

The CPRE Sussex Countryside Awards 2020

Welcome to the
Virtual Awards

14th October, 2020 at 7pm



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Welcome to the CPRE Sussex Countryside Awards

**Empowering Communities -
The Peter Brandon Award by
public vote:** recognizing
individuals who make an
outstanding contribution
towards conservation,
biodiversity or climate change.

**Connecting People and the
Countryside:** recognizing
community groups, local
enterprises and schools
whose projects and initiatives
contribute to enhancing and
protecting the countryside
and encourage engagement
with the natural world.

**Promoting Nature and the
Countryside:** recognizing
community groups and
enterprises with inspiring
projects and initiatives that
contribute towards a
sustainable rural community
and thriving countryside.



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Empowering Communities - The Peter Brandon Award by Public Vote

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Phil Belden, Conservation & Environmental Champion: Silver

Phil is one of Sussex's most passionate and proactive environmentalists.

For the past 30 years and more (*it's actually nearly two score years – from 1983!*) he has fought tirelessly for the countryside – securing protection for green spaces large and small across the county.

In the 1980s, before the advent of the National Park, Phil was in the thick of the campaign to protect the South Downs ensuring that its unique landscape was designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. He developed the concept of Volunteer Rangers, which he had extended to form a Downs-wide Ranger Service by the time the National Park was formed.

Phil's passion for the countryside is not confined to the South Downs. Over the years he has campaigned to enhance and protect numerous green spaces across the south east. More recently these have included threatened downland on the fringes of Eastbourne and Brighton, including two public golf courses.



Isabella Tree: Rewilding & Conservation: Silver



Isabella Tree is an environmental pioneer, bestselling author and passionate advocate for rewilding the countryside.

Twenty years ago Isabella and her husband, Charlie Burrell, made the brave decision to give up intensive farming on their 3500 acre estate, Knepp Castle, near Horsham, and let nature take over. The result has been an incredible story of natural recovery.

Knepp is now a shining example of returning biodiversity – a breeding hotspot for rare birds and butterflies and home to the first breeding White Storks in the UK for 600 years.

Isabella's bestselling book, 'Wilding – the Return of Nature to a British Farm' tells the story of Knepp's journey from a depleted, intensive arable and dairy farm to a rich wilderness, using free-roaming grazing animals to shape the habitat.

Isabella believes in the power of nature to regenerate itself – that natural woodland regeneration is more effective than organised planting schemes and that the best ecosystems are created when nature is given as much freedom as possible.



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Ben Cross: Crosslands Flower Nursery: Gold



Ben Cross is a 4th generation grower who runs Crosslands Flower Nursery in Walberton near Arundel and is on a mission to challenge the UK's dependence on imported flowers.

More than 90% of the UK's cut flowers are shipped in from overseas at considerable cost to the environment. Crosslands is one of the last nurseries in Sussex to buck this trend - supplying florists and wholesalers nationwide with millions of British Alstroemeria stems every year.

During Lockdown many of Ben's customers stopped trading, leaving him with thousands of unsold flowers. He responded by teaming up with a supermarket to donate them to frontline NHS workers.

Having quickly adapted to the new market, Ben has now developed a letterbox delivery service in partnership with another local business, Beachtown Blooms, in Littlehampton.

Ben's passion for British flowers is quite literally written all over him – he wears a t shirt emblazoned with the slogan 'British Flowers Rock' which is a campaign he has been doing since 2014. He gives over 50 British Flowers Rock talks a year at Garden shows, Flower Clubs, Horticultural Societies and more.



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Connecting People & the Countryside

Recognizing community groups, local enterprises and schools whose projects and initiatives contribute to enhancing and protecting the countryside and encourage engagement with the natural world.



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Worthing Museum & Art Gallery: **Bronze**

Worthing archaeologist, James Sainsbury has developed a unique series of walks which take ancient artefacts back to the places they were found.

The walks, held by Worthing Museum and Art Gallery, take genuine artefacts out of the museum and back into countryside to archaeological sites such as Cissbury Ring and Arundel Park and are believed to be the first of their kind in the country - enabling participants to experience the landscape of the South Downs in a brand new way.

