



Alton Climate Action & Network Newsletter – Oct 2019



Our groups have been going from strength to strength since our last newsletter, with a very successful launch of the Alton Repair Café and the start of the Food group's cooking and sharing course on Wednesday mornings. The lobbying group has been busy emailing councillors on building regulations and improving environmental education and a member of AVLAN has made contact with the headteacher of Bentworth primary school with a view to going into schools to spread the environmental message.

And, despite our being a little late getting started, our climate strike attracted a good crowd and made a big, and positive splash in the Alton Herald – thank you to all those who turned out and especially Ginny Boxall, Paula Langley and Pam Jones for their speeches and Tim for organising the PA system.

Contact: altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

Facebook: @AltonClimate

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Saving Energy in your Home

Saturday 19 October - 10am to 1pm
ALTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS

FREE EXHIBITION – Talks - Demonstrations

- Drop in anytime
- Talk to suppliers
- Meet local community groups
- Info on the latest technologies

- Renewable energy
- Heat pumps
- Insulation
- Biomass
- Solar battery storage
- Staying warm and well
- LED lighting
- Renewable Heat Incentive
- Grants...and more.

Energy Alton is a community group not for profit. We have no commercial interest, just the public's interest.

www.energyalton.org.uk

Don't miss the Energy Alton Home Energy Day

Saturday 19th October
Assembly Rooms
10am to 1pm

With stalls, talks & demonstrations

Come to see what's new and get your domestic energy questions answered by local experts.

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Dates for your diary

Sat 12 th Oct	ALFI Harvest Feast at the Methodist Church Hall 10:30am to 1:30pm
Sat 12 th Oct	ACAN stall at the ALFI harvest feast
Sat 12 th Oct	Alton Repair Café second session at Alton Community Centre from 10am to 1pm
Sat 19 th Oct	ENERGY ALTON HOME ENERGY DAY at the Assembly Rooms 10am to 1pm
–	exhibitors and talks. Come and find out about the latest renewable
technologies	and more. Event to be opened by Damian Hinds MP and the
talks chaired by	Ginny Boxall, local councillor and East Hants District
Council's climate change	champion
Wed 6 th Nov	SETTING UP A “FRIDAY FREE FOOD” SHOP IN ALTON Lucy Lomax from
	Free Shop Friday, Petersfield will be talking about how we can redistribute surplus
	food to local people at Energy Alton's public meeting do come along to find out what
	we are aiming to do. 7:30pm at Alton Community Centre.
Sat 9 th Nov	ACAN Open Meeting 2:30 – 4:30pm at Alton Community Centre.
Sat 23 rd Nov	ACAN stall at the Gilbert White Eco Fair , 10:30am – 4:00pm at the Gilbert
White	Field Studies Centre in Selborne.
Sat 30 th Nov	Possible Tree Planting – we will keep you posted on this one.
Sun 1 st Dec	ACAN stall in the Assembly Rooms at the Alton Yuletide Festival 9:00am
to	4:00pm.

AVLAN - Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature

Congratulations go to Gareth & Helena Hurd on the safe arrival of their delightful son in early September. This has, not unreasonably, led to a delay in the timing of AVLAN's second meeting which is now likely to be in later October or November. Members will be notified by email.

Some of you may have seen in the news on October 4th that the 2019 edition of The State of Nature report was released. The headline figures were that a quarter of British mammals face extinction.



41% of species have declined in population since 1970 as well as a 13% decline in average species abundance, are in keeping with the grim patterns of impoverishment and loss naturalists have glumly come to accept as the norm. But how to grasp what this actually means in our own neighbourhoods?

Consider the sparrows that still grace Alton and the surrounding villages, these are social birds that live in large groups. Since 1970, sparrow populations have declined by 70% nationwide, well ahead of 'average'

trends described in the report. Can you imagine what it would be like if the population of Alton fell that quickly? The loss you would feel if 7 out of 10 people you knew had died since 1970.

It is impossible to know, but are sparrows lonely, do they live under a cloud, sensing that the sparrows who still live in Alton are the last of their kind. Scrabbling to survive in towns, tied to the few good gardens and parks where they can still find enough food, becoming inbred and isolated.

