Information Collected For Olly Glover MP to Support The Mass Lobby of MPs on 9th July 2025

Part 1:
Local, National and Global we ask our MP to bring to the attention of the Government. Please use your influence to help to issues redirect Government policy towards a Sustainable Economy.

Part 2:
One-page descriptions and pictures of environmental projects in the Didcot and Wantage Constituency.

Local Environmental Initiatives in Didcot

and Wantage Constituency

Introduction.

This folder contains Information to support the environmental work of the MP for Didcot and Wantage, , Olly Glover MP.

Paet 1 A list of environmental issues that we, your constituents, feel that our MP should raise with Government Ministers. This Section is available on the Bioabundnace website

Part 2. A folder showing environment initiatives in our area.

This shows how people in our communities are genuinely committed and taking action themselves. The folder is arranged showing Constituency-wide projects first, then some of the Harwell sustainability projects, and then local initiatives, listed roughly East to West across the Constituency.

This list was compiled by editing the results of asking Chat GPT to list environmental initiatives in South Oxfordshire and making Google searches linking the names of parishes and towns in the Constituency with the words 'sustainable…' and "environment…'.

The environmental projects in this Constituency range from the development of Fusion energy to large solar farms, to communal gardens, wood and fields. This Constituency must rank as among the most significant in the country in our quest for net zero.

This briefing pack has been assembled by:

George Curtis
On behalf of the Bioabundance Community Interet Company
www.bioabundance.org.uk
bioabundance@gmail.com

Index of Local Environmental Initiatives in the Didcot and Wantage Constituency

Local Initiatives

Riverside Meadows, Wallingford.

Riverside Meadows, 9.25 hectares of land adjacent to the Thames to the south of Wallingford Bridge. Detailed annual work programmes have been drawn up by the Earth Trust on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council. Riverside Meadows is comprised of three fields lying to the south of Wallingford Bridge on the east bank of the River Thames. Fields A and B are cut or topped twice a year by the neighbouring farmer and grazier. Field C is cut for hay after the 15th July and aftermath grazed until November.

Six broad objectives for the future management of the site have been defined. These are not presented in order of importance.
A. To maintain the agricultural and landscape character of the site
B. To enhance the biodiversity value of the site
C. To allow informal public use and enjoyment of the riverside
D. To prevent excessive erosion of the river bank
E. To protect the site from inappropriate or damaging use
F. To interpret and protect the archaeological interest of the site

Ditches and their associated habitats are a priority habitat in the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, due to their potential importance for a number of priority species, the most notable of which being the otter and water vole. Otters are recorded on the Thames in this area and the habitats in the ditches provide a suitable laying up area for otters. There is suitable habitat available for water voles in the ditch at Riverside Meadows although the drying of the ditch in the summer months may make this a sub-optimum habitat for the species.

The site, being adjacent to the Thames, is subject to frequent flooding during the winter months, and occasionally during the summer as well, during which time access becomes impossible. The extent of flooding varies but in July 2007 the flooding covered all but the far north-eastern corner of the site. As a result of this any work or structures on the site have to be designed with flooding in mind.
.

Wallingford Castle Meadows.

Wallingford Castle Meadows covers some 16.6 hectares on the banks of the River Thames in Wallingford. The meadows contain the site of Wallingford Castle, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

As well as its fascinating history, Castle Meadows today is home to some incredibly important wildlife habitats. Deadwood piles provide homes and food for a range of invertebrates, which in turn, are a food source for woodpeckers, other birds and five species of bat. Local Cub groups constructed a fantastic bug hotel in 2017, which provides even more places to shelter for invertebrates, hedgehogs and amphibians too. The meadows are also home to numerous wildflowers and plants, the rare small blue butterfly, the little owl and much more.

Wallingford Castle Meadows includes the remains of one of the greatest medieval castles in England, along with floodplain meadows beside the Thames and a Victorian Grotto. The Earth Trust manages the site on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council. In 2022 Wallingford Castle Meadow was awarded its 15th Green Flag and Green Heritage site accreditation for the 9th year in a row.

Wood in Brightwell Cum Sotwell.

