



Addingham Environment Group

Report for 2016

We set up the Addingham Environment Group in April 2016 under the auspices of the Addingham Civic Society to put together an environmental plan for the village. What have we achieved so far?

Quite a bit! We're now a strong group of about 50 people, all contributing in different ways. Although there's much more to do before we're completely up and running, by this time next year we will not only have a work programme in full swing but we should also have started to make a difference, edging forwards to a greener more sustainable future.

On behalf of our small steering committee as well as the Civic Society I should like to thank everyone in the group for your help and support in 2016 and I look forward to working together with you in 2017. Here I report on our 2016 activities.

Constitution and overall aim

Our steering committee consists of Janet Hindle, Stuart Tomlinson, Peter Miller, Jim Robinson (representing the Civic Society), Catherine Coates and Margaret Batley (representing the Parish Council), Richard Walton, Gill Battarbee and Rick Battarbee (Co-ordinator).

We started by drawing up an agenda (see <http://www.addinghamcivicsociety.co.uk/environment/>) and circulated it amongst all members of the Civic Society and the Parish Council for approval.

Our principal agreed aim is to develop a plan that can be used over coming years to protect and enhance the natural environment of the village and surrounding countryside for the enjoyment and wellbeing of both residents and visitors (including wildlife!).

Objectives

Our first objective is to raise awareness of the environmental challenges we face globally and locally and the associated need within a generation to move towards a more sustainable life-style than we currently enjoy. Our intention, therefore, is to engage with every family and every organisation in the village to explore how together we might move towards that goal.

The specific questions we are addressing are:

- How can we minimise the impact of new housing on the character of our local landscape and on our wildlife?
- How can we mitigate climate change by reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, for example, by improving energy efficiency and adopting renewable energy sources?

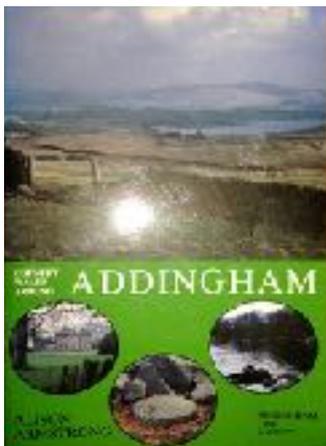
- How can we adapt to climate change, especially by addressing the problem of increased flood frequency and intensity and making our natural ecosystems more resilient?
- How can we improve both private and public land management to protect natural and semi-natural ecosystems and enhance biodiversity?
- How can we reduce pollution of all kinds, but especially water pollution from nutrients and air pollution from fossil fuel burning?

Raising awareness

In addition to keeping the members of the Civic Society informed through Jim Robinson's monthly newsletters our approach has been to make contact with **other organisations** in the village, explain our objectives and engage with them in drawing up a common agenda. So far we have forged links with the Parish Council, the Primary School, Garden Friends, the Parish Church and the Angling Association and are in the process of establishing links with the Brownies, the Scouts and the Golf Club.

At the moment we have a small web presence on the Civic Society website (<http://www.addinghamcivicsociety.co.uk/environment/>) but during the early part of this year (2017) we will launch a more **comprehensive standalone website** being developed by Don Barrett, that will include information on Landscape History, Local Habitats, Designated Local Wildlife Sites, Priority Species, Environmental Pressures as well as on the activities of our Group. The new website will also be accessed from the Village website and the Civic Society website.

A key element of our awareness agenda will be the launching and in some cases the re-launching of **walks** in the village. The first of these called "**the Sailor and the South Field**" is now being trialled. It was originally designed as a heritage walk by Arnold Pacey in 1995. We have updated it and will be making it available as a leaflet to be left in village shops and pubs. It is very short as a walk but full of interest describing the fields at the back of the Sailor towards the bypass and explaining the Medieval origin of the "hollow lane" and the adjacent open field system. Once we have finalised it, it will be available for download from the website along with photographs and further historical information.



We intend to follow this walk with the launch of another of Arnold Pacey's village walks called "**The Swan and Manor Garth**". Jonathan White and I also have permission from Alison Armstrong to update her booklet on "Country walks around Addingham" (still available for £2 from the Civic Society!). We're starting with Walk 5 in the 1998 second edition of the booklet (Walk 6 in the 1992 first edition). This is the "**Millstone Lumps and Windgate Nick**" walk that leaves the village from the Memorial Hall and goes up to the Moorside via Cat Steps and comes back through Gildersber and the South Field, linking up with the Sailor walk (above). Again with Don's help this will in the first instance be a web-based walk, possibly with an audio commentary and available through the ViewRanger app. The whole project of six walks may take some time to complete, but hopefully this first one will be ready shortly.

