

OVINGHAM AND OVINGTON CLIMATE AND NATURE (OOCAN)



Northumberland County Council declared a climate emergency in 2021, following their lead Ovingham and Ovington Parish Councils both recognised this and set up a combined group in response to that declaration in 2021. You may have attended our successful launch at Ovingham Middle School in November last year. We were joined by the many active environmental groups in our area, as well as expert advisors on energy-saving strategies.

Our New Year's resolution in 2023 was to get cracking on cutting our individual and our community's carbon footprint as much as possible, do our bit to mitigate the serious effects of the climate crisis and consider biodiversity projects.

To give you an idea of what Ovington and Ovingham have achieved, village groups have each put together a brief report to let us know what they have been busy with, please see below.

Ovingham Parish Council

***Tree Planting** - 22 large native trees have been planted on the Playing Fields forming a copse on the north bank. 6 flowering cherry trees have also been planted on the eastern border. A further 6 native trees will be planted on the top eastern boundary of the field in the autumn.

Any dead tree or fallen tree in future years will be replaced by a native tree either in same area or another area of the village.

*** Wild flowers** – the north bank of the Playing Fields is planted with wild flowers and grasses and a number of residents have planted wild flowers in their own gardens, all helping to improve biodiversity.

* **Bulb planting**- small areas of green space have been planted with daffodils, snowdrops and crocuses. Additional areas are to be planted in the autumn of 2023/24 funded by NWL/MMB

3,000 snowdrops were planted around the village by volunteers in 2020 in memory of the hard work carried out by the NHS nurses and doctors during Covid.

* **Blister pack disposal** - volunteers collect and transport blister packs to a collection point for disposal on a regular basis.

* **NCC Glass Recycling Pilot Scheme** - the Parish Council has made a request to be part of this pilot scheme if extra government funding is provided in the future to increase the present pilot areas in Northumberland.

* **Heating Systems – review of home heating forum** - an information session was held in Ovington Club organised by OOCAN.

Please see Ovington Parish Council information for further details.

* **EV Charging Points** – in our 2022 Village Appraisal questionnaire residents were asked to suggest suitable locations for EV charging points as NCC had indicated funds were available for the provision of one or two points in towns and villages.

Information collected suggested the following locations - White Swan, Closed Churchyard, Riverside Park and Prudhoe Station.

It was decided a site across the river may be the best option and this is to be investigated.

Transport - this was also a question raised in our Village Appraisal, use of cars to transport children to school did raise comments.

Walking to school is encouraged by both of our village schools especially those pupils who live in the village. Cycling to school is also encouraged.

Litter Picks – a volunteer organises quarterly litter picks of the whole village and these are well supported by volunteers who live in the village.



Ovington Tree Project

A total of **2529** trees for hedgerows and free standing trees have been planted with advice and support from:

- Northumberland County Council Highways
- Northumberland County Council Tree Officer
- Northumberland County Council Marketing Department 10 different Landowners
- Tyne Rivers Trust
- Ovingham Community Orchard
- Whittle Dene CIC
- Ovingham Parish Council
- Woodland Trust
- Ovington Community Group Forest Partnership (set up by Northumberland County Council)
- Ovingham First School
- Ovingham Middle School

The majority of planting is focused on public rights of way. This is important as donors of trees/funds ask for the public to have access to the trees as they grow. More hedgerows are planned for 2023/2024 planting season.

Bringing the strategy to life has involved a lot of planning and organisation. Local residents have been excellent at volunteering, donating funds and enthusiastically assisting with preparing, planting and maintaining trees and hedges. Administration volunteers have helped with grant applications, mapping tree locations and ancient trees, providing refreshments to volunteers and creating tree based activities for children.

Key activities on top of public access tree planting and tree maintenance have been:

- Delivering talks on the tree project and proposed linear tree arboretum at Ovingham First School, Ovingham Middle School and Mickley First School
- Engaging with neighbouring parish councils on tree project issues and ideas.
- Advising private landowners on tree planting that could be supported by the project
- Engaging Ovingham Middle School Eco Group to design a logo for the tree project
- Engaging Ovingham Middle School in carbon capture of the tree project. This will be a rolling process.
- Planting a new Goat Willow Copse in Ovingham Middle School and a row of free standing trees in Ovingham First School.



