

Abingdon Carbon Cutters Is Part Of A Green Forum

By Caroline Townsend of Abingdon Carbon Cutters

Actions need to be taken locally, as well as nationally and globally, to meet the challenges presented by climate change. Abingdon Carbon Cutters are committed to help make that happen here and have recently formed a Green Forum with other eco-groups in the town including the Climate Emergency Centre, Abingdon Liveable Streets and Sustrans. The idea was initially suggested by Councillor Gabby Barody, Chair of the Town Council Green Environment and Amenities Committee; it will feed ideas into the Council and enable collaboration with them and support from them in order to deliver practical change. For each quarter of this year, we will have a different focus:

- Active Travel and Sustainable Transport
- Biodiversity
- Reducing Consumption
- Reducing Carbon

A webpage for the Green Forum has been set up at <https://oneplanetabingdon.org/green-forum/>

Our first drive is on active travel and sustainable transport and we held a stall at Abingdon Local Excellence market in January which provided lots of valuable interactions with the public. There is a survey at <https://bit.ly/3slbEKq> for people to give their views on active travel. It will remain open until 23rd March. Data from the survey will be shared with everyone at our next stall on 26 March.

We are devising different strategies to encourage the public to take up active travel. Strategies include promoting car-sharing via the Hiyacar app and setting up a Co-wheels car club. To promote the status of cyclists and walkers, we are running a competition in schools to design a logo for a hi-vis gilet/backpack cover; the winning design will be printed onto the gilets/backpack covers and distributed to cyclists and walkers who will wear them around Abingdon. We aim to encourage more people to cycle by providing details of Bikeability training and producing a comprehensive cycling map for Abingdon. We would also like to reduce the number of delivery vans coming through Abingdon.

Our next Green Forum drive, starting in April, will be on Biodiversity. Abingdon Carbon Cutters have a keen interest in tree-planting and encouraging biodiversity. We held a community event to plant 420 whips at Rye Farm Meadow on 26 February; over 100 people got involved to plant the trees in a crescent shape near the lock. The woodland, consisting of five types of native tree provided by the Woodland Trust, will give new habitats for wildlife as well as supplying nature trails for residents and absorbing carbon from our atmosphere.

The VWHDC kindly gave permission for us to plant at Rye Farm and we are pursuing other tree-planting projects on Town Council land; we have already helped the Town Council set up a community orchard on Boxhill Park. To promote insect biodiversity, we are also pursuing a pilot project to turn a grass verge on Northcourt Walk into a wildflower area.

To find out more about what you can do come and see us at one of our events, call in to the Climate Emergency Centre or check out our website.