

Notes from the PACE Supporters Meeting, 4 February 2025 at Mistley Village Hall. An inspiring get-together of local environmental groups.

32 were present including 2 from Hadleigh Environmental Action Team (HEAT), 4 from Ardleigh PACE (APACE), and a surprise group of 5 from Mending Matters, Brightlingsea!

Caroline Hall welcomed everyone and explained the programme.

Paul Hodgkin and Kate Billingham presented for HEAT.

Hadleigh has a population of about 11,000, 3 Primary Schools, a High School and a good range of services. The town has more listed buildings than Lavenham. Three tiers - Hadleigh Town Council, Babergh District Council, Suffolk County Council.

HEAT started, like PACE Manningtree, just before lockdown:

'To help individuals, families, business and organisations to always take climate change and biodiversity destruction into account in every decision they make.'

HEAT is now registered as a Community Interest Company CIC, with 7 Directors, 50 paid-up members and 370 Supporters on Email. CIC perhaps easier to set up than a Charity (cf PACE) – but it does mean that they cannot campaign (whereas PACE can campaign but only on matters relating to its charitable objects).

HEAT Projects include:

Volunteer work party - doing practical work within Babergh, eg Benton End and a Farm.
Climate Café – running for 2 years, trying different formats to address people's concerns
Public Speaker Meetings – about one per month eg April 3rd 7.30pm Tony Juniper
Green Corridor – promoting a 1.3km corridor through the town
Forest School – running in 2 Primary Schools and a Nursery.
River Group – Water quality sampling with Riverfly, same as PACE
Energy Project – retrofit project supported with £25,000 from UK Power Networks
Food Group – started similar to PACE but taken a different tack eg with Shared Meals
Bat Group – started with a bat expert and has attracted a good group
Example of Project that has not gone well is the Family Hub for Rural Skills which focussed on a practical work on a piece of land – but had to stop.

Comms include: Regular Newsletter; Website; Social Media Facebook, Instagram; article in Hadleigh Community News.

Carolyn Mason, Sarah Parker and Anne-Cat Greatti presented for APACE

Ardleigh is one of the largest Parishes in England but only has a population of 2300. Comprises largely good quality agricultural land, some mineral extraction, several reservoirs. Three tiers – Ardleigh Parish council, Tendring District Council, Essex County Council. Ardleigh has a Neighbourhood Development Plan recognised by Tendring. APACE has been going for about 18 months *'to bring the community together to work on practical actions both individually and collectively'*.

At present APACE is a local community group which is not yet formally constituted.

APACE Projects include:

Nature Conservation Area in the local Cemetery – mowing regime, log piles, bird/bat boxes, information boards etc
Visits to local sites such as Ardleigh Reservoir, Martell's Quarry,
Recycling with Tendring Primary Recycling
Engagement Project – particularly for children
Bird boxes for Primary School and Pre-School
iNaturalist recording of wildlife in the Parish.

Example of Project that has not gone so well is the slow progress and uptake of the Solar Panel Offer and wider concerns over energy production.

Comms include: Regular meetings in Skylarks Farm Shop; Email Group; Social Media on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.

Caroline and John Hall gave a short update on PACE Manningtree

Population of Manningtree, Mistley and Lawford is about 7500 and with the nearby villages is over 10,000. Two separate Parish Councils and a Town Council, Tendring District Council, Essex County Council.

PACE started in 2019 and registered as a charity in 2022. 12 Trustees, about 300 on Email Group. *PACE Manningtree works with local communities to increase understanding and take positive actions to address the changing climate and the loss of biodiversity – we aim to build our resilience to the impacts of climate disruption and threats to the natural world.*

About 20 Projects running in the Manningtree area, John and Caroline focussed on: Wildlife Garden Open Days: tour of about a dozen gardens supporting wildlife.

Tendring Show: working with the Show to improve sustainability re travel, recycling etc

Example of a Project which has not gone so well is the Community Solar Energy Scheme where we aim get financial incentive for solar panels – but the funding from a Social Fund has been delayed.

Comms include: Regular Newsletter, Website, Social media Facebook, Instagram, articles in monthly InTouch News etc

Discussion Groups

We split into Discussion Groups – main points from groups summarised below:-

Collaboration between Local Community Groups

- Important because we can share what does and does not work
- Sharing is very useful
- A united voice could be useful on some issues
- Need to make it easy for new people to join in
- We should support district and county council initiatives where we can
- We need to keep our individuality, so we are relevant to our local area
- We are wary of spreading effort too thin by covering many issues or too large area

Social Media – Blessing or Curse?

- Works well when we post on our own page
- Problems can occur when we start sharing on other pages
- Helps us to promote events and initiatives and keep us visible

Eco-Shop or Hub

- We heard about Brightlingsea's Eco-Shop , run totally by volunteers for over 3 years and open 5 days per week 9 to 5. This is self-supporting financially. Impressive!
- It is a great focus for many volunteers – those working in the shop and other groups

Climate Café

- An interesting initiative where people can get good information?
- Or a place where people can get support for their concerns or angst?

Big Local, Regional, National, Global issues.

- These can be a concern and can take a lot of local community group time
- We need to remember that we do not need to take a position on all big issues.

**Thank you all very much for coming from Hadleigh, Ardleigh, Brightlingsea & local.
Next PACE Supporters meeting will be on Tuesday 4 March 7.30pm. Venue TBC**