



Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability News



2024 swept in with storm after storm battering our small island. Although the flooding in Pangbourne and Whitchurch was mostly safely contained within the water meadows some houses and the Swan and Greyhound pubs were affected causing stress and damage to livelihoods. We wish all whose start to the New Year has been stressful as a result of these weather systems a speedy recovery back to normal. I have not seen such extensive flooding in this area before.

In recent years we have all benefitted from improved weather forecasting and although it does not prevent the damage caused it does help people to be more prepared and in many cases saves lives as people are evacuated to safer ground. We in PAWS are delighted to hear that Sir Brian Hoskins, member of PAWS has been awarded the Japan Prize as described below:

Japan Prize awarded to Sir Brian Hoskins for the establishment of a scientific foundation for the prediction of extreme weather

One of Britain's leading climate scientists has been honoured with the prestigious international prize for science, the Japan Prize. The prize honours scientists and researchers worldwide for their original and outstanding achievements that have contributed to the peace and prosperity of humankind.

Professor Sir Brian Hoskins, Emeritus Professor of Meteorology at the University of Reading, and Chair of the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London, has been co-awarded the Japan Prize in the fields of Resources, Energy, the Environment, and Social Infrastructure.

The joint award is with his friend and colleague, Professor Mike Wallace from the University of Washington, USA. The announcement was made in a press conference on Tuesday, 23 January. The Prize will be awarded at a Ceremony in Tokyo in the presence of the Emperor and Empress of Japan on 16 April.

Sir Brian, who has been a member of the University of Reading since 1971, was recognised for his research leading to the establishment of a scientific framework for the understanding and prediction of extreme weather events.



We are not only indebted to Brian for his scientific work. In Pangbourne he is a massive contributor to our community, from his work in rescuing the toilets, helping with the plastic free fete, litter picking to chairing Pangbourne Choral Society and more. I think that sometimes we feel scientists only function in their academic institutions and that their work is not necessarily relevant to day to day life, but Brian along with Jackie sets us all a good

example of how we can live sustainably, and locally keeping our carbon footprint to a minimum. As an educator, Brian has shared his knowledge of climate change issues at many local events, encouraging young and old to become more resilient in the face of the inevitable changes brought by global warming. We are very lucky to have him here in our community.

Back to PAWS news, in January we had an extremely well attended planning meeting. People just kept arriving bringing with them their ideas and sharing the work that they are already doing to improve our local environment. From Asian hornets, declining swift populations, mink trapping, future energy systems, 'sculpture and climate', to a report from our representative at COP28 we had an energetic and extremely well-chaired meeting.

The result is that we have a very full programme of events this year, kicking off on the 22nd February with John White, our local beekeeper, giving a presentation on the threat of the Asian Hornet to our bees and other wildlife. As the weather warms the hornet is travelling further north through Europe where it has already created havoc in the apiaries. It has been found in various parts of southern Britain and PAWS aims to be part of a programme to monitor the movement of hornets locally.

We need to tackle another menace to our local environment and we have been advised by BBOWT and the Parish Council that volunteers are needed to monitor mink traps set along the Thames. Please contact either of the above if you are interested in being a volunteer.

If you are concerned about declining bird populations in the village, we have been made aware of Ailsa Walks and Talks. Ailsa runs regular walks and talks locally and include the swift, a bird we are delighted to see each summer nesting in the centre of Pangbourne.

Throughout the year we will be providing a series of talks including one on how COP meetings work. There is real concern that future COPs are to be held in fossil rich countries and the fact that there are no women on the 28 member climate committee. Are the COP meetings being hijacked by a business elite?

We have a speaker booked to speak on what is needed for a future sustainable energy system, a visit to the studio of our local sculptor in Nature, a tree competition and of course our usual fixed events. We are hoping that our programme of building resilience and sustainability will encourage us all in the battle against loss of species and destructive climate events.

Heather Thorne

Forthcoming events

When	What	Where
Thursday 22 nd February	Talk on Asian Hornets	TBC
Thursday 29th February 7-9pm	Hardwick Estate's future - public consultation *	Whitchurch Village Hall
March	Future Energy Systems	Pangbourne Village Hall
April TBC	Whitchurch litter picking *	
Sunday 28 th April	Pangbourne litter picking *	
Thursday 23 rd May 8pm	AGM	
May TBC	Whitchurch Hill Village Fete *	
June TBC	Pangbourne Village Fete *	Thames Meadow
June TBC	Swift Awareness	
28 June	"Show your Stripes" *	Reading
Sunday 23 rd June	WoTHabs meadow diversity walk *	Sheepwash Lane
Sunday 22 nd September 2pm-4pm	Apple pressing	Whitchurch Maze
Sat-Sun 12-13 October	Pangbourne litter picking *	
Thursday 17 th November 8pm	Film Night	Pangbourne Village Hall
Thursday December TBA	Christmas Gathering	Pangbourne Village Hall
Thursday 18 January 2025 8pm	PAWS 2025 Planning Meeting	Pangbourne Village Hall
* = Events not primarily organised by PAWS		

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