August 2022

# Annual Report

The One Planet Abingdon Climate Emergency Centre is an inspirational community hub run by volunteers, for the benefit of the people and the planet - building resilience in a climate emergency, right in the centre of Abingdon-on-Thames.

## Mission

To make the Climate Emergency Centre a space where the magic happens; connecting and supporting our community to change lifestyles and reduce our carbon footprint, whilst addressing issues of social injustice and inequality to build resilience and cohesion.

## Vision

To help to create a 'one planet' Abingdon where everyone in the town works together towards living within the earth's resources and repairing the damage done, whilst enjoying happy, healthy lives and leaving ample space for nature to thrive and flourish.

## Purpose

To provide a vibrant community place where people can come together to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical, natural and social environments in the town of Abingdon for the public benefit of its residents and the wider community.

To build community ties by working collaboratively with local groups and individuals, learning with and from the public, local business and other local bodies on the impact and mitigation of, as well as adaptation to climate, ecological and social challenges.

To develop understanding and create a sense of purpose to act on the climate, ecological and social issues that affect us all in order to deliver positive changes within our lives and in the town of Abingdon leading to a sustainable, enjoyable and positive future.

# Message from the Chair

This report marks a significant milestone - our 1st year of operation!  We have managed to achieve so much, with so little - and that is our message! There is no reason to wait - Act Now!

> *"Once you make a decision, the universe conspires to make it happen."*
>
> ***Ralph Waldo Emerson***



Our initial focus of engagement and outreach has been largely successful - however there are still many people who don't yet know about us!  We are therefore working on improving our marketing infrastructure and are very excited about our new funky pink gazebo which funding from Newbury Building Society has kindly helped us to obtain. Nobody will be able to miss us now!




We are making good progress with the engagement of the youth in Abingdon - and have recently begun a new project - details to be revealed soon!

The Green Forum has been successful too. An idea by Cllr Gabby Barody, the purpose being to promote and initiate changes which will help towards carbon neutrality within the town, reduce waste, promote the general wellbeing of residents, and improve biodiversity. The Forum Steering Group is a collaboration of local voluntary groups which are active in trying to improve the town's environment. It is led primarily by Anne Smart and you can read more about the work here.  This quarter, the focus is on Sustainable Energy, and the timing couldn't be more appropriate with energy bills going through the roof and families struggling to pay. If you are interested in getting involved please make yourself known by emailing in.

We are very grateful for having been successful in local funding bids - the workload is huge and the responsibility heavy. By working together we can share the load.

Thank you to everyone who has done their bit - we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you! M🌿

# Key indicators

## September 2021 - August 2022






### Visitors to the CEC

**2448** and **650** attended Plot to Plate!

### Volunteers

**44** active

### Steering Group Members

**13**

### Regular Days Open

**3** per week and now also some Sundays!

### Fundraising

#### Start up:

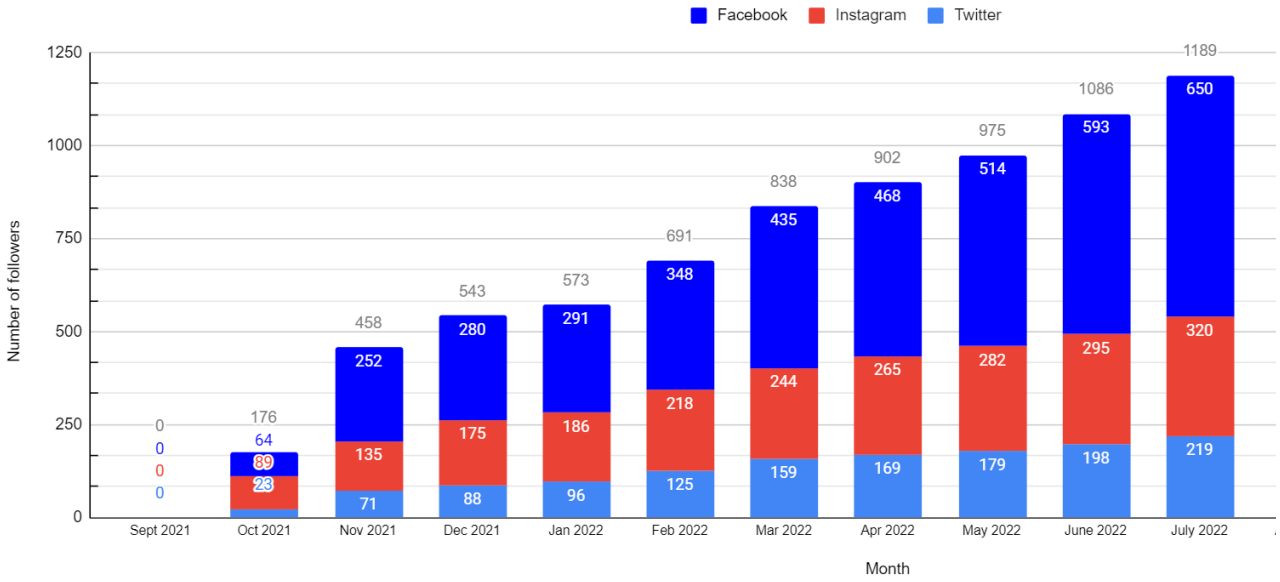
- We received £500 from Abingdon Carbon Cutters to support our startup costs.
- Insurance for the year was donated by Daniel Scharf.
- Abingdon Town Council covered the rent and services.

