



AGM 2020 Chair's and Group Reports

Ludlow 21 Chair's Report - Tish Dockerty:

Ludlow 21 continues to support local initiatives that are doing their bit to tackle climate change, with activity of its family and friend groups representing a broad range of activities. In 2019/20 we continued with our ambition of engaging with young people through the Green Festival and organised climate protests. Alas this year our ambitions to develop this work, has been thwarted by Covid 19.

However we are encouraged with the possibilities that an international pandemic may play in our favour. With cities redesigning their transport infrastructures to encourage cycling and walking we see this as a positive and grants are available for houses to improve their energy efficiency. We still believe there is still great scope for Ludlow to work towards becoming carbon neutral, building on its strengths as a town that has many examples of low impact living.

We have a lot of ambitions, however we could do with some new blood to help us realise them. We have the bones of an action plan, based on the thoughts of the packed upstairs room at the Blue Boar which we attracted last September. We would like to encourage people to come forward and take Ludlow 21 to the next stage of creating a more resilient community for what will be undoubtedly a more testing future.

Green Festival 2019

As those involved or attended on the day would agree, I believe it was the most far reaching of all Green Festivals, with a wide range of people participating in the day's success. There was so much going on that each time you turned your head a new event or activity caught your eye. The day included more than fifty stalls, many of which were interactive, engaging people in an environmentally relevant crafts, entertainment and activities. We had dancing, singing, cookery demonstrations and workshops, street theatre, soap box presentations, t-shirt printing, clothes and toy swaps, children's crafts, electric bikes, local beer and delicious ethically sourced food and drink. We were very pleased with the involvement of children and adults from Ludlow School and local scout groups and the many community groups that make up Ludlow's rich tapestry of those that are engaged issues that matter.

Reports from Friends and Family Groups:

Education Group

Leadership of the Ludlow's Valentine Day Student March was the most public outcome of the work of the Education Group this year. Although the march and subsequent gathering in Castle Square

attracted more non-students than actual students, it represented a significant step in what we hope will be the beginnings of a closer relationship with local students. It was a privilege to work alongside a group of highly committed and motivated students in planning the event.

We are also determined to involve local students in our present focus of creating the Educational chapter for the Ludlow Climate Action Plan. The pandemic emergency presents enormous challenges for us, but it also provides us with an opportunity to reevaluate how we live our lives, particularly when we are faced with an existential threat. The Education Group are determined to play a pivotal role in this transition period as we adapt to a new normal.

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Sustainable Transport Group and Car Club

Our objective is to help people to access the places they need to go, conveniently and sustainably, whether on foot or on wheels and we have ongoing projects for pedestrians, cyclists, bus and train users and car drivers.

Pedestrians: We have proposed changes to several out of date finger posts and identified a source for their manufacture which the Town Council have approved and agreed to fund. Installation is awaited. We have also proposed a major repair programme for the box drains in the town centre, most of which are no longer functional.

Bikes: We have secured Shropshire Council agreement for 10 new cycle racks in the town centre and have plans for further installations outside the centre over the next 5-10 years. We are also pursuing various options to introduce a bike hire scheme (preferably with electric versions) into the town.

Buses: Following the successful campaign to have a bus shelter installed in Corve Street, we are delighted that the Town Council has now agreed to a continual installation programme of bus shelters all over the town. We have produced a bus timetable leaflet with maps which has proved extremely popular with both bus companies and the public.

Trains: proposals for major improvements at the railway station are currently on hold because of the Covid-19 shutdown but we have agreement for a key meeting of TfW and all interested parties in Ludlow to make progress on implementing our proposals relating to accessibility and safety.

Cars: We are delighted that our pressure on Shropshire Council to get EV charging stations installed in Ludlow has started to bear fruit with a single station now operational in the Galdeford car park. We are continuing to press for more, especially in the Park and Ride.

We obtained lottery funding for our Car Club which has enabled us to replace our ageing Fiestas in Shrewsbury and Ludlow with Yaris hybrids which are proving very popular. By the end of 2021 all the petrol and diesel cars in our fleet will have been replaced by either hybrid or electric versions. The Car Club is a key component in our attempt to reduce the number of cars in Ludlow.

Our priorities for 2020/21 are subject to change because of Covid 19 but we hope to make substantial progress on all the above and:

- The business case for a fit-for-purpose Park and Ride
- The introduction of electric buses for our town services.
- Better facilities for pedestrians – especially major pavement repair
- Progress towards a more car free town centre.

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Incredible Edible Ludlow

The Incredible Edible group had a successful seed swap back in February regardless to it being on the same weekend as Storm Dennis. Since lock down, member Noel Lambert has organised a no contact seed and plant swap, publicised through mainly social media. The wheelbarrow has been positioned on Castle view terrace and goes once a week to the Local to Ludlow 'pop up' shop. To date Noel estimates that there's been over 80 swaps and almost £300 in donations made alone. Noel has also given growing advice to all those that have asked for it, we seem to helping a new generation of growers!

The Incredible Edible group had a 'Save Shropshire Verges' meeting with Janet Cobb just before lock down, as a result we have contacted Shrophire Council regarding three areas of interest, including Eco Park verge near entrance, Parys Road, Corner verges of Fishmore Park. Councillor Boddington offered to do a digital map to demarcate the areas and Janet has suggested a simple botany survey in the first instance, followed by sowing of yellow rattle seed to suppress grass, then followed by intentional planting of species or strewing from local meadows to spread seed that would thrive naturally. Polly Bolton has done an initial botany survey of the eco park area. The group are now busy collecting native wild flower seed for sowing later in the year, once a mowing routine has been agreed with Shropshire Council.

