

Top stories in this newsletter



Silent Sea by Sameul Taylor Coleridge



Image by Alex Stephen



Logo by Alex Stephen
[Ken Gallowood](#)



Photo via Unsplash
[Ranuga Cahya Nugra-](#)

A Christmas Wish from Dorset Climate Action Network (DCAN)



UK poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy curated a **series of 20 original poems** by various authors on the theme of climate change in The Guardian newspaper.

This one is written by Maura Dooley

Still Life with Sea Pinks and High Tide

Thrift grows tenacious at the tide's reach.
What is that reach when the water
is rising, rising?

Our melting, shifting, liquid world won't wait
for manifesto or mandate, each
warning a reckoning.

Ice in our gin or vodka chirrup and squeaks
dissolving in the hot, still air
of talking, talking.

A link to the reading of the poem by James Franco can be found [here](#).

DCAN Strategy Day - 17th November 2023



We held our strategy day at Dorchester's The Quiet Space in Poundbury on Friday, 17th November. We had a number of new attendees this year, including councillors, a CEO of another charity and the day provoked interesting, invigorating and intelligent discussion.

We saw how Planet Purbeck has created a Business Plan and are currently collating information from the day, which will be posted on our website in the very near future.

Dorset COP (Conference of the Parties)



The UK's first-ever community-led county-wide COP was held Saturday the 9th of September at the Corn Exchange in Dorchester. [Zero Carbon Dorset](#), [Dorset Climate Action Network](#) and [Sustainable Dorset](#), three of Dorset's leading climate action groups, came together to organise this pioneering event, hoping to raise awareness of the need and desire to act locally, in a way that puts local people at the heart of the climate and ecological crises.

Dorset COP (Conference of the Parties) - *cont'd*

We were delighted by the success of the event with over 250 people attending representing over 100 organisations. The event boasted a series of keynote speakers, talks, workshops, panel discussions break-out rooms, a COP Café and a People's Assembly. It was also fully carbon neutral by providing locally grown food and offsetting all transport and energy related emissions with tree planting.



The event started with a video from [Chris Packham](#), the Hampshire resident and Springwatch presenter, and continued with a string of inspiring speakers including Laura Baldwin, environmental campaigner and former Olympian; Catherine Allinson, Founder of Future Earth; Alice Favre, the Custodian of the Alice Favre Chettle Estate; Alex Moore, Assistant Head Teacher of Shaftesbury School; Sarah Arnold, Founder of Fashion Act Now; two of the first Youth Tedex speakers, Olivia Bowditch and Henrietta Love; Prof. Rick Stafford, Marine Biologist from Bournemouth University; Bob Ward from Grantham Research Institute & London School of Economics; Antony Littlechild from Dorset Council; Neil Short from Bournemouth Council and many others. The conversations and debates raged during the day and we even had surprise comment from



Bournemouth East MP, Tobias Ellwood, the only MP from Dorset to attend the event. See videos [here](#):

Dorset COP (Conference of the Parties) - cont'd

More controversially, we proposed the '[Dorchester Declaration](#)', a set of 6 unifying principles which together were a commitment to act, advocate and lobby for action on climate change and the environment across the county. Many people were happy to sign the declaration but some struggled with the wording and felt either that it did not go far enough or that it went too far. There are echoes here of the international COPs which show how difficult it is to agree any particular text. We also invited individuals and organisations to make [pledges](#) to tackle the crises in various ways. Again, we were overwhelmed by the response and have collected more than 50 pledges which will be tracked in the coming months.

The challenge is to continue this momentum and ensure there is a long-term impact for Dorset. Having taken on board a lot of feedback, we have already started making tentative plans for a larger follow-up event next year which will probably be hosted in the East of the county. The format and even the name may change but the focus will be the same: to help drive down carbon emissions and improve biodiversity for a cleaner, greener Dorset.