I am hoping that the bushes, trees and gardens still alive with squabbling sparrows in Wooteys, are a sign that things have not gone beyond recovery yet here in Alton and, of course, another winner in this area has definitely been the red kite.



On the plus side progress is being made on a tree planting event in association with Alton Town Council on the Woodland Trust's National Tree Planting Day on Saturday 30th November. Watch this space.

Food

Clare and Mary have successfully launched their cooking course. The 6 week pilot started on Wednesday 18th September - running from 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at Alton Methodist Church. The cost is £2.50 per session and the aim is to learn to cook, share a meal together and look at environmental issues around food. They are looking to recruit more participants so if you or anyone you know may be interested please let us know.

Friday Free Food & Community Fridge

The Food Group meeting held on 30th September focused on the possibility of starting up a Friday Free Food project similar to the very successful one held at the Station in Petersfield, possibly including a Community fridge. Penney Hames, who did such a brilliant job of getting the Alton Repair Café off the ground now wants to turn her attention to these new schemes.

Both are projects which aim to redistribute surplus food to local people, free of charge, once a week, from a central location in Alton. Simple, equitable and waste reducing. The 'Community Fridge' focuses on food that needs to be chilled, 'Friday Free Food' throws the net wider still.






 Tackling the climate crisis together

www.energyalton.org.uk

Wed 6 November 2019, 7.30 – 9.30 pm
Alton Community Centre, Amery Street, Alton GU34 1HN
SETTING UP A "FRIDAY FREE FOOD" SHOP
IN ALTON
Redistributing surplus food to local people
With Lucy Lomax from Free Shop Friday,
Petersfield

Alton Friday Free Food will open its doors in the New Year – planning is underway! Find out from Lucy Lomax about the very successful weekly free food shop in Petersfield and talk with Penney Hames about organising this in Alton. (Please volunteer – call Penney on 07811 217 744).



We'll also have an update on the ACAN food group's work and, if time, talk about low-carbon diets.

All welcome. Bar. Free event – donations welcome.

Food might come from surplus stock identified by local supermarkets, or from allotments where no-one can bear yet another kilo of runner beans, from fridge clear-outs when people go on holiday or any other distributor or producer of food. Anything that otherwise is destined for the bin or the compost heap, so long as it's clean and fresh.

The foodbank has begun this amazing project - the Friday Free Food project takes it one step further - At Friday Free Food there's no criteria for who can receive food, there's no need for referral, if you feel you are in need of additional food - then come and take some and help reduce waste at the same time. It's a simple idea and one that already has a lot of backing from town councillors and officers and from many good people around the town.

We hope Friday Free Food will open its doors to the public in the new year, but we need to start planning now:

We'll need an organising committee of half a dozen or so. Then we'll need an accessible, town-centre venue with parking, some money, a fridge or two for all the chillable things, someone to organise a Facebook page and a social media campaign, advertising, a volunteer coordinator, dozens of people to collect food donations on a Thursday, further dozens to help with the redistribution at the venue on a Friday, including someone to lead on environmental health issues and others to gain basic food handling certificates, others to clear up once the day is done, people to bake cake and provide tea for the 'customers', and a great deal of goodwill.

It should be fun and very rewarding. Contact us if you are interested in helping or funding this project and if you know any other group or individual you think might like to be involved do spread the word.

Alton Repair Cafe

Alton Repair Café opened its doors at Alton Community Centre on 14 September, very successfully, thanks to the generosity and expertise of all involved. 48 visitors brought repairs, and many more people,

including Chris from Wey Valley Radio, came to look around. Visitors' comments included, 'superb', 'professional', 'excellent' and 'delighted'.

Repairs ranged from a huge wine cooler, chairs, a TV, a touch lamp, radios, headphones, kitchen gadgets, dresses ripe for alteration, bikes, secateurs, and a 60 year old Hornby train. The train, fixed by Ian who had just dropped in, was then fit to be used by the visitor's 4 year old grandson, like his father before him.



We started the morning with 11 repairers. Over the next three hours, 10 more people offered their services, some to repair and some to help run the day.

Visitors were generous with their donations, which totalled £216.20. Out of pocket expenses for those helping out were all refunded.

To provide more room for more repairers the Community Centre has offered an additional room.