Currently we are working with Northumberland Bat Group, Go Local Ovington and Northumberland Wildlife Trust to create a baseline record of all species within the parish where trees/hedges are a key habitat. This acts as a baseline for the project. As trees mature the surveys can be repeated to see the impact of more trees and hedgerows on our environment.

Over the next year preparations with stakeholders are being undertaken to launch the Linear Native Tree Arboretum in 2024.

Many thanks to all who have helped over the past year.

Activities are being planned for 2023/2024 --- these will be published on the [Ovington Facebook page](#)

If you would like to be involved with the Ovington Tree project, please contact Anne Hudson, Parish Councillor, at anne.hudson@live.co.uk or 07785 905624.



Go Local Food.

Go Local Food was set up in response to a local resident's question – 'how can we create a sustainable village?' That was in 2010 ... clearly ahead of the times!

Green Ovingham at this time identified many ways in which we could adjust behaviours and increase environmental awareness. One of the topics under discussion was food and this led to the creation some 12 years ago of Go Local Food.

Our community owned co-operative has brought back into production barren land without the use of chemicals and as a consequence we share our space with a diverse range of wildlife and insects.

We have shortened the vegetable supply chain for our members and increased their opportunity to go 'plastic free' with our refill zone. We carefully manage water supply, have invested in reasonably large compost production and continue to look at how we can improve our practices. We offer members and local communities a chance to learn more about their environment and support other groups "grow" their projects.

To find out more visit our website -

www.golocalfood.org.uk

<https://golocalfood.org.uk> there is always space for new faces if you would like to join us.

Ovingham Community Orchard

Ovingham Community Orchard was established in 2018 on a small piece of grazing land next to the Village Green and Allotments by a small group of village residents.

It is fully supported by the Parish Council who own the land on which the orchard was planted, village residents, involvement of the schools and other village organisations. Twenty four apple trees, all different varieties were initially planted. In later years additional trees have been planted, raspberry canes and gooseberry bushes. Wild flowers can be seen growing in the long grass on the



Ovingham Allotment Association

There are 37 allotment plots available for residents of the village so that they can grow food locally. These are very popular and there is a waiting list.

For further details contact the Chair Simon Marker-

simon.marker@gan-ainm.org

St Marys Eco Church

Ecochurch is an online survey system for assessing the environmental achievements of places of worship. It is managed by Arocha an environmental charity whose activities range from managing nature reserves to providing carbon off set facilities.

It's all about how well we care for God's earth in different areas of church life and work. The answers provided collect points towards Eco Church Award – the more we do the more points we get. The survey contains five key areas of church life and we have to be able to act on the questions contained in each section, for instance –

- * **Worship and teaching** – The Ecochurch Group organises two environment themed church services a year and encourages the inclusion of prayers for the environment in church intercessions.
- * **Management of church buildings** - We conduct church energy surveys on a regular basis and negotiate green energy contracts. Our next project will be to draught proof the church porch by installing new doors.

- * **Management of church land** – We encourage Bee friendly planting of the church yard borders and create wild flower areas. We recently installed a swift box and campaigned against the felling of the giant redwood which has a sequestered 10 tonnes of CO₂
- * **Community and global engagement** – We hold events to raise the awareness of environmental issues e.g the showing of the film "2040 the regeneration" and regular events celebrating World Environment day on the 5th June in support of the theme.
- * **Lifestyle** – The Eco Church Group meets on a regular basis and has an appointed environmental champion. Handouts are produced and distributed which have guidance on how to best care for the environment and one page in the parish magazine is dedicated to green matters.

If any of this interests you and you would like to contribute to St Marys Eco Church send an email to Martin Davenport at greenmatters@btinternet.com

Whittle Dene CIC

Whittle Dene Community Interest Company is a not -for-profit organisation founded in 2019. Its Board of Directors are volunteers who have a special connection to the place and local community. The CIC's aim is to steward the area of land at the southern tip of Whittle Dene north of Ovingham, Northumberland, for the benefit of wildlife and the community. The land includes ancient woodland a glade with a historic cabin site and a wild meadow.

<https://www.whittledenecic.co.uk/>

info@whittledenecic.co.uk



If you are interested in joining and helping the OOCAN group -

please contact us via facebook: <https://facebook.com/groups/993328938033569/>

or contact the Parish Council Clerk -

Paul Smith – ovinghamparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk

Lorraine Burns - ovingtonparishcouncil@btinternet.com to make suggestions and be put on our mailing list.