

November 25

Edition 4

Fordingbridge Greener Living Newsletter

**FORDINGBRIDGE
GREENER LIVING**



fordingbridgegreenerliving.org

Dear Fordingbridge Greener Living Friends,

Welcome to our fourth newsletter. This follows the AGM on the 6th November, so will include an update on our exciting news, upcoming events and then full project reports.

Firstly, however, at the AGM we wished good luck for the future to David Sanders and Ian Mullan who stepped down this year. Their contribution to the group will be missed.

Fordingbridge Greener Living Committee

Purpose

To develop Fordingbridge into a greener town by delivering sustainable and environmentally friendly projects and sharing 'greener' methods and positive ideas which educate and encourage community involvement at all levels for the future benefit of this town and its environs.

Future plans – Woodlands and Charitable Status

We received a grant from Wessex Water via Dorset Community Foundation to fund the ecological survey and management plan, which was completed for us by Dr Clive Bealey. This is hugely helpful to understand what the woodlands consist of, future management options and where to place the boardwalks. We are taking a bit of a watching brief at the moment to see what the winter brings in terms of flooding and accessibility. As soon as we can, however, we will apply to the National Lottery for a grant to purchase the woodlands, create the infrastructure and fund project running costs for the next few years.

In order to do this, we need to be a registered Charity and the decision was taken by the committee and ratified at the AGM that Fordingbridge Greener Living will become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and register with the Charities Commission. This will help us to access more and large grant funding possibilities as well as enabling us to offer Gift aid on donations and tax-deductible business sponsorship.

We think this is a hugely exciting step to take and will put us on a different level in terms of what we can offer and do. We hope you agree and will support us on this journey.

Dates for the Diary

Repair Cafe/Blister pack recycling

17th January 2026

21st February 2026

21st March 2026

There is no repair café in December



Project News

Community Fridge and Freezer

The objective of the Community Fridge is to prevent food going to waste. Food which is safe for human consumption is donated and our team of 12 volunteers will collect food daily from the Coop, Sandy Balls and the Salvation Army. All the food is taken free of charge from the Fridge located in Fordingbridge Library. Over the last few months, the food donated is primarily bakery products although there is occasionally fruit and veg. Thanks go to all the volunteer team for their commitment.

Ridan Composter

Wendy had prepared a slide show which was presented to the meeting. The composter collects food waste from kitchens and digests it aerobically in the specially insulated composter. It then matures over several months into compost.

Approximately 300 bags of compost have been produced since 2022.

In the light of the doorstep collection service now up and running, a survey was sent out to Ridan users to establish whether they still intend to use it. The majority have said they would prefer to continue to use it, so for the time being it will continue.

Community Garden and Orchard

The Community Garden and Community Orchard are joint projects managed collaboratively by Fordingbridge Town Council and Fordingbridge Greener Living.

We would like to express sincere thanks to Anna and Mick Wilson; without their tireless efforts, the Community Garden would not be thriving. Our team of dedicated volunteers, some of whom are present this evening, stepped in to cover extra watering shifts during the hot weather.

This year was challenging for the garden due to dry and hot conditions, but it was still a positive and productive experience. The heat made watering a demanding task, but volunteers and visiting children generously helped.

Many local schools and preschools, including Fordingbridge Infants, contributed. The children were particularly interested in the history of the garden's water pump and enjoyed watching their teachers operate it, an activity that resembled a gym session in the heat.

From local out-of-school clubs, nurseries, and preschools, we have welcomed visitors from:

- * The Beavers
- * Rainbows
- * Salvation Army—Team and Play
- * The Branch
- * The Squirrels
- * Busy Bees (now renamed and relocated as Muddy Boots)

We have also welcomed two students seeking their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and both were supported in their endeavours.

We are grateful for generous donations. As part of the outreach effort, seeds were distributed to local schools and preschools for growing and returning seedlings; in one case, the children planted them themselves.