A land use survey of the parish carried out by the Group in 1997 showed that only 3.5% of area of the parish was woodland, against 6% for Oxfordshire as a whole. When the SODC was reviewing its land

holdings in 1999, the Group enquired about the piece of land at the western end of the village, with the idea of turning it into a community wood. Establishing a wood could involve villagers of all ages, create an asset for future generations, improve the environment and provide a feature marking the Millennium. The wood is situated at the extreme western end of the village. To clear the land and buy and plant the trees villagers gave donations totaling more than £5000. Funds also came from SODC and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE). SODC donated the land the wood stands on to the Parish Council in 2008.

The two-acre wood is planted with approximately 1000 ash, oak, cherry, whitebeam, malus and other native species. A contractor cleared the site and planted whips alongside the A4130 leaving a central glade of larger oaks. In March 2000 several hundred villagers planted saplings over the remainder of the area and their names were recorded in a beautifully illustrated book.

Over the last 14 years the wood has flourished. Open days have been held to encourage villagers to visit the wood and it is looked after by the scouts, members of the Group and other volunteers.

The Springline Project. Cholsey & The Astons.

Bringing wildlife, art, and citizen science to our community! The Springline Project is open to all and welcomes people from Cholsey, The Astons, and the surrounding areas to connect with local wildlife. Led by expert ecologists, our events throughout spring, summer, and autumn will provide opportunities to explore and learn about nature. Participants will also gain hands-on experience in surveying wildlife using citizen science methods, helping to contribute valuable data throughout the project.

In addition, two talented local artists will create lasting artwork inspired by the project, leaving a meaningful legacy for the community. The final artwork, along with the findings gathered over the year, will be unveiled at a special event in late 2025, where everyone is warmly invited to celebrate with us. No matter your age, knowledge, or experience, there's something for everyone in this unique project that brings creativity and science together.

The Springline Project was made possible with support from the Mend the Gap programme.

Pick's Field, Aston Upthorpe regeneration.

Picks Field is located in Aston Upthorpe, the Community taking care of local land to improve biodiversity by new land management,

On a sunny morning in February, we held our first management activity in the field to start clearing the European privet, which is taking over at the far western end. We were a small band of nine people (plus a small person) but we managed to clear a respectable area of scrub. Removing the dominant scrub reduces competition and allows the chalk-grassland species to flourish; it's important to clear the scrub before the spring growth is in full swing.

Our first challenge is to tackle the scrub and long grass. The immediate solution is one of manual labour - you might spot villagers in the field, pulling up privet, cutting the grass. We are also exploring re-establishing a very small number of grazing animals for at least some of the year, to help achieve this in the long run. We are keen to involve any villagers who would like to help. Whether you have specific skills that would be useful - in the field, project management, grant writing - or contacts that could help, we would love to hear from you.

Burcot Solar Farm.

https://ethical-power.com/

The 49.9 MW Burcot Solar Farm is a co-located solar PV and BESS site located in South Oxfordshire.

- The total site area measures around 140 acres
- The site will comprise nearly 80,000 solar modules, capable of generating 50 MWp of renewable energy.
- A range of new habitats, including grassland, native woodland, and hedgerows with a diverse mix of species will be introduced.
- Nesting and foraging opportunities for birds will be provided, including dedicated skylark breeding plots.
- Refuge, breeding, and hibernation grounds for reptiles and amphibians will be introduced.
- The site will generate enough green energy each year to power approximately 18,000 homes per annum.

BBC 9th March

A solar farm that will generate power for about 13,000 homes will go ahead despite a council previously refusing planning permission for it.

Land at Burcot Farm in Burcot, near Berinsfield, Oxfordshire, will be used for the 49.9MW solar farm after the proposal was originally rejected by South Oxfordshire District Council in February 2024.

Devon-based Burcot Solar Farm Limited appealed the decision and a planning inspector approved the application on Tuesday for three fields, which will also be used for a battery storage system.

The land has been used to grow wheat, barley, beans and oilseeds, which have been used to make food for livestock.

While some opponents to the solar farm had suggested the land was "very productive", a report found that its yields were "average".

Planning inspector Alison Partington said the solar farm would be an example of "sustainable development" and that any harm caused by it would be "clearly outweighed" by its benefits.

She said while the solar farm will be used on the land for 40 years and that is a "significant period of time, it is not permanent".

The application was approved following an inquiry, which was held in February.

Neptune Wood Long Wittenham.

Neptune Wood was created in 2005 as part of a nationwide project to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar and death of Nelson. It is named after HMS Neptune.