‘As far as we are aware this is a unique feature in heritage walks nationwide and could realistically be rolled-out across the country in the future,’ says the Museum. ‘These walks have been very popular since their inception and ultimately help to promote (and one hopes to eventually protect), the beautiful countryside of the South Downs area, as well as the alluvial valleys such as the Arun & Adur.’

The walks are graded by difficulty and at least one every year is designed to be accessible to people who are less mobile. They have been running since 2016, have proved very popular – attracting up to 40 people for each event. There are now plans to expand the programme to include Wealden sites in the future.



Worthing Climate Action Network's Zero 2030 Community Climate Conference: **Bronze**

Spreading the Net for Climate Action : volunteer groups in Worthing have formed a unique partnership with their local councils to inspire more people to take positive action on the environment. Worthing Climate Action Network (Worthing CAN) and Transition Town Worthing formed the partnership with Adur & Worthing Councils to organise and run a large-scale conference about climate change.

The Zero 2030 Conference was held in March this year - just before Lockdown. It attracted hundreds of local people, showcasing 30 local environmental organisations and inspiring a wave of new initiatives. 'The conference had a real buzz,' says Worthing CAN member, Michelle Furtado. 'And the feedback from the event was great.' 'By partnering with the council, as volunteer groups, we were able to expand our capacity and engage a far wider audience. Ongoing work to deliver the outcomes and support community action also has access to the council's networks.'

Worthing CAN is now looking at ways to develop the ideas emerging from the event. 'We are due to meet virtually with Transition Town Worthing and the two councils to develop the next steps,' says Michelle. 'All organisations are 100% committed to ensuring we tackle climate change and the impacts for our communities.' 'We do not want the conference to be the end, it is the beginning of real change.'



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Horam Manor Farm: Bronze

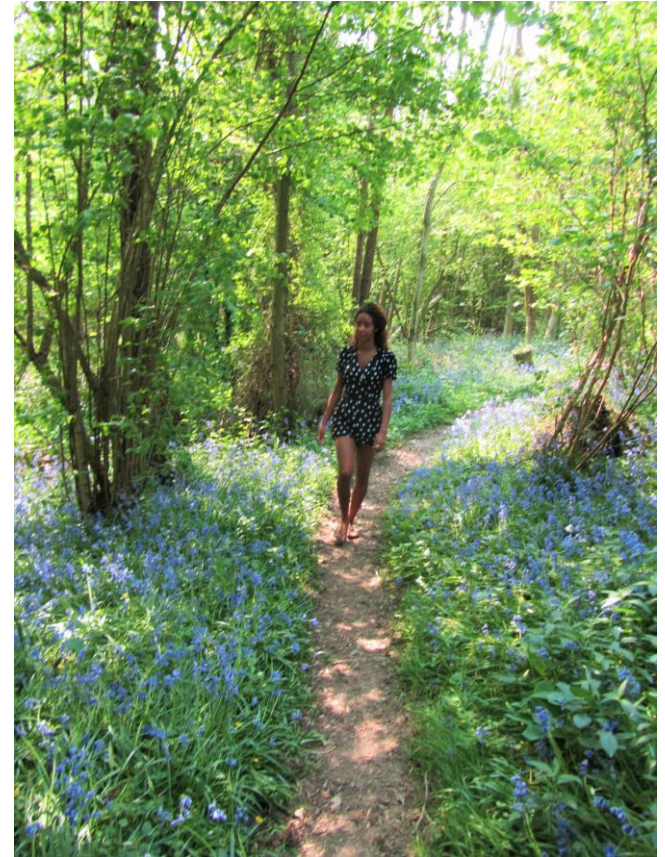
Evolving in Tune with Nature: over the past fifty years Horam Manor Farm has evolved from a struggling dairy farm to a thriving visitor destination. Today the farm is open to the public – offering daily nature trails, a farm museum, a popular fishery, a busy riding stables, a lakeside tea room, a touring park and number of other small businesses.

The farm's evolution has happened gradually over time but it has remained in the same family throughout – maintaining its ethos to protect and enhance the countryside.

'Raising awareness of the countryside and promoting awareness of its diverse habitats and the importance of preserving these habitats is very important to us,' says Felicity Goulden whose father farmed the land until the 1970s.

'So much of the future of our planet depends on what we do now, in this century, this decade, this year, this month and this week.'

