

BRIDPORT'S BIG GREEN WEEK

Bridport's Big Green Week got off to a flying start with the gathering on Millenium Green with stalls, games and music. Apart from the fun and enjoyment, there was a very serious side to the event – to showcase the ever larger climate and environmental catastrophe looming before us and showcase some of the local initiative being taken to mitigate the impact.

This year's Great Big Green Week here in Bridport focuses on restoration; the restoration of our soil, our rivers, our community, and of course ourselves. It's tough out there in the wide world at the moment: fiscal chaos, wars, reports everyday about how the natural world is under attack. And always when we learn the true facts it is ever worse than we suspected.

Restoring is a healing action, taking something that is damaged or working poorly and making it whole, getting it to work so that it doesn't pollute or is now more efficient, so that it fits in with the communities that surround it. Multiple relatively small local actions are the antidote to the global chaos. We may not be politically powerful but with the right wind, our actions (and similar countless actions) might thoroughly infect our society.

To let people in the main part of town know what was happening on Millenium Green, Town Crier John Collingwood gave a couple of cries and I made a speech in Bucky Doo Square which included the following:

“Twelve months ago I stood here and spoke to you about my hopes for the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, which took place in Glasgow between 31 October to 12 November. It was the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference hence the number in the name. I don't know about you but I am extremely disappointed by the pace at which delivery is taking place across the globe.

In 2010 David Cameron's Conservative Party came to power on a 'Vote Tory – Go Green' agenda – and little happened. We now have a Liz Truss led Conservative government which appears to be hell bent on rolling back rather than pushing forward the green agenda. More gas, more oil and fracking instead of investing in green energy.

£116 million, yes, £116 million pounds, that is what has been spent to remove 22 electricity pylons between Winterbourne Abbas and Hardy Monument and bury the cables 3 feet underground. That is almost £6 million per pylon. And for what? Apparently it is to, are you ready for this: “Return a landscape that once inspired Thomas Hardy to its natural beauty”.

Well, I am sorry if that is the case then it has been a complete and utter waste of money. Even the promotional photograph being used to illustrate how the pylons blighted the landscape has each pylon picked out with a big red circle in order to enable viewers to see them. That's how intrusive they are. By removing the pylons the 'Hardyesque' fantasy of a natural landscape may have been enhanced, but we now have a 6 mile long trench containing high voltage cables, filled with stone and concrete snaking its way across the land. But that is OK because you can't see it. Out of sight out of mind – I don't think so. Just imagine if Bridport Town Council had been given the equivalent of the cost of removing just one pylon to invest in Green energy projects. We could, for example, have installed solar panels over 500 plus car park spaces instead of the 5 we are currently able to afford. Energy that could be fed into the local grid for the benefit of local people. Multiply that by 22 and virtually every car park space in West Dorset could have become a power generator. All that power being generated and not a square inch of green space touched.

The removal of the pylons is an example of an inappropriate 'nice idea'. We should be installing wind turbines on the AONB not wasting millions of pounds in removing the pylons that will deliver the clean energy of the future to our homes and businesses”.



Stalls and other activities taking place on Millenium Green included:

- Entertainment was provided by [The Sideways Band](#) who played in the morning, interspersed with some speeches including a key note one from me. [Then East St Band](#) played during the early afternoon until the event closed.
- [Bridport Co-housing](#): Showing that energy efficient, climate resilient, nature friendly housing is possible and affordable.
- [Bridport Town Council](#): energy champion stall – introducing the town council’s scheme to help people reduce their energy needs while staying warm, and understand the options available. The Energy Champions will be in Skilling Saturday 1st October.
- [Bridport Local Energy/Dorset Community](#): energy: information on the proposed Energy Local Bridport solar project to supply householders and businesses with low cost solar energy. Solar power model making for children.
- [Bridport Community Shed & St Mary’s Eco Group](#): building bird boxes, £5 each to cover costs. It was a drop-in but if people had a particular bird in mind, they could prebook with Janet at jrb-jrb@outlook.com so that you get the right size.
- [Bridport Fashion Revolution](#): display of the damage caused by throwaway fashion, and demonstrations of how to make your clothes last longer.
- [Bridport Food Matters](#) and Local Food Group: Love Food Hate Waste, showing local initiatives to combat food waste, information about local growers and how to get involved. Snacks available from the Food Glut stall.
- [Dorset Climate Action Network](#) & Transition Town Bridport: Greener Homes. Learn how to make your home greener and more energy efficient and book a visit to the open homes showing how. Find out about DCAN’s other projects, including the Great Big Dorset Hedge. dorsetcan.org
- [Dorset Wildlife Trust](#): See how Dorset Wildlife is working to protect our environment, discover their range of volunteering opportunities and sign up to visit the beavers. dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk
- [West Dorset Friends of the Earth](#): coffees, teas, refreshments, write a poem or share a quote for our Wall of Words, info on River Monitoring and how you can help. Sign up for the cycle through town on 1st October.
- [Bridport Area Community Housing](#) and [Raise the Roof](#): Promoting the need to build affordable homes that use local materials using less energy to create as well as to live in, and showing how this can be done.
- [Sustainable Palm Oil Community](#): learn more about palm oil and the work of the local sustainable palm oil group to make Dorset the first county whose businesses use only sustainably produced oil.
- Guardians of Nature: display of animal and plant frieze with opportunities for children to paint more shapes and add to it.



Stars of the event were the pupils from [St Mary's School](#) who were showing us all how important it is that we take action now in order to let them have a safe and secure future. The school has a very active 'eco club' and some of the pupils were there showing off a Plastic Free game they had come up with. I got on my knees and played, not very successfully, but the pupils took pity on me and let me have a rainbow wristband as a reward for 'trying my best'. Later they took to the stage and sang a powerful song about the importance of recycling.

