



BVS Environment Group

Sustainable Blewbury Newsletter

A special interest group of the Blewbury Village Society

This Newsletter covers recent decisions about the future directions of Sustainable Blewbury, events and items of general news for both internal and external circulation.

For the latest news and more information, please see our website at <http://www.sustainable-blewbury.org.uk/>

Welcome to the third edition of the Sustainable Blewbury newsletter.

This has been the first full year of activities, a successful year. But our ambitions outstrip our resources – we need more helpers. If you are interested in getting involved with a project, please make contact with the project leader or one of the two Mikes (Edmunds or Marshall – details at the end of this newsletter).

Projects running or being developed (with contact) are:

- Blewbury Energy Initiative (Hugh Osborn)
- Blewbury produce stall (Sarah Deco)
- Permaculture project (Sarah Deco)
- Orchards (Mike Edmunds)
- The Cleve, springs and streams (Mike Edmunds)
- Downland project (Peter Cockrell)
- Village skills project (Anita Rendel)
- Restoration of the Blewbury Wagon (Peter Cockrell).

Energy and transport

PV installations: Have you considered installing PV panels? Although the Blewbury discount has ended, under the feed-in tariff they remain a good investment as well as a green one. There is more information at:

<http://www.blewbury.co.uk/energy/renewable.htm#FIT> ,
or contact a member of the Blewbury Energy Initiative.

Thermal imaging: You can still register to have your house insulation checked by a thermal imaging camera this winter. Contact Hugh Osborn at hugh@appleinter.net .

Travel & transportation

Bus service: We continue monitor this and let the County Council know of any problems or suggestions for improvements. Bus services will be reviewed at the end of the year so it is important that they are well used and that any problems or suggestions are passed on. If you have any comments on the bus service please contact Jane Gibson (Parish Council) or Mike Edmunds (850337 or wme@btopenworld.com).

Food and farming

Blewbury produce stall: This had a very successful inaugural year. The turnover was £1400 over the four months, 90% of which was returned to the producers. The remaining 10% has gone to a fund for improvements to next year's stall which will start up again in May 2011. For information contact Sarah Deco at sarah.deco@care4free.net or 01235 851441.

Apple Day

The event on October 16th proved to be very popular and attracted over 150 people both from the village and farther afield. People have expressed their surprise at the wide variety of apples and other fruit that are grown in the village. The tasting of many new varieties has, we believe, awakened new interest in traditional British apple varieties and all sorts of exciting



new flavours. From the number of enquiries on the day and since, there may be some interest in arranging a village workshop on growing, pruning and preserving apples – please let us know if you would be interested in us arranging such an event during next year.

We have ideas on how we should carry forward the apple day event next year and in the future – maybe not in the same format each year – but certainly to mark the harvest in different ways. We welcome your feedback.

Permaculture: Sarah Deco is continuing her course on permaculture and considering together with Eric Eisenhandler the design and planting of our planned permaculture site on Woodway Road. During the coming year there will be opportunities for all those interested to discuss plans further and get involved. In the meantime we invite members to visit the web site [www.permaculture.org.uk/] to learn more about the background to permaculture as a revolutionary approach to increasing food production and land management. Please contact Sarah Deco (details above) if you are interested.

Natural environment and heritage

The Cleve and Blewbury's springs and streams

We are working with the Environment Agency on a plan to improve the biodiversity of the Cleve and to encourage greater streamflow through the site. This will be related to a wider study of the health of our village springs and streams and so we will also increase our monitoring of these.

The Downland Project – the Chalkpit and Rubble Pit Lane.

We have been seeking ways to preserve and improve the, now very small and often degraded, areas of natural chalk grassland

around the village and enhance their biodiversity. Our first practical step has been to study the area in and around the Chalkpit and Rubble Pit Lane with the help of staff from Natural England, South Oxfordshire DC and BBOWT (Berks, Bucks & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust).

We hope and believe that the area will shortly achieve the status of a Local Wildlife Site (or LWS). BBOWT are to provide a management plan for the area and some recommendations for the treatment of other adjacent land that still retains some of the characteristics of natural chalk grassland which we hope to present to the membership and the wider village early next year. The Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF) have been very helpful; they recognise the importance of preserving this and many other habitats and aim to coordinate the efforts of groups across the county with the same objectives. Anyone who would like to be involved with this work would be most welcome.