#### Projects:

- We were allocated a £250 budget by the council to use for the Bunting project in order to decorate the fencing for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations.
- We received a grant of £500 from the Newbury Building Society Green Fund to buy a branded gazebo and associated materials to support outreach and events.
- We were partially successful in our bid for funds from the VOWH Climate Action Fund, £2,925 towards youth outreach and our Knowledge to Action programme, aimed at growing sustainability knowledge and confidence amongst our volunteers and supporters, and strengthening our engagement with young people.
- Bioregional collaborated on a Lottery funding bid with us and we have been allocated £6500 to deliver an Eco Fair, deliver training on the One Planet Living framework/coordination of events in the CEC.

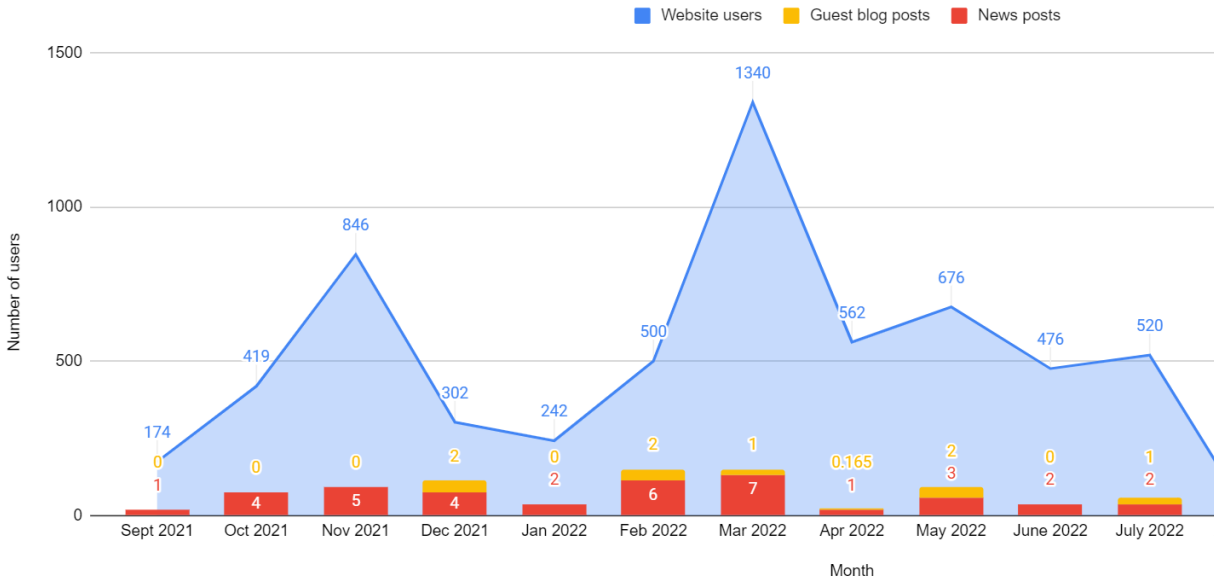
# Social Media presence

One Planet Abingdon is active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.




