



Eco-Forum 1st October 2026, 10 – 12pm

The Barn Community Hub, American Lane, Bentswood, Haywards Heath

Agenda:

1. Welcome and housekeeping
2. Around the room for introductions.
3. What Community People can offer you

As a small charity with a wide reach and a growing membership, it's important that new, emerging and established groups know about the support available to them. Events like this are a fantastic way to build connections, share ideas and strengthen our community network.

Did you know Community People offers:

- Free 1:1 support for all not for profit groups working locally
 - Help identifying and addressing gaps in the community
 - Online tools and resources, including an organisational Health Check, Business Relations document and Climate Toolkit for community groups
 - Volunteer matching services and a volunteer fair
 - Free training throughout the year
 - Free Community Forums and Networking opportunities
 - Amplifying the voice of the not for profit sector at strategic meetings and events
 - Regular E-bulletin
 - Vibrant Community Hubs with room rental opportunities
4. Paul Norman from SCANN
 5. What are your priorities you would like the Strategic Authority to know about? Post it note exercise.
 6. Open to the room for updates.
 7. Mark from Lost Woods – mandala and networking

Notes from SCANN presentation:

Came together, as a network, for whole of Sussex to be a voice for climate and nature and importance is conveyed to the Strategic Authority for Brighton and Sussex. The scope and purposes are still being developed and adapted, and SCANN welcome new members from across the region.

<https://sussexcann.org/>

New Mayoral authority is operating and putting together a Prosperity Strategy in front of the 2028 mayoral elections. Members of SCANN have already put together an open letter signed by 200 organisations (including Community People) which has significantly influence the strategy. This is a

very good time to get involved, as plans are evolving and at pace. Anyone can join individuals, groups, small groups, large groups, councils. Started in Feb 2026. 52 groups so far – 143 people.

South Downs National Park where asked to write a Climate and Nature Strategy in a short time in August and included Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Sussex Nature Partnership to comment. This is now with the Authority.

The Strategic Authority are holding a Symposium around nature and climate and the rural and coastal strategies on 6th October. SCANN are attending as is Nicola from Community People.

Post it notes exercise to hear the priorities from the groups in attendance, which Community People will reflect in their feedback at the event. See end of document for record of all post it notes, and summary of priorities.

Updates from other members:

Sussex Wildlife Trust – Jack Thompson – Leaving and relocating up north. Please contact Jack if you have any projects you would like support with over next 2 weeks. New Wilder Communities Officer in December.

Haywards Heath Town Council - Hermione – trialling ‘New Leaf’ a drop in at the town hall for refills, fixes, swaps etc. Saturday 24th October 10 – 12. Leaflet in the links.

Haywards Heath Baptist Church – Next Eco Fair – 27th February 2027. 300 attendees last time so worth attending, and can be wider than just the town.

Weald to Waves – Network continues to grow – over 200 land managers. Connect and take action. Bio box loan scheme. Community groups can borrow for events. Split kit into different activity boxes. Connector projects – hedgerows and grasslands. Workshop training – hedgerow etc landowners and farmers and comm groups.

Waste Prevention team – Please contact if you would like them to attend an event or talk with presence about recycling/food waste/ small electrical recycling.

Lost Woods project part of Action in Rural Sussex – 100 people community groups supported. 5000 ancient trees and mapped across area, new dormouse populations have been found and Michael is applying for funding for a lesser spotted woodpecker project. Also a Film festival, training courses, social media, charcoal making, talks, woodland wanders (can guide your own), Christmas wreaths, networking for conservation groups.

Fairer World Lindfield. Our Better Nature talk with Tony Whitbread 18th Nov 26. [Our events](#) | [Fairer World Lindfield](#)

Ashenground and Bolnore Woods – fungi walk on 10th October. [Events](#) | [FoABW.UK](#)

Friends of Scrase Valley, Haywards Heath. Restoring the community orchard with 44 different species now identified. Events during the year such as community fruit pick.

Gravetye Charity, Fiona Humpries — Accessible site which has welcomed hundred of volunteers this year as well as 300 – children mainly from Crawley. They have funding to host children from East

Sussex, ideally those who wouldn't normally have as much access to outside space – please get in touch if you have any contacts.