The farm's nature trail is designed to give visitors an understanding of the importance of responsible behaviour in the countryside while the museum explains the farm's history and its evolution through time. The farm has also become an integral part of village life, hosting local events in its restored Cartlodge. 'The current lockdown has given us a glimpse of a quieter, less polluted world, with an extraordinarily quick to regenerate wildlife.'



Cradle Hill Community Primary School Garden Club: Silver



Young Hands Helping Nature in Seaford: Cradle Hill Primary School has been working hard to inspire a new generation of conservationists. The school has a committee of Eco Warriors whose job it is to think up new green initiatives, a gardening club which grows fresh vegetable and flowers and a Forest School which encourages all the children to understand and respect the natural world around them.

Cradle Hill's young Gardeners have embraced the concept of wildlife gardening. They have built a hedgehog house, a worm world and an impressive range of bug houses. Their efforts impressed the judges at the Seaford Horticultural Show who awarded them with a number of prizes, including 'Best in Show.'

The school has also teamed up with Seaford Town Council and the Tree Warden to plant eight young Elm Trees. The project was part of the '104 Elms for Seaford' initiative in memory of the 104 Seaford soldiers who lost their lives in WW1. 'It was a fantastic opportunity for the children to learn how to plant and grow trees and work with experts in the area,' said a school's spokesperson.

The school's hard work has earned it an Eco Schools Green Flag.



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Beechtobeach Community Films: Silver

Free Films to save the Sussex Countryside: BeechtoBeach is a small media company which is committed to environmental issues. It was formed in 2012 by a team of media professionals who were frustrated by the lack of creative opportunities outside London. The company regularly donates its time and creative expertise to support threatened environments - producing free of charge films to bring attention to issues such as damaging rural developments and on shore oil drilling.

These films have been used by the BBC, Spirit FM, local newspapers and campaign groups to raise awareness of the threats facing the natural environment in Sussex. 'Video is a key tool to deep understanding and connection with issues as well as providing content that is more likely to be shared to help spread those messages,' says Beechtobeach Director, Jane Mote. 'Our community videos have helped to raise awareness, enable campaign groups to gather support and visualise issues with authorities.'

These videos have included a walk through a threatened woodland with the Sussex Wildlife Trust's CEO and a film in support of a campaign to save an ancient bridge in woodlands near Kirdford, near Petworth.

All these professional films were produced cost free to environmental causes – helping to protect habitats and to support campaigns and charities across Sussex.



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Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum: Silver



Connecting the City's Green Spaces: Brighton and Hove Green Spaces Forum brings together more than 90 community groups who care for the city's many parks and open spaces. The Forum empowers the groups with one voice - enabling them to mutually support one another and to share knowledge, ideas and information.

The Forum was set up in 2017 from a partnership project funded by the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP), involving B&H City in Bloom, Trust for Developing Communities, Community Works, Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere, the University of Brighton and B&H City Council.



Most of the city's green spaces are owned and managed by Brighton and Hove City Council. They include outdoor recreational areas for people and wildlife, such as urban greenways, woodlands, nature reserves, large estates, cemeteries, allotments, playing fields, traditional parks and play areas. With growing financial pressures on local authorities to reduce the cost of managing parks and green spaces, the volunteer community has become increasingly important.

In the long term, the Forum is hoping that it will gain recognition for Brighton & Hove as a role model City. With this in mind, it has actively encouraged volunteer groups to participate in the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' and 'Brighton & Hove City in Bloom' competitions.



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High Weald Hero Primary School Education Programme: Silver

Welly Walking High Weald Heroes: High Weald Heroes is a primary education programme which helps children to form a lasting connection with the natural environment around them. The programme is free to all state-funded primary schools within the High Weald AONB area and currently has more than 80 member schools. All the activities are linked to the KS1 and KS2 curriculums and are built around four key High Weald Hero 'Actions':- Explore; Take Care of; Be Proud of and Enjoy.

Participating schools have access to a wide range of tailored activities and resources covering important curriculum areas such as geography, history, science, art and literacy.

In 2017 the ANOB's Education Officers began to promote the programme's 'Welly Walk Project' to get more children out walking, learning about the habitats and the High weald landscape. They also encouraged the children to take part in a unique map making initiative: 'The unique element of the programme is the creation of individual school welly walks,' says the High Weald's Rachel Bennington. 'We do this by working with a class of children in upper KS2, teaching them mapping skills and getting them to help plot a route that starts and ends at their school gate.'

