

TURN LYME GREEN ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



It is a pleasure again to present the Annual Report. There has been excellent cohesion in both the main steering group and in the ongoing development of Plastic Free Lyme Regis (PFLR). I would like to thank Polly Benfield, our secretary for tirelessly producing the monthly online newsletter, Grenville Barr for being the endlessly jolly treasurer, Karen Durham Diggins for her passionate clarity and enthusiasm, Heather Britton for her faultless management and Krys Lavery for her organisation of regular beach cleans, often taking place in blistering storms. Emma Brice has worked tirelessly on both websites and we are so thankful for her contribution. We have a good rapport with the Lyme Regis Town Council and now have two council members as active members of both TLG and PFLR, namely Rob Smith and Belinda Bawden. A third Council member, Gill Stammers, has joined the PFLR Strategy Group as a Council representative.

TLG has continued its regular monthly meetings over the past year, usually attracting about 25. The most recent meeting on plastics, led by Mark Foxall, netted 41, our largest attendance ever in the Royal Lion Hotel. Our meetings have ranged from talks on badgers, nature walks, visiting Carymoor eco education centre, to a fascinating talk on the ecological sustainable human body by Dr Sue Beckers, a local GP, and the rigours of running a local organic farm led by Alexa di Ferranti. We also had a meeting dedicated to Extinction Rebellion. As we end this financial year, due to the current ecological and health restrictions, it is unclear when these monthly meetings will resume. When they do, we look forward to seeing you all.

For the past 3 years, we have organised well attended evenings specifically for local businesses, focussing on their experiences of adopting 'green' business practices, sharing and promoting ideas and initiatives. The most recent one in March led to lively, interesting and positive discussions with new networks created.

Jake Causley, an active member of PFLR, ran a series of film nights at the Driftwood Café, screening the 'Blue Planet' films narrated by David Attenborough. We wish him well in his new job as sustainable development officer at Falmouth University.

Regular beach cleans organised by Krys Lavery and annual tree pruning teach-ins led by Phil Gamble continue to receive support.

PFLR has run a series of successful campaigns during the last year. Promoting substitutions for throwaway plastic bags, two projects were launched – a PFLR logo cotton bag for sale and for competition prizes and the Boomerang Bag. Some 300 Boomerang Bags are stocked by 23 local businesses, the TIC, the Library and Town Mill together with a growing number of B&Bs and three hotels. A dedicated team of

volunteers has sewn the bags from donated fabric saved from landfill. The bags can be borrowed and then returned to any location displaying the Boomerang Bag sign. Thank you, Polly, for organising this.

ReFill is another popular project. Working with PFLR, 24 local businesses are providing free top ups for refillable water bottles, an effective way to reduce the need for single-use plastic bottles. The Town Council plans to roll out the installation of ReFill taps on the seafront.

There is an ongoing mindset in the town to reduce, refuse, refill and recycle. PFLR received its community award from Surfers Against Sewage in 2018 and since then has presented 28 local businesses with the SAS Plastic Free Community Champion award for finding alternatives to single-use plastics. Other businesses have been presented with PFLR Supporters Scheme awards. We were shortlisted to one of three finalists for the first ever SAS award for Plastic Free Communities. Sadly we didn't win, but we were very proud to have been nominated out of over 600 applicants.

Being 'plastic free' is a great selling point for the town, and the Town Council plans to incorporate logos in signage and print to reflect progress in efforts to promote a more sustainable environment. Work continues to improve recycling, particularly on the seafront, and new signage has been developed for waste bins.

A climate emergency was declared by the Town Council in July, 2019. This facilitated the formation of the One Planet Working Group to help the Council achieve its objectives to become carbon neutral by 2030. TLG and PFLR liaise closely with the Group to promote and support local initiatives, such as the first and very successful 'Fiver Fest' in February, part of the national 'shop local' campaign. Collaborative working with eco organisations both in and near Lyme Regis continues to be important - together we are stronger. Groups in Dorset and East Devon include Transition Town Bridport, West Dorset Friends of the Earth, Beaminster Eco Group, Litter Free Coast and Sea, Sustainable Dorset, Plastic Free Charmouth and Axminster, local Extinction Rebellion groups and Lyme Bay Ladies.

Over the last year, we have continued our presence at local events and fetes, including Anning Road, Uplyme Fete, an eco-day during Carnival, Guitars on the Beach and the Christmas Tree Festival. We hosted a four day half term event last October at the Town Mill's Malthouse Gallery which attracted some 300 people. Workshops, Boomerang Bags, award schemes, Refill, recycling and other projects were featured. The walls at the Town Mill were covered with posters submitted by children at St Michael's, Mrs Ethelston's and Woodroffe. Thanks to year 9 textile students for their brilliant Boomerang Bags!

We are grateful to our funders – the Town Council, Lyme Bay Holidays and Lyme Splash. And our thanks to Alison Johnson who raised funds through sponsorship of her Lyme Splash swim to Charmouth. Also we are fortunate to have the Baptist Church and the Royal Lion giving us free access for meetings. Other income comes from donations made by supporters and subscriptions from around 25 paid up

members. We need more members! But remember that everyone is welcome to all meetings and events.

Regular communication of activities and campaigns is maintained through a mix of sources. The monthly TLG newsletter has a mailing list of 465 subscribers. We run web sites and Facebook pages for both TLG and PFLR. Lyme Online has started a 'Green Page' and Karen Durham Diggins co-ordinates press release and blog contributions for the page, as well as for other local newspapers and media. We are happy to welcome Debra Fox and Alison Johnson to help develop these communication channels and Meg Devine to work on the newsletter and our transition to using Mail Chimp. .

Future plans include another film night series about land and food security organised by Suzy Gallina and support for a Lyme community garden scheme. I would love to create a food growing enterprise. We have the land; it just needs protecting from deer. And we will lend support for local tree planting facilitated by the Word Forest Organisation which plans to have one tree planted for each resident in Lyme.

We want to invite everyone to share more ideas for what we could achieve in the future. I would love to explore planting edible flowers in the town and helping support development of Langmoor Gardens. How about a 'barefoot park' section to encourage children to use the gardens?

In these times, the key issues I feel are food security and adaptation to sudden climatic and social change. I have a vision of stability, resilience, support and peace in a world of turbulence. Everyone can contribute a different skill through community action to bring about local and then more widespread change. This is clearly happening already! We must not succumb to fear but live in gratitude for our fantastic town, community and the earth on which we live. Thank you everyone for being part of such a great group!

Jo Smith Oliver
Chair, Turn Lyme Green

April 2020