All of the trees in Neptune Wood were planted by local people, including 750 school children from neighbouring communities. It was a fabulous example of community engagement – a theme that is at the heart of all Earth Trust projects. By planting trees with the children of today, the project aimed to bring history to life, to forge a link with the past through practical action and to breathe new life into our landscapes.

As well as planting these trees, Earth Trust also built a series of maritime-themed willow sculptures which can be found in the open area between the car park and the wood. They represent: HMS Neptune, three cannonballs, a telescope and an anchor.

In the arboretum area adjacent to the oaks, we also planted every species of tree that was used in a ship of Nelson's time. From alder (which helped to keep gunpowder dry) to rowan (which was used to make bowls, hoops and barrels) you can see them all here! Within the figure of eight walk we planted approximately 8,000 oak trees as a provenance trial (a research experiment looking at how trees adapt to different environmental conditions). These came from Great Britain, France and Spain – all the countries involved in the Battle of Trafalgar.

Paradise Wood Long Wittenham.

Paradise Wood is our national research woodland. This incredible resource is a living genetic library, and the largest collection of hardwood timber trials in the country.

In order to preserve the scientific trials, Paradise Wood is not open to the general public. As well as the research trials, there are also a number of non-research plantings. These include shelter belts and conservation areas which incorporate a wide variety of tree and shrub species. These features not only enhance the local landscape, but also provide benefits to wildlife.

The first trees were planted in 1993 on former arable land, known in medieval times as 'Paradise Field'. Since then, around 60,000 trees have been planted.

Earth Trust is championing a new sustainable model for our trees and forests – integrated management, which balances their value for amenity and for wildlife, as well as for economic, sustainable timber production.

The research at Paradise Wood is primarily focused on the production of high-quality hardwood timber. There are many hardwood tree species grown in Britain, but we have chosen five species to include in our tree breeding programme: Ash, Beech, Cherry, Oak and Walnut. These species were selected because of their commercial importance and their ability to grow well in mixtures and on a variety of sites. We also undertake additional research into the environmental and economic aspects of commercial broadleaved forestry.

The Sylva Wood Foundation. Long Wittenham.

The Sylva Wood Centre is a 12-hectare site in South Oxfordshire, and is firmly rooted in the local community. We have a community of Wood Centre businesses, the Sylva Wood School, the Future Forest, including a Forest School site, and the House of Wessex.

The Sylva Wood Centre is an innovative place helping to make big change happen. They state that there is a circular economy on site. They offer practical expertise leading to innovative solutions. They are turning their theories into practice.

Quaker Wood Blewbury.

The Quaker Wood grand opening and picnic was at Blewbury Village Hall on Sunday 22 June. This was to celebrate the opening of Blewbury's new community wood.

A Quaker meeting house and burial ground were located here in the 17th and 18th centuries and gives the wood its name

Our vision is to create a community woodland to the long-term benefit of the village community and the wider environment which will open opportunities for enhancing ecological diversity and will provide an area safe for local wildlife.

This project will create pathways and glades (about 20% open space overall) through woodland to encouraging leisure, recreation, health and wellbeing for the local community in a location that adjoins the village.

Blewbury Primary School is also developing plans for study and recreation on the site and every child has been involved in the planting to encourage a sense of ownership-and interest.

Our environment is under threat from climate change. The creation of this woodland helps to mitigate it by absorbing carbon dioxide.

The wood was made possible by some extraordinary generosity. The land was donated by local resident Jane Dexter and Sustainable Blewbury received a bequest from the family of Richard Brodie who made his home in Blewbury for 35 years after leaving university. We were also supported by a grant from the Vale of White Horse Climate Action Fund. We are thankful to them all.

Nuneham Estate, Oxfordshire.

Nuneham is a place for people to live, to work and to enjoy.

The Nuneham Estate Ltd has refurbished and adapted a variety of farm buildings to provide sustainable holiday accommodation, retaining historic buildings, re-using original materials and installing air source heat pumps.

At the core of our thinking is the environment. We are passionate about managing the land for environmental enhancement, considering our legacy and the impact on future generations and communicating this to our visitors.