# Website

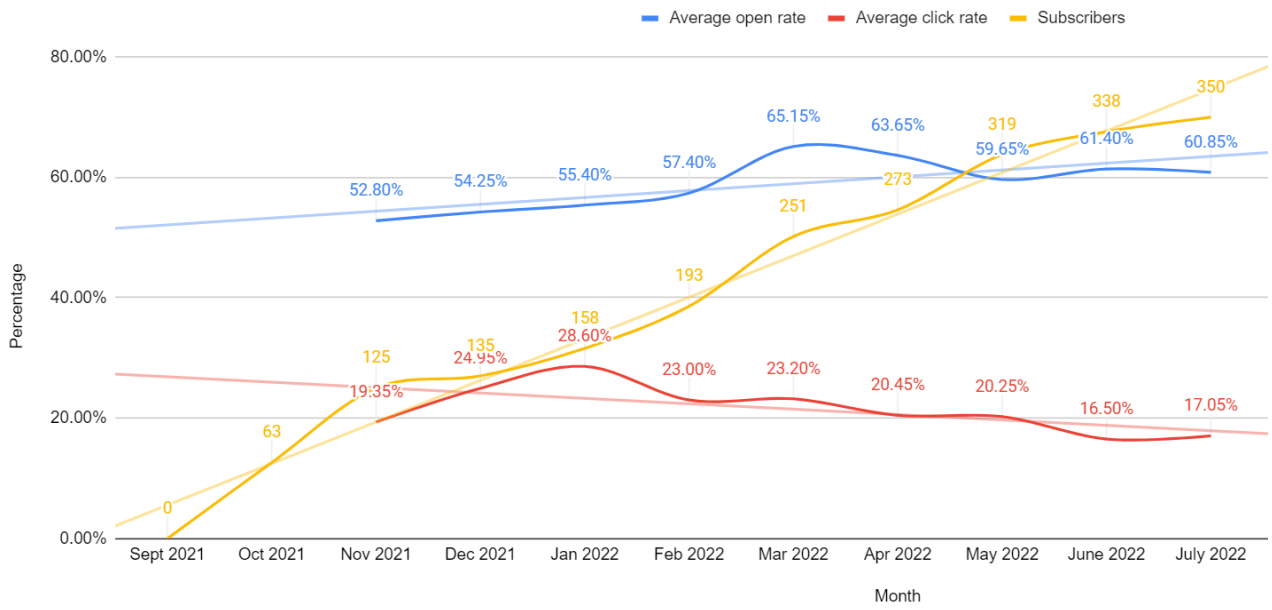
We see increased online traffic when many events are organised in the centre.



# Mailing list

Managed via Mailchimp.

We send two “Latest News & Upcoming events” emails on average per month.




# Diversity (not officially recorded)

*This is a sensitive area and by sharing this information we hope to improve accessibility and inclusivity to all the people of Abingdon by stating that everyone is welcome.*



**Age -** Youngest supporter actively involved is 12 and oldest is 90 years old

**Gender** and sexuality - we have the support of the LGBTQ+ community, and we are doing what we can to support these groups too!

**Race/culture/origin** - we have welcomed visitors from Australia, Peru, Spain, South Africa, America, Canada and New Zealand. They are always amazed and say that they will share the good work we are doing!

We are engaging with Host Abingdon and have started to receive visits by the refugees living in Abingdon. We hope to be able to offer as much support as we can to these new members of our community.

We have had visitors requiring the lift due to disability and lack of mobility and for mums with pushchairs.

We have engaged with the social prescriber in order to offer a service to patients with mental health challenges.



It is important to us that everyone feels welcome in the space…
We always have a puzzle out for those who may prefer to sit quietly before interacting. We have board games, books in our Eco Library and toys for the children.

We sell nothing - it is all by donation to ensure that we are accessible to everyone.



*Buckminster Fuller – "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change things, create a new model that makes the old one obsolete."*

# Activities for our first year of operation

**115** Eco events in the centre, held within the 10 Principles of [One Planet Living](), the framework which underpins all we do.

## Including:

- 🧸 Toy Swaps
- 🍏 Apple Pressing
- 🧵 Make and Mend
- 🔧 Repair Cafes
- 🧶 Learn to crochet and knit
- 🎶 Fun with Music for kids
- 🎵 Mood music for adults
- 👑 Learn to play chess sessions
- 👚 Teenage Clothes Swaps
- 👗 Swish
- 🎀 Natural Wreath Making
- 🚲 Bike Checks
- 🌱 Plant Swaps
- 🎨 Block Printing Workshops
- 🥗 Learn to make salads from scratch
- ✂️ Eco crafting for kids
- 🧶Sunday Crafternoons




## **4** Special Events

### 1) Launch Event (Sept 2021)

The launch [event]() was a colourful and collaborative affair. It was held at the end of the National Big Green Week and included a celebration of live music, apple pressing, bike repairs, free tote bags, flower seeds and reusable coffee cups. We provided advice, support, and a listening ear, along with tea and homemade cake.  The then Mayor Cheryl Briggs gave an opening speech and the Abingdon Town Crier heralded us in! We were open!



## 2) The Royal Gambit Chess Competition May 2022

The Royal Gambit Chess championship was a massive success and a first for us! It was a collaboration with Abingdon Passion Play. 21 competitors took part in the 6 round Swiss system based competition and feedback has shown that residents of Abingdon would like more of these! What has chess got to do with the climate, you may ask? It is a way of reaching out to different parts of our community, engaging in health and wellbeing activities (our 1st principle!).

