

GEM Green Impact

March Newsletter



It's already March! The days are getting longer, the sun is coming out more and more often, and nature is waking up (surely you've noticed buds coming out on the trees and birds singing again!). And nature is precisely what this newsletter is all about, with its theme of biodiversity.

Swifts, Hedgehogs, Great Crested Newts...all on the decline. What can we do at work to help?

Julie Wickham, Navigator Developer at Stroud Valleys Project gives some ideas.

Biodiversity and community are close to our hearts here at Stroud Valleys Project and something we do year in and year out. There are some great tasks for you in the Green Impact scheme that will get you thinking about biodiversity and what you can do to help. We will try to offer suggestions for what you might do, and what you might need to consider if you do.

Broadly speaking, biodiversity means biological diversity. But don't think about that; think of the call of the swifts as they return from Africa in the summer, the snuffle of the hedgehog foraging for slugs and snails, the beauty of the great crested newts as they perform their mating dance in your local pond. And then think of the decline in these populations and how under threat they are.



Swifts

Swifts are in trouble. The UK has seen numbers plummeting, with a 53% decline between 1995 and 2016.

[Find out more about swifts on the RSPB website.](#)



Hedgehogs

According to the latest [State of Britain's hedgehogs report](#), numbers of hedgehogs have fallen by up to 30% in urban areas and 50% in rural areas since the Millennium.



Great crested newts

Great crested newts have declined dramatically in the last 40 years and although still widespread across lowland England they are now uncommon. Despite protection under UK and European wildlife law, numbers are still declining overall, and deterioration of habitat remains their biggest threat.

[Find out more in this report from Natural England.](#)

GC Newt Copyright
Thresholds Photography

Green Impact workbook closes on the 1st of June 2022.
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If you are an organisation that has its own grounds, then you may be able to effect some change. If you don't, then you may be able to partner with another organisation that does have land. Think of Town and Parish Councils, local parks, and forgotten overlooked bits of waste land that need a group to look after them. BAC001 has 12 points attached to it because we know that looking at things from the point



of view of a species, is probably the best thing you could do to improve Biodiversity in your area. The habitat is the natural home of a species and should provide everything that species needs to survive. It is tempting to think that a hedgehog box or a swift box are a solution to species decline, but the swift needs airborne insects to eat, and a hedgehog needs worms, beetles, slugs, caterpillars, earwigs and millipedes, **all** free from pesticides; can you provide that?

BAC2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are different ways of helping towards BAC001, so choose the ones that are most comfortable for you and your organisation, but if you focus on one species and what you could do to improve its habitat, then you can get the 12 points. BAC001 asks you to improve the habitat for that species.

A mixed native hedgerow is invaluable for hedgehogs and a whole variety of birds. If it is designed with wildlife in mind, you can provide food and shelter for wildlife all year round. The planting season ends at the end of March but begins again next autumn, so make a comprehensive plan now, and be ready to go when the leaves fall off the trees.

Consider creating a pond. [Froglife has an excellent free publication](#) that gives you a lot of help and advice. Even a small amount of water in a park or garden makes a huge difference to biodiversity.

Finally, think about the life span of what you create. If you plant trees or make hedges, plan in some staff time and funds to maintain them in the future. Hedges can become overgrown and turn into a line of trees, and ponds get silted up.



Frog Copyright Deborah Roberts

For help and advice on where to start, contact Julie or Paul.

Biodiversity actions within Green Impact

BAC001 - Biodiversity and community - 12 points

Identify one species locally that is threatened, such as protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, or on the Birds IUCN red list. Create or improve the habitat for this species locally. If the habitat is degraded bring it up to favourable condition. If the team doesn't have any suitable land, work in partnership with someone locally.

BAC002 - Biodiversity & Community - 3 points

Within the last 12 months the Green Impact team has undertaken one or more proactive initiatives to sustain or encourage biodiversity.



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BAC003 - Biodiversity & Community - 4 points

The team has developed its own community engagement initiative.



BAC004 - Biodiversity & Community - 5 points

EITHER the organisation has run its own charitable event for departmental staff within the last 12 months which has biodiversity as its focus
OR it has one planned to take place within the next 6 months.



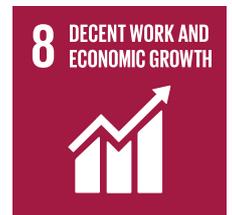
BAC005 - Biodiversity & Community - 2 points

The Green Impact team has communicated the benefits of purchasing biodiversity friendly products for people to use in work and at home. This could include: FSC certified wood products; Rainforest Alliance products; responsible clothing choices e.g. People Tree; alternative cleaning products e.g. refills from a local eco store, Bio-D (widely available in supermarkets), or check [Ethical Consumer](#).



BAC006 - Biodiversity & Community - 4 points

The organisation has involved one or more GEM participants in at least one of its community-focussed activities, resulting in a beneficial outcome for the participant.



Adrian McKie of the National Star College is a Sustainability Hero!



Adrian won an award at the [Green Impact National Awards 2021](#).
Adrian said: "I am still stunned to receive a national award. My motto is "Nature wastes nothing; nor should we". I have used this on posters around the college."