The group have also used some of their donation money to buy 2 new apple trees to be planted at the end of Glencoe Close (yet to happen due to lock down) and they have also commissioned a wooden tag from a local craftsperson for the labelling of all the fruit trees to date. The tags will be written on with pyrographic pen by local scout group, again when things start to resume.

If you'd like to join us just email IncredibleEdibleLudlow@outlook.com or find the link on our facebook page.

Energy Group

The energy group is making progress looking at a zero-carbon Ludlow.

The Neen Sollars hydro group (of which L21 is a shareholder) has started to deliver generation to the grid, but was affected by the floods early in 2020. We are taking this opportunity to upgrade the control system to allow more effective remote monitoring and control.

The present emergency offers an opportunity to think about the basics of a zero-carbon economy and we hope that all levels of government can act on this. For Ludlow, the major challenges are replacement of gas heating system, the designed-in (or not) thermal efficiency of the housing stock and reduction of vehicle usage. If we consider Ludlow to include its supporting hinterland, then

energy usage there is mainly agricultural. This sector is making progress, but clearly there is a long way to go.

Ludlow 21 is working with 'shareenergy' to investigate the economics of ground-sourced heat pumps, initially for 'off-grid' small communities. The finances of this kind of approach are critically dependent on the current 'Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme, which finishes in March 2021 (at present). It is not clear what form its replacement will take; the present situation means that a very strong case would have to be made – perhaps as an element of restarting the economy?

It is worth thinking about the possibility of this technology being used in the historic core of Ludlow, where significant installation of new utilities is difficult.

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Climate Friendly Diet Group

The Climate Friendly Diet group has been taking a break this year due to members' other activities, but we aim to be back.

Ludlow Fairtrade Town Group

The new town signs, showing our status as a Fairtrade Town have now been erected – I hope you've noticed them if you have driven into Ludlow from the A49. If not – look out for them! Our annual Study Day for Schools took place on 25th February. Four schools took part: Ludlow Primary, St Laurence's, Bishop Hooper and Bucknell. This included over 200 pupils.

Our keynote speaker was Robin Roth, from Traidcraft.

5 local producers/retailers led workshop sessions: Appleteme, Shropshire salumi, La jewellery, Oxfam and Myriad. We are very grateful for them giving up their time to help.

Our conference 'Our food: the cost to the earth and its people' was held on 29th February.

Over 100 people attended the conference, and the feedback was extremely positive. One guest commented that "the day was absolutely tremendous, it changed the way I will think about the world for ever," while another said that "the speakers were inspiring and the whole day was beautifully organised."

The conference was followed by a private meeting between the speakers and leaders from nineteen local organisations to discuss what practical steps can be taken to move this agenda forward in Ludlow.

Robin Roth said it had been great to be a part of the event, adding: "Ludlow has been a real trailblazer when it comes to food. It matters that local farmers get a chance to showcase their best in class and it matters that businesses and citizens care. Good food is not a given nowadays, but well produced, organic, local food where the farmers are paid correctly and fairly is important beyond words."

Shane Holland said, "This conference further cements Ludlow's claim to be the most Fair town in the U.K. - to see all areas of the community and come together to discuss issues, but more importantly concrete actions, should be a template for every area in the U.K."

As mentioned above, the conference was followed by a closed session attended by over 30 leaders of organisations in Ludlow. A really constructive discussion ensued, with lots of ideas for the future.

Unfortunately, Covid 19 has interrupted our ability to follow up from this, but it is hoped that in time the following Fairtrade actions will be pursued:

'Twinning' with a Fairtrade cooperative We are actively looking into this possibility and discussing it with the wider Ludlow community via the Ludlow Food Network, so that it can be a truly 'Ludlow' project, not just one that is 'owned' by the Fairtrade group.

Chocolate trail We are looking at the possibility of adding a chocolate trail (Fairtrade of course!) to the ever popular sausage and beer trails at the Ludlow Food Festival.

There were also a lot of other ideas which are not specifically to do with fairtrade and which also will hopefully be acted on in due course through the Ludlow Food Network.

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Ludlow Swift Group

Ludlow Swift Group was set up in 2011 and continues to raise awareness about Swifts throughout the town. They are a wonderful part of the summer scene here but numbers have now dropped by over 50% in 20 years. A number of Swift boxes were put up last year and some more have already gone up this year - mainly on residential properties but do have a look for the boxes on Homecare. However we are aware of nest sites that have been lost and we would like to work more closely with residents to ensure the retention of natural sites where possible.

We continue to comment on Planning Applications and ask for Swift provision where appropriate but would very much welcome support from all Ludlow21 members here - any comments from residents to ask for better environmental and improved biodiversity features are welcomed by Shropshire Council.

Swifts arrived relatively early this year probably the good weather meant an easier migration trip. Please DO continue to send your swift nest site records to ludlowswiftgroup@gmail.com - this is important information that we need to be able to monitor our Swift population. If you want to know more about the group or become involved with our work please get in touch.

Peta Sams ludlowswiftgroup@gmail.com

Local to Ludlow

We began 2020 with a new website www.localtoludlow.org.uk that lists all our regular stallholders and with promotional material that cites us as 'Shropshire's Friendliest Farmers Market.'

Initially with lockdown both the Local Produce Market and the cafe/shop had to close, but Tish soon came up with an acceptable plan to open the shop safely, with family members in the shop

and customers served from the door. The 'pop-up' shop has run weekly with considerable success enabling many local producers to continue to sell their products. Social Media has been invaluable in promoting the pop up shop and delivery services offered by many of our stallholders.

June saw the re-opening of the market. Most of our small local food shops and producers have risen magnificently to the challenge by organising home deliveries or safe shopping, and I just hope they will get their reward with continuing customer loyalty.

This emergency has demonstrated the value of local food production for flexibility, quality and food security. The challenge for our organisation will be to build on this greater awareness.

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