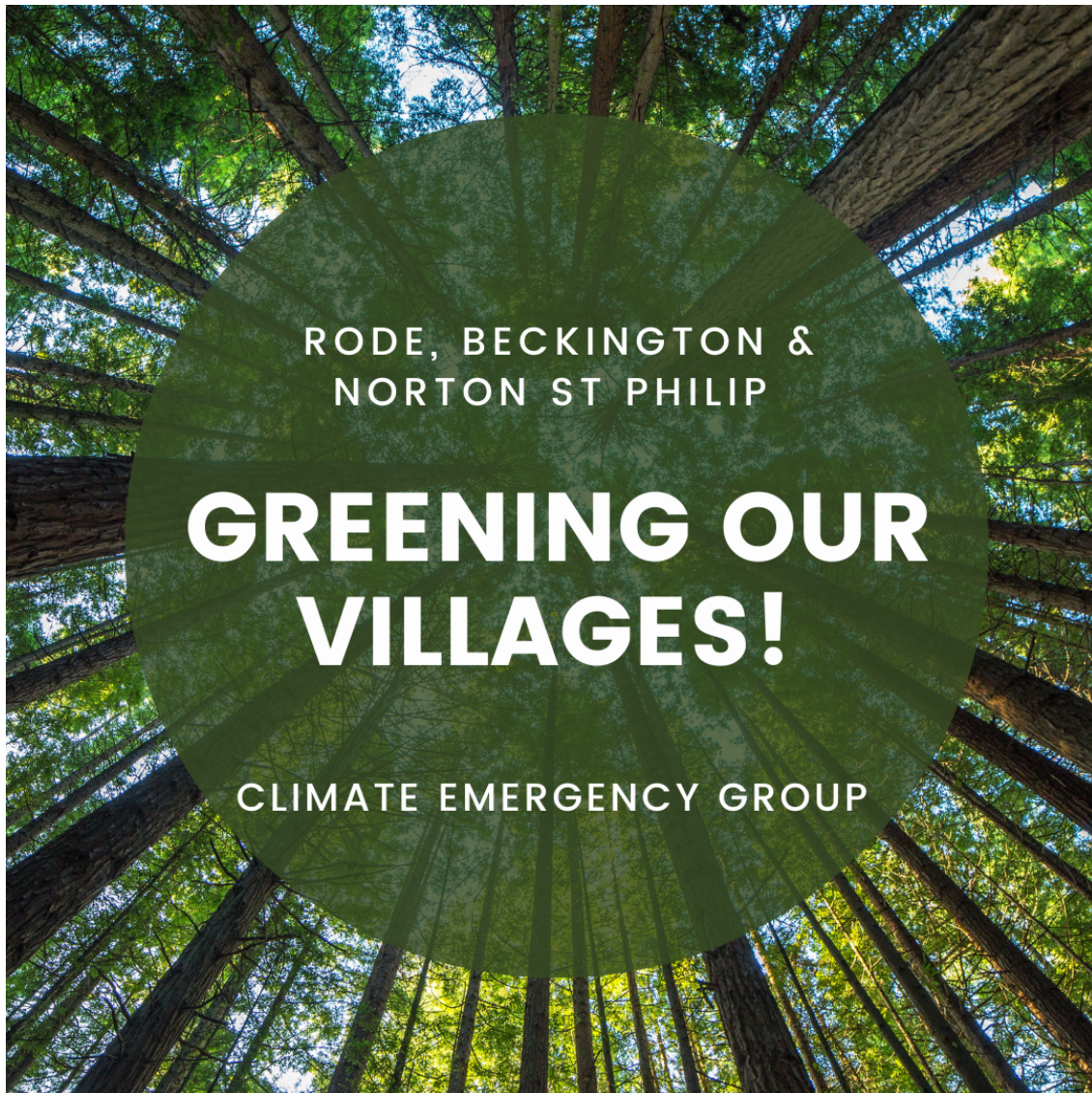


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Welcome to the October Climate Emergency Group Newsletter

Last month was depressing in many ways (not least because I became another year older!). But far more seriously, the UK government started to significantly row back on a range of vital measures to tackle the climate emergency.

In response to the "pro-car" agenda which is emerging, the focus of this newsletter is mainly on walking and cycling. However, there's also information on some improvements to the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, and the opportunity to get a FREE retrofit assessment (if you're quick).

the proposed new solar farm in Rode. However, the submission of the planning application has been pushed back again. I now understand the application is likely to be submitted in mid-October.

