

WOLVERTON AND NORTON LINDSEY

CLIMATE CHANGE EVENING

15th September 2023

Notes courtesy of Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture at WCC

1. Home Heating

a) If oil boiler sales are banned in 2025/6, what are my options if my oil boiler breaks?

The ban has been proposed but not yet passed into law. Heat pumps either air source or ground source are options to consider. It will still be possible to buy a new gas boiler but although connection to the gas grid may be prohibitively expensive. For hot water only a solar hot water system might be viable.

b) How can I find out real world experiences with heat pumps/solar panels?

Guidance for real world experience can be found on <https://www.actonenergy.org.uk/> or 0800 988 2881. Act On Energy is an energy advice charity working across Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Birmingham, Coventry & Solihull.

c) Where can I get trustworthy advice on how to carbonise my home heating?

The Energy Saving trust is a source of trusted impartial information that provides advice tailored for householders: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>

d) Are there schemes available where homes can buy solar panels etc collectively at a discount?

The Solar Together Warwickshire scheme to facilitate homeowners buying solar panels is closed to new applicants. We currently have no plans to run further schemes.

e) What can individual householders do to encourage biodiversity?

It's all about making the most of the space you have. If you have a garden you can implement some or all of the opportunities below:

- Grow wildlife-friendly plants that attract pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, and moths. The RHS have put together a good list to get you started here: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators>
- Create a wildlife pond. The single greatest way to add wildlife value to a garden is to create a pond, however tiny - a large pot or even an inverted dustbin lid in a quiet spot will do. A wildlife pond is a great way to attract amphibians, insects, and birds. Again the RHS have some good resources on this: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/ponds/wildlife-ponds> and <https://www.rhs.org.uk/ponds/wildlife-container-pond-steps>
- Let nature take its course. Don't be afraid to let some areas of your garden become overgrown. This will provide a home for a variety of wildlife ie. leave some areas unmowed/No Mow May <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/>
- Provide food and water for birds all year round. Although it's important to remember to ensure feeding tables are not accessible to cats. Here is some advice from the RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/how-you-can-help-birds/feeding-birds/when-to-feed-garden-birds/>
- Reduce your use of pesticides and herbicides. Reduce where you can and always use biodegradable or natural products if you have to use any.

- Encourage your neighbours to create a hedgehog street. Hedgehogs are severely declining in the UK, one of the main reasons is due to lack of connectivity in the suburban areas because of garden fencing. Creating a hedgehog street allows hedgehogs to move freely between gardens, increasing their access to food, shelter, and mates. Hedgehog Street have their own website and there is more info here: <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>. You can even register your street on their national database as a hedgehog street.
- Provide a variety of nesting sites for birds and other animals. This could include birdhouses, bat boxes, hedgehog homes, insect hotels or even piles of leaves or rocks. Some more resources available from the RSPB: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/lesson-plans-and-supporting-resources/homes-for-nature/>

If you don't have a garden, there are still ways you can encourage biodiversity in your local area:

- Get involved in local conservation efforts – join a local 'friends of' group to help with conservation projects in your local area.

Finally, one of the most important things that anyone can do is:

- Record what you see! The Warwickshire Biological Records Centre would love to know about any wildlife sightings from your garden or local area. Records of wild plants and animals help us track trends over time to see how species are doing in the local area, this also helps us to identify areas where specific conservation efforts may be required: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/environment-ecology/warwickshire-biological-records-centre>

2. Recycling

a) What happens to the contents of our bins?

This depends on the type of waste:

- Kerbside recycling is collected and sent for recycling by the district council, so they will have details on where the recycling is sorted and where it goes next. Each collection authority currently uses a different sorting facility. However, an exciting development over the next few months is that all kerbside recycling collected in Warwickshire will start going to a new sorting facility called Sherbourne Recycling in Coventry. This will mean that the same set of recycling will be collected in all areas of the county and we as the County Council will be able to put out messages to all Warwickshire residents, as the rules will be aligned. It should also mean that there is even more transparency about where the recycling goes next and we will be able to display that on our website. Trial loads of recycling are already going to the new facility from Stratford District Council. Watch out for more information about this new recycling sorting facility starting in October.

Where does recycling collected at the recycling centres in Warwickshire go?

- The county council manages the 9 Warwickshire recycling centres. We display on our webpages where all of the recycling goes: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/waste-recycling/recycling-go>

What happens to the separately collected food waste?

- The collection vehicles take the food waste first to Burton Farm where it is bulked and then hauled to Coleshill. The Anaerobic Digestion facility is run by Severn Trent Green Power. The food waste produces biomethane which is used for the national gas grid and also to generate electricity and heat. There is no solid compost product from this process, the liquid 'digestate' is sold to local farmers as a fertiliser.

What happens to the green garden waste?