Another walk initiative is one that leaves the village at the Sailor or Craven Heifer and proceeds past the back of Plan-it Earth up Marchup Ghyll to the **Danny Palmer Nature Reserve** and then either returns directly to the village or heads south towards the bypass linking up again with the South Field

walk. We see this as a way of promoting an awareness of the nature reserve and encouraging more people to visit and enjoy its trees and wildflowers.

Finally a major focus of our awareness raising exercise will be a **Village Environment Day** to be held on Saturday May 13th. The plan is to start off in the morning in the Memorial Hall with stalls, talks and exhibitions and then continue in the afternoon with one or more guided walks including the South Field walk (above) and possibly the Danny Palmer NR walk. Nothing is yet fixed, so any ideas for the day would be welcome.

Working groups

(a) Housing and the Neighbourhood Plan

The most immediate issue facing the village is the prospect of extensive new housebuilding and the need for the village to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to guide the process. The Parish Council is responsible for the plan and has set up a Neighbourhood Plan Forum consisting of Parish Councillors and residents including Jim Robinson and Jan Hindle from the Civic Society. Jan also heads up our housing and environment group and is building detailed **environment case files** for all the plots of land in the village proposed for housing. In some cases these include the very detailed and authoritative statements Arnold Pacey wrote in the 1990s when there were similar threats to the fabric of the village including proposals for building, as today, on the South Field (pictured), Town End and the Garth. We're very grateful to Arnold for passing on his documents from those days. With the support of our biologists in the group we are planning to add more detailed data on **contemporary wildlife** populations in these sites. Some surveys have already started, but we will arrange a meeting later this month (January) to plan in more detail the design of our survey of wild flowers, fungi, butterflies, bats and birds to be carried out across the different seasons in 2017.



(b) Climate change: renewable energy

Under the UK Climate Change Act (2010) we are committed as a nation to reducing our emission of greenhouse gases by at least 80% by 2050 (based on the 1990 baseline). There are many actions that individuals, households and organisations in the Village will need to take to meet this objective. Embracing renewable forms of energy is one of them. We have started by carrying out a census of **solar panels on village roofs**. Richard Walton and Lizzie Hebbert are leading the project and are planning to speak to householders with and without solar panels over the next few months to determine how best to encourage more to be installed.

We are also looking carefully at all **planning applications** for the village to ensure new building conforms to the highest energy conservation standards. As time goes by we hope to develop a more comprehensive understanding of energy use in the village and what can be done to meet national targets over coming decades.

(c) Biodiversity: trees, woodland and hedgerows

Botanists Nicky Vernon and Heather Burrow are taking the lead in assessing our woody plant habitats in the village. We're starting with a census of our most notable individual trees, first by making sure we know where all our trees that are protected by **Tree Preservation Orders** are and second by identifying specimens not protected but for which protection might be sought. Large trees within the Conservation Zone are automatically protected and only trees that are threatened in some way

can be listed, so this exercise chiefly focuses on the many notable unprotected trees on land threatened by housing.

At some stage with the help of sympathetic farmers and landowners we'll need to turn our attention to the management and restoration of our **historic hedges**, again building on the work of Arnold Pacey, to the improved management and repair of our **riparian woodlands** and to the need to **plant more native trees** everywhere for carbon sequestration, flood control and habitat creation....it will take some time, but it's not too early to start the conversation, especially as these are actions strongly advocated by Government and Government agencies.

(d) Biodiversity: wild flowers

Up and down the country local communities are embracing the need to encourage native wild-flower rich grasslands, not only in fields but also along roadside verges and in urban green spaces. The enthusiasm for wild flowers is not only because they are very attractive, it is also because there is a national concern for the rapid decline in populations of nectar-rich plants needed to provide food for pollinators, especially bees and butterflies that has taken place over recent decades.



Stuart Tomlinson, supported by Nicky Vernon, Jenny Collins and Peter Miller is leading our wild-flower team and we are combining forces with the Garden Friends to plan **a campaign starting next spring to alter grass cutting regimes to encourage wild flower regeneration at several sites within the village.** We hope to have the support of the Parish Council for this plan that will include leafletting local residents to explain why grass will be left uncut until October to allow wild-flower seed to mature.

(e) Biodiversity: village becks

For more than a decade now the Environment Agency, under the EU Water Framework Directive, have been engaged in removing or modifying non-essential barriers and impoundments on our rivers in an attempt to improve the passage of migratory fish such as salmon, sea-trout and eels up and downstream. Locally there are plans to build a fish pass on the weir at Low Mill on the Wharfe. But fish especially native brown trout also need passage up tributary becks to spawn and feed. Our village becks are especially difficult for trout to navigate, given the number of barriers and culverts that exist through the village, and **for the most part our becks provide poor habitat for fish and other wildlife.** With the help of Jon Grey (Wild Trout Trust), Dan Turner (Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust) and Tony Brady (Addingham Angling) we are surveying Town and Back Becks and we are considering the possibility of Addingham hosting a local community project on Back Beck close to the school. We are also discussing with Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency whether we should offer our village becks and their catchments as a case study in the Wharfe Catchment Management Plan now being developed that aims to integrate the need to improve water quality, restore wildlife and promote natural flood management. This is an initiative that needs to be discussed with the Parish Council.



