



Parish Meeting Talk, Wymondham Town Council 27 April

I'm going to talk about 2 projects that Greening Wymondham are running in Wymondham.

1) Wymondham: a Hedgehog Haven

We are working with Councillor Annette James in her capacity as one of the organisers of Wymondham-in Bloom on making Wymondham a hedgehog-friendly town. This is a community-wide project: Greening Wymondham are collaborating with the Men's Shed as well as Wymondham-in-Bloom and thanks to the town council, will be having a stall at the Farmers' Market on Saturday 15 May. Annette has set up a very popular facebook group with 166 members at last count. There will be a zoom webinar with speakers from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and Norfolk Wildlife Trust on Thursday 3 June. Please email Greening Wymondham for the link. Hedgehogs roam up to 1 mile or 2km per night so they need Hedgehog Highways, from a gap in the hedge to a small CD-sized hole in the fence, they need connection of habitats. This leads me on to our next project which also involves connections.....

2) Wildflower habitats

Greening Wymondham are working with local people to encourage them to leave an area of their grass to grow to attract pollinators and beneficial insects, as recommended by the No Mow May campaign organised by the Plantlife charity. As Mary mentioned, this is one of the best things we can do to increase biodiversity. If isolated pieces of land can be joined up into networks, this makes it easier for pollinators and animals to move through habitats. Biodiversity is not just for nature-lovers but for survival.

This leads me on to the Dasgupta Report, mentioned earlier by Mary. The UK Government commissioned an independent review which was headed up by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, a well-known economist. It is called 'The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review'. Here are the headline messages (and I quote):



- Our economies, livelihoods and well-being all depend on our most precious asset: Nature
- We have collectively failed to engage with nature sustainably to the extent that our demands far exceed its capacity to supply us with the goods and services we all rely on
- Our unsustainable engagement with nature is endangering the prosperity of current and future generations
- At the heart of the problem lies deep-rooted, widespread institutional failure
- The solution starts with understanding and accepting a simple truth: our economies are embedded within nature, not external to it
- We need to change how we think, act and measure success
 - Ensure our demands on nature do not exceed its supply and that we increase nature's supply relative to its current level
 - Change our measure of economic success to guide us on a more sustainable path
 - Transform our institutions and systems – in particular our finance and education systems – to enable these changes and sustain them for future generations
- Transformative change is possible – we and our descendants deserve nothing less

You are probably thinking, well, how is this to do with me at the parish council meeting in Wymondham? Or you may be thinking, what can we do as a small local council when this is aimed at the government? So I shall leave you with 2 quotes

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead, anthropologist



“Sustainability is a political choice, not a technical one. It’s not a question of whether we can be sustainable but whether we choose to be.”

Phil Harding, British field archaeologist