Hopefully you find the newsletter informative and interesting, and - if so - perhaps you'd consider forwarding it to a friend or neighbour. New subscribers can sign-up here:

[https://mailchi.mp/4b503e0ba20c/initial-sign-up?
fbclid=IwAR2N42N4AEBZCnvzdJNHpu1na0KPFv4s0PZdYK7hJiwwKLm45ojMwGr
uF20](https://mailchi.mp/4b503e0ba20c/initial-sign-up?fbclid=IwAR2N42N4AEBZCnvzdJNHpu1na0KPFv4s0PZdYK7hJiwwKLm45ojMwGr uF20)

Plus - if you're interested in joining the Rode, Beckington & Norton St Philip Climate Emergency Group, you would be very welcome. Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 17th October in Rode Memorial Hall, starting at 7pm**. Email me in advance if you'd like to come along.

Jim

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Green Open Homes - Bath

Rode and surrounding villages have held a couple of "Green Open Homes" events over the past year, but if you missed these (or need more information on particular green technologies or solutions), then you may be interested in a similar event being run in Bath on the weekend of 4th & 5th November.

The event will celebrate homes in Bath and North East Somerset that have incorporated energy efficient features, and is a great way to find out about the reality of installing solar panels, insulation, triple glazing, or new heating options. As with the recent events in and around Rode, you will be able to have

and cut how much they're paying, saving on their energy bills as a result.

Currently there are 10 properties in Bath which will open their doors to visitors on 4th & 5th November...more may be added closer to the time. For more information:

<https://greenopenhomesbanes.org/>



Free Retrofit Assessment

Retrofitting is the process of making changes to an existing building to make it more energy efficient, more comfortable, cheaper to heat and healthier to live in. Retrofitting can help you tackle problems like damp, condensation, and mould. It could help reduce your energy bills, improve your health and it could also help reduce your carbon emissions.

If you have an old or poorly-insulated property and want to tackle some of these issues - but don't know where to start, a Retrofit Assessment is the ideal first step. A retrofit assessment can help you understand where your house loses heat and energy, and plan how to make improvements as efficiently as possible either now or in the future.

And - for a limited period - you can apply for a FREE assessment, courtesy of Frome Town Council (the offer applies to Frome and surrounding villages).

<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/sustainability-and-resilience/green-and-healthy-futures-programme/healthy-homes/retrofit/>

Somerset Retrofit Accelerator

And, if you are considering a retrofit project, but don't know which advisor, supplier or equipment to use, the Somerset Green Directory could be useful....it has been put together to help homeowners find local businesses and services to help them with their eco retrofit project. Full details here:

<https://retrofitsomerset.info/>



Boiler Upgrade Scheme

heat pump under the "Boiler Upgrade Scheme" (BUS). Originally, grants were available for £5,000 for air source heat pumps, and £6,000 for ground source heat pumps. But from 23 October 2023, these figures will go up to £7,500.

Octopus Energy last month unveiled a new heat pump design that, taking account of the BUS support, can be installed for free in some homes, and for £3,000 in those that need upgrades including insulation. Logically, these costs will go down as competition increases and more people install heat pumps. Heat pumps are also cheaper to operate than gas boilers if homes are well insulated.

Details of the Octopus Energy heat pump options are here: <https://octopus.energy/get-a-heat-pump/>