Please contact Peter Cockrell at peter@cockrell.plus.com.

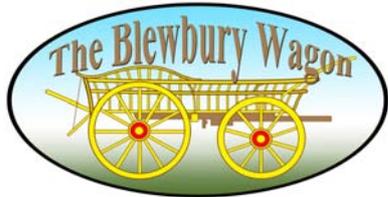
Village skills project

We are also supporting two further heritage initiatives – restoration of the Blewbury Wagon (*see below*) and a study of the village fabric starting with architectural details characteristic of Blewbury. These form part of our wish to revisit village skills which are disappearing and which may in some cases be important for reinvigorating our society in the future. A seminar on architectural heritage has been arranged for next year (*see "... And in 2011" below*).

We welcome suggestions from anyone who may be interested in rural trades, skills or pastimes in which they have knowledge that could be passed on to others.

The Blewbury Wagon

The new appeal for funds to restore the wagon is underway. The fund now holds or has promises for nearly two thirds of the required amount. Roughly £2000 more is required to restore the wagon itself plus around £500 to construct a suitable shelter.



Background: The Blewbury Wagon is a rare example of a four-wheeled Berkshire Bow Wagon built in 1895. It was brought to the village from East Hagbourne in 1965 and was restored at that time by a number of far-sighted and skilful people who saw that this was an irreplaceable piece of village history with a fascinating story. The Wagon has again fallen into disrepair and is in danger of being lost forever. The new plan, strongly supported by Sustainable Blewbury, seeks to collect funds to allow a complete professional restoration to be carried out.

About £6000 is needed to restore the wooden structure; the extensive ironwork, happily, remains complete and can be reused. Some extra costs will be incurred for painting and for building a suitable shelter; it is hoped that volunteer help will reduce these to a fairly small sum.

If you would like to know more or would like to make a donation or assist with the work in some way please contact: Peter Cockrell 01235 850052, peter@cockrell.plus.com, or Coral Richards 01235 850218, coralr.blewbury@gmail.com Cheques should be made payable to "The Blewbury Wagon Fund"

Waste and recycling

The new wheelie bin collections are now in operation. If you have queries about what to put in which bin or have some information from the collectors (Verdant, Tel. 03000 610610 or e-mail: admin.vale@verdant-group.co.uk) please let Mike Marshall (850360 or mike@twintrees.demon.co.uk) know. . . .

. . . And in 2011

In the new year we are planning a number of events.

Firstly a "seed swap" coffee morning which will allow everyone to exchange surplus seeds from last year, home grown seeds, flower pots and more. Saturday 8th January 2011 10 am – 11.30am in the Vale Room, Village Hall. **POSTPONED!**

Then in early February we plan to hold a shared "bring a dish" lunch followed by a general meeting for members and others who may be interested, to update everyone on the current and new projects and see how you can get involved.

A seminar on Architectural Heritage has been arranged for Monday the 4th April with guest speaker Charles Brooking followed by a village walk with him on the Tuesday to point out architectural features of interest.

Please see details of these in the forthcoming Bulletins.

We have now established a dialogue with Blewbury School who have their own Eco-council. We are setting up a web link between the School and Sustainable Blewbury and hope to support their Eco Day and help with food projects and other areas of mutual interest.

For the Blewbury Festival this year we have agreed to coordinate a Village Crafts and Produce Fair on the Playclose. This will build on the Produce Stall idea but with stalls involving others in the village who have produce or crafts of any kind and possibly with some stalls invited from nearby villages. We also plan to hold a cheese and wine evening with a well known guest speaker on a food related topic.

So we look forward to the consolidation of many of the ideas that have been developing over 2010 and look towards the involvement of many of our supporters in the village.

We welcome new members and anyone interested in getting involved in the above (or new) projects

Contacts: Chairman – Mike Edmunds (wme@btopenworld.com)
Secretary – Mike Marshall (mike@twintrees.demon.co.uk)

Website: The Sustainable Blewbury website is at <http://www.sustainable-blewbury.org.uk/>
It is frequently updated with news and information