



# ENVIRONMENT PLYMOUTH

## FEEDBACK JAN & FEB 2019

**WOW.....January took off quickly didn't it !** Welcome to our first, **BUMPER** edition of Feedback for 2019....It's been a very busy start to the year and there is so much going on so this edition covers the meetings on waste and wildlife. We've had some great news, need your help...and the help of your family, friends and neighbours (see the Tesco's item in this edition !), have some challenging new ideas to follow up and forthcoming visits and workshops to consider as well as updates for the Plastic Free Campaign and the usual reports from the January meeting. So thank you to everyone who attended any of our events during January and February.....we look forward to seeing you all over the next few months !

**'We are the first generation to truly understand the impact we are having on the planet. And the last generation to be able to save it ' Sir David Attenborough, Jan 2019**

**IN THIS EDITION .....Tesco's Bags of Help fund. We need your votes !  
Details of how and where inside.**

**The Marine Park, plastics, forthcoming events and more....**

**Responses to the Government's Resource and Waste Strategy published on 18<sup>th</sup> Dec and what we can do to help urban wildlife.**

Please note that Environment Plymouth does not produce formal minutes. The proceedings of meetings are reported in the Feedback Newsletter which is ratified at the following meeting. Environment Plymouth is the city's independent, strategic network for those interested in all things environmental and sustainable.

Membership details available from Co-ordinator, Jackie, at [jyoung.urbanagenda@gmail.com](mailto:jyoung.urbanagenda@gmail.com), or by calling 01752 672537

# Coming Up.....

**Plastic Free Champions Needed !** To secure Plastic Free Community status for the whole city we have been advised that we need to recruit 33 local schools. Although that sounds like quite a challenge, we've already signed up 13 local 'champions' and, at the Schools Conference planned for Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March, we hope to recruit as many more as possible. So far we have a full complement of 140 pupils from 22 schools taking part. Help on the day would be appreciated – there will be an information 'market place' so we will need some stewards. We might even need someone who is approx. 5ft 6" and a size 12 to 14 to make our local womble, Smeaton, come to life ! Please let me know by email if you're interested.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 9.00am to 2.30pm, The Council House, City Centre**

## National Marine Park

The details are still being finalized but early in March we will be hosting an Environment Plymouth workshop on the proposals for the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park. This will be our first opportunity to hear what you think about the idea and how you feel it should be rolled out with as much community involvement as possible. Working with Josh McCarty we will be asking **"What would a National Marine Park in Plymouth mean for you?"**

Over the past year there has been much debate and discussion around creating the UK's first National Marine Park in Plymouth Sound and its varied coastal spaces. Plymouth City Council, working with partners, is keen to take this conversation further by seeking views on what such a National Marine Park could achieve and on the benefits that it could deliver. There is emerging consensus that a NMP designation that recognises the social, environmental and economic benefits of the Sound's spectacular marine environment would be very positive for communities, businesses and visitors.

### **Our ask of you.**

Through consultation we aim to translate the work and commitment from the city and surrounding communities into a marine park designation that is developed locally but is recognised and valued nationally. We believe this move from a concept to a valued designation, must be done cooperatively with those that live, work, and enjoy Plymouth Sound. We would really appreciate you completing the online engagement survey via the link below to help us create a comprehensive vision.

[www.plymouth.gov.uk/marinepark](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/marinepark)

**Next Step:** As stakeholder if you would like to contribute further, we would ask you to consider the following legacy questions, and let us know your thoughts.

1. [What type of legacy would you like to create in Plymouth Sound?](#) (Examples: Lots of marine life, Lots of activity, Clean Waters, Plastic Free)
2. [What do you see as the responsibility of a National Marine Park?](#) (Examples: Manage Engagement, Enhance marine protection)
3. [What symbolises Plymouth Sound to you?](#) (Examples: Drake's Island, Fish Market, Smeaton's Tower)
4. [How could the NMP be more inclusive?](#) (Examples: Access, Learnings, Events?)

**Details to follow as soon as possible**

# Round Robin Update.....

**At the University :** Environment Plymouth's patron, John Bull, joined us for the meeting and brought us up to date with a series of changes on the campus that will help the site to become more sustainable. Many of the changes will be prompted by new signage; reminding everyone of the footprint of the University and how it can be reduced.

**New funding from the former 'Heritage Lottery Fund' :** Laurel Miller will be a key note speaker at our next meeting (11<sup>th</sup> March, 5.30pm, venue tbc). She will be introducing a new emphasis on natural heritage – which has simply been renamed 'Nature'. The meeting will also hear from the Plymouth Heritage Network and the Leat Project.

