



Pollinators still in peril!

Like many others in Midlothian I am concerned about the decline of insects and pollinators within our towns and countryside.

The facts are clear: pollinators are in decline because their habitats are. It is our responsibility to ensure we protect wildlife habitat for the pollinators which are vital for our future food stability, already at risk due to the affects of climate change.

Since the 1930s the UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows.

The State of Nature 2013 report showed the extent of insect decline: more than half of the bee, butterfly and moth species studied have declined in the past 50 years. In recent decades, three bumblebee species have become extinct, 52% of solitary bees have declined, 227 species of moth have declined (with 62 species going extinct in the 20C, and, possibly, four more since 2000) while 72% of butterfly species experienced downward trends between 2001–2011.

Flowering Midlothian's mission is to encourage the growth of wildflower spaces for pollinators.



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It's a voluntary community group with the aim of adopting open spaces to create wildflower and insect sanctuaries throughout Midlothian, to protect our food pollinators and brighten up our local surroundings.

We have already had a very constructive meeting with a Midlothian Council ranger and the council have given us two plots of land near Thornybank roundabout for our pilot scheme. Flowering Midlothian will foster this land to create a wildflower and insect sanctuary. Small patches of land on roundabouts or roadsides or more substantial areas within

public parks could be used and we hope to expand on this when we have volunteers in other towns in Midlothian.

Flowering Midlothian, together with Midlothian Council, would aim to manage land in a more ecological way to reduce council costs, brighten the county and make our towns more appealing while providing much needed wildflower and insect sanctuaries.

We've already had a donation of 4kg of wildflower seeds, been offered machinery for free and have a handful of volunteers for the first pilot scheme, one of whom is a skilled landscape gardener with all the H&S certificates for the machinery! The response has been awesome.

You can keep up to date with our progress or join in with our seed collecting by following our Facebook page, Flowering Midlothian or you can email us at floweringmidlothian@gmail.com for more information. *Jill Simon*

The next **social meeting** of Midlothian Greens is on **Tuesday, 1 September.**

The next **branch meeting** is on **Tuesday, 8 September.**

Both of these will be via ZOOM, we'll let you know the log-in details closer to the dates.

We say rooms for improvement!

Midlothian Council is preparing a draft Local Housing Strategy. This document will set out its plans to 'improve' housing provision in the county from 2020 to 2025 – and they want your views! But there isn't much time as the consultation only runs until 28 August 2020.

An online survey where you can submit your views is still available at: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QKPMCX5 or email lesley.connell@midlothian.gov.uk with your views.

Midlothian Green Party already has a vision for housing provision in Midlothian into the 21C. This is what we demand:

Mixed use developments

- housing, workplaces, shops, leisure and community facilities, schools and health centres are located within easy reach by walking or cycling

High quality, energy efficient homes

- houses have high levels of insulation and air-tightness, reducing energy consumption
- houses are built from natural, non-toxic materials, giving a healthy indoor environment
- housing uses ecological design techniques such as passive heating and cooling
- houses are built from low-energy materials
- power and heating will come from renewable energy sources such as solar and geothermal, using district heating systems

Homes for all

- housing is built and run by community organisations, co-operatives and the council, not by volume private house builders who allocate only a small proportion of their land to 'affordable' houses



- housing is a mix of different types to enhance social inclusion and to ensure that homes are suited to the needs of the elderly, children and families, and those with different health needs;
- tenants/owners have more control over the design and quality of new houses

- self-managed and self-build housing schemes, run by groups of residents, are the norm.

there is compulsory sale of undeveloped land for which planning permission has been granted.

Positive environmental impacts

- new developments make maximum use of brownfield sites and derelict or empty buildings
- there is a strong presumption against building on greenfield sites and, in particular, on prime agricultural land and Green Belt.
- New housing developments should include green spaces for recreation and biodiversity.

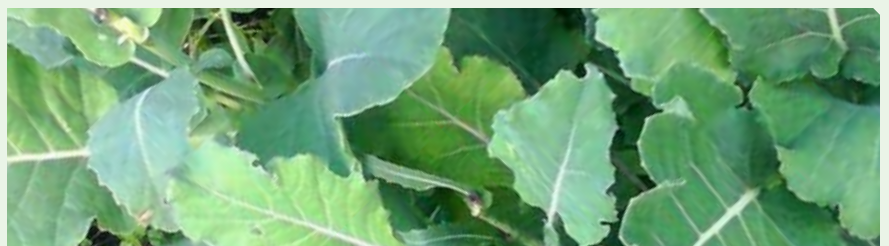
Convenor's Cogitations

Where have all the bugs gone?

As I drove to Boness and back the other day, I realised that I had not needed to clean my windscreen of splattered bugs at all. There should have been plenty in the middle of the summer. So where are the bugs? Has the overuse of pesticides wiped out everything or is there some other reason? Look at the broccoli in our garden, it's perfect, unmarked, uneaten, and no sign of any caterpillars. Are we supposed to accept this as 'normal'?

Has social distancing been abandoned?

Midlothian has crowded pubs, shops, and roads, and the beaches were as busy as ever according to news and other reports, so what now for the second wave? Are over 50s being told to stay at home so the young can party as usual?



Opinion

What exactly is sustainable development, I was wondering the other day.

We hear about the UN's sustainable development goals and governments prattling on about development. Do the two concepts and policy directions actually meet I wondered? With two billion (30%) people in the world without access to water and three billion (40%) without a personal toilet I cannot even begin to think of space satellites. This is the latest whizz idea of companies and wealthy individuals wishing to launch satellites from Scotland.

Please can these billionaires put funds into building toilets, water supplies, agriculture and help **this** world now, not some dream world of the future!

