

Questions and comments gathered from the Chat on 26th September 2020

Land – Morning session

Meadows, Soil and Grain

What strategies could we put in place to maintain wildflower meadows?

Lots of meadow creation and restoration going on in south Shropshire - check out the Marches Meadow Group. Also the Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project aims to restore and create linear meadows along road verges.

Marches Meadow group: <http://www.marchesmeadowgroup.com/> also see Middle Marches Community Land Trust.

This paper refers to temp and carbon release relationship if this helps.

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/rising-temperature-causes-soil-to-release-more-carbon-dioxide-56528#:~:text=Researchers%20predict%20that%20over%2055,business%2Das%2Dusual%20scenario.&text=The%20paper%20says%20that%20temperature,dueto%20human%20activities%20annually>

Prof Beerling from Leverhulme institute gave a talk in Hereford in feb on rock into soils project. Looks promising but still 10 years plus off. FAQ's here: <http://lc3m.org/faqs/>

What contribution do you think "Continuous Grain Cropping" could make to reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity? <https://www.thelandmagazine.org.uk/articles/continuous-grain-cropping>

Are soil improvement activities such as use of biochars or enhanced terrestrial weathering being used in Shropshire and if not what can be done to encourage them?

What are the most important steps to take to reverse the decline in the insect population - particularly pollinators.

Tree Planting

Philip Dunne: How realistic is doubling tree cover in the Marches? Severn Trent has just launched Nature Plan under which they are paying farmers (including me over 20 ha!) to plant cover crops on cereal areas adjacent to sensitive areas to reduce soil erosion and run-off from fields left in stubbles over winter. Very good initiative launched this autumn.

Tree cover - we've asked our Parish members if anyone has places we could plant - and we'll make it happen...but I feel it needs to be part of a structured plan so we get the right trees in the right place to achieve all that we need in terms of creating wildlife corridors, enhancing biodiversity and sequestering carbon. Otherwise we end up planting sitka spruce in straight lines because that's going to soak up the most carbon. Manda Scott

Where are we going to source these trees?

Do tree warden still have access to funds for tree planting projects?

Network Rail have been removing trees/shrubs adjacent to the railway line between Ludlow and Leominster and I mentioned this to Shropshire Wildlife Trust as a way to increase wildflower corridors. They are aware of this but it would need managing. Could this be a good way to set up wildlife corridors across the UK?

How can we stop folks from trashing their existing trees?

We as a Town Council (Ludlow) are asked every planning meeting to cut down trees, we always ask that new trees replace the old ones and the Town Council have planted trees in the Linney.

We can get food from trees, nuts and fruit for example:

Farming & Developments

What are the barriers to creating a market in soil carbon (as they have in USA and other areas) that would encourage farming practices that store more carbon? Above and beyond what ELMS may encourage.

What incentives can we offer farmers who are financially dependent on their farm, to change/adapt their farming methods?

Alison Caffyn : How can we encourage more farmers to grow veg, fruit and non-meat protein? - that would reduce transport of such crops from abroad and improve diets. Much of our arable just goes into animal feed or AD units not feeding people.

Becky Gough: Absolutely we need to be respectful toward local farm owners and they are obviously key to changes, their knowledge and experience etc. Excellent to see Mr Dunne participating this morning and is taking a lead in making changes too.

Charlie Bell : The Stepping Stones Project (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carding-mill-valley-and-the-long-mynd/features/stepping-stones-project>) is currently involved in a Defra Test & Trial in south Shropshire, looking at how farmers can be paid for environmental services whilst maintaining a profitable farm business. This will (hopefully!) feed into Defra's development of the new ELMS scheme. If anyone wants more info on what's going on message me and I'll send you my email address.

Lynn Mann: 25% of topsoil lost through run off in UK every year.

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What scope is there for people managing their gardens differently? (can't speak sorry)

Restore hedgerows!