**Plymouth Churches Green Action Group :** The group is currently recruiting local green 'champions' and has arranged their own visit to the MVV Waste to Energy plant at Devonport.

**Plymouth Radical Cinema :** Just a reminder....for the second Tuesday of every month. 7.30pm in the Portland Square Building at the University. Details from Pat Bushell.

**The Unitarian Church Green Group :** Is currently working towards their Silver Eco Award. Sheila Evans also let us know about the three-day Fairtrade event at the Clipper on Union Street (see details later in this newsletter). Fairtrade chocolate is also the topic of the next Green Book Club (see item later in the newsletter).

The need to maintain interest in both local air quality and action on climate change was boosted by news of the Youth Strike for Climate Change planned for Friday 15<sup>th</sup>. In the event this day of action drew attention across the UK. Although the Government (No 10) made it clear they disapproved of this action, many were in support of the messages being relayed by those involved and of the right of young people to demand answers in this way.

**Climate Emergencies :** The local Green Party was meeting last week to decide how to challenge Plymouth City Council to declare a 'climate emergency' in much the same way as Cornwall Council and Devon County Council. Not sure at this stage what the outcome was but a recent response to a question on Climate Change Action in the city is included later on.....together with the response on local air quality.

## FEATURED TOPIC : WILDLIFE



### Devon Wildlife Trust

February's meeting welcomed Ed Parr-Ferris from the Devon Wildlife Trust who spoke on the topic of wildlife and, in particular, the urban wildlife we encountered on an increasingly regular basis.

Established as a voluntary initiative in 1962, the Devon Wildlife Trust now has 50 reserves across the county and 100 staff members including those who work for the Seaton Jurassic Project in East Devon. A quarter of its income comes from its membership so new enquiries are always welcome.

Until recently DWT's focus was very much rural but, as they are based in Exeter and share their home with the otters and kingfishers that frequent the leat under the Mill building, they are recognizing the changes in local habitats that are being increasingly influenced by development. Increasingly Nature Recovery Networks are being established to support the wildlife populations that many still overlook.

Urban wildlife has a surprisingly close link with humans and, in particular, the domestic animals we keep as pets. But it's not just the 'gifts' brought home by generous kitties that can have an impact. Many do not see sea gulls as wildlife even though they are quick to criticize them when chips are stolen from take-aways. Seagulls are a classic example of

'exploiters' – they pick up the waste and take advantage of the food left on our streets. Mice are another example. We're very good at harvesting food and creating shelter. This in turn provides a home and food for rodents. In a city you're never very far away from a rat !

Another group can be referred to as 'adaptors'. These are species such as deer that make the best of what's going on around them. In general they keep themselves to themselves but there is always the risk of road traffic accidents. The deer that inhabit the areas of Estover are a good example but stoats and harvest mice also fall in to this group.



Avoiders are animals that would rather not be around humans. They are often predators. In the US they include pumas and coyotes. In the UK otters belong to this group and have often been forced in to hunting in areas where river corridors have been limited.

Many species are seeing changes to their populations and habitats. Hedgehogs, starlings, frogs, slow worms and butterflies are all at risk but, like Hedge Sparrows, often do better in urban areas. Hedgehogs are in decline but often do better in urban areas as they miss the habitat changes and pesticides or herbicides applied to rural fields.



Some species – bumble bees and many of the pollinators - are facing dangerous levels of decline – perhaps 76% over 25 years – but they will survive in areas where there is less pressure. In comparison with open fields with little diversity, urban gardens, with their planting, garden structures, hedges, trees and ponds, provide real opportunities so help is always welcomed. House Sparrows have declined by 60% in 30 years but there is evidence to suggest that the movement of sparrows mirrors that of humans in settlements. They are now on the Red List of endangered species as arable weeds, grains and stubble based habitats have declined too.

Swifts are another species that has declined by 40% in 20 years. Here changes in roosting sites – from trees and ancient woodlands to buildings have been observed. However, many of our newer developments do not take their needs in to account so they are under threat again. In Exeter a 90 roost swift tower has been constructed with recorded calls being relayed to encourage new occupants – it hasn't been used yet but it has been 'inspected' so the hope is that Exeter's Swifts will soon be taking up residence.

In Plymouth, apart from the deer, we live alongside the Peregrine Falcons (North Hill and the Guildhall), buzzards (a pair hunts over Millbay Docks), Long Tailed Tits (Catherine Street), squirrels, owls, foxes, slow worms, Herons and Cormorants (Drake Reservoir) and many others.

The DWT champions making a difference and encourages people to care about the world around them. Positive action often follows but, without education, it's a little bit like looking out to sea without realizing there is a marine ecosystem there. The challenge starts with information and awareness and moves on to empowerment and engagement; with wildlife champions (often from local schools) asking what the problems are, whether they are local and what could be done about them. Many projects have been piloted in Exeter and then rolled out elsewhere. Exeter itself has been designated as a 'wildlife city' in a partnership between the DWT Devon County Council and Exeter City Council.

