise awareness of practices that are more likely to lead to a sustainable future. We hope you enjoy this selection of articles and we welcome feedback, suggestions for future articles and contributions to future issues. Norman Jackson (Editor)

From Modest Beginnings To RE-Betchworth

The Re-Betchworth story began in mid-2020 when two then members of the Parish Council—Hilary Edwards and Martin Higgins persuaded the Council to invest in 120 Bird Boxes to give a helping hand to one section of our local wildlife. Two years later we've:

- ◆ Established a wildflower strip on Goulburn Green and fostered a group of locals who've done the same in their gardens.
- ◆ Held a number of online educational talks from bio-diversity to heat pumps
- ◆ Shared information on a resource-rich website www.re-betchworth.org.
- ◆ Worked to bring the village apple orchard back into useful production, and similar older trees is so many local gardens.
- ◆ Successfully held the first taster sessions for our own village Forest School.
- ◆ Secured commitment from residents to plant 70 trees as a Jubilee celebration and addition to the Queen's Green Canopy.
- ◆ Begun to make short movies that appreciate and celebrate our natural world and established a YouTube channel
- ◆ And most recently, held our first communal apple pressing day.

We have worked hard to establish ourselves as a credible organisation with strong environmental, ecological and sustainability concerns and in early August the Charity Commission registered Re-Betchworth as an environmental and community -focused enterprise worthy of recognition as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The remit we set out in our governing document is deliberately broad.

Continuing our story of formation —back in 2020 Hilary and Martin were joined by James and Claire Benn and Camilla Peterken, and our website setting out our vision was built by Cathy Honey. We secured welcome financial support from the Parish Council, without whom many of the activities listed above could not have been attempted. Debra McKay and Norman Jackson joined us in 2021, to bring other angles to a team convinced that community-led initiatives and partnerships are the way forward. The strength of our team is in the diversity of interests and the commitment we share for trying to make a positive difference to our local environment and community.

You may already have been involved in one or other of our schemes or read about them in the Parish Magazine; but few know of the full extent of our activities and ambitions. So welcome to this, the first edition of a digital 'reminder' from RE-B, which we'll publish quarterly to share our news and offer new opportunities for joining our community projects. We hope you will find something in these pages to interest you and we are always open to new possibilities so please share your ideas. If you would like to join us please do get in touch—James Benn jb@pottersfarm.net

In case you're wondering. Re-stands for - RE-wilding / RE-cycling / RE-duc-ing / RE-pairing / RE-using / RE-storing / RE-inventing / RE-connecting / Re-generating AND MORE

"RE-Betchworth works to promote the conservation, protection and regeneration of the natural environment for the benefit of the public in the area covered by Betchworth Parish Council and adjoining parishes and helps raise awareness of practices for a more sustainable future."



Celebrating the Humble Apple James Benn

How many apple trees do you think there are in Betchworth? There are some 450 houses in the village, and most of the older ones have sizeable gardens with multiple apple trees: Mary has 17, John at least 12, the Station Road/Old Reigate Road group of houses some 25 between them, maybe more. There must be 1,000 trees, surely, maybe many more?

Few families - even with multiple grandchildren - can eat all the fruit that one mature tree will produce; mum may peel, chop, bag and freeze, and a few villagers have juiced, but typically the bulk of the crop will end up on the compost heap or tipped under a hedge somewhere,. Unless, that is, you are as wise as Ken, and do a deal with the [Garden Cider Company](#) in Chiddingfold.

A new option opened up on the misty morning of 15 October, when a Press Gang gathered around (almost) commercial grade equipment for the first ever Buckland and Betchworth Apple Press Day at the Village Hall. Under guidance from Leigh's Charlotte Kinloch our team set up the weighing kit, the powered 'scratter' for macerating, presses and other paraphernalia in the carpark to produce the first ever Re-Betchworth freshly pressed apple juice. And it was delicious!



By opening time the skies had cleared, the sun was out and the place was a hive of activity with apples of every description being brought in. Inside the hall Sian and the Ellisons provided plenty of refreshments for all, including coffee and cake and ploughman's lunch with our own village chutney, made from apples of course! Clair from our Forest School kept the little ones busy with autumnal crafting and there was face painting too.

Those without their own crop were able to buy juice from donated fruit; and overall demand was so great we used up all our supply of new bottles before the official closing time, even though some people turned up with their own containers. A nice problem to have on our first outing.



Judging by the feedback we received, the first Re-Betchworth Apple Press was a huge success, and a wonderful community event. We'll be celebrating the apple again in 2023, so watch this space – and maybe start thinking about making your own cider next year.