Community People Dates:

[Events and Training - Community People](#)

Burgess Hill Soup – opportunity for a group to come and present – evening November 13th

AGM 26th November with free training by Penny Wilson.

Volunteer Fair at Haywards Heath College – end of January. Details soon.

WSSC Nature Recovery Fund Launched:

News from Rachel Carless, Head of Sustainability, West Sussex County Council:

Dear Partners,

I'm pleased to share that West Sussex County Council's Nature Recovery Fund has launched. The fund will support practical projects that help deliver the priorities of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy across West Sussex. You can find information about the fund and how to express interest here:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/nature

Please do share this opportunity with organisations and partnerships that may have suitable projects. We look forward to working together to turn the Strategy into action on the ground.

If you have any questions about this opportunity, want to check if your project is eligible, or would like to discuss an outline project idea, please contact Holger in the first instance;

- email: naturefund@westsussex.gov.uk
- phone: 0330 222 9425

To complete the EOI form, we recommend you create an account. Creating an account enables auto-completion of your information when completing forms and the ability to view account history

Training opportunity:

Carbon Literacy Training for residents, parish councils and businesses

Are you concerned about climate change and want to understand what we can do to make a difference? To celebrate Carbon Literacy Action Day, the South Downs National Park Authority is offering free Carbon Literacy training.

The training, which is created by the [Carbon Literacy Project](#), helps people to learn about the causes and impacts of climate change, and more importantly the solutions which will reduce the impacts we

are already seeing and help us to adapt to a changing climate. With many communities and organisations screening the People's Emergency Briefing, this training delves into some of the topics covered in the film and helps us to understand the actions we can all do that will make a difference.

It is useful to both individuals and organisations or businesses. Many organisations are delivering Carbon Literacy training in their workplace – from the BBC to the NHS, from Museums to Autotrader, or from insurance to engineering firms! You can see a list of Carbon Literate Organisations here: [CLOs - The Carbon Literacy Project](#)

In this training you will learn:

- What is causing the climate to change
- What are the impacts of a changing climate
- What National Parks are doing about climate change
- Understand the solutions to prevent further climate change
- What we can all do to be part of the solution
- How your organisation can get started on a Carbon Literacy training journey
- Confidence to talk to others about climate change

When: We are offering a limited number of spaces on either a full day course or two half day sessions:

- **Wednesday 11th November, 09.30 – 16:30** (Full day)
- **Thursday 12th November, 09.30 – 16:30** (Full day)
- **Wednesday 11th November 09.30 – 12:30 and Thursday 12th November 13.30 – 16:30** (Two half days)

Where: The training will be held online with a one hour lunch break for the full day training.

How to book: Please book your place here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/carbon-literacy-training-for-residents-parish-councils-and-businesses-tickets-1998428848482>

Other links of interest:

Sussex Bay – A Blueprint for Seascape Recovery. [Blueprint for Seascape Recovery — Sussex Bay](#) This sits alongside the Sussex Nature Recovery Reports which only extend to the coastline and not beyond.

Community People's Climate Toolkit: <https://communitypeople.org.uk/climate-toolkit>

Community People's working with Business toolkit and Organisational Healthchecker are available through our member portal: [Member Portal Login - Community People](#)

National Emergency Briefing dates and venues: [National Emergency Briefing](#)

Post it notes analysis of key priorities

1. Nature Recovery and Protection

Key suggestions included:

- Expanding tree canopy cover across Sussex.
- Protecting wildlife habitats and important nature sites.
- Increasing biodiversity in urban areas, verges and public spaces.
- Improving access to nature for all communities.
- Demonstrating measurable progress on nature recovery.
- Link between nature and health and wellbeing.

2. Sustainable Housing and Planning

Priorities included:

- Stronger controls on developers removing trees and habitats.
- Protecting green spaces from inappropriate development.
- Greater community influence over planning decisions.
- Increased use of brownfield land.
- Climate-resilient homes with solar panels, water efficiency measures and sustainable design.
- Investment in retrofit programmes for existing housing.

3. Water Security and Climate Resilience

Participants raised questions about:

- Long-term water supply and security.
- River water quality.
- Drought resilience.
- Flood risk and sustainable drainage.
- Preparing Sussex for hotter, drier summers and wetter winters.