Please come and see us on a second Saturday in the month, 10am to 1pm, next on 12 October, or contact Penney Hames on 07811 217744 or altonrepaircafe@gmail.com.

Lobbying

The lobbying and campaigning group has held constructive meetings with Alton Town Council; with East Hampshire District Councillors; with Hampshire County Council member for Alton Town - Andrew Joy; and with MP for East Hants - Damian Hinds. Most recently at Damian Hinds public meeting at the Maltings on 4th October where 4 members of ACAN managed to ask environment related questions. His answers did not reflect the scale or urgency which this crisis demands, but after the event when Eleanor Hill brought to his attention that the number of climate questions he had been asked makes it clear how concerned the electorate are, he did concede that we had a point.

Another subject that the lobbying group has addressed recently is that of planning and building standards. We emailed selected District Councillors and the District Planning Officer urging them to seize the opportunity afforded by the redrafting of the Local Plan 2017-2036 to incorporate much strengthened environmental standards for building, following the lead of



progressive councils elsewhere and we have been assured by Cllr Diana Tennyson that the EHDC Climate Change Liaison Panel will be considering some of the points raised.

Energy Alton

Energy Alton continues to be the main mover on Energy campaigning of all kinds in the area. Energy Alton is a member of the Alton Town Council Task and Progress Group, and is providing advice on an energy audit of Town Council buildings. They have also been asked to complete an energy survey on the Alton Maltings.

They also do energy surveys of residential houses as well so if you would like to call them in, do please contact them at energyalton@gmail.com

Their next big event is:

A green poster for an event titled 'Saving Energy in your Home'. At the top is the 'Energy Alton' logo. Below it, the title 'Saving Energy in your Home' is in a yellow box. The event details are: 'Saturday 19 October - 10am to 1pm' and 'ALTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS'. It is a 'FREE EXHIBITION - Talks - Demonstrations'. Key features listed include: 'Drop in anytime', 'Talk to suppliers', 'Meet local community groups', and 'Info on the latest technologies'. A list of topics includes: Renewable energy, Heat pumps, Insulation, Biomass, Solar energy storage, Staying warm and well, LED lighting, Renewable Heat Incentive, Grants... and more. A small photo shows people at an exhibition. At the bottom, it says 'Energy Alton is a community project for the region' and provides the website 'www.energyalton.org.uk'.

Saving Energy in Your Home: Saturday 19 October: 10.00 am to 1.00 pm, Alton Assembly Rooms

Do come and find out how to make your home more energy efficient – save energy, save money and reduce your carbon emissions.

This is a great opportunity to talk to home energy suppliers and community groups and see the latest products. Meet the experts and hear their talks in the small hall – insulation, biomass, renewable energy technologies including heat pumps, solar and battery storage, low-energy lighting, staying warm and well, the government's Renewable Heat

Incentive and more.

