

GreenSnape Newsletter - May 2019

Onshore energy developments

Since the last newsletter the GreenSnape committee has been active in responding to the proposed industrial building developments by Scottish Power Renewables and National Grid Ventures. Our response to Scottish Power's consultation can be read on the village website www.snapevillage.info. GreenSnape has also helped to form the *Anglian Energy Planning Alliance* which brings together most of the local groups campaigning against the proposals. GreenSnape committee member Graeme Murray is its chair. We think that challenging these developments meets GreenSnape's aim of "opposing any plans or actions that, in the view of the Committee, would damage or be detrimental to the environment in and around Snape". One effect if the proposals go ahead would be to bring heavy construction traffic through Snape for several years. The planned development carves a huge cable corridor through our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from Thorpeness beach almost to Friston, and culminates in a vast estate of ugly industrial power buildings - each covering at least 10 acres of previously unspoiled land, and most of them higher than Snape church. These would be just the first of many, as more new offshore windfarms are due to be permitted. The welcome energy from offshore wind turbines needs to be brought ashore. But opponents believe that there are viable alternatives to the current scheme, which will destroy landscape and wildlife irreparably, damage tourism and be entirely out of place, and out of scale, in our quiet rural area.

Snape Swifts

The distinctive sound of swifts should increase in Snape this summer, as there has been a good take-up of GreenSnape's swift boxes, some of them accompanied by sound systems to play seductive swift calls. Last of the summer migrants to arrive, swifts have declined drastically in recent years and are on the Amber list of threatened bird species. One reason for the decline is the absence of nest sites now that houses and other buildings are sealed to 21st Century standards, with no gaps useful for wildlife. Nest boxes are a perfect replacement. Another principal reason is the decline in the insect species that swifts feed on. Farmers rely on heavy insecticide use, but our gardens can help by providing chemical-free spaces for insects to thrive.

The Village Green

The finishing touch to the Village Green refurbishment took place on 30 March, when donor representatives (including Parish and District councillors), volunteers and other GreenSnape members gathered to unveil the new information board with footpath map opposite the entrance to The Crown. The ceremony was performed by Wilfrid George of Aldeburgh, whose hand-drawn local footpath maps have guided thousands of people around the Suffolk countryside. Wilfrid kindly allowed us to use his copyright Snape map free of charge.

Unfortunately much of last year's wildflower planting on the green shrivelled in 2018's intense summer heat, but two GreenSnape committee members have stepped in: Derek Walduck raised more cowslips and ox-eye daisies which were planted with the help of other committee members this month, and Teresa Cook is kindly keeping them watered until they are established.

Sheep safely grazing

The National Trust's mixed flock of rare-breed sheep that have graced and grazed Snape Warren since February are now back in Orford after chewing their way through acres of our heathland grass and other species, prickly gorse included. They improve the habitat for a variety of plants and wildlife, and keep open many of the paths that cross the Warren. More than 40 children from Snape School went out to meet and feed the sheep in March, and to learn about them from NT shepherd Andrew Capell aided by GreenSnape's part-time voluntary shepherd Peter Fowler.

Snape school garden

GreenSnape members and other volunteers also spent another enjoyable day helping to prepare and enlarge the school garden that we reclaimed last year with such spectacular results, thanks to the children, Head Sarah Gallagher and the teachers. The school won a top Royal Horticultural Society award for its gardening achievements, as the garden is now integral to the curriculum, and pupils grow a variety of flowers and vegetables for school use and for sale. All this from what was mostly an overgrown and barren space until our volunteers and parents came together to rescue it.

BYO Barbecue at the Barn - Midsummer Day, 21 June from 6.30 pm.

Snape's Abbey Farm Barn, which dates from the 14th century and is the oldest barn in Suffolk, will be the venue for our longest-day summer party for GreenSnape members and their guests. Founder member Miranda Barclay is kindly letting us use the barn and its environs for a delicious early evening barbecue (vegetarians catered for too).

Cost per person will be £ 7. Please email if you would like to come, and we will send directions for access and payment.

Do please bring your own wine or other drink - no corkage charge, corkscrews and glasses will be provided. There will also be wine, beer and soft drinks on sale at low prices, but BYO is Best!

Private guided visit to Columbine Hall, Stowupland - 10 July, 2.30 pm.

Following our enjoyable trip to Otley Hall last year we have arranged another private guided tour for GreenSnape members and their guests to the moated medieval manor and gardens at Columbine Hall near Stowmarket. Our guide will be one of the two owners, writers Leslie Geddes-Brown and her partner Hew Stevenson, who bought the house in the early 1990s after it had been empty for seven years. It remains a family home and is not generally open to the public. Pevsner's Suffolk guide calls it "enchanted", and Barbara Segall's *Secret*

Gardens of East Anglia describes “vistas, parklands and the seemingly floating and secretive garden that wraps itself round the hall”.

The cost per person is £18 including afternoon tea in the Hall. We will as before be car-sharing for the 45 minute drive to Stowupland, so if you have car space or would like a lift, please let me know.

As we made a small loss last year through last-minute cancellations, we will be asking for payment with, or soon after, booking. Wherever possible we would like payments made direct to the GreenSnape account: Sort Code 30-98-97, acc no 53767060. Reference: Columbine.

Twilight walk on The Warren - 24 July

Another chance to spot nightjars hawking for moths, and glow-worms advertising for mates, and to experience the many evocative sounds of Snape Warren as night falls. No fee, let us know if you would like to come and we will send details in early July.

2019 events

Dates and details of other events will be sent as soon as we know them.

Victoria Hambley

This is a rare unillustrated Newsletter, because our Joint Secretary and design expert Lesley Walduck is on a well deserved holiday after her fantastic fundraising efforts for GreenSnape projects, ranging from the Village Green to Snape Swifts. Photographs are promised next time.