Communities are also involved in recognizing the value of urban wildlife and in designing for its survival. Meadows are another option but, in some cases, this poses a challenge as some of the areas need to be very big and this requires thinking in terms of future resources. Even so, this approach has grown from one site in 2012 to over 30 in 2018/19. Tree planting is another option as Devon has a long heritage of orchard management.



In Plymouth the Active Neighbourhoods Project has done well. In a collaboration between the DWT and the City Council seriously deprived areas, where there was a disconnect between people and green sites, were identified and, through the Stepping Stones to Nature Project, the capacity to management within the community was identified and boosted. In addition, the role of the proposed National Marine Park will be essential as the Sound already has 27 protected areas. There is the option of linking the blue green environment through a network of urban sites.

Engagement will be essential. Get out there and get involved. Change perceptions. Raise awareness. The DWT supports a range of volunteering opportunities, taster days, seed harvesting, scrub bashing and litter picking – all activities that support the local habitats.

So what's next for the DWT ? A funding bid has been made to replace the Active Neighbourhoods project and to extend it to link with the health and wellbeing agenda. This will hopefully help with the delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan which seems, at this stage, to be very positive – although how much of it will actually be delivered remains to be seen. Wildlife education features strongly – with 2019 being the Year of Green Action – but much reflects a policy 'intent' rather than actual action.

Regardless of Brexit the Environment Bill is essential as it will bind action in to law and go much further than the intents set out in the Plan. Here the Nature Recovery Network is promoting the extension of nature reserves from isolated areas to wider, linked networks. The fear here is that urban sites will be lost or degraded but, if the Bill becomes law it will be effective. It was good to see that the Bill was Government wide and not just another DEFRA proposal.



In Plymouth action is still needed. Hedgehogs, for example, need both security and food and green runs to enable them to move through the city in safety. They benefit from piles of leaves in gardens and some cat food but please don't put milk out for them.....it can be lethal to them. A lot of emphasis needs to be placed on mapping our wildlife so that a network can be established for Devon as a whole so, if you see something, please report it.....it might have been overlooked ! Please volunteer or join DWT or other wildlife bodies – they need the help and local expertise. Stand up for wildlife by writing to your MP and campaign for 'Our Wilder Future' ...it really needs people to shout about it.

John Bull thanked Ed on behalf of Environment Plymouth and reminded the meeting that the threat to wildlife is not going away. Human populations are rising so we need to be proactive to ensure we do not drive species in to extinction. The bottom line is education – the key is to ensure that people know what is on their doorstep and enable them to find the best way of helping out. He also emphasized the importance of insects. We only know about less than 2% of the world's population of invertebrates – so, in many ways, we don't even know what's on the planet to protect.

Ed agreed with this. He noted that if it is pretty or fluffy we tend to fuss over it but if it is slimy or ugly we don't. Kids, however, do 'get it' so we need to lead by example even if it means introducing the 'yuck' factor. Penny emphasized the need for care and attention to the details too – especially where sites are potentially threatened by development. She also advised the meeting that a bid for funding for a Pocket Park in Howe Street has been submitted in partnership with the Council.



On mapping, some work has been completed and the Plan for Trees due in March will really help but the data collected has to be robust. Without reputable data the wrong decisions could be made.

Sara Palmer set out the plans for the land around the Land Registry which, hopefully, will be re-sown with wildflower meadows if the grounds team can be persuaded to take action. There are various ways of achieving this and it would be possible to support a Land Registry Volunteers Group with other willing helpers from Environment Plymouth if needed.

Alan Ramage sought advice on protecting wildlife areas from the likes of mountain bikers and riders. He asked at what point complaints should be made and whether there was anything that could be done to limit the misuse. Ed advised that sites are always under pressure; especially if they appeal to multiple users. Unfortunately just saying 'no' won't help. The best approach, if possible is to work with all the users to agree a compromise and to separate out the trails from the areas most at risk. It takes a bit of understanding on both sides but, if conflict can be avoided, solutions can often be found. Alan was concerned about the areas of Radford Woods where the steepest and wildest sites for wildlife are those that attract the thrill seekers. He noted that the 'conflict' had been going on for some time.