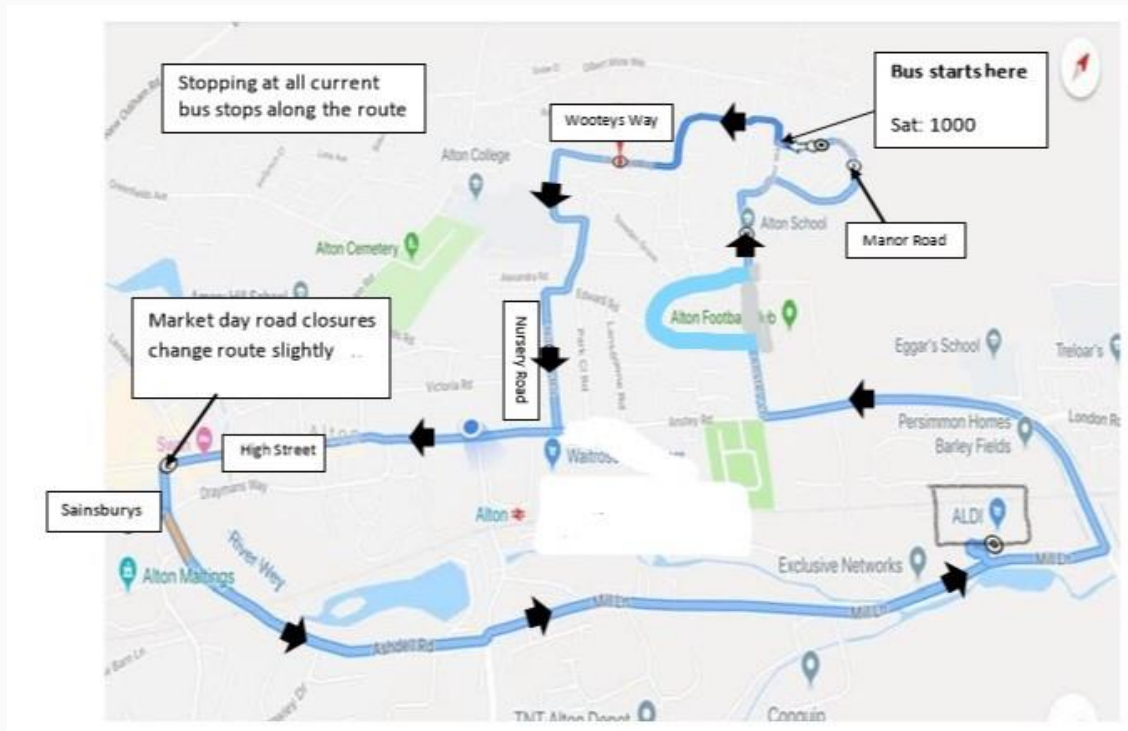
Free event – drop in anytime and stay as long as you can!

Transport - Alton Community Bus Needs Support

Public transport can dramatically reduce the number of cars on the road, as well as reduce social isolation and loneliness. Eastbrooke Councillors Paula Langley and Gideon Cristofoli have taken on the Community Bus project and have started a registered charity to keep this already valued service going.

It is currently running on Saturdays from Wooteys/Manor Road, through Eastbrooke and in to town before going via the industrial estate to complete a loop of the east of town.

Paula Langley is currently driving the Alton Community Centre Bus herself whilst trying to recruit a paid regular driver. The hope is to put together a business plan and find funding for a regular service that fills the gaps left by Stagecoach.



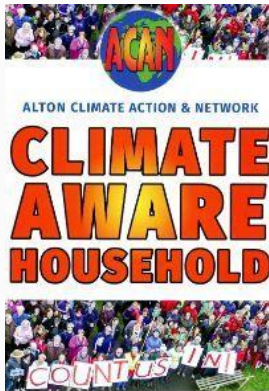
Sponsors are needed for each weekly service to ensure the bus's future.

The service needs passengers and all are welcome. Leave your cars at home and hop on the bus, make a donation and keep this community lifeline running. Good public transport is a sure way of keeping cars off the road and reducing emissions.

The service will be advertised on its new Facebook page 'Alton Community Bus'.

If you would like to drive it, use it or sponsor it you can contact Paula at Paula.langley@easthants.gov.uk for more details.

Information and Outreach



Sadly the delivery of our beautiful Climate Aware Household centrefold with Round & About proved a bit problematic with quite a few householders reporting that they either did not receive the magazine at all, or they did receive it, but without the centrefold.

Happily we have got some spares which we continue to distribute at our various stalls and events and we are now looking to produce an A5 folded version to extend the use further. We can also report that Round & About have agreed to some free editorial space in next month's magazine by way of compensation so look out for that.

In September we signed up with our web site designer and work has already begun on that. We will keep you posted on progress.

Eleanor's talk on Taking Action with Extinction Rebellion was well received and may result in more Altonians going up to join the rebellion in London in the next couple of weeks.

Philippa is going to be talking to the Senior Lunch Club at the Alton House Hotel on 11th November. Please get in touch if you have contacts with any groups who might be interested in inviting us to provide speakers, or if you would like to help with materials and/or speaking yourself.

In the meantime, we continue with our regular slot on Wey Valley Radio, talking about all things environmental, on every fourth Thursday morning at 10am. Do tune in if you can (101.1FM) – our next slot is being taken by Jenny Griffiths talking about all the upcoming events in our busy calendar.

Lesley has also negotiated a 10 day library display for us, starting on 25th October – another opportunity to get our message out to people we don't normally reach as it will be situated on the path to the children's section – do look out for that.