## 3) Abingdon Royal Jubilee celebrations June 2022

We launched this project in April in order to be ready for the big weekend. We mobilised people power with a Bunting brigade to create the decorations. The method used upcycled scrap fabric and a simple 'no sew' technique to allow people of all ages and abilities to take part.



The aim was to make at least 10 metres of bunting for every year of Her Majesty's reign – and with the help of the whole community that target was beaten spectacularly, with 740 metres being delivered ready for the festival.

Project Coordinator and One Planet Abingdon volunteer Kay O'Regan said, "*We wanted to bring the community together to achieve a shared goal and bring a splash of colour to our lovely town. I was delighted that so many different groups of people joined in and had so much fun with us.*"

## 4) Plot to Plate festival



The very first Plot to Plate collaboration event was held at the Abbey Buildings. Hundreds of people attended celebrating growing, cooking and eating vegetables in Abingdon.




There were talks, classes, workshops and activities to give people a chance to try new recipes, learn vegetable growing tips, improve their cooking skills and consider different diets. There were children's activities enabling reflection through craft. It was a sight to behold and we were blown away by the positive comments of those visiting the event.

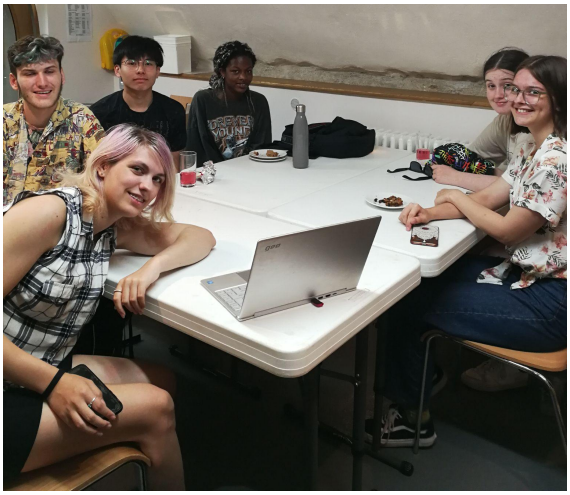


The evening ended on a high note with a joyous Ceilidh!

This was a collaborative event by Abbey Buildings Trust, Abingdon Event Partnerships, One Planet Abingdon and Abingdon Carbon Cutters as “a celebration and a learning experience.’

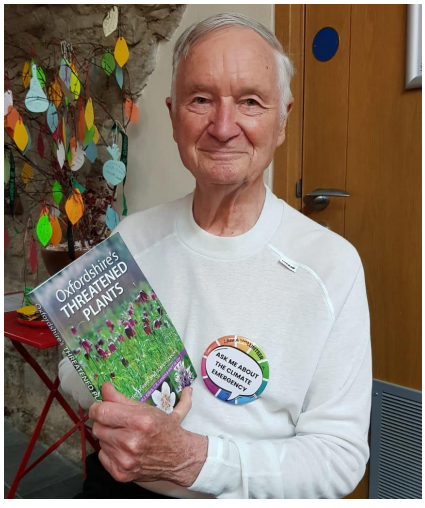
We hope to make this an annual event!

**16** External visits including visits to schools and invitations to make presentations at various Community Group meetings.



**28** Educational talks held in the centre including Plastic Pollution, Biodiversity, Sustainable Energy, Carbon Footprints and Sustainable Food





**4** Guided tours to Abbey Buildings

A collaborative event by OPACEC and Abbey Buildings Trust. Almost always fully booked!  By creating an awareness of our heritage and history, we can learn to love what we have and respect our past.



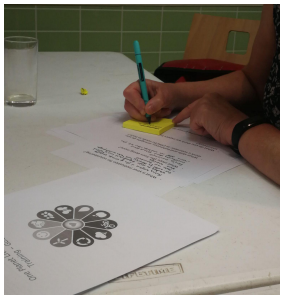


## Communications and consultations

**18** Consultations submitted (Neighbourhood Plan, Bellway Homes, to name a few)

**21** Blogs/articles published. We now have a regular bi monthly slot in the Abingdon Herald!

# Training



**10** individuals One Planet Living Framework Training

**11** Food Hygiene Certificates

**3** Operational group sessions

In order to create capacity, One Planet Living Framework training has been offered to all the volunteers in order to help them feel confident when talking about how we do things at the CEC. Positive feedback has been received and this will now be offered on a regular basis.

