

Copythorne Annual Parish Meeting – April 30th 2024

Item 12 – Greening Copthorne Update

Hello and good evening, I am Karen Caton and I am part of the small group of local residents' who make up the Greening Copythorne Team.

You may already know but we got together in 2021 shortly after our Parish Council declared a Climate Emergency. Led by Jackie Rhodes we were a group of likeminded people who wanted to find out what we could do in support.

We discovered the 'Greening Campaign' a grassroots campaign established in 2008 to support small community led groups to tackle Climate Change. Importantly they recognise that many may feel overwhelmed by the enormity of Climate Change, so they offer support and expert advice to help everyone make small but real changes such as reducing energy use and making space for nature.

This year work has continued at Splitwind Pond. A small working party spent several days working at the pond. They carefully cut back some of the willow and ragwort, cleared rubbish and planted wildflowers on the bare patches.

We are also excited that a local gentleman has carved a beautiful back panel for the pond's bench which will be fitted soon.

We really want to make Copythorne Parish as beautiful as possible so with this in mind and to help create a 'sense of place' we have suggested that 'white village gateway gates' are introduced. You may have seen them as you enter other villages around the country. Several areas have been identified as suitable positions with top priority currently being given to Southampton Road where, coming from Netley Marsh, the 30mph and CADNAM signs are.

Another exciting development is that our Parish Hall Committee are looking at getting funding for a small community orchard which would be amazing.

A small group from the team were shown around West Solent Cooperative's Solar Farm built on a former gravel pit and landfill site near Lymington. It was very inspirational. Its 9,372 solar panels allow it to export enough electricity to the Grid to supply 650 local homes. But it was also clear what a huge undertaking it had been to set up and is to run so we were delighted to learn that within our Parish Paulton's Park are planning to continue their investment in Solar power by building Solar Panels above their Staff Car park. Such a great example for other local businesses.

As a group we are keen to support other projects and a couple of members spent a day planting hedging plants at Paulton's with Ellie Banks (who leads on the CPRE Hampshire Hedge initiative). Several Greening Copythorne members are also on the Plastic Free Copythorne Steering Group to reduce single use plastics that Sherri Johnstone has spoken about this evening.

Thank you for your time and if you are interested in getting involved, please catch me afterwards to find out more.

KAREN