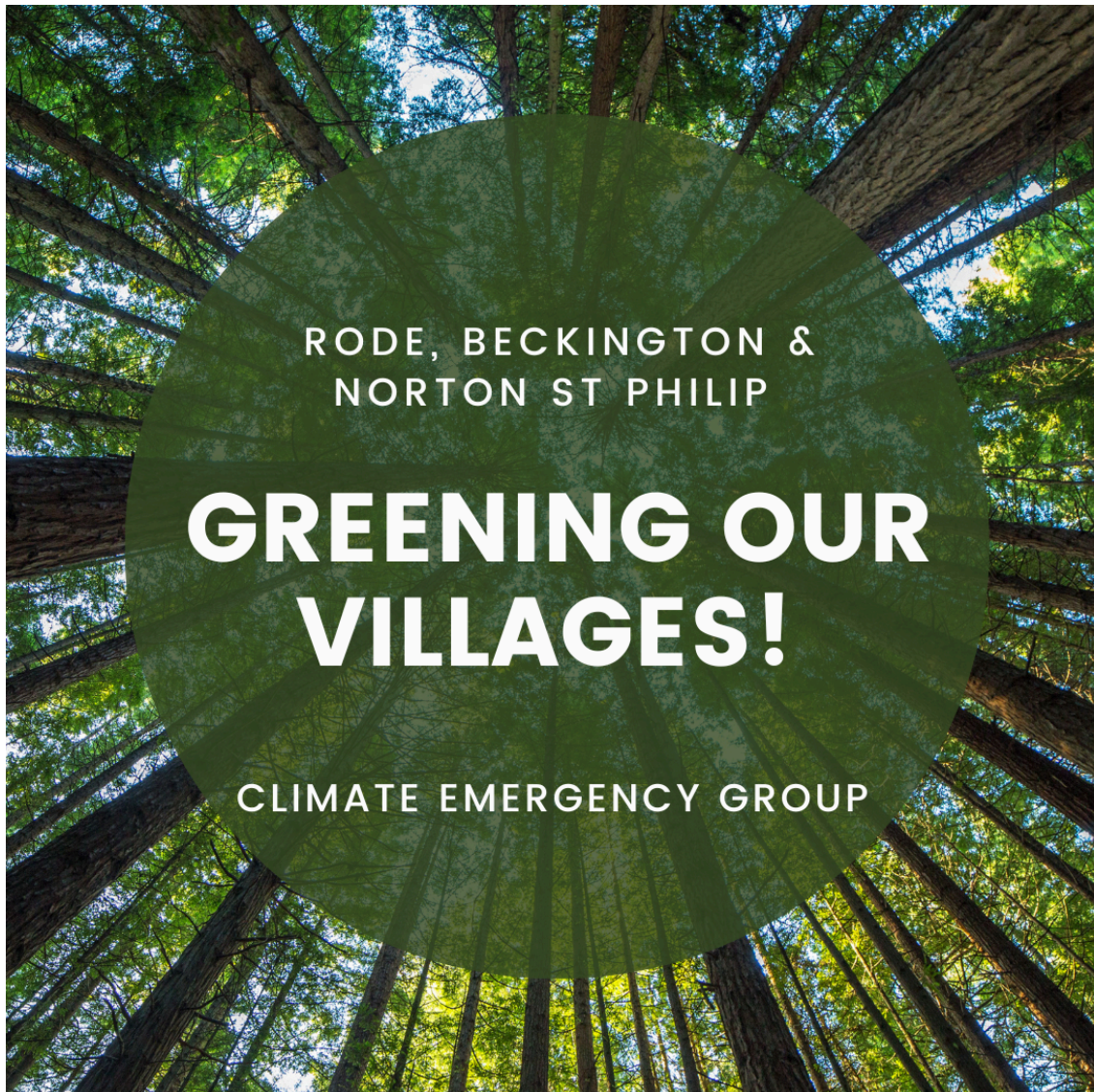


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## Welcome to the May Climate Emergency Group Newsletter

First of all, many apologies for the absence of a Newsletter in April - work, holidays and general "life stuff" all conspired to get in the way. Hopefully this month's newsletter makes up for it!

The main news item relates to the proposed Solar Farm in Rode - a decision on which has been deferred by Somerset Council - more info below. In addition - just a reminder that TOMORROW (as I write this) Philip Haile (who runs Transition Bath's Heat Pump Advisory Service) will be giving an on-line webinar entitled "What you need to know before purchasing a heat pump"....again, more info below.