**Ed was thanked for his presentation – we look forward to boosting links with the DWT as the network develops so all ideas welcomed.**



## Do You Shop at Tesco's ?

### Could you if it would help us secure some funding ?

If you shop at any of the following Tesco's outlets in Plymouth between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 you could help us to win between £1000 and £4000 from the Tesco's 'Bags of Help' fund that is being administered by Groundwork. The fund comes from all the 5ps charged for their carrier bags ! We applied in the Autumn and have been told we are one of three local finalists. So do you, or could you, shop at :

COMPTON PLYMOUTH EXPRESS PL3 5JU

MUTLEY PL PLYMOUTH EXPRESS PL4 6JJ

PLYMOUTH ALEXANDRA RD EXPRESS PL4 7EG

PLYMOUTH BEAUMONT RD EXPRESS PL4 9AZ

PLYMOUTH DISCOVERY HEIGHTS EXPRESS PL1 1UH

PLYMOUTH METRO, CITY CENTRE PL1 1RA

PLYMOUTH NOTTE ST EXPRESS PL1 2AR

PLYMOUTH ROBOROUGH EXTRA PL6 7RF.

Or PLYMOUTH TRANSIT WAY SUPERSTORE

PL5 3TW

When you make your purchases you'll be given a voting token and we'll be one of the options for your vote.

**PLEASE VOTE FOR US**



## What's New ?

At the full Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018, Councillor Darren Winter proposed a motion regarding the Council's commitment to the accelerated reduction in single-use plastic by 2020. Following a debate the Council agreed that :

a) All events on Plymouth City Council land will complete an Environmental Assessment prior to the event to show how single-use plastic will be eliminated, replaced by alternatives or, at least, reduced to an absolute minimum and how the maximum level of recycling of other plastics will be achieved.

b) All Council buildings will go single-use plastic free by September 2019

c) Building on existing commitments, the Surfers Against Sewage [SAS] community campaigns, Plymouth City Council, working with the Plastic Task Force members, will develop and introduce a city-wide voluntary code of conduct to ban single-use plastics such as plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery and single-use coffee cups that will come in to place by the end of 2019.

As the lead for the AVOID theme in the Plan for Plastics, Environment Plymouth will be contributing significantly to the text of this 'code' as it picks up on success that has already been achieved.

We have now been advised, by SAS, that we need to show a good citywide spread of Business Pioneers and the recruitment of 33 schools to gain citywide status. We have 12 already and hope to sign up the remaining 21 on or after a major schools conference on 28<sup>th</sup> March.

Watch out for more workshops and events over the Summer !

# MEETINGS for 2019

Environment Plymouth's regular meetings take place on the second Monday of every month with an evening meeting on a quarterly basis. The dates and times for 2019 are set out below but we have yet to secure venues and, in some cases, topics for discussion.

## STEERING GROUP

Environment Plymouth's Steering Group (Penny, Jackie, Pat, Richard, Caroline, Hugh and James....with Nicky as our 'observer') has met twice recently – there is so much going on.

One good piece of news is that the Pennon Group (via South West water) has agreed to fund our work on plastics until April 2020 – and are very keen to boost the working relationship we have with the group which includes Viridor. As soon as we can we will be organizing site visits to the MRF at Chelson Meadow and the new waterworks at Roborough.

It is becoming very clear that other funding options may soon be available to us – including the Heritage Lottery's new Nature fund – so we will be looking at a 'developmental' strategy soon. This will help us set out where we all want Environment Plymouth to go in the next few years and guide funding bids.

We are keen to talk to the SEI at the University about shared space and events and are already planning an EP workshop on the proposed Marine Park (early March) and, possibly, some more in depth discussions about what a sustainable city for the 21<sup>st</sup>+ Century might look like.

**All ideas are welcome so please contact Jackie to have your say.**

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February, 10am** : Urban Wildlife – Protection, Conservation and Priorities. With Ed Parr-Ferris of the Devon Wildlife Trust. How can we all help ?

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 5.30pm** : The new Heritage Lottery Fund (with a focus on natural heritage) and local examples including an introduction to the city's Heritage Network.

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April, 10am** : Plymouth's Vulnerability to Climate Change. In addition to work planned for Environment Plymouth's Climate change group, there are several local specialists we can engage as speakers.

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May, 10am** : Fashion Faux Pas.....the impact of the industry on the environment and sustainability.

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 5.30pm**: Rather than a meeting we will be celebrating our official second birthday so keep an eye out for further details and let me know if you have any ideas. What would you like to do ?

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July, 10am** : Our Vulnerability to Climate Change...should we be worried here in the South West ? The national footprint figs should be out by then...will Plymouth have maintained its successful reduction programmes ?

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August, 10am** : Summer field trip tbc

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September, 5.30pm** : Topic tbc

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 10am** : Topic tbc

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 10am** : Topic tbc

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 10am** : Another Year of Action on Plastics and annual review.