The Nuneham Estate is fortunate to play host to a number of different and interlinked natural systems such as lakes, ditches, hedgerows, copses. We strive to do our best to manage and enhance our natural environment and to integrate it with all our Estate activities. By way of a few examples, this means

- adapting the way, we farm our land to produce food in a more regenerative way,
- looking after wild bird populations and providing food sources all year round,
- ensuring we manage the existing parkland trees and planting for the future,
- employing sustainable building techniques across our portfolio wherever possible,
- looking at how we can support the generation of renewable energy systems,
- considering the riparian environment and how our operations link with the River Thames catchment.

Nuneham Solar Farm.

The proposed Nuneham Solar Farm is located in Nuneham Courtenay, south Oxfordshire. It is anticipated that the solar farm would be capable of generating up to 49.9MW of clean, low cost renewable electricity.

The site has been chosen as it has good solar irradiation levels, lies outside of any statutory environmental, archaeological and landscape designations and due to its proximity to a viable grid connection.

RES will design the solar farm so that it will fit sensitively in the surrounding landscape. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out to ensure any impact upon the environment, landscape, heritage and local residents is appropriately assessed and mitigated. The EIA will include assessment of the following:

- Landscape and Visual Effects
- Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Transport and Access
- Flood risk and Drainage
- Glint and Glare
- Arboriculture
- Noise
- Cumulative Effects

Countryside charity CPRE is demanding that South Oxfordshire District Council, the planning authority, revoke permission for a solar farm at Nineveh Farm, near Nuneham Courtenay, which would be constructed on an open and unspoilt green belt hillside, directly facing Oxford.

The charity said that Oxfordshire needs a proper county-wide strategy to plan similar sites and that renewable energy is vital but “mustn’t jeopardise other critical factors such as food production, biodiversity, and landscape.”

Stonehill Community Garden.

Stonehill Community Garden welcomes people from all walks of life. We are currently working on an acre, producing fruit, vegetables and eggs from our hens.

Stonehill Community Garden offers groups or individuals the opportunity to get involved and learn about, growing food, Healthy eating, Foraging, Building, Community cooking, Nature identification and care, working together, Looking after the Chickens.

Our aim is to bring people closer to nature and to share the joys of being outside and gardening together. We hope it will be a place that will be beneficial to all people including those from disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds.

A community garden can build community – a sense of community develops through participation and common enterprise reduce environmental impact – by reducing food miles and recycling waste improve nutritional health – by increasing the consumption of fresh, organic, locally grown food create opportunity – for skill-sharing, friendships and learning create purposeful recreation – by getting people growing food and reconnecting them with nature

Culham Campus.

Culham Campus is a World Leader in Sustainable Fusion Energy.

UK Atomic Energy Authority has a clear and ambitious strategy to grow and redevelop the campus contributing towards our mission to lead the delivery of sustainable fusion energy and maximize the scientific and economic benefit. The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) is the national research organization for the development of fusion energy. This will be key in supporting the UK's ambitions to deliver sustainable fusion energy and help achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

UKAEA’s programmers include the MAST Upgrade (Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak) experiment, the JET (Joint European Torus) fusion research facility and STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) – an ambitious programme to accelerate the delivery of fusion energy, with plans to deliver a prototype powerplant.

UKAEA also undertakes cutting edge work with academia, other research organisations and the industrial supply chain in a wide spectrum of areas, including Remote Applications in Challenging Environments (RACE) – UKAEA’s dedicated state of the art centre for robotics, Materials Research Facility (MRF), Oxfordshire Advanced Skills (OAS) – which offers hi-tech training for apprentices, and the Special Techniques Group – a highly-skilled material joining facility with more than 40 years of experience in industry.

Culham Campus is committed to the design and construction of new buildings and campus infrastructure with a focus on sustainability.

All new buildings will -
Be designed to BREEAM Excellent3 in line with the Government Buying Standards (GBS) requirements and the Local Plan. Any building that does not fall into the BREEAM classifications and is seeking to be exempt will carry a written justification.
Below are some examples of the key targets adopted as part of BREEAM for each project. These may differ slightly from one building to another depending on the specific credits targeted to achieve the Excellent Rating.

• minimum of 10% electric vehicle charging points in each new car park
• a minimum of 1 cycling storage facility per 10 occupants
• potable water usage reduction by at least 25% compared to the BRE baseline
• sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), including natural infiltration, used to ensure the peak run-off rate is no greater post-development than it was pre-development
• materials to have Responsible Sourcing Certification Schemes (RSCS), suppliers and contractors to have Environmental Management System and provide Environmental Product Declarations certificates
• construction waste and diversion from landfill from excavation, demolition and non- demolition waste targets specified
• low Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerants used
• low operational and embodied carbon through energy efficiency and renewable energy measures - see objectives below which go beyond BREEAM to target net zero carbon.