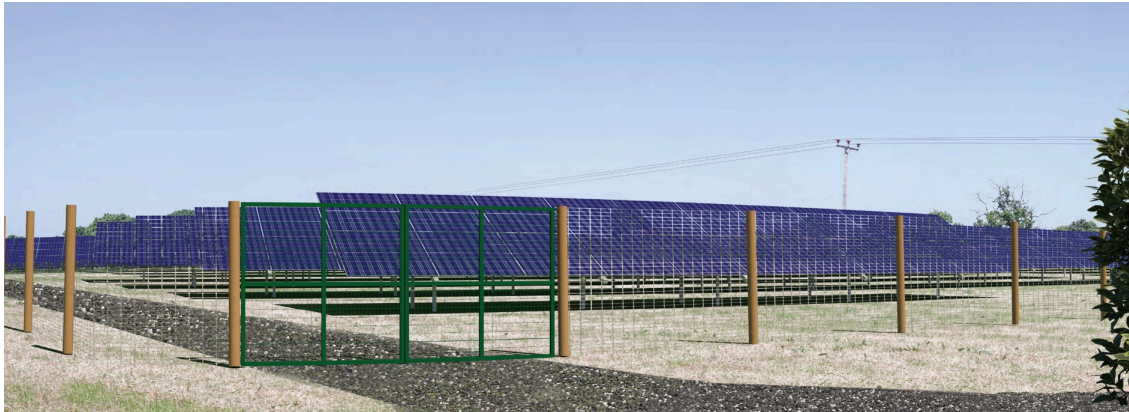
following the link below:

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

And all past editions of this newsletter, plus various resources, advice and information, are available on the Rode Village Website:

<https://www.rodevillage.com/climate-emergency/>

[jim.mcauliffe@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.mcauliffe@btinternet.com)



## Proposed Solar Farm in Rode - update

The application was considered at the May meeting of the Somerset East Planning Committee, which met on the afternoon of 7th May.

As you will know, although Rode Parish Council is strongly in favour of sustainable energy and formally declared a Climate Emergency in 2021, in line with the views of many local residents, the PC believes this proposed development is flawed. In particular the council is concerned about the scale of the proposed solar farm (which would be the largest in Somerset, and one of the largest in the UK), its proximity to the village, and its impact on the local countryside and a number of heritage assets.

The PC believed that the changes made to the scheme since the original consultation period were very minor in nature and did not materially address any of the concerns or issues previously raised.

The Somerset East Planning Committee debated the merits of the application at some length, and ultimately decided there were some key elements that they were unhappy with,

- Harm to landscape and heritage caused by the scale of the scheme and its proximity to the village of Rode - in particular the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer;
- The unsuitability of the proposed access route via Monkley Lane;
- Screening issues (including the height of boundary fences and the potential inadequacy of hedging and other screening proposals).

In due course Somerset Council will publish the details of the Planning Committee decision and expand on these matters.

The deferral is for a maximum of three months, and it is very much hoped that the applicant will engage positively with interested parties - including obviously local residents and Rode Parish Council. The PC has made it clear that it is willing to discuss potential changes to the scheme. There is a strong belief that a better scheme can be found which addresses the matters noted above, but ultimately also provides a meaningful contribution to renewable energy production.

All the documentation in connection with the proposed development is available on the Somerset Council website:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/view-and-comment-on-a-planning-application/> [On the SC website, go to “Planning, buildings and land”, then select “View or comment on a planning application”, choose “Mendip”, then go to “Find an application”. The application reference is **2023/2183/FUL**].

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## Thinking about installing a heat pump, but don't know where to start?

The Climate Emergency Group is hosting a free online webinar for local homeowners – “What you need to know before purchasing a heat pump”. The talk will be given by Philip Haile who runs Transition Bath’s Heat Pump Advisory Service, and will take place on **Thursday 9th May at 7pm**. If you’re interested, email [jim.mcauliffe@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.mcauliffe@btinternet.com) for log-in details, etc.