4. Sustainable and Accessible Transport

Key priorities included:

- Better rail connectivity.
- Improved rural and community transport.
- Affordable public transport that provides a genuine alternative to car use.
- Investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Better integration of transport and environmental objectives.

5. Community Voice, Inclusion and Accountability

Many participants wanted stronger community involvement in decision-making on climate and nature issues.

- Listen to local communities and learn from local experience.
- Ensure consultations are inclusive and accessible.
- Engage underrepresented groups.
- Work more closely with local climate and nature organisations.
- Improve transparency and accountability for environmental commitments.

6. Young People, Skills and Green Jobs

Participants saw investment in young people as essential to Sussex's future.

Suggestions included:

- Increasing opportunities for green careers.
- Supporting skills and training for climate and nature sectors.
- Ensuring young people have a voice in decisions about their future.
- Building a workforce equipped to respond to climate and environmental challenges.

Post it notes transcript:

More urban and green / schools/ business.

Tree planting for shade and wildlife. Ideally native and climate resilient.

Rural transport increase.

Secure water supply.

Fishersgate forest. Increase the tree canopy from 3% to 15%.

Environment for nature – retaining environments and protecting ancient trees/ woodland.

Reflecting grassroots sentiment/ aspiration

Transport – efficient community transport across Sussex.

Tighter control on building companies/ developers when it comes to cutting down trees.

Balancing transport and nature

Car charging infrastructure

Sustainable green transport

Regulations on new buildings – solar, water, grey water.

Re-development of brown field.

Promoting bio-diversity through solar farms

Water quality of rivers

Solar panels on all new homes

Making new grass areas/ verges more species diverse

Improved transport links across sussex – trains especially.

Continue education in reducing waste

Prosperity will be local people coming together, sharing skills and resources and this is the key to resilience.

Skills and training – investing in young people’s training, awareness, skills, technology for a resilient workforce.

Prioritise young voices and create opportunities through education to green careers.

Investing in young people – star

Train the future generation of experts for climate and nature

Short term funded projects make a huge impact on communities but then funding runs out and community lose faith which blocks any motivation to engage in more projects. Fund climate and nature projects for longer terms to get community buy in.

Involve communities who are hard to reach – global majority, grt – by giving them a voice in climate and nature decisions.

Joined up working with climate groups across Sussex.

How are the combined county authorities navigating Andy Wooley’s administration decision at East Sussex CC to abandon their 2050 net zero target?

Incorporating youth voice in decision making for their climate future.

Give due consideration to nature conservation groups' achievements regardless of location. Not just sites like high weald/ south downs but all countryside.

Listen to community, learn from local experience. Involved them in decisions. Star

Investment in both SuDs (sustainable drainage systems) and retrospective SuDs implementation, especially in our large towns and cities to be more resilient in the face of drier summers and wetter winters.

Better housing and retrofit and greener communities

More protections for wildlife in Sussex

Preserving wild species – housing is decreasing the quality of some of our green spaces.

How can local groups make their voices heard over amended planning decisions that are hugely unpopular. Star

Be accountable for 'nature recovery' – prove to us this is happening

Ensuring protection of our important sites for nature in the face of housing development pressures.

Tree planting

Water resilience – star

Community engagement

Protect wildlife and nature from housing development in and near the downs – star

Accessibility for all to nature.

Future proofing against climate change

Prosperity relies on nature – star

The need to value and reflect the importance of natural greenspace for health and wellbeing support and savings alongside the benefits to the economy through ecotourism.

Water supply – where is it coming from – star

Preserving wild spaces – housing is devastating the quality of our greenspaces

Urban trees – counter the urban heat island effect (cost to economy of people unable to sleep) – star.
Prevent flooding. Biodiversity gain

How is this consultation going to be more inclusive.

Listening to what's going on re pollution, housing, infrastructure

Support organisations encouraging repair and reuse

Look at Sussex as a connected landscape – for nature and people – star

Focus on local – work with towns/ parish councils

Public transport – genuinely affordable (ie cheaper than driving), reliable and rapid

Climate resilient housing

Building -design of buildings to reflect climate change. We need to build the right type of homes.