'Once the route has been approved and tested it is available for the school as a long-term outdoor learning resource. A Welly Walk leaflet is created for them as a downloadable pdf for their website and ours.' The new Welly Walks are then distributed to local shops and businesses making them easily accessible to the local community.



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Hope Springs Chairs Chair Making Courses: Silver

Connecting with nature through Craft: traditional craftsman, Jason Mosseri is helping people to connect with nature through innovative chairmaking courses which are good for the soul.



Jason's six day courses transport people away from the modern world by teaching them the traditional craft of making an English Windsor Chair deep in a tranquil Sussex woodland. 'I would like my students to experience the satisfaction of making something useful entirely by their own hand and for them to be able to retreat for a short while from busy lives and hectic schedules,' he says.

Jason holds his courses in designated ancient woodlands in East Sussex, 15 miles north of Brighton. His students start the week with a fresh 'green' Ash log which they learn to slowly craft into a piece of strong and useful furniture. All his methods are traditional and have no need for electricity. 'Every student leaves the woods with a finished chair that is both elegant and strong,' he says. 'The course is primarily concerned with chairmaking, but there is an equally strong emphasis on enjoying and connecting with the natural surroundings of the woods.'

'It's lovely to see students understanding the relationship between the Ash trees that are growing around them and the material that we are working with – this is a connection that is becoming increasingly thin in the modern world.'



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Petworth Primary School Eco Warriors: Silver

A Young Force for Good: the children at Petworth Primary school have been the driving force behind the school's eco achievements. Last year the school set the children a challenge to 'change the world around them.' Their response has stunned their teachers:

'Our children have been inspirational in developing our curriculum, especially with their enthusiasm in wanting to develop and protect the environment around them,' says Deputy Head, Mrs Sandon-Webb. The children began by campaigning for solar panels and more water butts at the school – both of which have now been installed.

They also initiated numerous ideas for cutting waste, reducing landfill and recycling. These included building a recycled bottle greenhouse, collecting plastic to make eco bricks and holding a five year recycle market, where the children sold products they had made from items destined for landfill. The money raised was donated to Water Aid.

The children have created their own litter picking rota and installed compost bins. They have built bird boxes and bug hotels for the school grounds and created a pond to attract the wildlife.

The school has its own Forest School which aims to promote a knowledge and understanding of the local natural environment ,which may go some way to explaining the children's great enthusiasm for their eco challenge.

The children received an Eco Schools Green Flag Award in March.



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Railway Land Wildlife Trust Outreach Environmental Education Programme: **Silver**

Finding Nature on the Door Step: the Lewes based Railway Land Wildlife Trust developed a brand new one-off initiative which it hopes will change the way hundreds of children view their immediate environment. The Trust's 'Schools Outreach Project', which ran for six months, created a series of wildlife sessions which tapped into the school curriculum to explore wildlife within the grounds of local schools. The hour long activities included looking at habitats for Science, collecting data for Maths and hunting for stories for Literacy.

The sessions were designed to overcome the issues with transport, staffing levels and cost usually incurred by school trips. The Trust's experts travelled to each school to show the children how to discover nature on their own doorstep without the need to travel. During the six months the project was running, the Trust worked with more than 300 children in a variety of outdoor spaces.

'We hoped the sessions would serve to remind schools of the benefits of outdoor learning in terms of expanding academic opportunities, improving behaviour and wellbeing, as well as the benefits for nature itself, hoping to encourage schools to prioritise outdoor learning.' More than 200 pupils took part in the Maths Adventure sessions which were designed to make the subject 'active, purposeful and fun'.

Although the project was a one-off, the Trust is hoping that it will have had a lasting impact on the way schools view outdoor learn and the academic opportunities it can create.



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South East Climate Alliance (SECA) : Silver

The Green Movement Rocking Councils Across the South: early last year a small band of Sussex based community groups embarked on a mission to put the environment at the top of the agenda for decision makers across the UK. 'We all felt frustrated that so little seemed to be happening on a large scale in the UK when so much effort was being put in on a local scale,' say the group's founders.