Launching Our Village Forest School

Camilla Peterken

Our hope for the future lies in the hands of the children of today, so imagine you are 6 years old and you are joining a group of friends to gather in a beautiful wood surrounded by nature. In the wood is an inspirational teacher who helps you learn about the world that surrounds you and encourages you to explore and appreciate it through play. There aren't the usual classroom toys, so you play using your imagination and the things you find in the wood. You get to go on a Mini Beast trail to find bugs and creatures, you mix potions in a nature kitchen, and create mythical creatures and little dens for them. You get to hear and tell stories about the animals around you, and you sit around a campfire to listen to a story. You sit on logs which might also be a home to mini beasts!

This is the essence of Forest School and such activities are widely accepted within the educational sector as an important contributor to children's understanding of the natural world. By encouraging children to play and learn within a natural environment the benefits are not only to their learning but to their physical and mental health. Through this form of outdoor education and experiential learning it is hoped that the next generation will become knowledgeable and caring custodians of our natural world.

During August Re-Betchworth, with support from the Parish Council, hosted two Forest School taster sessions for 32 children from Betchworth and the surrounding villages.



Our Forest School was held in a delightful wood in a local garden. Activities were led by our very own Betchworth Forest School Leader and primary school teacher, Clair Cobbold, who has recently moved into the village with her family. Children from ages 5 to 11 years old, spent 2 hours playing amongst and with nature. The hot dry summer meant that insects were not as plentiful as normal but there was no shortage of ants, spiders and butterflies.

Following the success of the taster sessions we are planning to run more Forest School events.

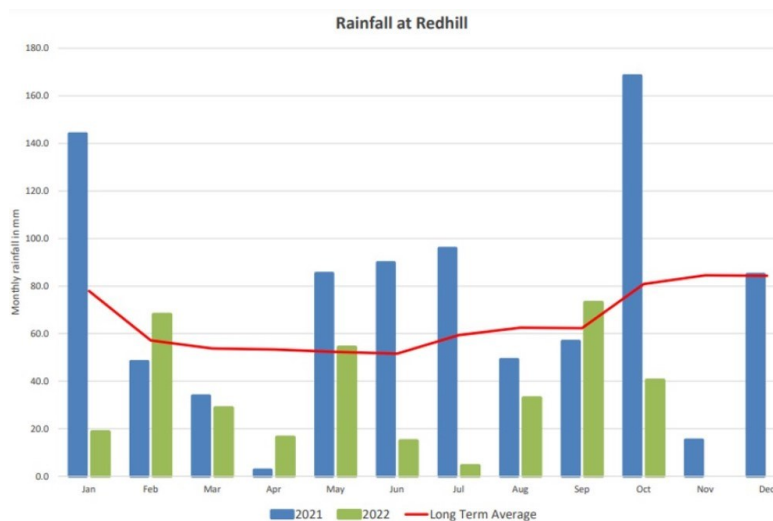
The next Forest School will be held on Saturday November 19th and if you would like to join it, or find out more, please contact Forest School Leader Clair Cobbold: 07799305378. Claircaxton@hotmail.com.

Acknowledgements : We are grateful to the Parish Council for financial support and Ken and Ros Rokison for giving the Forest School a home. We would like to say a special thank you to Clair Cobbold for her inspiring leadership of the Forest School and to the parents for allowing us to photograph their children at play to share a flavour of their experience.

Caring for Our Wild Water Norman Jackson

The unusually dry summer of 2022 across the whole of Europe witnessed the drying up of ponds, streams, ditches and wetland areas in and around Betchworth and Buckland with detrimental impacts on the plants and animals that depend on these natural sources of water. According to the SES rainfall monitoring station in Redhill, we have had significantly less than average rainfall in all but 3 months of 2022.

Like so many other aspects of our environment we need to do more to conserve and optimise the use of this precious resource not just for ourselves but also for the plants and animals that depend on it. RE-Betchworth's forward plan includes action for water.



Our first concern is for the water that nature provides in our river, streams, ponds and ditches – our “wild water” . The question we are asking is: *what more can we do to protect, conserve and expand this precious resource, and make more effective and productive use of the water that nature provides?* Our second concern is for the water that is provided to our homes through SES Water. Each person in the SES supply area uses around 150 litres of water a day at home – that's 20 litres higher than the national average. So the question we are asking is: *what more can we do to reduce our household consumption and make more effective use of the water we consume by storing and reusing it?*



Above: Slough Brook in March when water flowed freely and in August when the brook was completely dry

As an initial step towards developing a water conservation and regeneration strategy we are going to create an up to date inventory of the lakes, ponds, watercourses and wetlands in the parishes of Betchworth and Buckland. This will take the form of a map of the natural and man made lakes, ponds, watercourses and transient wetland areas in and around our villages. We will also undertake a survey of garden ponds in our villages and offer Zoom meetings.