Mowbray Fields Nature Reserve at Didcot.
Mowbray Fields is a 1.88 hectares local nature reserve south of Didcot and north-west of East Hagbourne. The reserve includes a small section of stream, a wildflower meadow, part of a railway embankment and a fill pond.

SODC employ the Earth Trust to manage Mowbray Fields as well as two other sites in its ownership (Wallingford Castle Meadows in Wallingford and Riverside Meadows in Crowmarsh).

Water continually seeps into the fill pond from underground and from Hagbourne Brook. Over the last 30 years this has contributed to the fill pond developing into a very interesting wetland habitat providing home to some rare and threatened species. The fill pond contains a number of habitats including a large temporary pool, wet grassland, marsh, a tall herb community and wet woodland.

Group Against Reservoir Development.

Copied from the GARD website:

GARD campaigns for a smarter, sustainable water strategy in the South East that ensures resilience against population growth, climate change, and drought.

Using inflated demand projections, Thames Water is pushing for a reservoir without proper scrutiny, ignoring flood risks and design concerns. This flawed scheme risks decades of environmental harm and financial cost.

This proposed reservoir is not needed – only a strategic re-set will secure the future.

More detail provided by a member of GARD:

Thames Water has been pressing the case for a reservoir since 1996 and it was studied at a Public inquiry in 2010 after which the inspector ruled that only a 50Mm3 reservoir could be justified but the alternatives had not been properly studied. The approx. 15-year construction time for a reservoir compares unfavourably in cost with about 7 years for a pipeline from the River Severn to transfer

water to the Thames and create the beginning of a water grid. Additional water could put into the Severn drawn from the Midlands (Menwith Treatment Works) and North Wales (Lake Vyrnwy) to boost supply if needed in future. This is a phased exercise with simple well-established engineering.

The Thames Water proposal for a 100 Mm3 reservoir called the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) with 10 km of embankment up to 25m high covering an area the size of Gatwick Airport was increased in size to 150Mm3 after the formal consultation, with no explanation or further opportunity to comment, and was approved as part of the Thames Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) by the Secretary State for the Environment only 6 weeks after the Labour Government took office, and in spite of the call for a second Public Inquiry. As a result of the decision to approve the WRMP a Judicial Review was held in June to judge the fairness and rationality of the Secretary of States' decision, the result is expected at the end of July 25.

SESRO is designed to serve Southern Water and Affinity, but the former requires a £2Bn pipeline and the Southern WRMP has not yet been approved, and Affinity can be served by The Grand Union Canal

Main Issues outstanding:

There are several serious issues which remain unresolved about the viability of the project and these justify detailed public scrutiny in a Public Inquiry before the reservoir can be deemed a suitable solution to water shortages in the South East and before huge expense is committed in preparation for the project.

These issues are:
Accurate cost estimates,
The safety of the design and the implications of embankment failure or sabotage,
The full environmental impact,
A detailed flood risk evaluation and the sustainability of SESRO in a long drought without Severn to Thames Transfer.

Sustainable Initiatives in Milton Science and Technology Park .

Home to over 270 organisations and more than 9,000 employees, Milton Park's innovation community has (quite literally) some of the coolest and hottest occupiers in the universe?

20% of Milton Park is made up of 43 acres of open landscaped spaces, including 2,700 trees, 6,100 sq. m of wildflower areas and eight lagoons?

We have brought together some of our favourite seasonal highlights you can discover on your next lunchtime outing.

- **Wildflower areas —** With 6,100 sq. m of wildflower areas now established across the Park, these spaces don't just brighten the landscape, they also provide an essential food source for our pollinators like Leafcutter and Mason bee colonies.
- **Urban gardens —** Milton Park has 21 urban gardens where occupiers can grow everything from tomatoes to thyme. Many occupiers have created gardening clubs, giving employees a chance to relax, connect with others and enjoy the benefits of growing their own.
- **Milton Wonder heritage orchards —** Did you know that the second oldest standing apple tree in the world, the Milton Wonder, was planted in nearby Milton Village in 1810? Inspired by this, we planted two heritage orchards in 2022, featuring 12 trees including Milton Wonders, Epicure, Blenheim Orange and Beurre Hardy pear varieties, followed by a Milton Wonder sapling at Bee House to commemorate the King's coronation in 2023.
- **Bee and bird habitat posts**. To help the birds and the bees, we have installed sustainable cedar bee and bird habitat posts, crafted from wood sourced from a privately-owned forest in

Oxfordshire. These beautiful, yet functional posts support local biodiversity by providing nesting sites for solitary bees and birds.