Meanwhile our U.K. Government tells us to get out and **spend!!!**

Buy before you die.

You wonder, whose side are they on?



Holyrood Elections 2021

The campaign to retain our two Green MSPs and to get more into Holyrood nationally will start in earnest this autumn.

Campaigning costs money.

For example, if every member of Midlothian Green Party gave a monthly donation of just £1 we'd have £100 towards our campaigning fund every month.

A Direct Debit or a standing order with your bank would mean that Midlothian Green Party would be able to rely on an income to enable it to campaign more extensively, for Holyrood and then in 2022 to put up candidates in every ward for the council elections. Can you help? Whatever you can afford would be more than welcome. Our bank details for you to arrange a Direct Debit or a standing order are:

Co-operative Bank
Sort Code: 08 92 99
Account No: 65391518
Midlothian Green Party



ERIG gets to Esk some questions

And about time! The inaugural meeting of the Esk River Improvement Group was held on Thursday August 6.

SNP MSP Colin Beattie welcomed the twenty-one other attendees virtually via Teams to the meeting, including those representatives from community councils and government bodies. No-one from Midlothian Council attended and it was decided not to involve other MSPs, an interesting decision to say the least.

Unsurprisingly attention was on the perennial issues of mining minerals flowing into the river and the abundance of sanitary towels, wet wipes and sewage in the river and on its banks.

SEPA, Scottish Water, NHS Public Health, the Forth Rivers Trust, the Coal Authority and the Forth District Salmon Fishery Board all sent representatives, some of whom spoke or gave presentations and were then

questioned by others present.

The following purpose statement was agreed at the meeting:

- To create a single forum which brings together stakeholders with an interest in the Esk River, and for whom the river is important, whether commercial or leisure or ecological or regulatory.
- To investigate how we can further improvements and advancements in the quality



of water, in order to provide a high-quality environment for the river users and wildlife associate with the Esk.

- To provide an authoritative and clear voice in respect to proposed measures to achieve the primary aim described above.
- To disseminate reliable information on progress towards key goals and objectives and to provide ongoing comment for public interest.'

An ERIG private Facebook page has been set up and as at least two Midlothian Green Party members are already involved with this group information on its progress will be made available to MGP members.

Call for council candidates

Are you passionate about your local community? Ever thought about running for the local council elections?

The next Scottish local government elections will take place in May 2022 and we'll need a candidate for each of the six Midlothian wards: Penicuik; Bonnyrigg; Dalkeith; Midlothian West; Midlothian East and Midlothian South.

Three Councillors represent each ward and we would like to stand one candidate in each. If you would like to put yourself forward for selection as a Scottish Green party candidate please get in touch now!

When we have a list of potential candidates, we will send the list to all members prior to holding a selection meeting where members will be able to vote

for their preferred candidate for each ward. All prospective candidates should send their responses and any questions they may have to: midlothian@scottishgreens.org.uk and give us a few sentences telling us why you would like to stand for the Scottish Green Party in that area.

If you would like information on what it's like being a councillor, check out this excellent resource: <http://www.localcouncillor.scot/>. The website will help you understand the many different aspects of a councillor's role, provide you with some information to help you decide if being a councillor is for you and ensure you are well

prepared should you be elected. Of course the branch will be happy to answer any other questions you may have.

From 2012 to 2017 Ian Baxter did a fantastic job as a Green Party Councillor so let's get at least one Green Party Councillor back on Midlothian Council in 2022!



News Brief

Sustrans and VisitScotland launch push to improve Scotland's cycle touring offer.

Three new cycle touring routes and 15-day trips are being promoted by Sustrans Scotland and VisitScotland, Scotland's national tourism organisation, as part of a nationwide campaign to get people to explore Scotland by bike, as the country emerges from lockdown.

The move finds these routes featuring on an interactive, online journey planner hosted by VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.com/see-do/active/cycling/national-routes/map/#/):

- Lochs and Glens Way (Glasgow-Inverness);
- Union and Forth and Clyde Canals (Edinburgh-Glasgow);
- Loch Ness 360 touring routes.

Source: Sustrans

Earth has lost 28 trillion tonnes of ice in less than 30 years

A total of 28 trillion tonnes of ice have disappeared from the surface of the Earth since 1994.

That is stunning conclusion of UK scientists based at Leeds and Edinburgh universities and University College London who have analysed satellite surveys of the planet's poles, mountains and glaciers to measure how much ice coverage lost because of global heating triggered by rising greenhouse gas emissions.

The scientists also warn that the melting of ice in these quantities is now seriously reducing the planet's ability to reflect solar radiation back into space. White ice is disappearing and the dark sea or soil exposed beneath it is absorbing more and more heat, further increasing the warming of the planet.

The team stressed that not all the ice that was lost over that period would have contributed to sea level rises.

The group's results were published 30 years after the first assessment report of the IPCC was published, at the end of August 1990. This outlined, in stark terms, that global warming was real and was being triggered by increasing emissions of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels.

Source: The Observer

Did you know..?

August 22 this year was Earth Overshoot Day. It marked the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeded what Earth can regenerate in that year.

To include the impacts from the coronavirus pandemic this year, Global Footprint Network combined the most reliable data and formed the most reasonable assumptions to assess humanity's current resource situation.

Changes in carbon emissions, forest harvest, food demand, and other factors that could impact global biocapacity or the Ecological Footprint from January 1 to Earth Overshoot Day were evaluated. The main drivers were the carbon Footprint (reduced 14.5% from 2019) and the forest product Footprint (reduced 8.4% from 2019). **For more information on how the date was calculated go to www.overshootday.org.**

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