Our hope is that during the early part of 2023 we will, as a community, be able to create more small garden ponds and regenerate existing ponds that have become silted and overgrown. In this way we might seek to enhance our environment and increase biodiversity for the plants and animals that depend on these watery habitats. During the final stage of our project we hope to engage in a community pond or wetland restoration or creation project if we can find a suitable site for development. If any of these ideas are of interest to you and you would like to participate in one or more of the activities suggested above please do not hesitate to get in touch. normanjjackson@btinternet.com.

Betchworth's Contribution to The Queen's Green Canopy and Carbon Capture

James Benn

Inevitably, Queen Elizabeth's death and funeral has overshadowed the June celebrations of her amazing 70-year reign. But, across the nations of the United Kingdom, one Platinum Jubilee initiative will grow and grow.

The Queen's Green Canopy has already created a living legacy with over a million trees planted in Her Majesty's name across the nation last autumn and winter. With the scheme extended to the end of the current tree planting season in March 2023, many more trees will be added to serve as a lasting tribute to Her Majesty's extraordinary service to her country and her people.

Goulburn Green has several excellent specimen trees planted to commemorate past Jubilees. But, to the RE-Betchworth team, a single tree seemed both an inadequate marker of the extraordinary event and a missed opportunity. After all, trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines. Like great carbon sinks, woods and forests absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries; and we desperately need to reduce that atmospheric carbon. So Re-Betchworth set the ambition to have at least 70 trees planted in gardens across the village by March 2023.



The Parish Council gave us their backing and more, importantly generously financed the provision of £30 vouchers for tree purchases at Knights Garden Centre. The discount Knights also offered meant that villagers could buy a young tree – typically 5-7 years old, 1.5-2m tall and in 15ltr pots – effectively at half-price.



This fantastic opportunity to buy a tree, combined with enthusiastic promotion at the Jubilee events in June by the Re-B team – proved effective, and by early July we had secured the necessary commitments to buy and plant the 70 Trees. Stocks have now arrived at Knights, and with a little more rain the ground will soon be suitably yielding to make planting both a joy and reasonably safe.

We have asked that a photo be taken of each tree that is planted and we will upload these, with descriptions, to a digital map on both the Village and Re-Betchworth websites, showing the locations of the 70 Jubilee trees. And we'll be making a short movie from all the photos to celebrate the achievement. Please send your photos to Norman Jackson lifewider@gmail.com.

Autumn Gallery

Our intention is to produce an issue of the magazine for each season of the year and we will produce a photo gallery for the season in the form of a YouTube movie. We welcome photographs to include in the seasonal gallery so if you would like to send us your winter scenes of plants and animals, we will endeavour to include them in our January magazine.
Norman Jackson (Editor) lifewider@gmail.com



Autumn Gallery <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88xJYUy2wEg>

YouTube

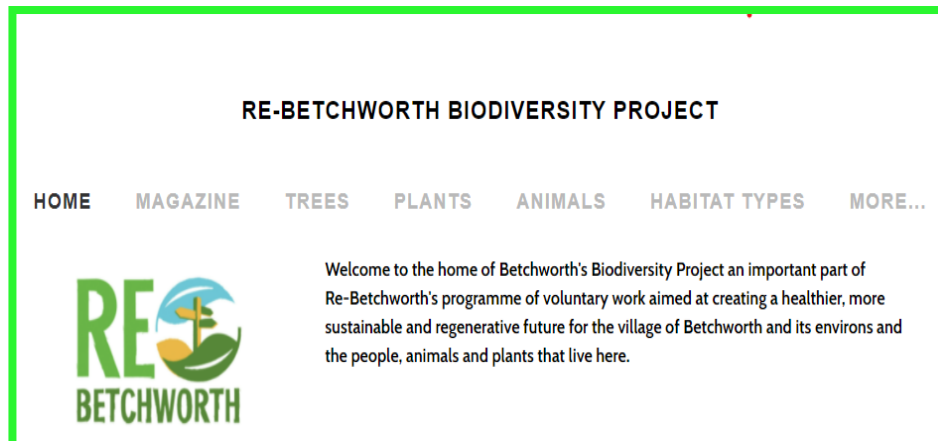


Resources

Resources Hub <https://www.re-betchworth.org/>



Biodiversity Project <https://rebetchworth.weebly.com/>



[rebetchworthmovies](#) YouTube channel