Website: <https://dorsetcop.info>

Compiled by Giles Watts, taken from Press Releases on the Dorset COP

New Strategy and Funding Push for Dorset CAN



We thought you might like a flavour of our new Strategy which will focus on our network and the difference we can make by working together.

Here's a flavour:

"Dorset CAN is in a unique position to act as an incubator for bold ideas and a knowledge exchange platform, harnessing and showcasing action across the county to address the climate and ecological emergency. We aim to build a strong network of environmental groups and individuals in Dorset, inspire and enable work on nature recovery, support renewable energy projects and encourage and empower our leaders to take urgent action to tackle the climate and ecological crisis. managing their time, advising on fundraising opportunities and connections.

"This is what we need to do to grow to scale and achieve meaningful impact for people and nature across Dorset"

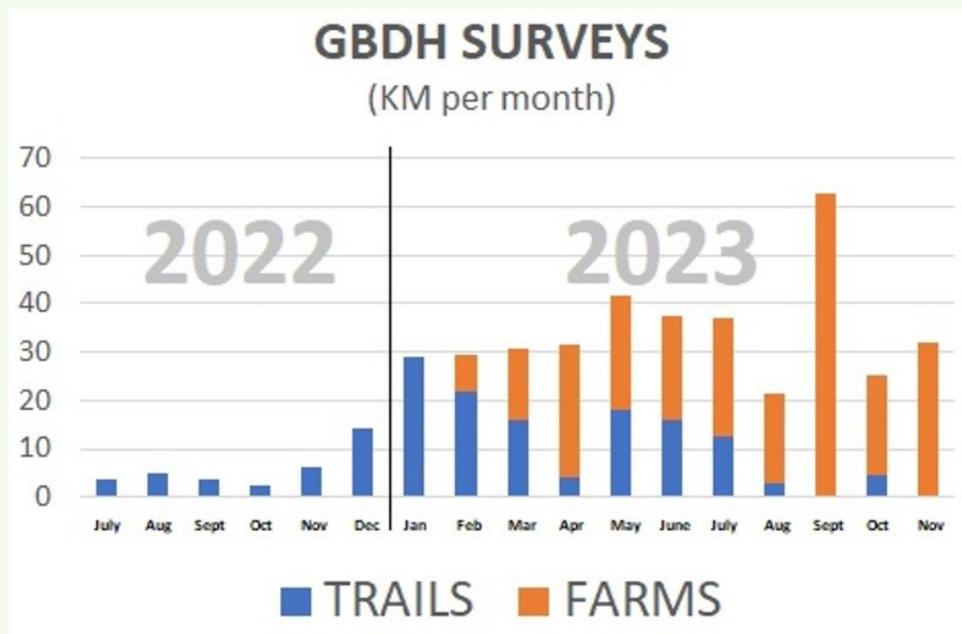
We're so grateful to everyone who came along to the Strategy Day in November and helped us think about how to develop DCAN.

In order to achieve all we want to do over the next couple of years we need to raise funds. We are fortunate to have been supported in our work over the last year by the Raby Trust, CPRE, Dorset Community Energy, Dorset Council, individual town and parish councils and many of you who are reading this.

Now we're a registered charity we will be able to claim Gift Aid on donations and apply to charitable trusts and other sources of funding which were unavailable to us previously. One of the first will be the Big Green Match Fund - if they agree to support us we will be part of Big Green Give week in April. Your donations will then be matched, helping us bring in much needed core funding.

Please keep your fingers crossed for this - we'll let you know if we're successful and will invite donations during that week.

The Great Big Dorset Hedge—update for December 2023



GDBH HOT NEWS:

On 15th December, a hedge-planting team of GDBH volunteers including several regular survey volunteers, made a big impact in a National Trust hedge-planting volunteer morning at Eype, near Bridport. The volunteer team worked with National Trust Golden Cap staff who have something like 300 metres of mixed species hedges to plant this season - some being four rows of plants deep!