Also to be arranged : Visits to the Materials Recycling Facility at Chelson, the new Water Treatment works at Roborough, the Ad Plant at Langage and further MVV Tours.

# Plymouth's Polar Bear Explorer



This lovely trail of polar bear cubs and their messages on plastic is still running and will be until March 3<sup>rd</sup>. 20 Polar Bear cubs have been let loose across Plymouth's Waterfront. The cubs are hiding in Sutton Harbour, The Barbican, Hoe, Millbay and Royal William Yard. Each cub will have a Bear Fact with them, telling us about the Arctic and the oceans, how plastic is affecting their home and how we can all help. Your task is to become a Polar Bear Explorer and find each of the Polar Bear cubs with their Bear Facts, complete the trail and make your own pledge to contribute to the wider campaign.

## A CASTING CALL FOR A FILM ABOUT TACKLING PLASTICS !

Hello! I am an enthusiastic environmental artist and student at Plymouth College of Art. Last year I had a dream which became a performance, shown at various venues around Plymouth, called 'Drowning in Plastic', in which I was dressed in a plastic 'fish' costume. The audience and my protagonists bury me in plastic bottles and packaging in a large wire cage resembling a rubbish bin. It proved very popular and people said how powerful and moving it was. I am now planning to make a short film at the tidal pool near Royal William Yard, Plymouth in collaboration with other students, and we would like to engage with would-be actors who could feature in the film.

The idea is to have a series of people engaging in everyday activities, chatting, playing, going shopping, walking a dog, etc. carelessly dropping plastic into the pool. I can imagine kids kicking a plastic bottle around or using it as a target for throwing pebbles. The next minute a huge fish-monster (dressed in a plastic costume) rears up through the plastic which has accumulated, thrashing around in distress, disappearing and reappearing, and eventually collapsing. I want to film the reactions. Perhaps fright, anxious giggles, grabbing each other, hiding away, staring in disbelief, horror, sadness... they then walk away. In the next scene people are trying to drag a large fishing net containing plastic from the pool but it is too heavy and they give up, walking away. The last scene starts with a long shot of the 'fish' lying on the side of the pool next to the water. The camera zooms in as the 'fish' rolls over to reveal a human face.

We are planning to film early mornings on 19/20th March or 2/3rd April (depending on the weather), before the Easter holidays, as we don't want too many people about. We have permission from Plymouth City Council to use the venue and Plymouth Collage of Art have agreed to insure all students and volunteers who take part, pending risk assessments. We are also looking for people to help with transport, refreshments, moving the plastic and helping clear it up, in and out of the water. If you have a wetsuit, +/- mask and snorkel you would be particularly welcome. We are also hoping to find a few people with kayaks or similar craft who could retrieve any plastic items that escape into the sea (we won't release any plastic if there is an off-shore wind). Any help with filming, editing, publicity, fundraising, etc would also be much appreciated. Any sponsorship would be acknowledged and rewarded. This promises to be an exciting project. I do hope that you can be involved. Please contact me for more information.

Judith Harington email: [judyharington@gmail.com](mailto:judyharington@gmail.com) or [jh10678076@pca.ac.uk](mailto:jh10678076@pca.ac.uk) mobile: 07789955031



# From the Council.....

At the Full Council meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 two very appropriate questions were posed to Cllr Sue Dann, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene. The first, asked by Jackie Young, focused on climate change action and the second, asked by Alan Ramage, focused on air quality. The responses which are now available on the Council's website (even if they can prove a little difficult to find) are set out below and are worth a quick read as Environment Plymouth has working groups on both topics.

## Tackling Climate Change :



**The Question :** On 8th October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a stark warning of the need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. Given the emphasis on public involvement in this report, how does Plymouth City Council propose to lead the local action required to realise this target?

**The Response:** We take the IPCCs warnings very seriously. The report made clear that we cannot afford to delay further action on Climate Change and the need continue our acclaimed work on our City's Low Carbon future. This Administration has made a manifesto pledge in re-committing Plymouth to become a carbon neutral city by 2050 and working to achieve our interim target of halving emissions by 2034. Our soon-to-be adopted Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan provides the statutory planning policies to pursue these ambitions through the consideration of future developments. •

We are already delivering a range of energy efficiency and new renewable generation projects across the City including:

- Allocating £350,000 to our Energy Company Obligation top up grant fund to support 500 fuel households get energy efficiency improvements in their homes
- Launching a new Warm Homes Fund to allow another 200 homes to get brand new efficient heating systems
- Drilling a 100 metre deep borehole to access ground source heat to support regeneration of the Civic Centre, and the expansion of District wide heating solutions
- Running an ambitious energy advice and community engagement programme to give 1,000 homes the opportunity get free LED lights and other simple energy saving measures
- Working across our estate, and in partnership with Plymouth Energy Community to identify new solar and other renewable projects across the City.
- Working with Schools and community buildings to drive an uptake in LED lighting systems In addition to this we are also:
- Continuing to run our successful Plymotion campaign offering incentives to City Council Monday 19 November 2018 encourage residents to try greener, cheaper and healthier ways of travelling.
- Investing heavily in public transport infrastructure.
- Have approved a Plan for Plastics and banning Single Use Plastics from Council venues.
- Committing to install more electric car charging points across Plymouth.

