

Forum report Feb26 - Climate Solutions group

Our first meeting of the year was very positive and productive. Our conversations ranged from heartening 'Good News' items and the continuing success of Sue's 'blister pack' recycling campaign, to new ways of raising awareness of things we can all do to make a positive impact on the environment. We are very grateful for the donations given by people bringing empty blister packs for recycling; these will enable us to pay for another Terracycle collection when the current bin is full.

We are aware that most of the plastic we collect for recycling in the UK is in fact incinerated or packaged for export. Now, a UK parliamentary committee is examining resource efficiency and the potential for a circular economy, including developing domestic reuse, repair, and recycling industries and reducing plastic pollution. To help investigate the scale of the household plastic packaging problem 'The Big Plastic Count' asks us to count and record all our plastic waste in the week of 9th to 15th March - Big Plastic Count website - <https://thebigplasticcount.com>. Members of our group will be signing up and taking part, and we encourage others to do the same.

Positive Tipping Points: "These happen when amplifying (positive) feedback loops take over from damping (negative) feedback loops and get strong enough to support self-propelling change." (*Prof. Tim Lenton, World Economic Forum, July 2024*). In terms of 'permanent and cascading' positive change - the BBC reported last October that, in the first half of 2025, renewable energy had overtaken coal as the world's leading source of electricity.

A recent review of the EU's energy sector by thinktank Ember (<https://www.positive.news> 28 Jan) revealed that wind and solar generated 30.1% of electricity in 2025, edging out fossil fuel sources, which generated 29.0% - a milestone described by energy analysts as a major "tipping point". And National Grid statistics (<https://grid.iamkate.com>) show the same encouraging balance was achieved in the past year in the UK - with 41.1% renewables ((33.2% wind), 12.6% nuclear, 28.2% gas). The last UK coal-fired power station closed in 2024.

Other 'Good News': In several US states, including Pennsylvania and California, some 2,100 out-dated dams are being dismantled so that rivers can be restored to a more natural condition, benefitting aquatic wildlife and enabling native salmon that have been prevented from migrating upstream to feed and spawn again.

In Seoul, South Korea, a river running through a dense central business district has been restored by the removal of a 6-lane concrete highway, with multiple positive effects. These include providing habitat for nature, reducing air pollution, preserving cultural heritage, providing access to nature for the public, flood control, and a micro-climate cooling effect.

https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?204454/Seoul-Cheonggyecheon-river



And local news - a 2025 Natural England funded survey has confirmed that Dunlin - a rare and declining upland wading bird - are breeding successfully in new areas of the North Pennines National Landscape. RSPB surveyors captured camera footage of Dunlin chicks on High Helbeck estate, where peat restoration works since 2022 have led to habitat and biodiversity improvements.