

Climate Solutions discussion group February 2023 - Report by Kate Bailey

The group met to discuss a draft presentation, prepared for a different group last year, on the subject of 'Climate, Biodiversity and Health'. This illustrated talk may be revised and presented to the Geography group at a later date.

The points of interest we discussed included the use of satellite imagery to assess annual changes to ecosystems, for example, areas of forest loss and gain. It is notable that the continents suffering the greatest loss of forest cover are the equatorial regions of Africa, SE Asia and South America, not including China and India. We also discussed nature recovery projects in the UK, including peatland restoration in the North Pennines (part of the 'Great North Bog') and flood management projects in places like Holnicote estate on Exmoor and the River Otter in East Devon, where Eurasian beavers have successfully been reintroduced.



(Image - Devon Wildlife Trust)

We also talked about the UK Environment Act 2021, which brought in legal requirements for developers to create 'Biodiversity Net Gain' on the development site or equivalent gains in the local area. Covid-19 lockdowns emphasised the need for housing schemes to include networks of 'Green Infrastructure' such as cycle routes, footpaths and wildlife corridors, and 'Blue Infrastructure' such as sustainable drainage systems with natural water channels, pools and ponds to capture heavy rainfall. We agreed that visits to recent housing developments around Barnard Castle, to see whether local builders are providing greener places for people to live, would make a good research project.

We decided that for future meetings the group would, in advance, do some 'homework' on a chosen topic for discussion. This may include listening to a podcast or talk or conference session that is available online. In April we plan to consider whether financial institutions, banks and corporate decision-makers are supporting the UK's proposed transition to a green economy. New members will be very welcome to join us, please contact the convenor Kate Bailey.

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