

Green Sparks News

We were delighted to meet so many of you at the Green Sparks afternoon, at Spark Bridge village hall on Saturday 18th September. About 50 people from around the Crake and Rusland Valleys came along to share their ideas about how we can encourage sustainability, lower our carbon footprints, protect our environment and care for the natural world.

Lots of you shared your feedback and aspirations on the **Tree of Ideas**. There isn't room to include all of them here, but this is a summary of the themes raised:

- ✦ People really do care!
- ✦ Lots of individuals are already working hard to do 'their bit' but there's even more we can do if we work together. Most also welcomed the social aspect of doing this.
- ✦ Water quality, pollution and the impact on wildlife are really important issues for many in our area.
- ✦ The River Crake is hugely valued; we want to ensure it is maintained in good health.
- ✦ People want to know more about gardening for the good of the planet: growing your own, using low impact products and techniques, sharing knowledge and resources to help cut waste.
- ✦ Developing the Community Swap Shop idea or similar schemes.
- ✦ People are keen to find out more ways to recycle and reuse resources.
- ✦ Litter picking was one of the most frequently raised issues.
- ✦ We want to protect and improve biodiversity in our gardens, wayside verges, hedgerows and in the green spaces around us.
- ✦ We want to work together to reduce our individual and community carbon footprint.

So, what's next? These are some of our ideas:

- ✦ Grow a network of people in our area who want to work together at a local level, to tackle the issues of climate change, sustainability and nature recovery.
- ✦ Use the Green sparks email list to share ideas and resources and publicise what is going on.
- ✦ Use the Green Sparks email list to help promote an active exchange of ideas. We can call out for volunteers, or like-minded people, who can work together to focus on particular issues and get things done. People on the list can email in their suggestions or plans and we will circulate them.
- ✦ We will look into setting up a Facebook page to enable easier communication.
- ✦ Establish an information and resource bank to support people on our email list to share information about relevant websites and articles.
- ✦ Organise future events – the chance to get together to work out how we make a difference locally.
- ✦ Support local community action such as litter picking, bio-diversity mapping, community swap shops, the orchard project (see below).

Ideas you might be interested in:

- ✳ www.preciousplastic.com A how to guide to setting up **community-based plastic recycling**
- ✳ **Cumbria Action for Sustainability practical ideas for individuals and communities** <https://cafs.org.uk/> services offered include free phone consultations about **retrofitting older houses** to improve energy efficiency
- ✳ <https://cop26coalition.org/peoples-summit/> **free online debates and presentations** focussing on the global challenge of tackling climate change
- ✳ **Fleeces for gardeners** – using sheep’s wool as mulch to improve soil; a natural way to use a product that all too often is going to waste because there isn’t a market. One member of the network has already made links with a local farmer. Is anyone else interested?
- ✳ **The Orchard Project** – before lockdown work was underway to create a database of local orchards and map the orchards in our community. The contact is Mandy Lane mandy.lane@ruslandhorizonstrust.org We’ll be circulating more information about this in our next update.
- ✳ **Colton Parish Council** has litter picking equipment to lend to people in the Colton area who are organising a community litter pick. **SLDC** can also help with litter picking equipment. See the websites below for ways to contact them.

A really big thank you to everyone who came along, took part and helped out.

The Green Sparks Event at Spark Bridge event would not have been possible without the contribution and support of lots of individuals and organisations including:

- ✳ Cumbria Wildlife Trust <https://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/>
- ✳ Conserving Coniston and Crake and Dan Fox, for his wonderful film <https://ccc.scrt.co.uk/>
- ✳ Rusland Horizons <https://www.ruslandhorizons.org/>
- ✳ Colton Parish Council <https://coltonparishcouncil.org.uk/>
- ✳ Egton with Newland, Mansriggs and Osmotherly Parish Council <https://enmoparishcouncil.org.uk/>
- ✳ South Lakeland District Council <https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/>
- ✳ Kate Lloyd-Phillips, who is mapping the Crake Valley



Green Sparks was started by Lynda and Abigail from Spark Bridge and Marion from Bouth. We are keen to work with anyone in the local area who is interested in environmental issues and community-based solutions. If you know people who would like to join the email list, please ask them to get in touch greensparks.sparkbridge@gmail.com