

APCM- Green Watch

In line with our vision of being a truly inclusive, welcoming hub, All Saints has continued to develop a strong environmental focus, and to welcome a diverse audience. 2025 saw an interesting series of monthly Green Watch talks, the annual Environment Day and the Plant Sale all of which were enjoyed by both our local community and some from further afield.

We rely on a band of willing volunteers who undertake different aspects of all the events and to whom we are very grateful. We rely on them for the expertly designed publicity, the teas and lunches, operating the sound system and projector and providing the lovely background piano music.

In January, we learned about air quality from Dr. Jessica Muirhead who tailored her talk to local conditions in addition to giving a more general overview of air pollution. February brought us a fascinating account from Matthew Rideout of Knead and Desire Bakehouse in Hitchin. Matthew explained how we have gone from a hugely diverse and organic cereal system in the UK to a non-organic monoculture, with the loss of our grain heritage and an unhealthy dependence on phosphates.

In March Cllr. Tim Hoskin's talk 'Gavin and the Biodiversity Crisis' took us on a journey following the development of Sustainable Hertford Heath, and in particular the progress of the community orchard where the Hertfordshire apple, Gavin, is flourishing. For the April talk, Cristian Pinta, using clear slides, discussed the common trees of Hertfordshire, how to identify them and what to look out for.

May is the month for the annual Plant Sale, where the keen gardeners in the All Saints community bring flower, fruit and vegetable plants, young trees, seedlings and other garden related items to sell at very affordable prices – a very popular event in the Hertford calendar.

The June Green Watch talk was given by Clive Fleming who gave an update on the status of swifts around our town, reviewing the reasons for their decline in the UK and looking at initiatives that can make a difference. Butterflies was the topic of Andrew Wood's talk in July. A life-long passion of Andrew's, he shared beautiful slides of locally found butterflies and reminded us of how we can help them to thrive in difficult times.

Hugh Gravelle, who volunteers with the Hertford Town Council Energy Hub, came in August to discuss energy saving measures, including the technical and cost aspects, topics that we all need to consider carefully.

The All Saints Environment Day took place in September. The focus of our Environment days is Environment, Climate, Hope. Through illustrated talks, presentations, stalls and displays, the wonderful wildlife areas in easy reach of Hertford were celebrated. Alongside this, the day promoted an awareness of the importance of wildlife for our wellbeing. Stall holders offered suggestions of how to live more sustainably and to protect the environment, taking into account the ravages of climate change, but always finding ways to point to hope for the future. Speakers were Peter White from the River Beane Restoration Association, Nigel Braggins who took us through the vertical world of rock and ice based on his experiences in the Pyrenees and Tim Hoskin who used the title 'Slim Down Your Waste' to highlight sustainability. Interspersed throughout the day were guided walks through our beautiful churchyard with Donato Cinicolo.

In October we were privileged to have Simon Thorp present on light pollution. Dark Skies was the title of his talk – something we all wish for. Simon demonstrated that light pollution is another way in which we accelerate climate change, but he showed that it is easy to fix and the effects are instant. He emphasized the ill effects of excessive light pollution on humans as well as on the natural world but pointed out the remedies that we can all take.

Kate Sheard, the Wilder Communities Officer with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, rounded off our year of Green Watch talks with 'Creating Space for Nature'. Kate explored the health and wellbeing benefits that nature provides. She urged us to recognize that nature is there for us and developing a relationship with the natural world can be mutually beneficial. Kate stressed the importance of water in our gardens, recommending a pond or other water source.

We would like to thank all those who supported these events and look forward to continuing to investigate and learn about environmental issues through 2026.