They formed the South East Climate Alliance (SECA) and set about lobbying local councils to persuade them to 'Declare a Climate Emergency'. Within a few months councils across the South East had been forced to address the urgency of the climate issue and were making changes.

As a result, 57 of the 59 councils in Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Hampshire had taken action by passing meaningful climate motions or declaring a 'Climate Emergency'.

The Alliance has now shifted its focus to ensuring that these councils honour their promises by producing effective Climate Action Plans which are then put into motion. 'Having declared emergencies it is now crucial that councils turn their words into action,' says the Alliance website. 'We think that SECA can help this process by keeping an overview of what's happening in councils in the South East, and supporting ongoing lobbying of local councils by our member groups.'

The Alliance's future plans include looking at ways to track council actions and showcasing good practice and innovative ideas. They are also working on the creation of a lobbying toolkit for SECA member groups, organising training and workshops, and coordinating media campaigns.



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The Secret Campsite: Silver

Camping with Nature: the Secret Campsite in Barcombe is putting the magic of the natural world back into camping. Its founders, Tim and Lisa Bullen have created a tranquil holiday 'escape' where families can connect with the natural environment and experience real camping in the wild.

The site is a former garden nursery, surrounded by ancient woodland and wildlife rich habitats. There are no play areas or swings, just simple facilities and lots of nature and tranquillity. 'What we wanted to do was create a wildlife rich space where campers and their families could escape and enjoy a few nights connecting with the natural world,' says Lisa. 'We could see a growing interest in simple things that counteract the speed and sophistication of childhood and the disappearance of simple family and couples time.'

Campers have the chance to discover nature first-hand. They are provided with maps and field guides and are shown where to see Glow Worm and Adders and where to hear the Nightingales singing in Spring. They can also peek under the reptile mats and borrow the site's bat detector at night.

The couple have poured their passion and experience into an 'Escapees Handbook' which encourages campers to enjoy the simplicity of their environment. 'We really do nothing much here at The Secret Campsite,' says Lisa. 'But, we like to think we do it rather well.'



The Sussex Peasant: Silver

Making Local the Easy Option: The Sussex Peasant is an innovative farm shop which aims to close the gap between the farmer and the consumer by making it easier to buy local produce. The shop operates from a small fleet of converted horse trucks which bring local produce to local communities in Brighton and Hove and the surrounding villages.

The Sussex Peasant was founded three years ago by young entrepreneur, Ed Johnstone, who wanted to run his own farm shop but couldn't afford any premises. However, he realised there was a gap in the market which would benefit both local producers and consumers, so took his shop on the road. The idea has been so popular that Ed's business has quickly grown from one van to three – serving ten local markets in a mini revolution which he hopes will 'change the face of food retail'.

Sussex Peasant now has a cooperative of 18 local producers supplying meat, fish, dairy, fruit, veg, bread, pasties, jams and flowers to people who would otherwise probably buy their fresh produce at a large supermarket. 'We desire to change the face of food retail by returning food and drink to what it once was,' says Ed. 'Our enterprise is driving society to eat and cook food that is local and well farmed.'

'We believe farming and consuming in this way is a social and cultural glue and undertaking this is key to underpinning key values of society, health and life.'



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E.Y.E – Eco Young & Engaged Project: Gold

Eco, Young and Engaged: the E.Y.E. Project works with schools and pupils across West Sussex to help them to make a positive difference to their environment. The project has hosted 19 Eco-summits and influenced thousands of school pupils of all ages - promoting eco awareness, incorporating school learning objectives and encouraging more sustainable living.

The project was initially set up in Worthing in 2008 but rapidly expanded to encompass most of West Sussex, engaging with 45 junior and secondary schools in the years 2016 to 2019.

‘The E.Y.E. Project brings West Sussex schools together to focus on the importance of caring for our planet,’ explains the E.Y.E.’s Kate Evans-Makrakis. ‘Empowering our young people to have the knowledge to act and make changes within their sphere of influence... and beyond.’

A key part of the EYE model is its Eco-Summits which are a day full of environmental learning workshops and activities delivered by recognised environmentalists to an audience of 5-18yr olds. The summits are also a platform for launching eco-warrior ideas and inviting local groups to host stands or be keynote speakers.

‘We hope that those who engage with our projects come away with the incentive to make choices that will lead to their environment becoming a better place to live,’ says Kate.