The talk will cover a range of issues, including:

- How do heat pumps work?
- Which homes are most suitable, cylinders, outside space
- Thermal insulation improvements, historic homes
- Temperature versus efficiency/cost/CO<sub>2</sub>, weather compensation
- Locating a heat pump, noise, planning permission
- Do you run them 24/7? Most efficient ways of running them
- Installation costs
- How to go about getting quotes? Installers versus energy companies

There is also a whole host of useful information about heat pumps on the Energy Saving Trust website: <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/heating-your-home/heat-pumps/>



## Repair Cafés in Rode and Norton St Philip

Unfortunately we have had to defer the planned Repair Café in Rode, as we didn't have enough volunteer repairers. However, the very popular Norton St Philip Repair Café takes place on **Saturday 11th May, from 10am to 12noon**. The venue is the Palairet Hall, Church Street, Norton BA2 7LU. A great opportunity to have something fixed. Bring along your broken items and the team will try to fix them.

Don't throw it away, see if the team can repair it while you relax with a cuppa and a piece of cake!

# railwalks

## WALK BRITAIN BY RAIL



### Rail Walks

The Guardian recently publicised the great "Rail Walks" initiative via a wonderful walk from Bradford on Avon to Bath:

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2024/apr/30/you-can-walk-virtually-everywhere-in-england-by-using-the-train-the-man-connecting-rail-based-walks>

The principle is simple - to map the many, many options for beautiful walks connected by railway stations. Find out more about the project here:

<https://www.railwalks.co.uk/homepage>

We can all help expand the map of Rail Walks, whilst doing ourselves and the planet a great deal of good! And the Rail Walks initiative is partnering with Slow Ways (see section below on National Walking Month).

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## National Walking Month!

This month is national walking month.....and walking is one of the easiest ways to improve your health, stay connected to your community, and help the planet. More details here: <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/get-involved/national-walking-month/>

And in that context, it's very much worth highlighting the "Slow Ways" project, which is now just over four years old. Slow Ways is about mapping and sharing

effort has led to half of those routes being checked and given a positive review. One in four of the routes are verified...including many locally.

More people would enjoy the pleasurable and existential benefits of walking if we had a reliable national walking network, and sharing a good way to go can make the difference between someone choosing to enjoy a journey by foot or by wheel, or not. A good way can give a person inspiration, confidence, and make their lives easier – all important ingredients for all active journeys.

The Slow Ways project is focussed on finding and sharing good ways that are safe and enjoyable. With that in mind, one very positive thing we could all do (and celebrate National Walking Month!) is to get involved in the project....

Here are some ways we can get involved:

Choose, complete and review a route – then repeat! <https://beta.slowways.org/>

Create a trail of #SlowWays routes using the Journey Planner: <https://beta.slowways.org/Allroutes>

Do the Big Slow Ways Challenge! <https://the-big-slow-ways-challenge.raisely.com/>

Use the progress map to find routes to target: <https://slowways.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/interactivelegend/index.html?appid=fea700074be945bc88992472ae35ec23>

Share your journeys and photos using the hashtag #SlowWays

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## Rewilding

Do you know a local land-owner, or someone interested in re-wilding? If so, they (or you) may be interested in an event being hosted by Heal Rewilding, a local organisation which raises money to buy land for rewilding. Their first site is at Witham Priory, just south of Frome.

And Heal has just announced its first ever rewilding gathering called "Into the Light" which is taking place on **Friday 10 May and Saturday 11 May** (at Witham Priory). Tickets are available online, with a limited number available at early bird rates with a 15% discount.

If you're interested in what's happening in rewilding, would like to spend time with others who love wildlife and want to help it thrive again, this is for you!

Into The Light runs over two days and you can book for one day or both days. There will be a big tent for talks and a smaller tent for book talks and other fringe activities.

On Friday, the focus is on rewilding finance and technology.

On Saturday, talks will be more general, on wildlife, rewilding projects and broader themes.

There's a fantastic programme each day, with a roster of brilliant speakers and plenty of time between talks for conversations. More information about the themes for each day and confirmed speakers is on the ticket page (link below).

