

Update for February 2014

Welcome to a new year!
With water, water all around was a new eco-nomy floating in with January??

As we had no update for January, we'd like to take a quick stroll back through this month before we take you on to up-coming activities and events for February March and beyond.
So back to talk of floating



Floods – not quite!!

If you take a look at [Lewes-eco-nomics](http://www.lewes-eco-nomics.org/), you'll see that Andrew has pulled out a lot of valuable information for you to turn to if you have any concerns about rising water levels in our lovely river – he points you to where you can find warnings of flood risks and he points to another site when can you actually monitor river levels and see what's going on here and now (<http://www.lewes-eco-nomics.org/>).

He also mentions some ways that recognition of the value of ecosystem services are being applied to reducing flood risk nationally. There are also local projects that are working on this in ways that are likely to benefit Lewes – for example, the Environment Agency's [MORPH project](#) and the Sussex Wildlife Trust & partners' [Trees on the River Uck](#) project. These are only a start and lots more along this line would be needed to help reduce flood risk further in Lewes – but it would provide a long-term benefit to the areas that are prone to flooding in Lewes.

If you want to see more evidence, have a look at [Farming floodplains for the future](#) from Staffs Wildlife Trust; also the [Slowing the Flow](#) project.

Whilst we're on the topic of floods and water, the film we've mentioned previously that was made to introduce people to the [Coastal Communities 2150 project](#) (made around the workshop that L&OVe ran for the CC2150 project in July) is now out and can be seen on the L&OVe website – [Adapting to climate change in the Ouse Valley](#). There's more about the outcomes from our workshop on the [website](#) too.

As you may have seen from our December update, a bunch of members of L&OVe have followed the OU Futurelearn free on-line course called '[Introduction to Ecosystems](#)' – it seemed relevant and interesting to us, so we thought we'd try it out. Just before Yuletide, we had a meeting of those who'd been taking the course to see if we could start to see ways to apply what we'd learnt locally. Those there agreed that looking at trees would be a good

place to start – using what we’d learnt to explore ecology in relation to trees. Different types of woodland, the process that keep them going, how connected (or not?) woodlands are across our town, the ecosystem services they provide, etc. Somebody had clocked that one of the [OpenLearn](#) resources at the time pointed to [Treezilla](#) - a website that allows you to map trees near where you live and get from it the value of several ecosystem services that those trees provide (as we mentioned in the December update, there were only 2 trees mapped for Lewes at the time!!).

So we linked up with people from [Friends of Lewes](#) who’ve done a survey of Lewes’s trees for their [Urban Arboretum](#) project and walked around the Lewes Railway Lands looking at some of the trees they’ve highlighted and applying what we’d learned about ecology to those trees and their setting. We then walked across town considering the connectivity between the riverine/wetland woodlands and their ecology – there are some significant gaps!



In the process, we measured a tree to put the data into Treezilla. If you go to the site now, you’ll see that our tree is there – a [Norway Maple](#) near the river.

That single tree has saved Lewes over £100, bringing a value equivalent to more than the 2 trees mentioned above do together. It’ll be intriguing to see values change as we map more trees – so get out there and give a hand!

January has been busy for Colin in particular, planning some opportunities to engage with the communities on Landport, Nevill and DeMontfort Estates over the wildlife and benefits of [Landport Bottom](#).

Colin is working with Michael Blencowe of [Sussex Wildlife Trust](#) to run some events with and for residents – a couple of *Naturegain* walks are planned for March, we’re going to be taking a couple of classes from Wallands School up onto Landport Bottom and we’ll be holding a Community Event towards the end of the month – see below and the L&Ove website for further info and dates and times for the events.

Things may be a bit quiet in February, but hopefully Louise will be getting an opportunity to see the first of some maps of ecosystem service provision from our area, which are coming thanks to [Durham Wildlife Trust’s EcoServe GIS](#) and [Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre](#). They could be a fantastic resource So watch this space

Then in March, we’re doing a Naturegain Walk at Landport Bottom with Michael Blencowe of SWT on Sat 8 March, 1030-1200; a second walk on Thurs 20th March, 1430-1600; meet at the interpretation panel at the entrance to Landport Bottom Reserve. We’re then running a

Community Event about the Wildlife & Benefits of Landport Bottom on Wed 26 March, 1830-2030, at St. Mary's Church Hall, Highdown Rd, Nevill.

There's been lots in the News in recent times (indeed there almost constantly is, it seems) about the economy – apparently, we are showing real signs of recovery after the economic maelstrom of 2008.

The question for L&Ove (well, all of us really!), though, is what kind of a recovery is it? Is it reflecting a real building of resilience and strength so as to forge a sustainable economy?

Or is it just re-branding the same sort of financial incentives that drive growth in [GDP](#) based on a simple increase in the flow of money?

From our perspective (and that of many international and national bodies of one sort or another – including some in the business sector), growth in GDP/[GVA](#) is NOT necessarily any sort of growth in progress or wellbeing or even future economic activity (if you look past the short-term), because it pays no attention to the real things (people and nature) that actually underpin all economic activity?

The well known, Right Livelihood Award winner, Vandana Shiva puts it more starkly in stating that the only growth that GDP stimulates is [growth in poverty](#).