South Downs National Park Farm Groups – Meet the Farmer Project: **Gold**



Farmers on Film for South Downs Walkers: a series of interactive media links on the South Downs are enabling visitors to 'meet' the farmers who are protecting the unique habitats they are walking. Walkers can find the video links displayed on plaques attached to gates and stiles. They are then able to 'Meet the Farmer' by watching short films about how each farm is managed.

The initiative, which began in 2018, is the result of an inspiring collaboration between the South Downs National Park Authority and the Eastern South Downs Farmers Group. The project has proved to be very popular with walkers who have viewed the videos thousands of times on YouTube and through Twitter.

'Never has there been a more important time for farmers along the South Downs to tell the visiting public about their role as custodians of our iconic landscape,' says farmer, Annie Brown, who is part of the scheme. 'This is a fabulous opportunity to highlight the fact that the South Downs is a managed landscape, and would not look as it does if the farmers were not here.'

Walkers are able to hear for themselves how passionate the farmers are about protecting and enhancing the unique wildlife habitats.



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Fittleworth Community Shop: Gold & Lockdown Heroes

Transforming a Village with People Power: nearly a decade ago the people of Fittleworth, near Petworth, lost their village shop. But they missed it so much that five years later they launched an ambitious plan to build another. The whole community united to raise £400,000 to create not just a shop, but a community hub, café and children's playground.

Fittleworth Stores, which opened in 2018, is now a thriving small business, attracting enough trade to put it into the UK's top 4% of community shops by turnover. Last year it was able to add a new post office, along with an annual grant of £5,000 in recognition of the role it plays in the local community.

The shop has also created a successful outlet for other local businesses. It stocks a wide range of local produce from more than 40 Sussex based suppliers. This includes everything from meat and veg to jams, coffee, biscuits, gifts, crafts and beauty products. The milk it sells is from Southview Farm dairy, which is one of the last Sussex dairy farms to produce milk from its own herd. But Fittleworth Stores is not just a small business:

‘Our village has transformed as a result of having a shop at the heart of our community,’ says one local resident. ‘We have reduced social isolation and have created a vehicle which enables villagers to look after and take care of those who are vulnerable or just in need of a chat.’

‘The coronavirus pandemic has illustrated how we are a true lifeline for our local community. We launched a home delivery service to those who are elderly or self-isolating and a click and collect service available to all. Our use of small local independent producers means our shelves have remained well-stocked in comparison to those in the major supermarkets.’ The village's strong community spirit also enabled them to quickly raise new funds for a Food Angel scheme to help those in most need.



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Ninfield Village Stores & Post Office: Gold & Lockdown Heroes

Lockdown Lifeline: Ninfield Village stores in East Sussex is a small business which has been making a big difference to its local community this year. The village is home to a high percentage of elderly and vulnerable people who would have been left high and dry during the lockdown without the help and support of the shop and its staff.

The store's proprietor, Chris Moore, quickly adapted to the situation, providing free deliveries to those who needed to isolate, and keeping the post office running for essential business.

'He and his small staff have been instrumental in ensuring that the extremely vulnerable and self-isolating can obtain the necessities they require,' says the grateful customer who nominated him for a CPRE Sussex Award.

'They have been delivering personally up to 5 times a day rather than forcing the elderly high percentage of the population to travel further, especially those without any private means of transport'

'Without the Village Stores, the village would lose a vital part of its spirit and character. He is a worthy candidate, no, WINNER.'



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Steyping for Trees: **Bronze**

Creating a Town of Trees: the community group, Steyping For Trees, was formed last year with the simple aim of planting as many trees as possible in the town.

The group, which has small charity status, wants to see more trees planted on both private and community land to help fight climate change and to enhance green spaces. 'Planting trees and hedges will halt or reverse the catastrophic decline in biodiversity by providing homes for nesting birds, shelter for small animals and invertebrates, as well as extending Steyping's wildlife corridors,' says the group's Jo Gordon.

'And for us humans, trees engender a feeling of well-being - something we are all very conscious of at this time.'

Last year Steyping for Trees set up a stall at the local Farmer's Market where they gave away 225 small saplings for people to plant in their gardens. This year the group has been working alongside the Parish Council and Steyping Grammar School to plant more than 400 hedging plants on the Abbey Road. The planting was due to take place in April but has had to be postponed due to Coronavirus.

