

Saltash Environmental Action - Annual Report for Town Council 2023/4

SEA has again had a busy year, in addition to organising its regular stalls at Mayfair and the Regatta, a *#EndFossilFuels* display for the Library Hub's September environmental month, and frequent newsletters. We were delighted to be chosen as joint recipient of **Mayor's Charity** this year, and have spent the windfall grant on new projects – an ecological survey of Elwell Woods, renewal of the Victoria Gardens wildlife bed, and a pair of can-crushers to help manage the waste problem at outside events.

Allotment SEA was awarded £2,503.19 from the Co-op Community Fund in November 2023. This will fund the reinforcement of the entrance area so that wheelchairs can access the allotment. It has also covered the purchase of two raised planters and a notice-board. These will be added to the wild fruit garden area creating a roll, stroll, sit and pick area for visitors with mobility issues.

The allotment is also the site for the ***Eat Your Greens Initiative***. The standard no-dig traditional cultivation bed for 2024 will be laid out in traditional accessible rows of leafy green vegetables, cut and come again varieties that can be used to supplement the diets of food bank users and local people living on low incomes. The food bank offering is high in processed, preserved foods and low in greens and this will help to maintain the general health of users without requiring complicated preparation or cooking.

Great Big Green Week was headed up locally by the Council's Climate Change and Environment Working Group, and SEA organised a litterpick and a tree walk.

Litter Rangers have continued to clean Saltash streets and held a party in the Community Kitchen to celebrate 3 years of activity. Several community litterpicks have been organised.

The **SEA Christmas tree** in St Nicholas this year promoted the multiple benefits of trees: 'A Tree is Not Just for Christmas!'

Tree Saltash collaborated with May Fair Committee to plant a Coronation Oak in Longstone, the only regret being that local rules prevent it being labelled as such! The volunteers also planted 17 standards around Fairmead, Frobisher Drive, Mulberry Road and Oaklands. This year we have also planted some hedgerow in areas of grassland that are too small to take a standard tree – the aim being that hedgerow will reduce the need for mowing (so carbon-intensive), provide low-maintenance habitat for wildlife, and improve the townscape.

Tree Saltash volunteers also collaborated with *Forest for Cornwall* in planting up Saltmill with large standards; and in their *Free Trees* project, which handed out about 300 whips to Saltash residents, the first time this has been offered in Saltash.

The series of **Winter public meetings** were held at Isambard House, which SEA used as guests of the Council's Climate Change and Environment Working Group. Meetings

focussed on Electric Vehicles, Recycling, the Cornish film 'A Year in a Field' (in collaboration with Forder Film Club) and Stopping Draughts. The March meeting will promote the bioWATCH project to be launched in April by the Library Hub, and the April meeting will discuss the toxic plastic crisis.

We also arranged two **farm visits**: Tim Williams is regenerative farming at Erth Barton and Purdy at the adjacent farm is actively restoring Nature.

Wildflower meadows in Pillmere and the cemetery had another difficult year with the weather severely affecting growth and flowering during the critical early Summer. A cold April was followed by hot, dry May/June, on top of a drought since the previous Autumn, followed by heavy and persistent rain for the rest of Summer and Autumn. SEA has worked with Cormac at Latchbrook Valley. Volunteers this year have included new SEA members and employees of Hemsley Frazer.

SEA is working on new projects: wildlife 'green corridors' in Saltash; Elwell Woods as an urban nature reserve; and renewal of nature-friendly bed in Victoria Gardens. Any interested local resident is welcome to join in. Find us on www.seasaltash.org.uk and Facebook.

End of Report
Adrian White (Chairman)
February 2024