However we recognise there is more to do in response to what the IPCC have said. Plymouth City Council is already leading several innovative initiatives in relation to climate change issues - but to achieve even more we will need the support of central government, our local businesses, other public sector partners and a range of community organisations to make the difference required.

**Comment :** Essentially it is the very last paragraph here that is encouraging as there are many climate change related issues that have been omitted from the Council's approach. Whilst tackling home energy, fuel poverty and renewables is to be applauded, there is much more that needs to be done and, very soon, Environment Plymouth will be gathering together our Working Group to consider the city's vulnerability to sea level rise, extreme weather events, reducing our carbon footprint, local and global awareness and what households can do to help. It's going to be very interesting to see if the student's strike for climate change on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February will have any impact or whether the Council will accept and adopt the Green Party's call for a Climate Resolution and a far greater commitment to what is becoming one of the most serious threats to Plymouth and the world. Our meeting in July will take a closer look at how we can plug the gaps in local action.

## Local Air Quality :

**The Question :** Will PCC task its Public Health Team to assess relevant health data for citizens resident close to arterial routes compared to those who are not close? What legislation and policy changes would PCC wish citizens to lobby their MPs for to help enhance PCC's current air quality improvement measures?

**The Response:** The Public Health team currently assess a wide range of data at different geographical levels, as defined by the Office of National Statistics. Reports based on neighbourhood and ward level, for example, are available on our website. Data shows a trend of worsening health from the east towards the west of the city, which reflects the



pattern of deprivation rather than tracking arterial routes.

The analysis of health data to determine the impact of air quality is complex; multiple factors influence health, air quality changes very sharply with distance from a road, people's home postcode may not reflect their exposure to different pollutants. The complexity of this means that it is the topic of large-scale research, rather than routine monitoring. This large-scale research has been carried out and has shown significant harm can result from exposure to pollution.

Therefore the position this Council takes is that there is a proven link between poor air quality and worse health outcomes, and so we take air quality very seriously. The principles of protecting the air we breathe is contained within the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP), as it was previously in the Plymouth Plan and the Local Development Framework before that.

Plymouth City Council has a balanced transport strategy that seeks to support the objective of cleaner, healthier air for its residents and visitors. Emissions from road transport are by far the greatest cause of air pollution in Plymouth, and significant transport schemes have been carried out and are planned to shift the flows of traffic to reduce exposures. The strategy also has a strong focus on encouraging greater sustainable transport use with more trips undertaken by bus, cycle and foot, alongside reducing the need to travel, and enabling greater use of cleaner fuel vehicles.

Indeed since 2014, when the Air Quality Management Area was put in place, air quality improvements are being observed in all of the areas contained within the AQMA with all but one small area well within recommended levels. We have recently worked closely with DEFRA to validate and analyse all data, with the result that they are satisfied that the actions taken by Plymouth have shown results, with schemes currently underway predicted to reduce air pollution even further. Influencing the type of vehicle that people and businesses buy and how they use them are predominantly in the gift of central government. The following policy changes would therefore help to drive the transition towards less polluting private transport choices:

- Unfreeze the fuel duty escalator and significantly increase the duty on highpolluting diesel relative to petrol
- Reverse the recent decision to reduce the recent decision to cut the Plug In Car Grant (which reduces the purchase cost of electric cars) from £4.5k to £3.5K

- Amend Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) rates to disincentivise ownership of diesel vehicles as well as incentivising low carbon emission vehicles
- Significantly increase the money available to local authorities under the Air Quality Grant (just £3m for the whole of England & Wales in 2018)
- Provide more incentives for businesses to replace diesel light goods vehicles (LGVs) with electric powered alternatives (e-cargobikes, e-vans, e-microvehicles)
- Provide more incentives for bus operators to replace diesel buses with alternative powered buses (electric, LNG (liquefied natural gas), biogas and hydrogen)
- Abolish VAT on electric bikes

**Comment :** This is a little worrying as much of the proposed action seems to rely on policy change at a national level rather than action to improve local conditions. Reliance on the Joint Local Plan is also worrying as it always seems to delay any commitment to local action so, again, this is a topic we will be keeping a close eye on.