Polystyrene recycling;
Polystyrene (EPS) is widely used across life science and tech sectors and is particularly useful for packaging sensitive equipment. It has historically been difficult to recycle due to its bulky, lightweight nature and low scrap value. As a result, surplus EPS is often destined for landfill or incineration.

Milton Park's new polystyrene mill is now open, giving Park occupiers a solution to a tricky sustainability challenge. Milton Park's brand-new on-site mill changes that. Occupiers can now recycle their polystyrene waste by simply 'posting' it through the flap on the compactor, located at 'skim.physical.sponsors', (see what three words!) off Innovation Drive/Olympic Avenue.

Nebula Construction Award:
We're delighted that Nebula development has been shortlisted for Construction News' Low Carbon Project of the Year Award. As a best-practice example of sustainable construction, the new development was recognised as setting a new standard for innovation and environmental responsibility.

Nebula's greener features include:

Structural glulam timber beams used in place of steel, saving 686 tonnes of embodied carbon (the equivalent of 196 return flights to Hong Kong)
32 electric vehicle charging points
A new bus shelter with real-time transport updates
EPC A and BREEAM 'Excellent' rating targets.

42 net zero homes to be built near Milton Heights.
Copied from Oxford Mail website

Designed by HTA Design, the approved plans at Milton Heights include a mix of 27 open market and 15 affordable homes located just under three miles from Didcot Parkway Station.

New accessible green spaces will be provided for both new residents and local people.

Greencore's homes are built using an "innovative closed timber frame panel that is insulated with natural materials". Developers say the structure of each home locks up more carbon than it emits.

Designed and built to Passivhaus standards, the homes are highly insulated to ensure a low energy demand. This low energy demand and the use of renewable energy sources allow all new Greencore homes to be net zero carbon in operation.

The M&G-backed housebuilder acquired the five-acre site in February last year, as one of the initial steps in its ambitious goal to build 10,000 homes by 2035.

These new houses are anticipated to be completed in 2026.

Jon Di-Stefano, CEO of Greencore Homes, said: "The UK needs to build a lot more new homes but it also needs those homes to support and protect our climate as much as possible.

"New homes should be energy-efficient, reduce carbon used in construction and yet still deliver high quality, well designed places to live.

The Letcombe Brook.

12 Kilometres of Precious Chalk Stream

The Letcombe Brook, much loved by local people, is a chalk stream that runs from Letcombe Regis to East Hanney, providing water for local use today.

It is home to protected species such as white-clawed crayfish and water voles. Chalk streams are globally rare, so the Letcombe Brook Project was set up in April 2003 to enhance and protect the natural beauty of the Brook.

Local people are at the heart of this project and its success is due to many individuals, partners and organisations that are committed to protecting and enhancing the Letcombe Brook now and for future generations.

The Letcombe Brook Project provides environmental management of the Letcombe Brook Corridor to maintain and enhance ecological diversity, minimize flooding and pollution and and develop the Corridor as a green community resource.

The Wantage Mix.

The Mix is the heartbeat of Sustainable Wantage's activities. It is our town centre hub, which aims to provide practical ways to live more sustainably and to bring our local community together. We can be found at 15 Mill Street, a very short walk from Wantage Market Place or through Angel Walk from Sainsbury's car park. Access is up three steps but staff and volunteers are always happy to come outside to talk to or to serve anyone who might struggle with this.

We're open 3 times a week for residents to come and collect free food from the Community Fridge, to buy refills of detergents and toiletries, to drop off items for recycling, and for picking up and returning items from our Library of Things. Members of the public are welcome to pop in to ask questions about all kinds of environmental, community and sustainability-related topics. We love to chat with people who are trying to do their best for the environment and we can often point people to the relevant places or services if we can't address the issue ourselves. We offer workshops and courses throughout the year and a Repair Cafe on the first Saturday of each month; to see what we have coming up or to book a place check our Events page. You can also keep up to date with what we have happening by following our Facebook page.

