

Climate Solutions Discussion Group - report by Kate Bailey (August 2023)

We were delighted to see that a number of members put forward suggestions for Pollinator Parks in Teesdale. We talked about the different opportunities presented by each individual site and we want to thank those members who have expressed an interest in getting involved. Climate Action NE, the community interest company helping us to progress the initiative in Teesdale, will decide which site or sites are most suitable for action. They will carry out ecological surveys, make contact with landowners, local businesses and potential volunteers, and report back to us in the autumn. We anticipate that planting will take place early next year, 2024.



We agreed that it feels good to be doing something positive for wildlife recovery, not just talking about it !

In August our topic was "Oceans". We enjoyed a wide-ranging discussion about the Earthshot Prize, the Gulf Stream, mangrove forests in unexpected places, cold water coral reefs around the UK, kelp forests and seagrass meadows. These coastal habitats are important because they sustain fisheries by

providing shelter for many aquatic plants and marine species; they also defend the coast from wave erosion, storm damage and on-shore flooding.

To learn more, follow this link to the BBC programme: How can oceans help us capture carbon ?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct3khx>

The oceans cover around 70% of the earth's surface and absorb 90% of the CO₂ in the atmosphere. They also absorb and redistribute the heat of the sun via ocean currents such as the slow-moving Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, a system of deep ocean currents that drives global weather systems. The AMOC is part of the Great Oceans Conveyor Belt which includes the Gulf Stream, carrying warm water from the Caribbean north past the UK and up into the Norwegian Sea. Studies show this current has been weakening for some time, partly because of warming oceans and melting sea ice in the Arctic.

The Government has designated a "Blue Belt" of 91 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) around the UK, along about 25% of our coastline. These are areas created to protect a range of nationally important, rare or threatened habitats and species. However, dredging across the seabed and bottom-contact trawling activities are not illegal in these zones even though they destroy vital ecosystems and marine habitats.

