

Holbeton News Climate Change & Environment

Life On The Edge – great news!

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded £2.24 million to this large scale project to help restore thriving populations of some of the UK’s rarest insects living along the coast between Berry Head in Torbay and Wembury. This will fund the 5 year delivery phase of the project.

The partnership is jointly led by the South Devon National Landscape (was AONB) and Buglife. It includes the National Trust, Doorstep Arts and South West Coast Path Association and will engage farmers, communities (including Holbeton Parish), schools, gardeners and businesses.

Our Parish Council has already put together a “pollinator plan” with Life On The Edge to encourage wildlife friendly green spaces, highway verges and gardens. Mothecombe is one of the project’s “hot spots”.

Fossil fuels drop to just 35% of UK’s energy supplies

Fossil fuels accounted for 35 per cent of the UK’s energy mix in 2023, down from 43 per cent in 2022.

On top of British renewables, energy imports from France and Norway, accounting for almost 10% of UK’s mix contributed to the decline in fossil fuels, due to their generation from nuclear and hydroelectric.*

One caveat is that the imported biofuel from North America by the large Drax power station is counted as carbon neutral. It makes no sense that this is shipped round the world. Drax's burning of wood biomass has been found to produce higher levels of CO2 from smokestacks than its coal did.

These combustion emissions are allowed to be counted as 'zero' under international carbon accounting principles and EU and UK law, on the basis that any deforestation should be counted elsewhere. Drax are planning to set up a carbon capture and storage system that will be started by 2027.

*Source: https://www.electricinsights.co.uk/#/homepage?_k=7rzegs

Tip of The Month: Cloud storage of our computer files

When we save a file “in the cloud”, our information is actually stored in data centres, massive buildings filled with hard drives. These hard drives have to be running at all times. This is why “cloud” storage uses so much electricity, and why globally it creates a huge carbon footprint that now exceeds the emissions from the whole of the airline industry!

It has been calculated that storing 100 gigabytes of data “in the cloud” for a year produces 0.2 tons of CO₂e. A single data centre uses the same amount of electricity as can power up to 50,000 homes. Global “cloud” data capacity is projected to more than double by 2025 compared to 2020.

Data centres also require a continual water supply for use in cooling and humidity control. Larger centres can consume up to 5 million gallons of water each day! Not to forget the mining of rare-earth elements used in computer components.

The fact that the environmental costs are hard to perceive is what makes them so insidious.

The greatest benefits of “cloud” storage are convenience and the ability to recover files if a computer or smartphone is damaged or lost. There is however always a risk of unauthorised access to our information.



The most sustainable and viable alternative to using cloud data storage is to back up files on an external hard drive. It only requires a fraction of a kilowatt to save all the information backed up and on the computer. The cost and size of external hard drives, including solid state, are falling. The

downside is that if lost or destroyed all of the data is permanently irretrievable.

I have a solid state hard drive of 510 gigabytes on my mid range laptop plus an external 1 terabyte hard drive with my archived files. All my current files including programmes fill around half the laptop drive. About once a week I back up all my files onto a second 2 terabytes external hard drive using a simple programme.

The tip of the month is to consider what really needs backing up on the “cloud” and if possible storing some or all your computer files on an external hard drive, thereby reduce your computing carbon footprint and saving yourself the ongoing costs.

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WATER Website

We are very excited to announce the launch of our new website. On it, you will find information on the WATER steering group, live and planned projects as well as information on how you can get in touch, sign up to our newsletter or volunteer. Just follow: www.ermesriver.org

Yealm and Erme Species Survival project (YESS)

Helping non-farming landowners enhance wildlife and climate resilience

We are delighted to report that the Environment Agency has awarded funds to help non farming landowners (NFLs) in the Yealm and Erme catchments to better manage their land to support wildlife and climate change resilience. Thanks to this funding, YESS, (a collaboration between WATER and the Yealm Estuary to Moor), is working with ParkLife South West and Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT), to deliver a Pilot Project by the end of March.

The YESS project will provide expert advice and practical support, leading to capital works and the Pilot Project will get us started. We hope that YESS will become an established project with NFLs being encouraged through talks and events to become a network/community who can share experiences and provide mutual support to assist the longer-term success of the project.

The work will seek to mirror the successful project delivered by Devon Wildlife Trust in the neighbouring Avon catchment ('the Avon project') though providing advice and delivering practical interventions to deliver multiple benefits.

Following a call to NFLs in the Erme and Yealm catchments, which resulted in over 70 responses, a short list of potential sites has been identified. A series of site visits and assessments is underway. We have received lots of exciting ideas from NFLs including tree planting, creation of hedges, ponds and meadows, flood and erosion prevention and fencing to protect trees and rivers from livestock. YESS plans to deliver at least 3 projects on the ground by the end of March.

WATER would like to thank YEM who have taken the lead in getting this project up and running.

Together with our partners we hope to apply for more funds in the future so if you are a non-farming landowner with 1 to 10 acres of land please get in touch via <https://yemcorridor.com/>, <https://ermesriver.org/get-involved/>

Plymouth City Council wins prestigious award at COP28

The innovative Fifth Generation Heating and Cooling Network, which the Council has been developing in Millbay, won two prizes at COP28, held in Dubai, UAE.

The scheme was awarded the Sustainable Infrastructure Grand Prize as well as the overall Green Solutions Awards Grand Prize – triumphing in a field of over 200 international entries.

The network will allow waste heat from cooling in buildings like the Plymouth Pavilions and Moxy Hotel, to be reused for heating buildings in the area, which would be supplemented by other renewable sources of heat. This very low carbon solution will help to significantly reduce emissions.

Source: <https://www.cityam.com/green-britain-fossil-fuels-fall-to-just-35-per-cent-of-uk-energy-supply/>



Yealm Community Energy announces the 2024 Community Fund round open!

YCE are encouraging applications for the latest grant funding round.

Do you have an environmental project that needs some match funding to realise its full impact and potential? YCE have granted £100,000 to local projects since 2018, including Covid emergency relief.

Due to YCE having completed the purchase of the solar farms we now have the security of offering grants annually for the lifetime of the project.

YCE harness the power of the sun to empower our local communities.

The 2024 round is open for Environmental Project applications.

Closing date for applications is 21st April 2024.

Application form, rules and guidance is available on the YCE website: www.yealmenergy.co.uk. Please read the full guidance, rules and expectation of an impact report before applying.