(f) Biodiversity: local wildlife sites

We have in the parish many designated wildlife sites including a section of the nationally and internationally important South Pennine Moor protected by both EU and UK legislation and we also have a number of local wildlife sites (LWS) including Steg Holes, Lumb Gill Wood, Brown Bank Marsh (technically in Silsden), Far Bank, Low Mill and the Wharfe. These locally designated sites are privately owned but overseen by the West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES). Robert Mascheder of WYES has kindly provided us with survey data for them and with the owners' permission **we intend to make more detailed surveys of them in future** using our own resources along with help from Wharfedale Naturalists Society.

In addition the village has its own publicly owned Nature Reserve, **the Danny Palmer Nature Reserve** at Marchup Ghyll established by the Parish Council in 2003 (see also above). It comprises a mixture of wildflower meadow and riparian woodland. Working with Wendy Palmer, Don Barrett and Garden Friends we plan to provide working parties to help with Reserve management as well as design a leaflet to encourage more people to visit and enjoy its wildlife.

Liaison with other village groups

To be effective our environmental programme is seeking the cooperation of everyone in the village. Consequently we are establishing links with as many local community organisations as possible.

(a) The Parish Council

Our most important relationship is with the Parish Council. Our agenda was endorsed by the PC and Catherine Coates (PC Chair) has been a member of our steering group from the beginning. Margaret Batley will join us from Jan 2017. Conversely Jim Robinson and Janet Hindle are members of the PC's Neighbourhood Plan Forum (see above). These arrangements are intended to ensure **good communication between the Environment Group and the PC** over issues such as roadside verge cutting, land management, invasive species, flood control, sustainable housing etc.

(b) The Primary School

Gill Battarbee and Peter Miller have established good links with the Village School especially with teacher Chris Clark who is responsible for the school's Eco-Committee. We hope the school will play a part in our Environment Day on the 13th May but our main aims are to offer **support to the school for its environmental work** and to help raise environmental awareness amongst all in the school community.

(c) Garden Friends

We have a strong common interest with the Garden Friends, chaired by Shirley Bolton, in our **shared ambition to promote wildlife and enhance biodiversity**. In particular we are combining our forces to develop a strategy for roadside verge cutting to encourage native wild-flowers.

(d) Addingham Anglers

We also have a strong common interest with those anglers in the village who are interested in **improving habitat for native brown trout** that move between the main River Wharfe and its tributaries, including those that run through the village (see above). Our link is with Tony Brady who helped to show our visitors from the Wild Trout Trust and the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust around the village on Dec. 13th.

(e) St Peter's Parish Church

We are in discussion with Jill Perrett, Anne Hodgson, Joy Harper and Arthur Francis about our environmental agenda and **the role that the Church might play**. A special interest is the Church Field, its history and wildflower populations.

(f) Other groups contacted

We have had encouraging conversations with representatives from a number of other groups including local farmers and landowners (Michael Flesher), the Golf Club (Rob Walker), Gardens and Allotments (Douglas MacCowan), Brownies (Jane Winter), and Scouts (Paul Jennings). We are intending to follow up these conversations in the coming months to discuss how we might work together to promote our green agenda

(g) Other groups yet to be contacted

We are hoping soon to make contact with other key groups including other village Churches (Mount Hermon, Methodists, RC) and local businesses through Totally Locally.

Liaison with organisations outside the village

Outside the village we are making excellent contacts with other organisations that have statutory or other interests in our village environment. These have provided much appreciated advice and, in some cases, data-sets. They include:

- (a) Bradford MDC, especially Anne Heeley who is Bradford's Senior Countryside Officer;
- (b) West Yorkshire Ecology Services, especially Robert Mascheder
- (c) Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, especially Dan Turner
- (d) The Wild Trout Trust, especially Jon Grey
- (e) Wharfedale Naturalists Society, especially Peter Riley and Gordon Haycock
- (f) The Environment Agency, especially Julie Winterbottom and Simon Johnson
- (g) Leeds University, through village resident Andy Evans
- (h) Pennine Prospects, Robin Gray.

As time goes by we will develop these links further and also establish contacts with Natural England, the National Farmers Union, The RSPB and other key organisations.

Rick Battarbee, 19th January 2017