



Greening Chiddingly Meeting
19.30 – Tuesday 13 January 2026
Village Shop, Muddles Green

Notes

Attendees:

David Nash (Chair); Mark Valleley (Secretary); Tina Letanka; Bob Harvey; Ryan Hannigan; Sue Skan; Gail Giles; Noel Hardy; Katie Crowson (Wealden District Council); Emma Ratheram (Wealden District Council).

Apologies:

Peter Gunner; Sheryl Rennison; Cliff Marchant.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the first meeting of 2026. Introductions were made, including Katie Crowson and Emma Ratheram from the Climate Change team at Wealden District Council.
- 1.2 The notes of the previous meeting (November 2025, including the Extraordinary General Meeting) were noted.
- 1.3 Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed:
 - Constitution updates following the EGM have been completed and uploaded to the website.
 - The updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy has been published.
 - Link to historic habitat and landscape mapping work has been circulated.
 - Identification Seating options for the Parish Council ponds remain outstanding. **(Ongoing – CM)**
 - Initial preparation of marketing materials for the Special Spaces event has commenced.

2. Restoring Nature initiative – update

- 2.1 A meeting with farmers and landowners scheduled for 9 January was postponed and will now take place in February. The purpose of the meeting is to reflect on delivery experience from High Weald funded projects, including what worked well, challenges encountered, and timescales for delivery and reimbursement. Outputs will inform a short, practical guide for other community groups.
- 2.2 Nature Restoration Fund: Supply Market Research for Nutrient Environmental Delivery Plans. The group noted the Government's invitation for expressions of interest in becoming a delivery body for this. The opportunity potentially aligns with Greening Chiddingly's river monitoring, eDNA analysis, and natural flood management work. Recent eDNA results confirming the presence of European eel were highlighted.

Action: Mark Valleley to submit an expression of interest by 30 January 2026.

3. Special Spaces Mapping Event – 28 February 2026

- 3.1 The group discussed in detail the proposed Special Spaces in Chiddingly community mapping event, scheduled to take place on Saturday 28 February 2026 at the Village Hall.
- 3.2 Dave outlined that the core purpose of the event is to invite residents to identify and share places within the parish that are important to them. It was emphasised that the term “special spaces” should be interpreted broadly and inclusively, encompassing not only obvious natural habitats but also views, everyday walking routes, community facilities, and places of personal or shared significance. The intention is to surface values that may not be visible in formal plans or datasets, and to capture local knowledge in a way that is accessible and engaging.
- 3.3 The proposed format builds on established community green mapping approaches. Three large-format parish maps will be displayed, each focusing on a different theme:
 - ecology and natural spaces,
 - sustainability and green activity, and
 - community, culture and heritage.
- 3.4 Participants will be invited to add information using postcards and numbered stickers, linking written reflections to specific locations on the maps. This approach was seen as simple, flexible, and suitable for later digitisation, while remaining welcoming to people who may be less confident with formal mapping or technical tools.
- 3.5 The group discussed complementary activities at the event designed to broaden participation and encourage people to spend time at the event. A Creative Corner will allow children and adults to draw, model, or otherwise represent their special spaces, providing an alternative way of contributing to the mapping exercise. An Elders’ Corner will feature recorded memories from long-standing residents, capturing lived experience of landscape and environmental change. This was discussed not only as an event feature but also as the start of a wider oral history initiative that could be developed over time.
- 3.6 It was also proposed to run a programme of short, repeatable talks of around ten minutes throughout the day. Suggested topics included river ecology and environmental DNA monitoring, bird surveys, and historic landscape change. These talks are intended to provide accessible entry points into Greening Chiddingly’s work and to encourage people to stay longer at the event rather than treating it as a brief drop-in.
- 3.7 Marketing and outreach were discussed. Planned activity includes parish news articles, posters and flyers, social media, attendance at existing local events such as Souper Saturday and the Village Hall market, and direct engagement with local organisations including the Women’s Institute, Horticultural Society, Guides and Brownies, and other community groups. Particular emphasis will be placed on



engagement with the primary school, with the possibility of a short assembly or classroom-based activity linked to the school's nature garden and the event theme, as a way of involving children and reaching families who may not otherwise attend.

Action: Sue Skan to liaise directly with the primary school to explore opportunities for pupil involvement, including a possible assembly or classroom-based activity linked to the school's nature garden and the event theme.

Action: Sue Skan to coordinate flyer distribution to Willets Field.

Action: Mark to deliver a batch of printed flyers to Sue, who will then arrange distribution to Willets Field.

Action: Mark to contact local organisations and groups, including the Horticultural Society, Church, Lachelle Link, Guides and Brownies and WI, asking them to promote the event with their members.

Action: Mark to seek Greening Chiddingly presence at Souper Saturday (14 February) and the Village Hall market (7 February) to promote the event directly.

- 3.8 The practical running of the event was also considered. Volunteer roles on the day are likely to include welcoming attendees, supporting the mapping tables, assisting with refreshments, and helping with creative activities. It was noted that a clear rota and role descriptions will be important to ensure the event runs smoothly across the day. A short practical workshop in mid-late February will be needed to finalise materials and logistics, including preparation of postcards, numbering systems, signage, and display materials.

Action: Mark to prepare a list of volunteer roles required on the day (welcome desk, mapping tables, creative corner, refreshments) and draft an initial rota.

4. Any Other Business

- 4.1 Katie Crowson and Emma Ratheram from Wealden District Council provided feedback on Greening Chiddingly's work and reflected on how it aligns with wider district-level priorities.
- 4.2 They commented positively on the breadth and maturity of Greening Chiddingly's activity, noting in particular that the group combines community engagement, practical delivery on the ground, and monitoring and evidence gathering. This was seen as relatively unusual for a volunteer-led group and as a clear strength.
- 4.3 The officers highlighted the value of the group's evidence-led approach, including the use of environmental DNA monitoring and follow-up assessment alongside physical interventions such as habitat restoration and natural flood management. They noted that this strengthens the credibility of community-led projects and makes them easier to reference in wider discussions about environmental outcomes.



- 4.4 They also reflected on the importance of local knowledge and long-term community presence, observing that Greening Chiddingly benefits from strong relationships with landowners, farmers and residents, which enables projects to move beyond one-off activities and become embedded over time. This was contrasted with shorter-term initiatives that can struggle to maintain momentum.
- 4.5 In relation to engagement, the officers welcomed the proposed Special Spaces event as an example of inclusive, place-based engagement that could reach beyond those who typically attend meetings. They noted that approaches that make participation creative and accessible, particularly for families and long-standing residents, align well with the Council's interest in supporting community-led climate and nature action.

5. Date and time of next meeting

19.30 – Tuesday 17 February 2026, Village Shop, Muddles Green.