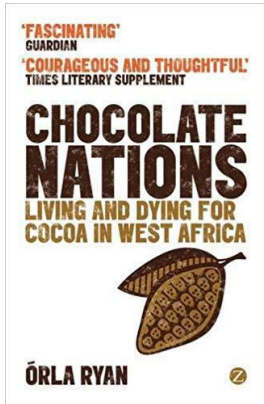
## What to do with Waste and Resources

The chosen topic for January's meeting has resulted in some very interesting comments at both a local and national (possibly international level so a separate and focused 'Discussion Paper is being drawn up so that it can be shared. That should be with you within the next week. The formal consultation has just opened and closes in May so if you want to send your own responses in please do.....you can find all the documents at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/resource-and-waste-and-plastic-packaging-tax-consu-1/>

One of the Government's proposals was particularly of interest to the Plymouth Food Waste Partnership who, for the last four years, has been trying to persuade the City Council to change their current policy as the only local authority in Devon not to collect household food waste.

The Government is now considering whether to introduce food waste collections as a compulsory activity for all local authorities so Penny, Jackie and Pat will be meeting with Cllr Sue Dann as soon as possible to see how the Labour Group's manifesto pledge for a trial scheme might be rolled out. We understand it is currently 'on hold' as other 'issues' have taken priority. It would be great to think the decision could be made locally through informed choice rather than Government enforcement.





## Global Book Club Plymouth

# Chocolate Nations: Living and Dying for Cocoa in West Africa

by Orla Ryan

Chocolate Nations reveals the hard economic realities of our favourite sweet. This vivid and gripping exploration of the reasons behind farmer poverty includes the human stories of the producers and traders at the heart of the West African industry. Orla Ryan shows that only a tiny fraction of the cash we pay for a chocolate bar actually makes it back to the farmers, and sheds light on what

Fair Trade really means on the ground. **Join us in Fairtrade Fortnight to discuss this insightful account of a key food industry.**

**Free Event Open to All : When ? Wednesday 6 March 2019 What time ? 7:00-8:30 pm**

**Where : Rolle Building room 117, University of Plymouth**

**This room has disabled access. If the ground floor door is locked ring 01752 588400.**

**If you don't have time to read it, a summary will be available.** For more information email [s.kay@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:s.kay@blueyonder.co.uk) or call DDE on 01392 438811 Global Book Club Plymouth is an initiative of Devon Development Education. DDE would like to thank Plymouth University for supporting the Global Book Club.

### SNIPPETS

Interested in solar panels ?

Jamie Wood has been in touch about a range of products designed and produced here in Devon.

The range can be viewed at [www.solar-range.com](http://www.solar-range.com)

or contact Jamie on

(m) 07969138692 or

(t) 01392 247577

### SNIPPETS

Pollenize is a new CIC that supports community beekeeping, local honey and pollinator conservation in the urban setting of Plymouth. They We are about to launch in the city across three carefully selected sites, and will be working closely with British Black bee, and the Mt Edgecombe apiary.

We have an important aspect of the business which concentrates with re-establishing wildflower foraging habitats for pollinators in an urban environment. We are looking for ways to record our data with citizen science, and are working closely with one of the sites to implement this.

See [www.pollenize.org.uk](http://www.pollenize.org.uk) for more info.

## Sustainable Seas Report Jan 2019

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/news-parliament-2017/sustainable-seas-report-published-17-19/>

Published in response to last year's inquiry, this report covers the potential future of fisheries as well as the damage we are doing to the marine environment from waste and sewage disposal. It should contribute a great deal to the National Marine Park discussions.

# Local Beach Cleans.....

Many thanks to Oleta and the Plymouth Beach Clean Volunteers for their continued hard work around our coastline.

No	Date	Day	Location	Start	Finish	Low Tide
46	23.02.19	Saturday	Jennicliff	13.00	15.00	14.28
47	24.02.19	Sunday	Bovisand	14.00	16.00	15.13
48	04.03.19	Monday	Mount Batten	10.00	12.00	10.53
49	10.03.19	Sunday	Hoe Waterfront	13.00	15.00	14.07
50	17.03.19	Sunday	Bovisand	09.30	11.30	08.21



## Fair Trade Celebrations

To mark Fair Trade Fortnight, there will be a 3 Day Fair Trade Festival at the Clipper, 96 Union Street. Thursday 28th February, Friday 1st March, Saturday 2nd March. This lively event will include speakers, producers, consumers. The Co-op will be promoting a wide range of Fair Trade items and explaining their ethical guidelines for the growers and suppliers to ensure all raw FT ingredients are produced under fair treatment for the workers. **For more details please contact the organiser Mary Elphinstone on**

[mge6015@gmail.com](mailto:mge6015@gmail.com) or pop into 'The Clipper' to find out more.