Local walking & cycling routes

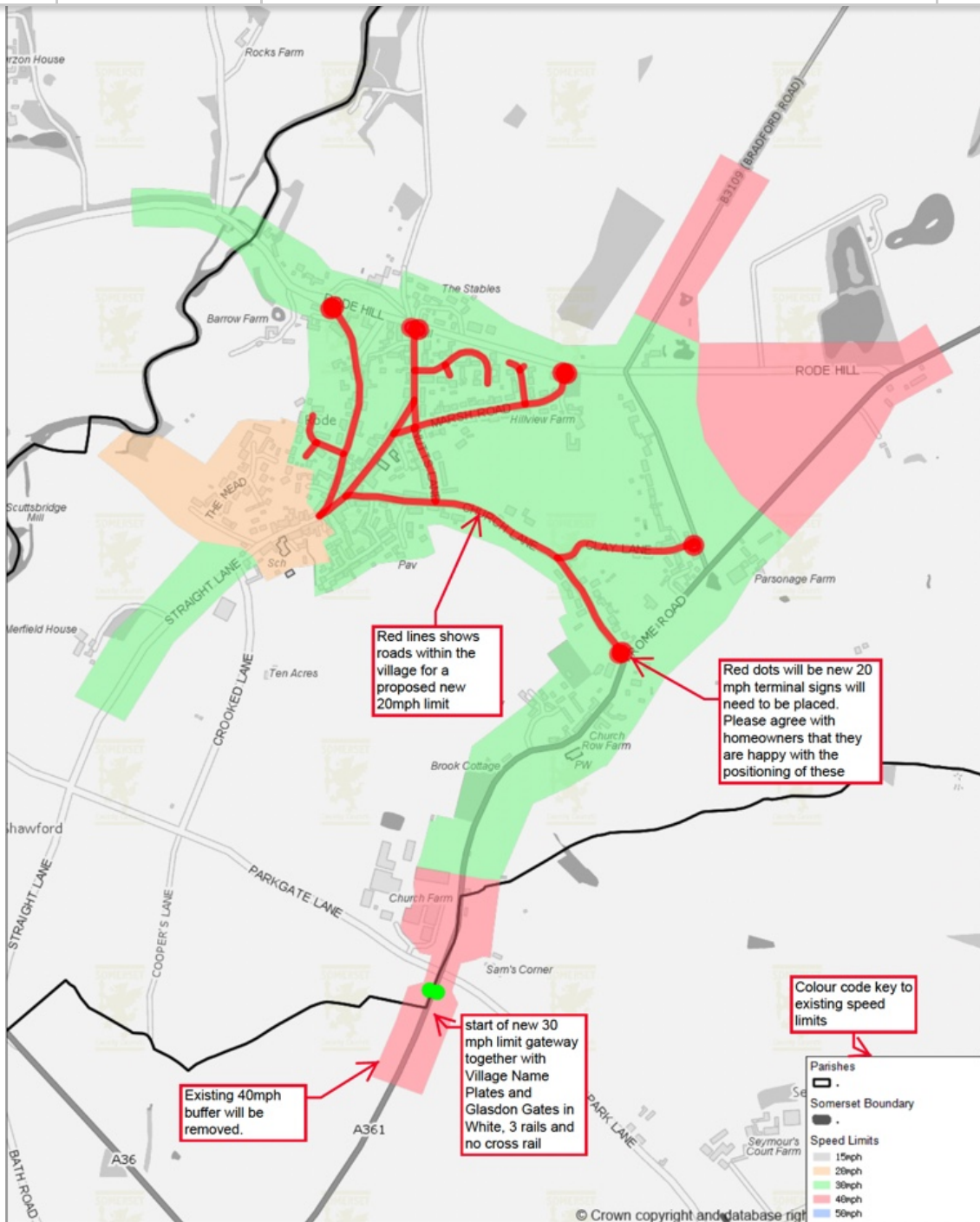
The government has been very keen recently to showcase its "pro-car" credentials, seemingly at the expense of trains, buses, cycling and walking. As part of this initiative, the Prime Minister has announced proposals to make it harder for councils to introduce a range of measures designed to make streets safer and more convenient for bus passengers, cyclists and pedestrians. However, in a joint statement issued last week, the heads of Ramblers,

the government's plans would end up leaving people feeling they had no choice but to drive, even if they would rather use other means.

As we know, the provision of sustainable transport is key in the battle against climate change. We are relatively fortunate in the villages of Rode, Beckington and Norton St Philip to (currently) have decent bus services to Bath, Frome and a number of other destinations. However, many local roads are dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists - discouraging the most sustainable of all forms of travel.

In Rode the Parish Council has been working with Somerset Council and the police for the past couple of years to extend the 20mph speed limit in the centre of the village, and also to extend the 30mph speed limit on a short section of the A361 (see plan below). These changes should soon be enacted, and will hopefully encourage more walking and cycling in and around the village.

Fortunately, despite the government proposals, there are many local bodies (charities, councils or membership organisations) which are committed to creating safer roads and delivering more sustainable transport solutions. It's worth checking some of them out, and I've sign-posted a few in the sections below.



Creating Places for People

Somerset Council is consulting on ways to ensure developers create attractive, high-quality environments, and inclusive and accessible places for all, regardless of age, gender, mobility, or background, where people enjoy living. The objectives include improving air quality; reducing carbon footprints;

resilient to the impacts of climate change while protecting and enhancing nature and wildlife.