All the hedging plants they use are native species: Hazel, Crab Apple, various Birches, Hawthorn, Holly, Goat Willow, Rowan, Blackthorn, Common Oak, Dog Rose, Dogwood, Elder. The group's future plans include planting semi-mature trees on roadside verges, working with residents and the WSCC "Donate a Tree" scheme.



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High Weald Housing Design Guide: Silver



Guide for Housing in the High Weald: the High Weald Design Guide is the result of three years' work to develop clear guidance for housing developments within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The aim of the guide is to ensure that all future housing in the AONB is designed in a way which is in keeping with the unique landscape and character of the area.

The guide has been created by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee which is a partnership of 15 local authorities, Natural England and a number of other interested organisations. The committee faced the difficult challenge of finding a balance between the ever increasing demand for new housing and the need to protect and enhance the AONB.

The result is a guide which puts the setting of the High Weald as a first priority in the design process – ensuring that the character of the High Weald's unique and ancient landscape is prioritised to preserve it for future generations. The guidance extends to cover the layout and structure of new developments, the appearance and sustainability of the buildings and the importance of local vegetation and wildlife habitats.

'By this approach, the longest-lasting design decisions will be embedded into the site, ensuring that the housing developments are truly 'of the place', a genuine and integrated part of the existing settlement, rather than a generic 'added on' estate, and that schemes conserve and enhance the High Weald character into the future,' says the High Weald's Claire Tester.



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Holbrook Primary School Eco School & Gardening Club: Silver

The Sussex School with the E Factor: at Holbrook Primary School, near Horsham, caring for the environment is not just a project, it is a way of life. For the past eight years the school has been consistently awarded an internationally recognised 'Green Flag' for its environmental actions and education.

To win the award children at the school have been working hard to maintain and understand the ten themes of Eco Schools: Global Citizenship, Marine Environment, Healthy Living, Energy, Transport, Waste, Water, Litter, School Grounds, and Biodiversity. The school integrates all these themes into everyday school life. The children are taught about wider issues such as Fairtrade and the marine environment in school assemblies, and they learn about their own environmental impact through the school's recycling, water conservation and green transport initiatives.

Holbrook has a team of Year 6 'spark spies' who monitor energy use at lunchtimes and the school has its own conservation area and growing field where the children can learn about biodiversity and healthy eating. 'We work hard to maintain our different environments providing a range of habitats and food sources for wildlife,' explains Year 6 teacher, Harriet Mayo. 'We have created brush heaps and bug hotels to provide over-wintering sites for invertebrates and small mammals and installed a bat box on one of our taller south-facing trees.'

'Even during lockdown, we planted up our growing beds, picked up litter and dipped in the school pond discovering a large number of newts, frogs and ram's horn snails.'



The Spithurst Hub: Silver

Taking the Office to Nature: Spithurst Hub is a co-working space which cuts out the commute and provides a sustainable working environment for dozens of local people. The Hub has been purpose built on the site of disused farm buildings near Barcombe, in East Sussex.

Since it opened in 2017, it has quickly developed into a working community of more than 50 people including authors, barristers, engineers, festival organisers and gin distillers. The idea for the workspace came about when Nigel and Maria Greenwood, who own local business, So Sussex, started looking for a home for their growing staff. They quickly teamed up with Nick and Harriet Lear who were keen to find a good use for their derelict site.

The project was supported with funding from the Action in Rural Sussex LEADER programme, East Sussex County Council and Brighton University. 'We have tried to make it as sustainable as possible within our means,' say the Greenwoods. 'Great effort was made to ensure our building would fit in with, as well as enhance, the surrounding rural landscape.'

'We also wanted to make sure the flow between the indoor and the outdoor environment was as smooth as possible to ensure our co-workers had easy access to the natural landscape around The Hub.'

The Hub's co-owners grow their own food to serve in The Hub's restaurant and have worked hard to enhance the wildlife around the site – installing a large pond and choosing bee and butterfly friendly plants for the garden.



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The Sussex Flow Natural Flood Management Project: Silver

Going with the Flow for Flood Management: the Sussex Flow Initiative (SFI) is an innovative method of flood management which works with nature to reduce flooding. The project uses nature's own flood defences such as hedgerows, flood plains and leaky dams to slow and store the water before it reaches settlements downstream.