Denchworth Solar Farm.

The Denchworth Solar farm that will power 11,000 homes.

The solar farm was given planning permission earlier this month

- Published 19 April 2025

A solar farm that will generate enough energy to power about 11,000 homes every year has been allowed after developers won an appeal.

Land to the east of Denchworth, Oxfordshire, will be used despite Vale of White Horse District Council turning the plan down in May 2024.

Renewable Connections Developments Limited appealed that decision with the Planning Inspectorate and the refusal was overturned earlier this month.

The company will now be able to use Manor Farm to build the 30MW site after planning inspector Steven Rennie said the "weight of beneficial considerations" meant it should go ahead.

The council said previously that the impact on views of the North Wessex Downs and Denchworth meant that it should not be allowed.

But the inspector said, while there will be an adverse impact on the area's character, planting and other landscaping around it will gradually soften its wider impact.

Sustainable Wantage.

Sustainable Wantage is a Community Action Group (CAG), part of a network of over 100 similar CAGs across Oxfordshire, focused on activities that protect and enhance our natural environment and strengthen our local community. We are run by volunteers interested in actions that have a positive impact and increase our resourcefulness and resilience as a community. Our current projects are focused on Food, Biodiversity, Waste reduction and Energy.
Visit our Governance page

The Mix Community Space on Mill Street is our home in Wantage town centre. We are open for the Community Fridge, Library of Things, and refills of toiletries & detergents and collections of hard-to-recycle waste streams. We run workshops and courses (check our Events page for what's coming up) and a monthly Repair Cafe.

Food
We distribute surplus food through our Community Fridge and Community Larder, and grow fruit and veg at the Market Garden. We also have fruit and nut trees at Millbrook Community Plot, where anyone is welcome to help themselves to produce.

Biodiversity
Our Wild Wantage project aims to enhance our green spaces, promoting biodiversity of local species. As well as running work parties (see Events page) we manage Pewit Woodland and other Growing Projects. The Market Garden is also run with biodiversity in mind. We are working to create a network of nature rich sites of all sizes, and encourage everyone in the community to get involved by taking action at home.

Waste reduction
We work to reduce waste through sharing, repairing, re-using and refilling. At The Mix we have a refill station, and the Library of Things has a variety of items available to borrow, reducing the need for individual ownership. Volunteer fixers are able to help with household items at our monthly Repair Cafe, we also refurbish bikes during the summer months and have a collection point for laptops, tablets and phones which are refurbished through Getting Oxfordshire Online.

Energy
Our Draught busters team help to reduce energy loss from homes by assessing and fixing draughts, helping people feel warmer and spend less money on heating. We're putting together a Solar project, and we are part of Wantage and Grove Active Travel group.

Low Carbon Hub Sandford Hydro Ltd .

The Sandford hydroelectric plant uses three Archimedes screws (similar to the one currently in operation at Osney Lock Hydro) to generate electricity from the flow of the river water.

Sandford Hydro has an installed capacity of 485kW and the potential to power over 500 households each year, or most of Sandford!

Investors in Sandford Lock Hydro have helped return the Lasher Weir on the Thames to its historic role as a provider of clean energy.

The hydro site has been through rigorous ecosystem surveys to ensure it has minimal impact on the local wildlife, such as trees, shrubs, birds and bats. It's even beneficial for wildlife and biodiversity in the area, through the installation of a fish pass in the river. This is a system designed to encourage all the species in the river to travel upstream – the first time in 400 years this will have been possible.

Across Summer and Autumn 2024, we carried out a range of other upgrades at Sandford Hydro, including: Turbine house improvements, including a new roof and the installation of solar panels. The panels not only generate clean electricity, but also help prevent the turbine house from overheating by soaking up the sun's rays. Solar panels over the turbine blades, which helps reduce algae growth on the Archimedes screws. This minimised the need for cleaning and helps maintain the efficiency of the plant. New technology to reverse the Archimedes screws, allowing us to remove debris such as logs, branches and other waste that accumulates in the river. Clearing this build-up is essential to keeping the screws working as they should. A compost toilet installed on site for people working there. Various electrical and health and safety upgrades completed throughout the site.