The ten volunteers were:

John Calder
 Ken Swain
 Geoff Ralph
 Pippa Lausen
 Deb Childs
 Juliet Bishop
 Garry Constable
 Sam Wilberforce
 Kim Sankey
 Jo Hackett

Thank you all for your efforts!

If you feel inspired to join the project in any capacity, you should just sign up [here](#):

John Calder
 GBDH Project Manager



Shaftesbury Town Council to Adopt Climate Change Action Plan?

Cover of the Sustainable Shaftesbury action plan

Action by town and parish councils in support of 'think global, act local' action to meet the challenge of climate change is as vital as anything being done or promised by Dorset Council or BCP Council.



Cover of the Sustainable Shaftesbury action plan

So it's good news that by the time you read this Shaftesbury Town Council should have become the latest council in Dorset to adopt a remedial climate change and biodiversity loss action plan

The ***Sustainable Shaftesbury Policy and Action Masterplan 2023-2031*** is due to be voted on at a special meeting of the town council on 12 December and is intended to influence all town council policies from here on, including its neighbourhood plan, now under review, and the council's five-year strategic plan.

Billed as 'Shaftesbury's answer to the climate and nature emergency', the 33-page plan is the culmination of a year's work by some 15 locally-based environmentalists, conservationists, ecologists, and climate activists, most of whom are members of Sustainable Shaftesbury and Planet Shaftesbury, and includes Jenny Morissetti, founder of Sustainable Dorset.

But the successful outcome of the vote is by no means guaranteed.

The town council agreed to the setting up of a special working group under its aegis, initially calling itself the Climate Change Working Group before evolving into the broader-based Sustainable Shaftesbury Working Group, in autumn last year.

The final document, published on 6 December, is a plan for how the town council will 'lead by example' over the next decade in dealing with not only climate change but also biodiversity loss and adapting to the environmental challenges of a changing climate.

It includes initiatives under energy, travel and transport, food consumption and production, waste, land and water management, air quality, housing and development, and the circular economy with appendices on biodiversity improvement, tree and hedge planting, wildflower regeneration, and allotments management.

Shaftesbury Town Council to adopt climate change action plan? - (cont'd)

But the action plan is not without its challenges to the usual local authority 'business as usual' stance and opponents on the council have already accused its proponents of 'extremism' by alleging it is 'curtailing personal freedom of choice', 'exceeding its brief', and 'wanting the council to get involved in functions it has no control over.'

If the plan is adopted it will only be by majority vote. That in itself gives cause for reflection but a majority vote is all it needs and it should not be a deterrent to anyone wanting to persuade their own town or parish council to follow suit. Political opposition is inevitable and to be expected but the weight of human history is against such defeatist behaviour.

But even if the plan does not get the nod on 12th December, all is not lost because those involved in its creation do not intend to give up. Local elections are due in May and the call will inevitably go out to encourage candidates whose election will hopefully lead to what fainter hearts fail to do this time.

The prize is too big and too important to be given up that easily. So watch this space.

Richard Thomas
Sustainable Shaftesbury

STOP PRESS -13th Dec 2023: Shaftesbury Town Council refused to adopt the Sustainable Shaftesbury policy document and action plan at its meeting on 12 December, insisting it needed 'more time to study the detail'. The recommendation to adopt the document was defeated by one vote on a 5-4 split. The town council is to meet in the new year in private to consider 'adjustments'.

Food Resilience in Dorset continues Apace!

Following on from our initial Open Zoom Event on 10th July, Dorset CAN and Jon Sloper from #helpandkindness have continued to host conversations around different aspects of Food Resilience in Dorset.

We are still holding open the possibility of applying to become a [Sustainable Food Place](#) in March 2024 and these conversations offer a framework for that application. More importantly, they are helping us to network with each other countywide and to find out what is needed and wanted by those working with food in all different ways in Dorset.



Food Resilience in Dorset continues Apace! (cont'd)

In August, Callum Etches attended the meeting to give us more detailed information about becoming a Sustainable Food Place.