# Youth Engagement

**30** Young people engaged in planning an eco event  or volunteering their skills









MAD week with Larkmead School, , Clothes Swaps, Filming foodie events, DoE sustainability projects, Damascus outreach project

**9** Schools/institutions/Groups engaged

- Green Panel at St Birinus School delivered various
- Outreach to St Helen and St Katharine with plans for Sept 2022
- Outreach to John Mason School and commitment delivered for March 2022
- Outreach to Larkmead School commitment delivered for July 2022
- Youth events shared with Europa School parents' group
- Abingdon School - delivery and future collaboration being investigated
- Abingdon and Witney College - delivery of filming secondment
- Dunmore Farm - Junior - outreach
- Damascus

# What to look forward to!

## Big Green Week

- September is going to be a busy one! A Super Soup Stomp under the arcade, apple pressing by the carbon cutters, art exhibitions, Energy talks and displays

## Twin Town

-We are planning to host an event in October which will welcome Christians from Europe in a Twinning Town experience.

## Bagmaking Workshops by Halima

-We are planning to host 2 events in October which will teach you how to make a gorgeous bag from your preloved clothing! Booking essential! You don't want to miss this one!

## More Clothes Swaps!

The swaps are proving very popular and we just can't keep up! What a wonderful dilemma to have!

## Youth Project

-It's a surprise, and we are so excited!

## Abingdon Eco Energy Fair

- a collaboration with GreenTech, Vale of White Horse District Council and ourselves - May 2023

# A focus on one of our amazing volunteers, Gina!



‘My Name is Gina and I've been involved with the CEC from its very beginning, being present at its opening.

I volunteered to get involved because I really want to help people understand the situation we find ourselves in as far as the climate emergency. I also have two beautiful grandchildren and I can't bear the thought that the planet Earth they will inherit will be so very different from the one I grew up in. I can't do that to them, they deserve more.

I have made many changes to my lifestyle and want to inspire people in Abingdon, and beyond, to do the same. I am passionate about making as little impact on our planet as I can.

I love being part of One Planet Abingdon CEC, I have met many lovely people, learned lots and hopefully have given our visitors things to think about and inspired them to go away and make some changes. It's been wonderful to watch it grow and evolve in its first year.

I run events to help with this such as the Clothes Swaps and support as many of the others as I can as well as doing shifts in the cafe so the CEC can be open to welcome visitors.

You have to start making changes somewhere and they may seem small but, if we all did them, lots of the small changes would add up to a significant whole. I'm not perfect in my lifestyle but I'm always thinking about my next change, however small and how it will help. The whole idea of a climate emergency, if you dwell on it, could seem overwhelming. Being practical helps ease the potential for that. People don't like change because they always see it in terms of what they will lose but if we make do-able changes now we will all gain so much. If we don't we run the risk of losing it all.

I intend to continue to support the CEC as it moves forward. The message we have to give and the support we can offer to our wonderful community is vital.

The CEC needs and deserves support from all quarters and I look forward to being part of that in our next year.'

# Thank you



Thank you to Abingdon Town Council for their support and faith in One Planet Abingdon CEC (OPACEC). The free use of the old Mousehole Cafe is a gift which we hope to continue to gratefully receive.





To the people of Abingdon who have come down the stairs to see what we are up to - thank you. Our request to you is to come again and again and to bring your family and friends along with you. Your support and participation is all we need to make this a beautiful experience for all of us. Building resilience and community; as we do all we can during these unprecedented times. We have so much on offer - and we must do so much more!



Last but not least - our incredible group of volunteers without whom none of this would be possible, thank you. Let's keep on doing all we can to create our 'One Planet Abingdon'.







Michelle Charlesworth, Chair - One Planet Abingdon Climate Emergency Centre

# A call to action!

We hope that you have been inspired by our activities thus far and that you are feeling moved to participate and support in some way.

We have managed to do all of this with very few funds and would love to be able to do more and more often. We are in a climate emergency and we have no time to waste.




One Planet Abingdon is run entirely by volunteers. We do everything from stewarding events, to the day to day running of the Climate Emergency Centre. It's rewarding work and we're always looking for people to join our amazing team! Whether you are looking to donate time, skills or expertise; looking to learn more about the environment and the issues facing it, to socialise, gain experience, give something back to society, we would love to hear from you.

If you are a young person you can contact us here.

If you can support us financially please donate here.

One Planet Abingdon Climate Emergency Centre is here for you, run by the town's ordinary people doing extraordinary things. We would love for you to be a part of it.

*With love and determination from the team at One Planet Abingdon CEC*

> *'Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet…'*
> Thich Nhat Hanh, B. 1926 - 2022

**With much appreciation to our supporters…**