- Garden waste is treated at Ufton at a composting site run by Biffa. The process is called In-Vessel Composting. They don't sell to the public as the consistency of the material isn't right for general gardening purposes. It is sold to businesses in large bulk loads as a soil conditioner. Some is used by WCC at our tree nursery.

What happens to general waste in Warwickshire?

- During the financial year 2022/23, only 7% of household waste collected in Warwickshire went to landfill. 51% of household waste was reused, recycled or composting and the remaining 42% went to make energy. Stratford District has the highest recycling rates in the county, so for your area the recycling and composting is over 60% and the landfill is very low. The two energy from waste plants we use are in Coventry and Cannock. The landfills are both in Warwickshire - Bubbenhall and Ling Hall. Most of this landfilled waste was collected at the recycling centres as furniture and other larger items not suitable for reuse which cannot go to the energy from waste plants as it is too bulky. So only a very small amount of general waste collected at the kerbside goes to landfill each year.

b) What happens if the wrong items are in the wrong bin?

The recycling industry refers to two different types of the 'wrong thing' – non-target material and contamination. Non-target material cannot be recycled but can usually be separated from the rest of the waste and won't spoil the whole load. An example of this might be polystyrene packing pieces. They cannot be recycled but are not usually dirty and can be separated from the recycling during the process and be sent for disposal. The main disadvantage of including this in your recycling is that it costs your council to deal with this non-target material. Contamination is material that has the potential to cause an issue with the recycling process. This could be something very dirty that gets all over the recycling and means it can't be recycled. Obviously used nappies, pet waste or food waste should not go in with dry recycling. Other items that cause problems are (currently) plastic film as it gets tangled up in the other contents of the bin and also the machinery of the bin lorry and recycling plant. And drinking glasses and Pyrex are different to glass bottles and jars and can stop glass from being recycled properly. Not all rigid plastic should go in the recycling - please do include plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays – do not include other shaped plastic items for example, toys, guttering, buckets, garden furniture.

The Recycle Now locator and the SDC webpage both give a comprehensive and up to date list of recycling that is collected in your area. Each Recycling Centre webpage has a list of what can and can't be recycled. Recycle week is in October – our e-newsletter for that month will have a focus on recycling.

c) How much of our waste is sold abroad?

WCC manages around 30 contracts for waste disposal and treatment. We go through a transparent tendering process to work with suppliers that offer good value for money and fulfil good quality standards in their operations and recordkeeping. All of the waste collected at the recycling centres goes to locations in England to be sorted, graded and processed; most goes to locations in the Midlands. We do get reports from our suppliers regarding the next destinations of their products, however, beyond that it is challenging to trace the materials as some recycled material, such as recycled metal, is traded in a global marketplace.

d) Does burning rubbish create more pollution than landfill?

We want to avoid any waste that could be reused, composted or recycled going into the general waste bin as waste disposal is the worst environmental option and also the most costly to the taxpayer. However, it is estimated that about 20% of an average household's waste cannot currently be recycled or composted (nappies and pet waste accounting for most if that).

Modern landfills are highly engineered, highly regulated facilities which are fully lined and would not allow pollution to leak into the environment. They also have pipework built in which can capture some of the methane from the decomposing waste and burn it for energy. However, not all of the methane can be captured and any that vents to the atmosphere (as well as any carbon dioxide from waste decomposition) can contribute to the greenhouse effect. Methane has a greenhouse potential many times higher than carbon dioxide and burning it still releases carbon dioxide.

Modern waste to energy plants are also highly engineered and highly regulated. They efficiently turn waste to both electricity and heat. The power for the new Sherbourne recycling facility will come from solar panels covering the roof and electricity from the Coventry incinerator. The heat from the incinerator is piped to the town centre and heats many municipal buildings. The combustion gases are passed through a series of 'scrubbers' that catch pollutants before getting to the atmosphere. The gases are monitored and breaches have to be reported to the Environment Agency. However, carbon dioxide from the combustion does go into the atmosphere.

WCC currently monitors the carbon impact of waste processing by using carbon factors developed by Zero Waste Scotland. That data indicates that although both forms of waste disposal produce greenhouse gases, waste to energy is less impactful than landfill when it comes to treating general household waste.

e) How can we help?

We have a hierarchy of topics that we focus on and waste reduction, reuse and home composting are given greater attention than recycling as they have the potential to benefit the environment the most. On Facebook and Twitter, WCC's behaviour change team Warwickshire Recycles post a lot about reducing food waste, which also helps with the cost of living and reducing packaging. We promote refill and reuse to reduce the amount of packaging that households may have to dispose of. Of course, we also promote our libraries and the many waste-reducing services they offer – books, periodicals, music, film, games...

There are reuse shops at Warwickshire recycling centres ran by Age UK – donations are welcomed and there is an amazing array of preloved goods available for low prices. There are also reuse warehouses in the county, including Shakespeare Hospice and Roundabout operating in the Stratford District area. As well as charity shops there are many online avenues such as Ebay, Vinted and Debop. Free items are shared via Freegle, Freecycle and Facebook Marketplace.