## Save the Date & Join the UK's Biggest Ever Clean-Up

Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean | Great Big School Clean

22 March - 23 April 2019

**Keep Britain Tidy will be counting on us/you to help make the Great British Spring Clean 2019 the country's biggest ever mass-action environmental campaign.**

You can now find out more about this great event and the location of local events on

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>

# FREE TALKS

Thanks to Pat at Transition Plymouth for this information. These free talks (donations accepted) come from John Hepburn of the Wembury Marine Conservation Area Advisory Group. They may look a bit technical, but they're aimed at non-specialists who are particularly encouraged to come along.

**21 March** : Penny Mills, Devon director for the Campaign to Protect Rural England will talk about the Campaign's plans. Book at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/campaign-to-protect-rural-england-tickets-56431834135>.

**11 April** : Amy Cartwright of the Sheehan Research Group at Plymouth University will give a talk on "Assessing ecological responses to wave energy developments to inform future management" looking at the benefits and impacts of these installations.

Tom Stamp will also be talking about IBASS : a project which aims to investigate how bass move and grow within Devon's estuaries. Book at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/two-talks-energy-from-waves-a-free-ride-bass-what-do-they-get-up-to-tickets-55652109959>

**12 & 13 June** : For the seventh year we will host graduates from Plymouth University's Marine Institute coming to tell us about their final degree projects at the Marine Centre, Wembury. The first group of 5 will be on 12 June, the second on 13 June. On both evenings the talks will start at 1900 and questions will be welcomed.

Book on [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wembury-mca-advisory-group-student-talks-tickets-45032870528](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wembury-mca-advisory-group-student-talks-tickets-45032870528). You will need to register separately for each evening. The 12 June is at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/student-talks-tickets-56433033723>, and the 13 June at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/student-talks-tickets-56448400686>.

Tickets for all these events are free, but you will have a chance to contribute to the Wembury MCA Advisory Group which helps fund the educational resources of the Wembury Marine Centre. A £2 donation is suggested. For more information please contact : John Hepburn on 01752 863764 or 07974 213301 or at Skype john.hepburn. Please reply to [mewstone.enterprises@gmail.com](mailto:mewstone.enterprises@gmail.com)

[Join Plymouth Marine and Maritime Ambassadors on LinkedIn](#) and help spread the word.



## EARTH CAFÉ : Saturday 23rd February.

It is at Union Corner, 96 Union Street, Plymouth. Opposite the New Palace Theatre, beside a pedestrian crossing. £1 entry. Doors open at 7:00 pm. Please arrive at 7pm, or shortly after, to avoid disappointment. As last time was so busy we will be adding extra tables and chairs! Food is from about 7.30pm - if you'd like to eat a delicious vegan meal (with gluten-free items) that's for a suggested donation of £5 and includes a slice of cake for dessert. Bring your own alcohol if you need any on the night. There is an Aldi just over the road and a Lidl a bit further on! Announcements and speaker(s) from about 8.30pm followed by live music. There is free on-street parking nearby. This is on the north side of Union Street - behind Union Corner. (Not all local streets are free though! The Aldi car park is only for 90 minutes.)

The ethos is Earth rights, human rights, animal rights. This is the link to this event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/678807699188175/>

# National Clean Air Strategy

Got a wood burning stove ? If so, your choice of fuel may be severely restricted in the coming years if the recommendations of the recently published Clean Air Strategy come in to effect.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-air-strategy-2019>

Taking in to account the Council's response to the recent question on health impacts and air quality in Plymouth and the content of this Strategy, your comments are welcome. As usual some feel the Strategy doesn't go far enough, some feel it is hampered by the uncertainty of Brexit and our reaction to criticism from the EU that pollution levels are far too high in the UK and others feel that the Government is shifting both the blame and the opportunity to take action on to local authorities.

So what do you think ? What should we be focusing on locally ? Are the Council's proposals too reliant on national Government decisions ?

## With thanks to

Penny Tarrant, Kirsty Wavish, Delphine Holman, Brenda Johns, Sue Baxter, Emily, Sheila Evans, Tim Purches, Pat Bushell, Richard Sroka, Hugh Janes, Judy Harrington, Laurel Miller, Nicky Hatherell, Liz Cole, John Bull, Alan and Menza Ramage, Sara Palmer, Stuart Spicer and Ed Parr-Ferris and with apologies (for 11<sup>th</sup> Feb) from George Wheeler, Caroline Blackler, Jason Lowther, Coral Smith, Sarah Ogilvie, David Curry, Andi Higginson, Roger Mitchell, Ed Donohue, Jenny Floyd and Claire Preston.