In September the theme was 'Creating a Directory', with a presentation from #helpandkindness sharing the network that's been created by them to support **Emergency and Affordable Food Projects in Dorset** as well as the work on their online directory.

We explored how we might expand mapping to create a county wide directory for all.

In October, #helpandkindness held the second of their 'in person' **Feeding Dorset** meetings in Blandford. Jon Sloper wrote: 'The afternoon's inspiration came from speakers who showcased the potential of food networks. Michael French's descriptions of **Grounded Community** showed the evolution of a network of support that has grown up around Boscombe and **Candida Dunford Wood (Bridport Food Matters)** shared reflections on the diverse web of food connections that have developed around Bridport.'

In November, the challenge was 'Together, how can we build a wider food network? Let us find the links!' Jon Sloper facilitated a dynamic and productive online workshop, gathering information from participants from all parts of the county. We asked: 'Who should be on the food web? Can we theme these and then localise our research to find them all?' and 'What are the opportunities – hot topics – within the food web? What are people doing or wanting to do that we could support by building better connections?'

You can see the video [here](#) and if you would like to add any resources/people that you know of in your area to our growing lists, then please email them to dorsetcan@gmail.com, marked **Food Resilience in Dorset**. Thank you!

Following the theme of 'Links', our next Zoom meeting is on **Wednesday, December 13th at 6.00 - 7.30 pm** and I am delighted to say that Rachael Forster from **Tamar Grow Local** has agreed to come and speak with us about some of the **Food Resilience Systems** they have in place, including a **Good Food Loop** and the **South West Land Match Projects**.

Finally, looking towards the future and 2024! on **January 17th; 6:00—7.30 pm** on Zoom we shall be hosting a meeting about the recent **Bridport Food Security Plan**, asking what can we learn, both from their plan and from the process they have been through to produce such a comprehensive vision and plan? Please join us. You are all welcome.

Full details and registration can be found [here](#).

Dorset CAN Events Team (written by Sandra Reeve)



Dorchester Streets Alive!



On 22 September 2023 Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG) held a day of activities, stalls, demonstrations, and more to re-claim our urban spaces in Dorchester and celebrate International Car Free Day.

The event was a first for Dorchester. The Acland Road car park in the centre of town was transformed into a car-free space for the day. The theme was active transport, encouraging those children and adults attending to have fun and engage in alternative to driving transport as well as enjoying the health benefits of active transport.

All the Dorchester primary and middle schools participated and brought children along who walked, cycled and scooted to the event.

On the day Kate Brown, Year 4 Teacher at the Prince Of Wales School, said: "The activities are encouraging the children into being active and imagining a future that doesn't just involve cars. The children are absolutely loving it, and have been excited about it since this morning. It's so enriching for them to learn and do things outside of the classroom".

There were activities for children and adults including walking football, bike-agility, King Ramps Skateboarding, Crazy Cycle Circus, Anna DeFuego Circus Skills, Blast-off fitness, various arts and crafts, talks about sustainability from Dorchester Library and Learning Centre, the Sustrans smoothie making bicycle and Tri-Shaw rides.

An action packed day formally opened by Alistair Chisholm, Mayor of Dorchester, who rode into the site on a trishaw, "I rode down here on a trishaw, and it was very comfortable – all the children have come here by walking, taking a scooter or cycling, showing there are alternatives, particularly for short journeys. This is the direction we should be heading in. Let's have more of it".

Stewart Palmer, Chair of DTAG said "We organised the event to make people aware of the choices they have instead of cars, and persuade people to join our campaign to improve access to Dorchester for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport".

Thanks must go to Dorset Council, Dorset Community Energy and Poundbury Asset Management for sponsoring the event and big thanks to Dorchester Town Council for their support and resources that helped to make it all happen.

If your group/organisations is based in Dorchester please look, like and follow our (Dorchester Transport Action Group) - [DTAG Facebook](#) site to see what events and campaigns we are doing and also please promote it on your own social media pages.