The strawberries did exceptionally well this year, and many children, especially those from Stepping Stones, thoroughly enjoyed picking and eating them. As in previous years, our produce has been shared via the Information Office.

The Community Orchard at the top of Sweatfords meadow mostly manages itself. We request that the Town Council hire a tree surgeon to prune the trees for their health and well-being.

We always welcome new volunteers. If you are interested, join our WhatsApp group to stay updated on our working hours. Try one or two sessions to see if it suits you.

In summary, the Community Garden and Orchard continue to thrive through collaboration, volunteer dedication, and growing community involvement.

Repair Cafe and blister pack recycling

The repair café is still happening on the third Saturday of each month though the withdrawal of both David Sanders, who set it up, and Ian Mullan has left it very short of repairers.

The sewing repairs have had to stop during the year as Sue can no longer come. Our stalwart team are Lesley Dipple, Steve Tonkin and Simon Love. We would really love more repairers to come forward to help us.

Having said that, this year we have had 62 electrical items come to us and we've managed to repair about half of them. Also 5 items of clothing, 30 toys, 5 clocks, a cheese knife and a picture frame! So, keep the broken stuff coming and we'll see what we can do and if anyone can sign up to have a go at mending, please sign our sheet.

With the help of **Spurt Salisbury**, we have in this year set up a medicine blister pack recycling scheme. It's been incredibly successful and is really well supported. The scheme is co-run by Friends of **Fordingbridge Surgery** and FGL.

We run this at the repair cafes, 3rd Saturday of the month 10-12 and since we started in the spring we have collected and sent for recycling just over 26,000 packs. We get between 30-40 people coming in each month.

The system is that we buy a box (costing £112) from MyGroup, a recycling company in Hull, fill the box with approximately 5000 packs and the box goes back to them. They then put the contents through a giant fine mincer so there are very fine particles, then electrostatically separate them into plastic and aluminium. These are then used to make items such as hubcaps and municipal seats/boardwalks. We ask for donations towards the purchase of the next box and our estimate is £1/50 blister packs. We would love to be able to offer this at no cost, but nobody recycles these for free anymore.

Community Recycling Shed

The shed is still running well and had a major tidy up this year by Jenny.

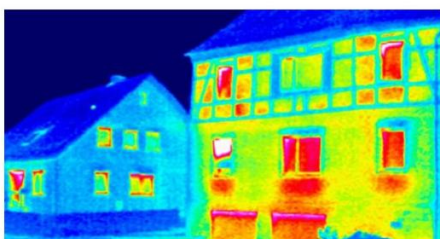
We collect and recycle:

- Stamps – Margaret
- Printer cartridges – Suzy
- Marigolds - Jackie
- Bras – Chris
- Candles – Barry
- Corks – Jenny
- CDs – Louise
- Water filters – Sue/Chris
- Plant pots – Jackie
- Aluminium foil - Ann

We don't have any stats, just that bins fill and get emptied by our wonderful recycling fairies.

Community Energy

The Community Energy group has now been active for three years. Our aim is to encourage local sustainable and renewable energy solutions which will have a positive impact on Fordingbridge and our surrounding villages and help our community towards net zero. We hope that by conserving energy, using it more efficiently and by setting up/getting involved with renewable energy generation sites and community owned energy projects within our local area, we support people to take steps towards a greener future. This said, we concluded that gathering information and helping to identify possible sites was really only benefiting the businesses or organisations that would benefit from solar installations et al and that the community at large was not going to gain any benefit from our endeavours. So instead we have focussed on trying to benefit local people by starting to provide a thermal imaging service linked to the New Forest HEAT (Home Energy Advice Team) Project.



We have hired thermal imaging cameras from the HEAT Project for the last two years in order to offer local residents the opportunity to have thermal surveys of their homes. These surveys proved very revealing to those who had a survey and we will offer these surveys again this winter (December 2025 to February 2026). A thermal imaging survey can often help identify the reasons for cold draughts and cold areas. Households can make cheap but very effective changes to improve

the thermal efficiency of their home. We hope to advertise thermal surveys more widely this year. For more information contact fordingbridgegreenerliving@gmail.com.