This year, for the first time, Green Impact will be organising international awards with partners in Australasia and Europe, and Adrian's name will go forward to contend for an award as an **International Sustainability Hero**.

Forest Voluntary Action also won an award for Community Action. Congratulations to them, too!

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Remember World Water Day from the last newsletter?

It's coming up!

[Find out more on the campaign's website.](#)



2022 Groundwater

Your Sustainability Policy

The GEM Green Impact team invited Marta Nowicka from SOS-UK to lead a webinar about Sustainability Policies on 8th February. If you didn't make it, [here are the slides from the webinar.](#) Get in touch with Mary, Julie, or Paul if you'd like to watch the recording of the session.

When thinking about your sustainability policy, it's important to comply with regulations - [this Q&A resource](#) gives an overview of environmental law and practice in the UK (England and Wales) which may be helpful to consider what regulations are relevant to your organisation.

The environment, economy and cost of living. How can we help our participants with advice on saving money?

*Find out how you can save energy, lower your fuel bills and help combat climate change! Come along to our **FREE** home energy advice sessions and talk to local householders who have created their own 'eco-homes'.*

*Home energy advice: **Severn Wye Energy Agency** will be on hand to give comprehensive energy saving advice to tenants, students, landlords and home owners.*

They will be able to answer questions about grants, billing, Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) & Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) surveys and carbon-saving switching.

| HOME ENERGY SAVING & RETROFIT SESSIONS | HOME ENERGY SAVING & RETROFIT SESSIONS | HOME RETROFIT SESSIONS | HOME RETROFIT SESSIONS |
|--|--|---|---|
| 3rd APRIL | 9th APRIL | 17th APRIL | 8th MAY |
| Home Energy advice from Severn Wye Energy Agency plus a panel of 3 local householders to talk about retrofit energy saving measures they have installed in their own homes. | Home Energy advice from Severn Wye Energy Agency plus a panel of 3 local householders to talk about retrofit energy saving measures they have installed in their own homes. | Retrofit exhibition and 3 local householders talk about retrofit energy saving measures they have installed in their own homes. | Retrofit exhibition and 3 local householders talk about retrofit energy saving measures they have installed in their own homes. |
| SUNDAY 3 rd APRIL 14:00 TO 16:00 | SATURDAY 9 th APRIL 11:00 TO 13:00 | SUNDAY 17 th APRIL 14:00 TO 16:00 | SUNDAY 8 th MAY 14:00 TO 16:00 |

NO BOOKINGS NECESSARY - JUST COME ALONG!

The Home Retrofit sessions are a great opportunity to see examples of what homeowners have installed, talk to them directly about their experiences, the advantages and disadvantages, and get an unbiased view with no hard sell. You'll be able to look at photographs and examples of insulation materials. Many of these measures are low cost, easy to install and eco-friendly.

Detailed advice will be offered on subjects such as:

- internal, external, cavity wall, loft and underfloor insulation
- draught-proofing windows and doors
- double and triple glazing, including original wooden sash windows
- ventilation

Or maybe you are interested in technologies such as air source heat pumps, solar PV, solar thermal, positive-input ventilation, a battery backup system or diverting your extra PV power to heat your water?

The Workshop, Malthouse Lane, Cheltenham GL50 4EY

'Warm, efficient, healthy homes now and for the future.'

Press contact: plegg@vision21.org.uk

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Where to find green jobs? - resource

Reflecting on her own green job hunt from last year, Marta from SOS-UK has made a resource for GEM participants with links to websites collating environmental/green/sustainability jobs that may be helpful for any future job hunt. [See the resource here.](#)



Events

Equality, diversity, stress - what do those have to do with sustainability?! (HWB006-8 & beyond)

Save the date! Marta from SOS-UK has kindly agreed to organise a webinar on 29th March at 10.45 am to introduce and explain the social side of sustainability. We'll be looking at related actions on the toolkit and at issues more broadly, too (email marta.nowicka@sos-uk.org if there is anything specific you'd like to see covered!), and dissecting why they make up a pillar of sustainability as a concept.

[Click here to join!](#)

The next webinar in SOS-UK's Green Impact webinar series, on 22nd March 2022, between 3pm-4pm will be on **Lifelong learning for sustainability**. Why should we learn for sustainability? What does lifelong learning for sustainability mean?

At SOS-UK we believe in lifelong learning for sustainability, meaning everyone can be a 'sustainability student' even after they've left formal education. Workplace learning and other informal ways of learning are hugely important if we want to realise a just and sustainable future for all.

In this webinar we'll discuss the importance of continuing learning beyond education, and how this could be achieved in your workplace or personal life.

[Click here to register!](#)

Missed last month's Green Impact webinar, **Monitoring your local wildlife: the importance of citizen science**? Want to watch any of the other past webinars? Or maybe you'd like to know what future webinars will be about in advance? [Visit this link for all of that!](#) You can register for all webinars we have planned so far, and watch recordings of the past ones.

That's everything we have for you in the newsletter this month! Is there anything you'd like to share with other Green Impact participants, any inspiring initiatives you've been involved with? Email Marta at marta.nowicka@sos-uk.org to include it in the next newsletter!

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