TO SEE MORE ABOUT HOW THE EVENT WENT AND PHOTOS FROM THE EVENT CHECK OUT OUR [DORCHESTER STREETS ALIVE FACEBOOK SITE](#)

The Streets Alive event made the news on **BBC South Today** the link to the broadcast: is [here](#):

Julie Ann Booker

A DCAN Personal Journey into HVO—Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil



A Summary of my journey into understanding "Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil" (HVO) - Mick Duncan

I cannot remember how I first heard about this fuel oil. It blew me away. I knew people ran vehicles on vegetable oils and chip fat.

A DCAN Personal Journey into HVO—Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil

I started to investigate further. I phoned National Fuels Ltd , and two guys called Dale and Oliver told me all they knew , and approached their research department to answer all my questions.

I found out a lot but there are some areas I have yet to explore. So if you start with the fact that both Scania ,and DAF run their own Vehicles on HVO. So do many companies in Sweden and the Netherlands.

The analysis on HVO titles the combustible part as a “Paraffinic Fuel”. The other constituents are of three types. Only one is troublesome. Sulphur. The “Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons” contain 10mg Sulphur per Kilogram of PAH. The PAH’s I am informed are harmless. The amount of Sulphur is not significant enough to be a problem.

The final substance is called “Cetanes”. Far from being harmful, Cetanes increase the efficiency of the fuel. Cetanes are in no way harmful.

An Oil Crop is specially grown to make HVO. Some kind of Oil seed is grown. Rapeseed or other kinds of Braccica.

I felt that trying to convince even Large Businesses to convert to HVO , was a drop in the Ocean. However, MoreBus were waiting for a new fleet of electric powered buses.

I contacted the Manager, and at first it seemed that he was happy to meet and consider the matter. We were only in email contact. It looked like a date for a face-to-face interview was about to happen, when he ceased contact with no explanation.

I had to wait. No further communication has occurred.

My next step, was to find a way to convince Dorset Council to suggest they change to HVO

i contacted councillor Ray Bryant. He was interested, but said he was too busy and that it was better to talk to Tim Woolford, the East Dorset Manager for the Council on Transport.

Tim Woolford assured me that all was going as fast as it could. All his fleet of vehicles were running on HVO, and the plan was to have 50% of all vehicles CO2 free by 2035. I rested at that point

Mick Duncan

Dorset Greener Homes to run Throughout the Year



This is the tenth year we have run open homes in West Dorset, and the third year DCAN has organised the event over the whole of Dorset. Some 44 homes opened this year. Although the total number of visitors , about 250, was down, the feedback from the hosts was that they were mostly homeowners doing serious research to inform their own projects. Some of the visitors stayed over two hours, and then emailed further questions.

This year we had a new website, funded by Dorset Community Energy (DCE). This allows for searching for features such as heat pumps or low cost improvements.

Dorset Greener Homes to run Throughout the Year (*cont'd*)

We also commissioned films of several of the homes, to draw people in and to be able to share their knowledge to a wider audience, sponsored by the Dorset Community Foundation of Wessex Water.

Some of the feedback we got from visitors:

- The visits helped to highlight the technology that can be used in two very different homes. This will help us enormously when looking at potential houses to buy when we move.
- Jo was on a limited budget, as I am, and her house contained 2 types of construction as does my 1860 home. She was enthusiastic even though she has had to manage her installations piecemeal, as I will, and has invited a return visit when she has gone through a full winter with her new ASHPs
- The host was very knowledgeable, giving practical advice for each area and reasoned arguments for different options that he had installed. Also had advice on what improvements might be available since his various systems had been installed. The session was perfectly timed. I was able to see all the 'gubbins' in cupboards and outside and discuss how things had been installed and the impact on the house in disruption and redecoration. I learned a lot!
- The owner was extremely technically knowledgeable and communicated well. The fact he was managing 2 very different types of build in a rural area meant he had wide problem solving experience. Whilst his property is of a completely different scale and purpose to mine, he had lots of information to impart.
- Purchase an EV and home charger, install solar PV and air source heat pump. These were already planned but the visit confirmed many of the benefits and was reassuring about some of our concerns giving a greater sense of certainty.
- I already have solar panels batteries solar thermal and an electric car but was at a loss how to approach getting a heat pump. Colin gave me a stack of information which I am now acting on and hope to have a heat pump installed soon

A further innovation is that most of the hosts have agreed to show people round, by appointment, throughout the year. Householders often approach us for advice on improving their home, and asking them to wait until next September is not helpful. The [DCAN website](#) identifies which homes are open and how to contact them.