We are looking for other local people to join our group to help us. We would really appreciate some new members. If you fancy getting involved or have an interest/experience with alternative energy/solar/heat pumps/EV/home insulation etc, please contact us.

Previously we have liaised with Community Energy New Forest (CENF) to help identify suitable local community/business premises which might benefit from solar schemes. There is funding available for installing solar on commercial/community buildings. If you own or use local business premises which you think might benefit from solar power, please get in touch.

We have thought about hydro energy production using the River Avon, and maybe in the future this might become a reality. We are keeping track of other initiatives locally and further afield to

keep abreast of developments regarding lowering emissions and using more environmentally friendly means to fuel and energise our homes and local community.

Several members of the group have already made alterations to their houses to reduce energy costs including installing solar panels and batteries/heat pumps. One of our members has built an eco house which he is now living in. We have visited each other's houses to see what all this new technology entails, which has been very enlightening. We are very keen to share our experiences and gain knowledge of how other people locally are gearing up for Net Zero and reducing their living costs.

Please get in touch with fordingbridgegreenerliving@gmail.com if you would like to know more about community energy project or if you are interested in getting involved.

River Avon Bathing Water Status

Key Points

- The second season of Environment Agency monitoring has now finished. Data can be viewed here [Bathing water profile](#). The 2024 classification was Poor, it is expected that the 2025 results are also Poor. Generally, results are better this year – largely due to the lack of rain. Note EA sampling will not re-start until May 2026.
- Wessex Water continue their weekly investigative sampling, this will be carried out all through the winter. Data can be viewed here [Fordingbridge Dashboard](#).
- Wessex Water AI system – continuous water quality monitoring in place, and system is currently being trained. Expect live app for 2026 bathing water season.
- Environment Agency have been carrying out investigations, sampling upstream of Fordingbridge to try and track down sources. This is still ongoing, but they currently think sources of contamination are relatively localised (1km) upstream of the site, and linked to bovine inputs. Work is ongoing.
- Actions in Wessex Water 2025-30 business plan relating to CSO upgrades, no update on progress.

Website signposting key info here [Fordingbridge River Avon Bathing Water Site | For the Love of Water](#)

Accounts for 2025

Income for the year was £3,013, small amounts came from the projects but mainly we had £2,567 of grant funding. We wish to thank:

- Wessex water foundation via Dorset Community Foundation for £2,000 towards the woodland ecological survey and management plan
- Frogham Fair who gave us £200
- Fordingbridge Town Council gave us £200 towards the blister pack recycling scheme
- Fisherton Consulting £167

In the year the cost of our projects was £852 which would suggest a surplus, but the £2,000 grant was earmarked and has now been spent.

Thanks to the Co-op grant from 2022 we still have some reserves, so we finished the year with over £5,000 in the bank, now this is £3,000.

Reminders

Easy Fundraising

With Easy Fundraising, every time you buy something online from a supplier who is part of the scheme, a donation will be given to your chosen charity. In the year we raised £139 from supporters, just buying what they need via Easy Fundraising. Do sign up.

www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Tetrapak recycling



A reminder that we also have a Tetrapak recycling bin in Fordingbridge located in the car park opposite the Recreation Ground. This is managed by NFDC who has now rolled the scheme out to other towns in the district.

The Green Gram – Community Refill Shop

23 High Street, Fordingbridge

www.thegreengram.org

Green Gram provides affordable plastic-free groceries offering a wide range of wholefoods, loose leaf teas and whole bean coffees, eco-friendly detergents and toiletries, as well as a selection of household products.

Everything is supplied without single use plastic packaging so you can buy as much or as little as you need! Customers are encouraged to bring their own containers to refill, but a selection of donated jars and bottles are available.



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