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Dear Greening Supporters,

There has been plenty of depressing news recently on the climate and nature front, not to mention global politics. So we're delighted to have some encouraging local news to share as a bit of an antidote to all of this.

Bramber Brooks has been saved as a nature reserve, and a new path has opened up on the Wiston Estate to create new routes for cyclists, walkers and horse riders. Steyning Parish Church has also been busily working towards an eco award over recent years and can now proudly announce a **silver award for 2023**. Read on to find out more on all these stories.

Speaking of good news, October's Green Drinks talk on the new [Weald to Waves](#) project was one of our busiest evenings yet with over 140 people joining us at the Steyning Centre to find out more about this pioneering project to connect up new nature corridors across Sussex. It's a clear sign that caring for our local environment is dear to the hearts of many in our community. For those interested in similar initiatives we have details of a forthcoming meeting in Pulborough about the **Wilder Horsham District** project.

It's not all good news though. You'll have probably heard about the closure

of the footbridge across the Adur, the centrepiece of the proposed **White Bridge Link**. We have an update from the Working Group on what's happened and the plans to replace the bridge. We also have dates and details of all our **regular events** this month.

Best wishes,

Geoff & Vicci, Co-Chairs, Greening Steyning

Good News for Nature



Connecting up the countryside at Wiston

The new path on the Wiston Estate and will create a handy new East-West connection along the foot of the South Downs.

The existing footpath that runs from Mouse Lane, round the back of Round Robin Cottages, and up to the track behind Wiston House, has been upgraded to an all-weather surface. Several awkward stiles have also been removed. So the path is now suitable for bike and horse riders, as well as walkers. This is great news for everyone who likes to get out and enjoy the countryside close up, and an important step in encouraging 'active travel' as a healthy antidote to jumping in the car.



A new chapter for Bramber Brooks

After several months of uncertainty, Horsham District Council has announced it plans to go ahead with the purchase of Bramber Brooks Nature Reserve. The Council will be taking over the management of the site, so public access will be preserved and all the hard work over the last 9 years in developing the area as a nature reserve will not be wasted.

You can read the full details behind both these news items on our website [here](#).

Green Activity Locally



Steyning Parish Church gains its Eco Church Silver Award!

We are delighted to hear this news from Steyning's parish church and were keen to know all about it. Here is what they told us;

"Back in 2016, at Steyning Parish Church, we began to consider ways in which we could integrate environmental issues into parish life. For years, the environment had been experienced by many of us as a Cinderella issue which involved much banging of heads against church walls. However, seven years later, and after a lot of work by various members of the congregation, we are proud to announce that we have gained our Eco Church Silver Award.

Eco Church is an award scheme for churches who want to demonstrate that

the gospel is good news for God's earth. Taking part helped us to identify existing, and initiate new, ways of caring for our environment in our worship and teaching, around our buildings and grounds, in our community engagement at local and global level, and in the personal lifestyles of our members.

We made a brilliant start to improving things by installing LED lighting, following our Let There Be Light fundraising campaign. This not only saves us money and reduces our carbon footprint but enhances the beauty of the church for services and for the many community events that are held there. We did a lot of work on reducing our use of single use plastics, using ethically sourced goods and improving our recycling. We changed our gas supplier and we looked at where we invest our church funds and the charities that we support. We developed a Churchyard Management Plan which has helped us to increase the biodiversity of our churchyard. Did you know that if you add up all the churchyards in the country the acreage is equivalent to that of a large National Park? A bonus of this was that it enabled us to work with other community groups – Greening Steyning's Biodiversity Action Group, Life on the Verge, Steyning for Trees, a local group who monitor the Swift population of Steyning, and pupils from Steyning Grammar School. We were involved in the Steyning Festival Green Day and some of us have taken part in Climate Change marches in London.

We also encouraged our congregation to register for Creation Care, which is similar in concept to Eco Church but is intended for individual households. We now have several members with Bronze, Silver and even Gold Awards. As with the Eco Church scheme, the online audit helps each household (couple, family or individual person) to assess their current situation to see how well they are doing but also gives access to lots of ideas of ways in which you can improve. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this, the link is: <https://creationcare.org.uk/>

We know that we don't stop here. This is an ongoing project and although our 12th century Grade 1 listed building won't make it easy to get our Gold Award, we will continue to do what we can to reduce our carbon footprint and become a more sustainable part of the community of Steyning."

Green Drinks Social Night - 29 Nov



Pizza night at the Star

We're taking our foot off the pedal for November Green Drinks. No speakers. No powerpoint presentations. Just a chance to meet up socially with other Greening enthusiasts for a pint and - if you fancy it - a pizza.

We're gathering at the Star Inn in Steyning from about 8pm on Wednesday

29th November. No need to book. Come a bit early if you'd like to order a pizza. We've alerted the Gorilla Pizza folks that there may be a bit of crowd.

White Bridge Link



Update on the White Bridge closure

The footbridge over the River Adur just north of Bramber Bridge was closed in late August, after a safety inspection by West Sussex County Council. Known as the White Bridge, the bridge is a key connecting route for walkers, so its closure has been a big concern for everyone who uses it, as well as a setback for the White Bridge Link project, which was developing plans to upgrade the path on each side of the bridge to create a new, improved, all-weather route.

The White Bridge Link Working Party has been keeping close tabs on what's

been happening. It has been liaising with the three local Parish Councils, Horsham District Council and the County Council, to stress the importance of the bridge to the local community and the urgency of getting it back in action. Here's an update on the story so far.

Why the Bridge was closed

The bridge is inspected periodically by WSCC. A recent inspection revealed extensive corrosion to the steel trusses that form the main framework of the bridge, and on the outriggers that support the large gas and water pipes attached on each side (See photo below). In addition, cracks were observed in the concrete foundations that the bridge sits on. The County Council took the difficult decision that it had to be closed immediately and concluded that it needs to be replaced entirely.



What happens next?

It is reassuring to hear from the County Council that they are treating the bridge replacement as high priority. However it is taking time to scope out the work needed, partly because of the complexity of the job and the need to liaise with counterparts in the gas company (the water main is no longer in use). The indications are that it will be a least a year before a new bridge is in place.

It means the White Bridge Link project is on hold for now. The Working Party is continuing with fundraising efforts and is working closely with the County and District Councils to make sure the new bridge is suitably designed for both bikes and walkers. Parish Councils are also keeping the pressure on.

We know it will be popular when the new bridge does get built. An online survey conducted over the summer showed there is strong demand from local users - walkers, cyclists, wheelchair and pushchair users. Nearly three quarters of respondents said they'd use the path more than they do now if it was improved, and a similar number said they would consider contributing to a crowdfunding campaign to cover part of the costs.

So while it's a major inconvenience for now, there are good prospects that we will end up with a better bridge and a much improved path in the media term. We'll keep you posted.

The White Bridge Link Working Party was established by Steyning and District Community Partnership. You can find out the latest on the project at:

www.visitsteyning.org/whitebridgelink