Sam Wilberforce

New LE River Lim Action—How can we Clean up Dorset's Rivers and Beaches?



Local residents in Lyme Regis were horrified at sewage pouring into the river Lim from a surface water pipe. Only Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are legally permitted to discharge sewage after heavy rain (which is bad enough!).

After more than two years of reporting the pollution to South West Water (Lyme Regis is the water company's more easterly outpost) they started having a go at finding out the cause. First it was blamed on misconnections in residents' houses – and that was part of the problem.

River Lim Action—How can we Clean up Dorset’s Rivers and Beaches? *(cont’d)*



Chuch Beach, Grenville

But it was also down to their own broken sewage pipes. There were celebrations when they finally fixed it and now what was brown and stinky is clear and sparkling. Phew! Pipe number one...

The River Lim Action group was formed over two years ago to monitor the pollution in the river and aims to get the river cleaned up within three years. There are three teams of monitors – water quality (measuring things like ammonia which is an indicator of pollution); E.Coli (bacterial contamination) and Riverfly, using invertebrate population health as a measure of ecological health.

The monitors are the eyes and ears of the local community on the river. It has taken many repeated reports of pollution to get action and we’ve made huge progress. South West Water has just completed a proactive test on all its Surface Water Outfalls to make sure they’re not discharging sewage. Lyme Regis was the first town where they’d carried this out. If you’ve got a river group where you live ask for this too!

The group works in an evidence based way. So when South West Water blamed cows for the pollution we asked for the evidence. They can track the DNA and find out the species which caused the E. Coli. And the Environment Agency has also responded to our requests to do that. In 2021 and 22 over 70% of the bacteria in the river came from humans. We’re waiting for this year’s results. Lyme Regis Town Council paid for the group to carry out an ecological survey of the river – this adds to our knowledge of the river and what influences it.

At the request of the group, Lyme Regis Town Council has organised regular roundtable partnership meetings involving the monitors, Dorset Council, the Environment Agency and South West Water. This forum has proved invaluable in sorting out problems and (gently) knocking heads together. The group has managed to secure drainage maps of the town and even discovered drains not on the map! This helps improve understanding of everyone involved on what might be causing the problems of sewage contamination in the river and on the beach.

The group decided the best way of tackling the problem of the river pollution affecting one of the town beaches was to mount a campaign to get it redesignated as a bathing beach. Church Cliff beach was undesignated in 2016 because of concerns about water quality. Bathing beaches attract more resources for monitoring, public information and clean up. And many local residents who want to swim there were complaining that worries about pollution were putting them off. The application went in a short while ago. A decision is expected before the next bathing season in May. Fingers crossed!

River Lim Action—How can we Clean up Dorset's Rivers and Beaches? (cont'd)

If you are concerned about the quality of your local river these are our top tips:

- Monitor and gather evidence
- Set up systems to encourage prompt reporting of pollution
- Talk to the water company and the Environment Agency, and other key players
- Get the support of your parish or town council
- Learn from other river groups and bigger organisations like the Westcountry River Trust, the Rivers Trust, Surfers against Sewage. There are lots of resources out there.

If you live nearby come along to the River Lim Action meetings. For more information contact via [LinkTree](#):

Future Newsletter Items

If you would like your stories included in the next Dorset CAN Newsletter due April 2024, please email us at dorsetcan@gmail.com



Have a Wonderful Festive Season and all the very best Winter Wishes to you.