

## Climate Solutions Discussion Group - report by Kate Bailey

Our planned topic in June was a review of climate, environmental and water-related policies proposed by the main political parties before the July election. It was somewhat depressing to realise that none of them seem to have come up with a robust solution to the sewage pollution problems that concern us. These will only get worse as rainfall increases and emergency outflows become overwhelmed more often.



We moved on fairly swiftly to more positive topics, for example, reducing waste by recycling pill blister packs, left-over fabric scraps and soft plastic wrappings. We talked about various collection points for more unusual waste materials and it was agreed that the group, led by Hazel, will submit an article for the next issue of Forum, along the lines of Michael Mosley's "Just One Thing" articles [after his sudden death on holiday, his good-natured health blog will be much missed].

There appears to be great potential for MOFs (metal-organic frameworks) to capture and absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and convert it to useful chemicals, though research seems to be at an early stage as yet. Similarly, [www.sciencealert.com](http://www.sciencealert.com) has revealed that some plastic-eating fungi can make a meal of hard to recycle polypropylene and polyethylene plastics. In laboratory experiments between 25 and 27 percent of samples were devoured after 90 days, following exposure to UV light or heat, and the plastic was completely broken down into organic molecules after 140 days.

More good news recently included a BBC announcement that in the first 3 months of 2024, windpower became the main source of UK electricity for first time. National Grid also confirmed that April saw a record period of solar energy generation. [Reminder: by 2035 the UK aims for all of its electricity to have net zero emissions, although some new solar and wind sites will have to wait up to 15 years to come online because of delays with getting connections to the grid.]

Various news items about whale numbers recovering after commercial whaling bans in many places (though not Japan), included Giant Sei whales in the Pacific Ocean, observed recently along the Patagonian coast of Argentina. In the UK a pod of Orca killer whales, hunting a grey seal close inshore, was spotted by people standing on the cliffs at John O'Groats.

Next month's plan is to visit the wildflower meadows near Ravenstonedale that we hope will be at their best despite the disappointingly cold and damp weather recently. We are always on the lookout for ways of rewilding parts of our own gardens but "No-Mow May" has left some of us with our own hayfield-lawns to bring back under control!

Images: Wildflower meadows in the North Pennines National Landscape

