

SEA Annual report 2020-2021

'Making Saltash greener, caring for the planet'

Overview

This year's activities have been severely restricted by lockdown, but the following projects have continued within the limits permitted by the regulations: Litter Rangers, Allotment, Wildlife meadows and Christmas Tree

The first lockdown led to the cancellation of a meeting on Growing Locally, of 'Thank you' party for Litterpickers, and of the 2020 AGM and planned update of the Constitution for the internet era.

The committee

Officers: Adrian White (Chairman) Maureen Kemp (Treasurer) Georgina Caro (Secretary)
Members: Jo Baskott, Sue Chalkley, Sho Frank, Rebecca Pearce, Dave Pemberton, Sarah Martin (non-voting member).

The committee has held 8 meetings during the year.

Marianne Beale left the committee to give more time to Extinction Rebellion. She has already been greatly missed, though she remains an active member. She was a founder-member of SEA, became well known for campaigning around Saltash, and was closely involved in many initiatives over the years. She was Saltash's Environmental Citizen of the Year in 2019.

Georgina Caro has been Saltash's Environmental Citizen of the Year for 2020.

SEA Membership

SEA has 169 members who are circulated with the Newsletter and Notices.

With the advent of SEA's online record-keeping, people have only been able to join by email. To widen access to those without email, SEA has set up a *poste restante* letter-box at The Hub 4 Fore St to receive paper membership forms, as well as any other post. In addition, SEA paperwork (membership forms, Newsletters) will be available for collection at The Hub, and SEA is grateful to CEPL12 for this collaboration.

SEA have maintained an active Website and Facebook page, and circulated 6 Newsletters to members.

Activity Reports

Community Allotment/Garden

SEA obtained the contract to run the double allotment in Grenfell Avenue which had been abandoned for several years. Rebecca Pearce is in charge, and is developing it into a plastic-free, wildlife friendly, no-dig resource for the community. The principles are being sensitive to nature (no dig, no chemicals, space for wildflowers) so that vegetables grow healthily and insects are kept in balance by natural predators; and community involvement with regular opening times and supportive guidance for all particularly including those with little previous experience of gardening or nurturing wildlife. It will benefit the mental health of all. In just its first year, it has been well received by participants and neighbours alike. SEA is grateful to Saltash Town Council for help in setting up and maintenance.

Litter Rangers

Litter Rangers was launched on 11th September 2020 as part of the 'Don't Trash Saltash' campaign, coinciding with the annual national clean-up by Keep Britain Tidy. In a media and Fore St launch, volunteers were invited to adopt their street and regularly pick up litter. SEA offers tools and hi-viz jackets for children on long-term loan, as well as online tips on safety and a risk assessment. A Litter Rangers Facebook group was set up and Update newsletters circulated. We currently have 75 registered members (plus in many cases their families) who have adopted 142 Saltash roads.

We have been approached by other groups for advice on setting up, and have written an Adopt Your Street Toolkit

Tools (grabbers and hoops) have been funded by a (historic) Saltash Town Council 'Reduce Rubbish' grant, a grant from Scrapstore, and funds from the 'Bin the Butt' grant. Hi viz jackets for children were funded equally by all 3 county councillors from their Community Chests.

Saltash Wildlife

This campaign aims to increase the amount of green space in Saltash that is managed as wildlife habitat, with reduced mowing and wildflower nurture.

Pillmere Meadow was managed for wildlife, with reduced mowing, raking off of grass, seeding and planting of wildflowers and sowing of seed - mostly obtained locally from other meadows in Saltash. The type of grass growing there seems to be a major obstacle to growing a meadow.

Latchbrook Valley was tackled afresh by Cormac and volunteers from SEA and elsewhere helped remove saplings, plant bulbs and wildflower plugs. A coppicing course will lead to better management of the overgrown, unmanaged woods on the hill.

Many **road verges** in Saltash fell under Cornwall Council's new 'Making space for Nature' policy of reduced mowing regime to encourage wildflowers and improve habitat for wildlife. SEA held a liaison meeting with Cornwall councillors and Cormac staff, on specific local arrangements. It was agreed to jointly manage the grassed area between Church Rd and Alamein Rd as a meadow area, probably to be known as **Postman's Meadow**. About 1000 potted wildflowers have been planted there by SEA in Spring 2021, leaving about 1000 to go. Mowing will be at reduced frequency in the wildflower areas, but continue normally in the play areas.

St Stephens Churchyard is potentially Saltash's most valuable site for wildflowers, because the turf has been largely undisturbed for many years, and has had neither weedkiller nor fertiliser applied. SEA has campaigned to reduce the frequency of mowing in at least certain areas, while maintaining mowing in other areas for access and safety. This is an ongoing campaign, awaiting the new incumbent.

Tincombe Park has come to prominence locally since the formation of Friends of Tincombe by . The Park offers a range of habitats in one location, and includes a recognised Nature Reserve. A formal committee will manage the Park in collaboration with Cormac, with the aims of balancing interests of users both human and wildlife.

The Core SEA is collaborating in some aspects of the garden development: a beech hedge kindly donated by a local resident was planted to provide privacy; and permission to plant some small, native trees around the garden, to add height, is being sought from the Council.

Ash die-back disease is striking ash trees in Saltash, like everywhere else. Cornwall Forestry is currently surveying the ash trees in the parks to identify those with brittle branches that need felling to prevent injury.

Continuing environmental action by members of the Committee includes:

Christmas tree presented at St Nicholas Church Festival

ReFill campaign to reduce need to buy water bottles

The wildflower bed in **Victoria Park** was maintained.

Other environmental projects have been 'on hold' during this year

'Bin the Butt'

Litterpicks

Plastic Free Saltash

Saltash Apple Project (SAP)

SEA Stall at public meetings and fetes

Finances

SEA remains in credit from accumulated funds and Bin the Butt grants. In addition to the Litter Rangers purchases above, we have bought a windproof 'flag' banner with SEA logo and straplines *Making Saltash greener, Caring for the planet*, and leg-weights for gazebo.

Looking forward

SEA is looking forward to increasing its local environmental work when the lockdown ends, and to renew the evening meetings to discuss local and global issues.