

## SEA Annual report for Town Council, 2021- Jan 2022

*'Making Saltash greener, caring for the planet'*

### Summary

Two notable civic events this year have reinforced the objectives of SEA by increasing public awareness of the twin emergencies of climate change and biodiversity loss: at the international level, COP26; and at local level, STC declaring a climate emergency and setting up the Climate Change Working Group. SEA's indoor activities have continued to be limited by lockdown, but outdoor activities have resumed, including those under our overall heading of *'Don't Trash Saltash'*.

### SEA committee

Officers: Adrian White (Chairman) Maureen Kemp (Treasurer) Rebecca Pearce (Secretary)  
Members: Sue Chalkley, Sho Frank, James Jenkins, John Mason, David Pemberton. Non-voting in attendance: Sarah Martin. Ex officio: Jo Baskott.

### SEA Members

SEA has 203 members who are circulated with the Newsletter and Notices. SEA has maintained an active Website, and Facebook page with 1218 followers which promotes the Community Hub and its community fridge, as well as other occasional campaigns; we circulated 5 Newsletters to SEA members. Newsletters have included a campaign against buying compost that contains peat, the topic of a new blog on our website.

### Activity Reports

#### ***Community Allotment/Garden***

The allotment on Grenfell Avenue has become established during its first full season, with shed and storage hut. STC Services have renewed the fence and gate and maintained the surrounding hedge, thank you. We await a sign for the gate explaining that it is a community allotment and dogs are not permitted. Regular Monday morning sessions have been ongoing throughout the year and have enabled areas to be defined as soft fruit, vegetable and wildflower areas with a bog garden. It is a plastic-free area (with the exception of water butts, buckets and plastic milk bottles used as weights).

This year volunteers will continue to experiment with wildlife friendly, no-dig, and foraging techniques. As a community resource it has attracted approval from passers-by and local residents - except for occasions when shed and footings were overturned and scattered about the site by a local resident.

For details of the 2022 growing season Garden Club, please contact [info@seasaltash.org.uk](mailto:info@seasaltash.org.uk)

#### ***Litter Rangers and Community Litterpicks***

75 Litter Rangers continued cleaning their designated streets throughout the lockdown.

Reports and photos appeared in local media of the first *anniversary* of Litter Rangers in September 2021, when a litterpick at Pillmere Green was launched by the Mayor and Lady Mayoress, to whom we are very grateful. This was the first community litterpick since lockdown.

Further community litterpicks took place at Churchtown Farm (in collaboration with Friends of Churchtown Farm), after the Regatta and after Christmas light Parade, and at Saltmill.

We have provided a community response to two Government's consultations on banning single-use plastic.

Littering from Macdonald's and other stores around the trading estate remains a significant problem for Saltash.

### ***Saltash Apple Project***

Friends of Tincombe planted 16 apple trees and has taken over management of the orchard there. Trees have grown well in Churchtown farm.

Many trees in the orchards are well established but late frost killed many flowers in April and resulted in a very reduced crop of apples in 2021.

### ***Saltash Wildlife Projects***

These projects aim to increase the amount of green space in Saltash that is available as wildlife habitat, by restoring wildflowers meadows and enhancing hedge corridors and tree cover.

**Pillmere Meadow** continues to be managed as a meadow. Two significant changes occurred:

- 1) a serpentine path was cut out and then maintained throughout the summer by STC Services in cooperation with SEA, which hugely increased the public's use of the meadow throughout the summer.
- 2) Bee orchids were identified on the Meadow for the first time: bee orchids are well known as an example of a wildflower that is under threat from mowing, so their survival here is a positive result of the no-mow policy.

The Burial Board has agreed that a boundary strip around **St Stephens Churchyard** will stay unmown in Spring and Summer, to encourage wildflowers. SEA volunteers have spent 5 sessions raking off thatch, scarifying the surface, and sowing seeds including 'green hay' from a local landowner, and yellow rattle hopefully to counteract the dominant grasses. Plug plants from locally sourced seed are being grown on and will be planted out in Spring.

SEA volunteers have collaborated in several projects involving meadow regeneration, tree planting and coppicing in **Latchbrook Valley, Church Road Meadow** and **Tincombe Park**.

**'Tree Saltash'** is a new project resulting from a collaboration between the Tree Wardens, STC Climate Change Working Group, and Forest for Cornwall local community liaison officer. The aim is to increase the number of trees in public areas throughout Saltash, on roadsides and open spaces. A birch tree donated by Frances Taylor was planted beside the Celtic Cross in January 2022. Other sites for the first phase of planting have been identified, and local consultation will start before planting. Our hope is that individual trees will be maintained by local residents while they become established.

### ***Campaign***

Cigarette butts are a danger to wildlife - their toxic chemicals enter the waterways and get in the food chain. Butts are also, quite simply, a blight on the town's public spaces. SEA's **Bin**

**the Butt** campaign was conceived in 2019, and we received a Cornwall Council grant to add to the earlier 'Clean Streets' donation from STC. The campaign was postponed by the Covid19 lockdown, but eventually launched at the Saltfest on 31st July 2021.

The campaign's aims were to inform smokers about the damage caused by butts, and encourage their disposal in ash-trays. To make it easier for anyone smoking out of doors, we gave out 2000 re-usable pocket ashtrays, complete with stickers. The campaign involved: media articles (*Observer, Cornish Times, Saltash Voice, BBC Radio Plymouth*) before during and after the campaign launch; Facebook campaign including video from a public health expert, and a poem from our resident poet; public posters; printed T-shirts; information provided on rolling electronic noticeboards in the town's bus shelters; visits to local publicans to provide information and supply the ashtrays, as well as posters and especially printed beer mats; and the SEA stall at Saltfest.

We are grateful to the Mayor for supporting Bin the Butt at Saltfast by providing a photo opportunity of stubbing out a giant-size cigarette - the photo went viral on Facebook and was seen by 5985 people!

We knew in advance that it would be difficult to evaluate the success of the campaign: our own audits have shown good reductions in butt numbers outside Railway, Social Club and Union Inn; but Nick the town cleaner and our own Litter Rangers report that pockets of butts still appear intermittently at known 'hot-spots' which include Fore St, the Leisure Centre and certain bus-stops. From time to time we run local campaigns at these hot-spots.

***Other environmental action*** by members of the Committee includes:

The *SEA stall* at Tincombe Tea Party on 22nd August, and at the Regatta on 4th September promoted all SEA's activities.

Virtual *presentation* to Burraton School on SEA and its activities: SEA is open to further collaboration with Burraton and other Saltash schools. The school made a donation to SEA which we are hoping to use to promote insect-friendly activities in Saltash.

*Christmas tree* presented at St Nicholas Church Festival.

*ReFill* campaign continues to reduce the need to buy water bottles.

The wildflower and herb bed in *Victoria Park* was maintained.

There have not been any indoor member meetings this year because of the lockdown. For the same reason, Plastic Free Saltash has not made further progress.

We look forward to collaboration with the Climate Change Working Party on public information events in Saltash.

### ***Finances***

A grant of £450 from the Lottery Heritage fund was used to purchase new hoops and grabbers for Litterpicks. Overall, SEA remains in credit and viable, and full financial balance will be presented at the SEA Annual General Meeting in April.

*Adrian White, Chair*

10th February 2022