The Council is proposing to prioritise active travel – cycling, walking and wheeling – along with public transport to reduce reliance on using private cars.

These proposals could be particularly relevant in villages like Rode, Beckington and Norton St Philip, where we are very reliant on the private car. If you believe in these objectives, please take time to respond to the consultation - it is very quick and easy (just 4 questions!). The consultation closes on 16th October:

<https://sومersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/planning/creating-places-for-people/>



Promoting Walking and Cycling

If you are keen to support walking and cycling - and help to persuade the government that it's pro-car agenda is mis-conceived, there are a number of campaigning organisations that are worth searching out. Here are just a few:

Living Streets (an organisation with nearly 100 years of history, which campaigned for the first zebra crossings in the UK): <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

Network): <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

Cycling UK (encouraging and enabling more people to cycle): <https://www.cyclinguk.org/>



Slow Ways

Slow Ways is an initiative to create a national network of walking routes connecting all of Great Britain's towns and cities as well as thousands of villages.

Using existing paths, ways, trails and roads, people can use Slow Ways routes to walk or wheel between neighbouring settlements, and combine them to create longer distance trips. It's designed to make it easier for people to imagine, plan and go on walking journeys.

People from across the country have already drafted 9,000 routes that stretch for over 130,000km (80,000 miles). Now these routes need checking on the ground to make sure they are good enough to follow. So far 1 in 5 Slow Ways have been checked and verified - each route requires at least three positive reviews and a survey for it to become part of the Slow Ways trusted network. The aim is for every place in the network to be 100% checked. Once that's


get involved, first of all sign up.

<https://beta.slowways.org/>

Then....Walk the walk - Choose a suitable route from the Slow Ways website or iPhone app*, walk it and then leave a review. You can do this on your own or better still, organise a day with friends, neighbours, etc, to walk all of the Slow Ways in our area. *[The app is currently only available for the iPhone, but an android version is coming soon.] Or, create a new Slow Way....

At its next meeting Rode Parish Council will be discussing ways in which it can support this initiative....other local groups can get involved, too!

The UK's biodiversity is in trouble




More species have seen their populations decrease than increase

- 38% have decreased**
- 34% little change**
- 27% have increased**

The abundance of 753 terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by

19%



16% of species are threatened with extinction from Great Britain. 151 of 10,008 assessed have already become extinct.

We have seen big changes in where wildlife is found

- The distributions of half of flowering plant species have decreased across Great Britain**
54%
- The distributions of invertebrates have on average decreased across the UK**
13%
- Stronger declines in some insect groups which provide key ecosystem functions such as**
Pest control **34%**
Pollination **18%**
- Insects that help keep a healthy balance of nutrients in rivers and ponds initially declined before showing a rapid recovery that has since slowed**

Every three years the UK's leading conservation organisations and research professionals publish a report using the best and latest data on the status of wildlife in the UK. The world-leading State of Nature report is the most comprehensive health check of nature in the UK and provides a benchmark for how our wildlife is faring. Unfortunately, to date, the results have not been promising.

Successive reports paint a grim picture. The latest edition published at the end of September, revealed that there has been no reduction in the decline of the UK's wildlife. One in six species is now at risk of being lost from Great Britain altogether and wildlife has, on average, declined by 19% since monitoring began in 1970. As a result, the UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth.

More information, including a link to download the 2023 report, can be found here:

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/landmark-report-shows-uk-wildlifes-devastating-decline>



Green Halloween - plus Pumpkin Day in Frome

I realise we've only just said goodbye to summer, but Halloween is THIS MONTH! Whilst it's a fun celebration, it's often not great for the environment.

Immediately post-Halloween, millions of pumpkins are destined for landfills,

quantities of plastic waste is generated from disposable Halloween clothing and decorations.

For some useful tips on how to have a greener Halloween, follow these links:

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/10-green-halloween-tips>

<https://onehome.org.uk/topics/lifestyle/seasonal/how-to-have-a-green-halloween/>

Meanwhile, to get into the spirit, why not check out the **Pumpkin Day Harvest Swap and Food Festival** at the Cheese & Grain on Sunday October 29th (10am - 3pm)?

Part harvest swap, part local food market, and part eating festival, the event will be full of inspiration around how climate and health can be used in food and in growing. There will be workshops, talks, kids' activities, community groups and a communal eating experience in the Cheese & Grain cafe, featuring a 10-mile menu.



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