

Sustainable Chesham's presentation to the Community Board (CB) – 27 October 2022

We are very grateful to the CB for allocating the SC Team to present an update of the activities of Sustainable Chesham.

My intention is to briefly cover the current areas of work of the SC Team, and then to answer any questions that the Board members may have. :

Repair Café

We have now held 12 Repair Cafes and we have looked at 232 items, of which 154 were successfully repaired, and a further 36 were given advice as to how the items could be repaired. The Cafes have generally taken place on the same day as the Local Food Produce Market on the 4th Saturday in each month in Chesham Town Centre.

We invite repairers with a varied selection of skills and then try to match the requirements of our residents with one of our repair crew. The prime purpose is to save the purchase of a replacement product, and to reduce the number of items going to landfill.

We are grateful to the CB for the very generous grant we received earlier this year, which helped us to purchase Portable Appliance Testing kits, to allow us to carry out electronic repairs in line with insurance requirements. About half of our repairs have been electronic to date, so this demonstrates how important it is that we are now able to offer the service.

The next event will be on Saturday 26th November at the Town Hall (10am-1pm).

Zone-9 Cycling

This started as a small group within SC that felt we should be doing much more, to facilitate safer cycling and walking in and around Chesham, to reduce pollution by providing an alternative to driving into the Town centre, and to encourage new people to take up cycling and walking to improve their health. We all know how hilly Chesham is, but with the introduction of re-chargeable electric bikes, even long, steep hills can be negotiated with the power assistance.

As a group we have received considerable support from Chesham Town Council and Buckinghamshire Council, to enable the funding of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The preparation of the Plan is progressing well and we should be in a position shortly to consider the methodology for a public consultation.

One of our key aims is to make Chesham a much more cycle and wheelchair friendly town, and we are planning to eventually create a cycling hub in Chesham which will be the location for a number of cycling and walking related activities.

Sustainable Fashion Swish Event

This is a way of recycling good quality children's clothing to save on the high carbon footprint of buying new clothes, and discarding older ones that no longer fit the person they were bought for.

The next event early in the New Year will be a clothing exchange event for children ages 3 to 12. Up to 5 items can be taken in the late morning, in exchange for a 'swish' ticket which

provides free entry in the afternoon, where the selection of up to 5 items of clothing, brought in by others, can be viewed, selected and taken away.

Biodiversity

This is another area where we have an impressive record, working with the Town Council to increase biodiversity on many of the sites owned by the Council. We have been directly involved in the creation of wildflower meadows at the Berkhamstead Field Community Meadow and the Co-op Fields and have developed a procedure for introducing selective roadside verge management for biodiversity. We are now involved in a new scheme at Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground.

We also are developing relations with various local schools including Chesham Grammar School, Chesham Prep School, Ley Hill School and Chartridge School helping them to improve the way their school grounds are managed and to consider introducing various biodiversity enhancements. Our team is regularly contacted by the Bucks and Milton Keynes Environmental Record Centre when they are looking for information about local areas because we have built a sound environmental knowledge, and it can save them a trip out to Chesham, if we are able to provide the information they need.

Our team has now organised the local planting of 875 trees to date and we are expecting another 500 tree whips to arrive shortly for allocating and planting out this winter.

We also maintain the Community orchard in Lowndes Park which was started in 2013. Only traditional, local varieties were planted from a local supplier, many of which were sponsored by local groups. Orchards are known to be excellent areas for biodiversity.

We have also provided advice on how our residents can leave more space in their gardens for wildlife.

Leaky Homes Roadshow

We have partnered with Bucks Community Energy to create the Leaky Homes Roadshow in Chesham this winter.

In February 2022, Sustainable Chesham were successful in securing £1700 of funding, for the purchase of a Thermal Imaging Camera and to fund training and initial implementation of Community Energy surveys for householders in Chesham & surrounding villages. The scheme is planned to be rolled out starting in November when there is likely to be a significant difference between the temperatures inside and outside the properties. SC team members are currently undergoing the necessary training.

The intention is to produce a report showing where the greatest heat loss is occurring and provide further advice on what the residents can do to reduce the heat losses from their homes. We will need to charge £20 for this service.

See our partner [Bucks Community Energy's page](#) for more information. Dates have been set so to take part and have your home surveyed please click [here](#)

Community Assemblies

We believe Chesham must do more to reduce its carbon footprint, so we hold the occasional Community Assembly when we pick topics of local interest and invite as many representatives from local groups as possible to an online meeting. So far we have discussed:

- 1) How can we communicate more effectively between groups to effect change
- 2) How can we draw attention to concerns about water supply, water demand, flooding and pollution all of which affect our River Chess

We also intend to hold further meetings to discuss the following:

Reducing the dependence on cars, stopping the decline of our local wildlife, the sustainability of new development, buying food locally and cutting down on food waste.

Many of the CB members will be aware, we are already making good progress in some of these areas.

Plastic Bag Free Chesham

We have not been able to allocate suitable resources to this important matter yet, but we hope to link with other groups and explore the development of an effective strategy in the New Year.

Sustainable Chesham Stall at the Local Produce Market in Chesham

The very successful Local Produce Market draws many extra people to Chesham and we have used this monthly event as a platform to communicate to our local residents in Chesham, and the surrounding areas, finding out their sustainability concerns, and offering guidance on the activities of Sustainable Chesham.

Questions were received from the CB members relating to our tree planting project, the work of our Zone-9 cycle group and where more information can be found about the Leaky Homes Roadshow.

I am sending this report through to the Community Board for inclusion in the minutes of the October Community Board meeting.

Trevor Brawn

Sustainable Chesham: <https://sustainablechesham.org.uk>

October 2022