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/healrewilding/1175259#>

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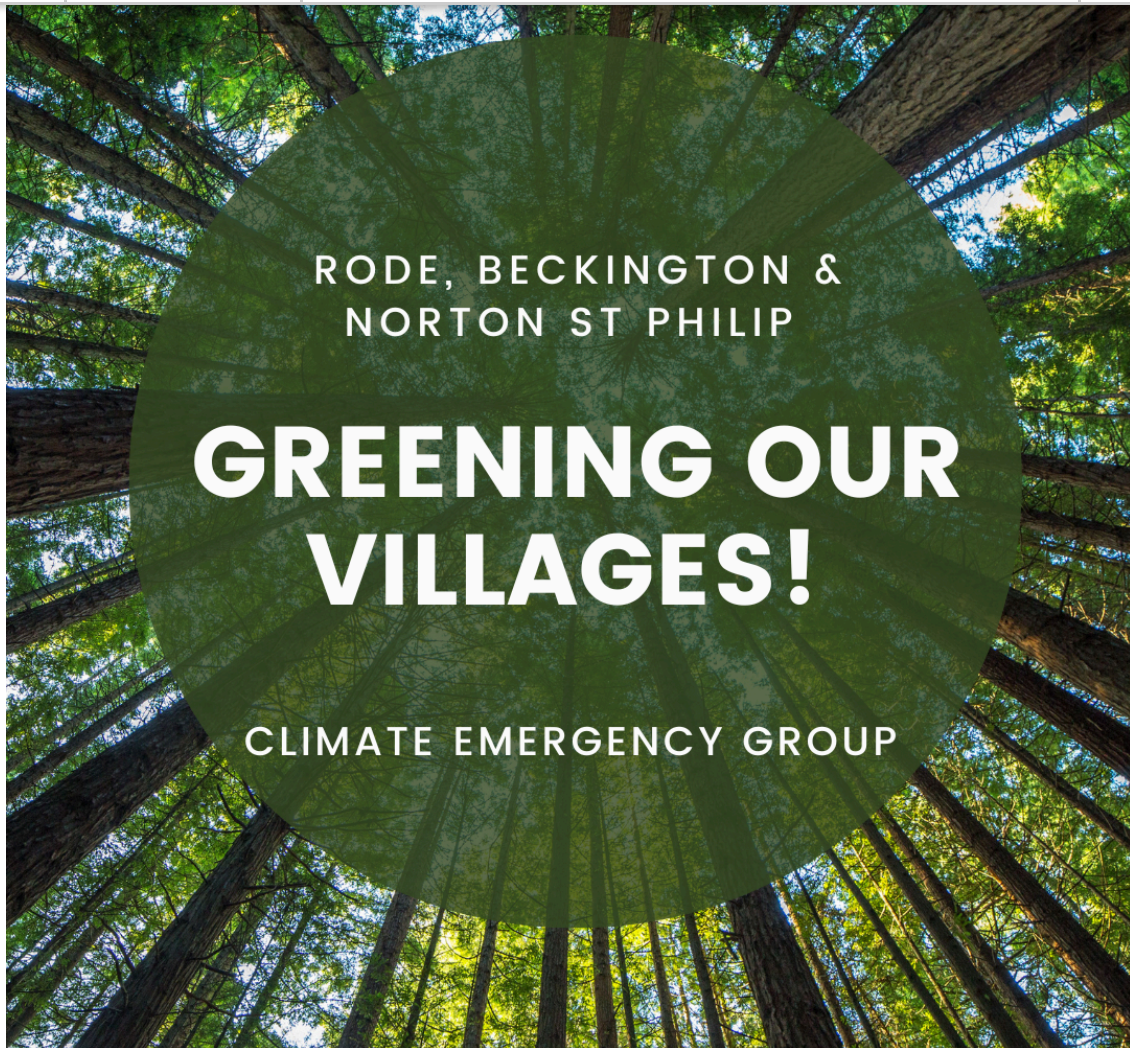
## Sustainability Shorts - edition 4!

Due to popular demand, Transition Bath is planning their fourth Sustainability Shorts event, at St Mark's Community Centre in Widcombe - St Mark's Rd Bath, BA2 4PA on **Saturday 8th June, from 6.30pm - 8.30pm.**

The evening is designed to be engaging, snappy and entertaining, with six speakers talking for ten minutes each on their chosen sustainability subject. There will be five minutes for Q&A after each speaker, then it's on to the next! You are guaranteed to hear something new and something you can work with from the varied speakers. More details here:

<https://transitionbath.org/event/sustainability-shorts-4/>

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RODE, BECKINGTON &  
NORTON ST PHILIP

# GREENING OUR VILLAGES!

CLIMATE EMERGENCY GROUP

Finally, a quick reminder that I will be stepping back from "leading" the Climate Emergency Group in the summer. By then I'll have been in the hot-seat for three years and I think it's time for someone with more expertise, energy, and time, to take on the mantle - and in particular to inspire us to reach the next level. If you think that person is YOU - please drop me a line....and, if it's not you, but you know someone who could be interested, please ask them to get in contact.

Email: [jim.mcauliffe@btinternet.com](mailto:jim.mcauliffe@btinternet.com)



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