**Review of the year - What has PACT done this year?**

The PACT board was enhanced at the last AGM by a number of new directors, followed during the autumn by Rachel and Anne-Marie who were co-opted onto the Board as Treasurer and Secretary. We also have had support from our Community Action Officer Kate who started in the role a little over a year ago. Kate’s role is funded by Zero Carbon Cumbria which is a lottery-funded project running across Cumbria from 2021 to 2025.

In the spring this year we started a new series of public talks at Penrith Library. These have been well-attended and have stimulated interest, and brought PACT some new members. Rich started us off with a general interest talk: ‘The climate is changing: what on earth can I do about it?’ followed by a talk about alternative energy called "Join the Great Green Energy Acceleration". During Great Big Green Week Joe Human did a talk for us in the library about the link between the climate crisis and the refugee crisis and we had a session with Kate Roberts about how soil is related to our health.

Our annual Seedy Saturday event in March went Large! this year. Kate’s vision meant that the usual seed-swap and tool swap event was enhanced by a series of workshops, talks and information stalls covering a wide range of topics relating to growing, composting and biodiversity. There was also a tool-sharpening service. Refreshments were provided and the Salvation Army Hall was buzzing.

A new project for PACT this year has been ‘Solar Made Easy’, run in conjunction with Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS). This project, which is already running in a number of other towns and areas in Cumbria, aims to encourage householders to get solar photovoltaic panels by giving them the advice and information they need to make a decision and by putting them in touch with trusted installers. We ran the launch event for the project locally and promoted it at our stall on Mayday in Penrith.

During the year we have also held a number of members’ events including social evenings and a fascinating session on biodiversity at Eva’s Organics. We would like to set up a biodiversity project but do not currently have enough enthusiastic people with time to do it.

In July we ran a somewhat washed-out stall at Penrith Show, in conjunction with PACT member Lynn Barnes of Home Grown Here, another partner of the ZCC project. The plan was to talk to members of the public about food miles, comparing what could be grown just outside Penrith with supermarket vegetables which had travelled 100s of miles. Unfortunately the weather meant that we did not make best use of the large amount of work put into setting this up as there were not many members of the public to talk to.

We have continued to liaise with Extinction Rebellion North Lakes and to support their ‘Green Screen’ series of films which continues at Penrith Alhambra. We have also continued to support the series of Freegle ‘Give & Take’ events around the area, Kate helping to set up events and a number of PACT members volunteering each time. These events take a bit of organising, and there are always left-overs to take to charity shops afterwards, but each event introduces more people to the concept of finding new homes for unwanted items.

PACT has two semi-autonomous subgroups, the Repair Café and the Community Gardeners. Both these are thriving and continue to do very valuable work. People come from far and wide to bring their items to the Repair Café and appreciate the value of getting things mended, not having to throw them away and buy new. And the Community Gardeners continue to enhance Penrith, especially the station where their plants and quirky planters are much admired by travellers. Their stall at the station, with seeds and plants available for a donation, brings in income and helps to raise awareness.

In July we had a visit from PACT member Paul Allen, who was born in Penrith but has been for many years the Director of the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth. He gave an inspiring talk on ‘Rising to the Climate Emergency: Wicked problems need wicked solutions’. This was well-attended by members of a variety of local groups who after the talk got stuck into the workshop session and shared their ideas on what we need to do to help make life in Penrith and Eden better in the future.

After Paul’s talk and workshop we looked at the wide range of ideas suggested and pulled them together to find common themes. We later found that some of our suggested projects are already being looked into by others so that left us with three potential new projects:

* Finding out about where our recycling goes
* A project with schools about growing and cooking
* Setting up Solar Made Easy for Business

I had hoped that Kate would be here to tell you more about these ideas but unfortunately she is not well at the moment. We are hoping to get things started on these projects soon so if you have any interest in any of these themes please have a word with any of the directors, we would be very glad to hear from you.

During the year the PACT Directors have been considering how to put PACT on a more steady financial footing, thinking of the future once the ZCC funding comes to an end. We have decided to introduce an annual membership fee, to be paid by standing order. We intend that this should come in to action on April 1st 2024, at the beginning of the next financial year.

I would just like to finish by thanking Kate and all the directors for their input this year. We are sorry that some have had to leave the team and wish them well in their new endeavours. And I look forward to working with PACT members on some new projects in the coming year!

Christine Sutherland