There is a refill shop in Stratford called Zero and other opportunities to refill groceries at small retailers and market stalls. More people are trying solid shampoo, toothpaste tabs and reusable cloths to cut down on waste. Many local businesses will refill coffee or water – find one near you using the Refill App.

WCC has a comprehensive programme to help people get started at home composting or get better. Discounted compost bins are available online. There will be another series of home composting workshops in the autumn and there is an online version via the WCC composting webpage. The next compost workshop is at Alcester Library at 10am on Monday 18 September 2023.

We have a campaign that helps people find all of the small easy changes they can make to reduce their waste – saving money and reducing impact on the environment. It's called Slim You Bin and offers monthly prizes to the best Bin Slimmers in the area.

We would welcome the chance to further explore with the Parish Council how we can work together to promote improved waste and resource habits in the area.

f) Does our recycling really get recycled or is it ending up in a heap in some third world country?

see 2c.

g) What mistakes do people make with their recycling?

See 2b.

We have tried to offer a comprehensive response to the questions although some information is held by Stratford District Council. If WPC has follow-up questions or need additional advice on reducing waste and recycling more, they can contact us directly via waste@warwickshire.gov.uk

3. Fuels of the future

No questions asked.

4. EV Community charging points

a) How can we get a community charging point installed?

As the villages of Wolverton and Norton Lindsey are dominated by a majority of homes with private parking and drives, it is likely that the easiest and cheapest solution to charging electric vehicles will be for residents to charge from home. This can be done fairly affordably by installing a home charging point (which might cost up to £1000) but this is quickly offset by the cheap night tariff compared to the cost of public charging.

For the homes in the parishes without much off-street parking, WCC are currently, as part of a six-month trial, allowing residents to place a charging cable across a footway when using a cable protector. This will allow those without parking to still charge at home, and benefit from the ease, flexibility, and affordability of charging from home. You can read more about the requirements of our cable protectors, and the guidance provided for proper use of the protector here: [Charging points for electric vehicles – Warwickshire County Council](#)

Finally, if you are looking to get a charge point installed, it would be a good idea to work out where you would be able to install one (particularly considering the power requirements) and then approaching a number of charge point operators to see if they would be able to install one for you at the site you have identified. They might be able to steer you towards a site that makes most financial sense, which could then allow the parish councils to install them more cheaply or for no cost at all.

b) How can I get my house assessed for energy efficiency?

You could use the Act on Energy home energy check service: <https://www.actonenergy.org.uk/what-we-do/technical-services/home-energy-check/>. This will not involve an assessor visiting your house but can provide you with tailored advice.

Alternatively, you could get a new energy performance certificate or get your first certificate for your house, by commissioning an assessment. You will need to find an accredited assessor that operates in your area by going here: <https://getting-new-energy-certificate.service.gov.uk/find-an-assessor/type-of-property>. Expect to pay around about £100 for an assessment and certificate.

c) Where can I get good information about greener ways of heating my house?

Either from Act On Energy <https://www.actonenergy.org.uk/> or 0800 988 2881, or online from the energy saving trust: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>

d) Are there any grants available for installing an air source heat pump or getting insulation?

The boiler upgrade scheme is the main grant source currently running in England and expected to run until 2028. A grant of £5000 is available for the purchase and installation of an air source heat pump, £6000 for an a ground source heat pump or where properties are not connected to the gas grid £6000. More information is available on:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063493/bus-installer-leaflet.pdf

Several grant schemes are available for insulation. These are targeted at low-income householders.

Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3) scheme for low-income homes heated by mains gas: applications for funding are applied for by district and borough councils and funds for successful applications are distributed by that Council. LAD3 will expire on 31 September 2023. It's not known if this will be repeated in its current form.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will upgrade a significant amount of the social housing stock currently below EPC D up to that standard. Wave 2.1 of the SHDF has allocated £778 million of funding for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 to local authorities, combined authorities, registered providers of social housing and registered charities that own social housing to install energy efficiency upgrades in their housing stock in England that is currently below an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) D rating. As per LAD3, funding was applied for by Local Authorities. Stratford DC have not been offered funding.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme is an obligation on energy companies and will run until 31 March 2026. The criteria is not especially simple and based on individual circumstances. There is a website to check eligibility: <https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency>, and an advice line: 0800 098 7950. Full information on the scheme is here: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/energy-company-obligation-eco/homeowners-and-tenants>

e) How can I best reduce my carbon footprint?

A range of websites list simple measures, many at no little cost. The Energy Saving Trust lists several: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/top-tips-to-reduce-your-carbon-emissions/>

Even more extensive is a list of 20 top tips at positive planet: <https://positiveplanet.uk/21-great-ways-to-reduce-your-carbon-footprint/>