SFI was formed in 2014, as a partnership between the Woodland Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency. It also receives funding from Lewes District Council. The project works with landowners and local people to help communities find natural ways to mitigate and reduce the likelihood of flooding.

'Our Natural Flood Management measures are cheap, collaborative and easy to implement,' say Sussex Flow's Fran Southgate. 'They also deliver many other multiple benefits to society such as carbon storage, pollination, health and wellbeing, and water purification.'

In the year 2019-2020 the project planted 2,826 trees and shrubs, installed 142 natural leaky dams and opened up 0.35 hectares of natural floodplain. These measures have not only stored nearly 3 million litres of water, they have also provided habitat for wading birds, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates.

A recent study showed that the project has had a lasting impact on the local people involved by increasing their connection with nature and improving their health and wellbeing. Local schools have also benefited through activities such as the project's 'behave like a beaver' days. Most people involved with SFI have stated that they would take further action for nature and the environment as a result of their participation



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Ecological Land Cooperative's new farms at Arlington, East Sussex: Gold

Opening Doors for Eco-Farmers: the Ecological Land Cooperative was formed to provide a viable future for small scale ecological farms. The cooperative buys agricultural sites of 18 – 35 acres and sub-divides the land to provide affordable and secure smallholdings for ecological producers.

Sussex became one of the first counties in England to benefit from the initiative when the cooperative bought a field at Arlington. 'We show that small-scale ecological farming CAN work in today's economy,' explains The Cooperative's Mary Hogan. 'Sustainably managed smallholdings provide low-impact livelihoods, regenerate land and produce good, healthy food for local communities, increasing sustainability and resilience, and improving ecology and biodiversity for future generations.'

The cooperative bought the Arlington site in 2016 and lost no time in restoring the land which had been intensively farmed for many years. Two years later Wealden District Council granted permission for three smallholdings, all sharing a large wooden barn, a solar array and water harvesting system. The farm now has three viable tenants: Sinead and Adam, who previously specialised in producing edible flowers and herbs on allotments in London. Since arriving in Sussex the couple have switched to growing vegetables in response to the demand for local food during Lockdown.

Chris and Emily previously ran a vegetable growing business and box scheme in Romsey but had no security on the land they worked. They are now supplying three times the number of customers they had expected.

The final farm is to be occupied by a couple who are presently running a market garden in Devon. Their plans for the plot include growing vegetables, herbs and hazelnut trees for oil in the longer term.



The countryside charity
Sussex

Sussex Green Living Network: Gold

The Force for Green Sweeping Sussex: Sussex Green living was set up in in Horsham in 2012 by a group of enthusiasts who wanted to inspire more people to embrace an environmentally friendly lifestyle. They created a network of initiatives which quickly spread across the town and beyond – motivating hundreds of people to adopt a greener way of living.

Sussex Green Living (soon to become a charity) is driven by its founder, CEO Carrie Cort, and supported by a small army of volunteers. Their projects include the Horsham Repair Café which is a monthly repair shop and organic food refill service, the Big Green Switch which helps people to switch to cheaper, green energy and the Horsham Climate Café which provides a hub for people concerned about climate change.

The group has also set up a network of single-use plastic recycling schemes across the district - collecting items which usually end up in landfill sites, such as crisp packets, mobile phones, dog food pouches and inkjet cartridges. The organisation focuses on sharing ways to adopt a greener lifestyle and how to reduce negative impacts on the environment.

‘We need everyone on board to help halt and reverse climate change, and so to help achieve that we are trying to help raise awareness of the problem and provide solutions to a wide audience,’ says Sussex Green Living Founder, Corrie Cort. Corrie also provides free environment education assemblies and lessons to more than 60 schools a year – speaking on the topics such as, ‘Love Clothes and the Planet’, ‘Energy Forever’ and ‘Plastic Free Sea’.



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Thank you to our judges this year for their support and hard work as we adapted to the new world under Covid19 restrictions

- Lady Egremont
 - Margaret Moore
 - Dr Geoffrey Mead
 - Dr Tony Whitbread
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- **Support us by becoming a member of CPRE Sussex at: www.cpresussex.org.uk**



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