**PACT Review of the past year – AGM 2024**

This year we have sorted our work into four strands. There are so many things we could be doing but we have limited numbers of directors and active members so have to make sure we only do what we can manage.

**FOOD**

The year since our last AGM started well with a fascinating presentation from Geoff Tansy on Food, Power, Poverty: creating fair, healthy and sustainable food system**.** This was very well attended. Geoff’s talk was followed by people working in small groups to share ideas of what could be done. Unfortunately this has not yet led to any concrete work but we plan to revisit this and see what we can do. Possibly working towards a Sustainable Food Places award. PACT is represented on the Eden Food Network which looks at the provision of food banks in Eden but also sharing information about other issues such as heating and insulation.

Also under the Food heading, though overlapping with biodiversity, is our annual Seedy Saturday in March. This year it moved to Penrith Methodist Church which proved a good venue with the Sandgate Room to use for lectures. The event was combined with a gardening Freegle and tool sharpening, both of which were popular. This year’s lectures covered Long Grass for Nature, Plant Health from Soil Health, Living with Nature in a New Build and a Gardeners’ Question Time. Plans are already under way for the next Seedy Saturday on March 15th 2025. Don’t forget to save some seeds for us if you can!

We then followed this with a new event, Seedling Saturday, in June, to enable people to swap seedlings rather than seeds. We held this in St Andrews Churchyard alongside the Parish of Penrith Plant Sale and were pleased how it went. There was a real buzz and we felt the two events enhanced each other.

Another event in the Food strand was just a couple of weeks ago when Kate Roberts did a talk at the library entitled Harm or Heal? Food, Ecology, Climate and Us.

**BIODIVERSITY**

We have formed a collaboration with the Eden Rivers Trust, planning joint events on their tree nursery site on Gilwilly Industrial estate in Penrith. The first event was a composting workshop in July. Unfortunately this was poorly attended due to torrential rain but we plan to run this again next year. Further events are in the pipeline.

Another new collaboration is with Acorn Bank where we have found a number of common interests including scything and growing perennial vegetables. So far we have just been sharing information about our events.

We also support PACT member Elizabeth Woodcock’s work in regenerating her field Sandilands on the edge of the Pennines – you can read her blog on the PACT website. Her next tree-planting dates are next weekend, October 12th and 13th so do get in touch with her if you would like to join in.

**ENERGY**

Events under the heading of Energy this year started with a talk by Rich Waller at the library in March - How Sustainably Can we Travel? Then in July we hosted a new CAfS event Electric Vehicles Made Easy. This brought together a number of different speakers talking about different aspects of EV use with a very enthusiastic audience. We have plans for further work on the EVs Made Easy theme.

**WASTE REDUCTION**

The Repair Café in Penrith continues to thrive with new repairers coming on board all the time. There will be a report from them later on.

Last November there was a Freegle Give & Take event in Shap and this will be repeated this year. However we have not run other events this year as we are not sure about the net benefits of these events. We would like to see the web-based Freegle better promoted instead.

Other work under the Energy and Waste headings involves writing or signing letters, for example against the proposed gas peaking plant at Shap and the proposed incinerator at Carlisle.

The PACT Board of Directors is a small band of keen volunteers but we would love to have some more if anyone would like to think about joining us. We are supported by Kate Clements, our part-time Community Action Officer, who is funded by the Zero Carbon Cumbria project.

During much of this year we have not had a Treasurer but we have been delighted that Neil Barrett has agreed to join us. Our accounts are thus in much better shape. Our secretary Anne-Marie would now like to step back from being Secretary though will continue as a Director with a particular interest in Biodiversity. We really need a secretary so hope you might consider helping us out in this way.

I would just like to finish by thanking Kate and all the directors for their input this year. And I look forward to working with PACT members on some new projects in the coming year!

Christine Sutherland