

Woking Great Big Green Week Climate debate

Friday September 24 2021

3pm – 4.30pm

Chair:

- Bronwen Smith-Thomas, Senior Campaigns Manager at WWF-UK

Panellists:

- Jonathan Lord MP, MP for Woking
- Nick Gardener, Head of Climate Action @ The National Lottery Community Fund and Co-Founder of Semble, Outdoor Classroom Day and Backyard Nature UK. Member of Woking Environment Action - WEAct
- Councillor Kevin Davis, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Sustainability
- Sean Rendell, Chief Operating Officer, ThamesWey
- Mel Hemmings, Owner, Bare + Fair and Crest Sustainability Hero Winner

Transcript:

15:00:54 From WEAct - Host to Everyone:

Thanks for joining us today we will get started in a couple of minutes

15:02:03 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

I think JL has joined us as an attendee

15:02:04 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:

Hi, can I check if we'll be recording today's debate for those that can't attend?

15:02:09 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

I will contact his assistant

15:02:19 From WEAct - Host to Everyone:

Yes we are recording

15:02:30 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:

thanks!

15:02:36 From Bronwen Smith-Thomas - WWF to Hosts and panelists:

I'll just wait for Jonathan to join us as a panellist

15:02:40 From WEAct - Host to Everyone:

The recording will be made available on the WEAct website

15:02:55 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

I think get started Bronwen - I will try and find his assistants number

15:03:54 From Nick Gardner - WEAct to Hosts and panelists:

JL's joined as an attendee (not a panellist)

15:05:55 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

I'm trying to promote him to panellist.

15:07:40 From marian ryan to Everyone:

Is Woking Borough Council on board with the World Health Organisation's guidelines on monitoring air quality namely particulate matter, the most damaging pollutant to human health?

15:11:55 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:

In particular how is WBC adjusting its approach in light of the new WHO guidelines out this week?

15:12:05 From Susan Clements to Everyone:

I second Marian's question. Also, I've heard rumours that up to 100 lorries a day may be routed through Victoria Arch after widening. Is there any truth in this?

15:12:25 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
One min Kevin

15:14:00 From marian ryan to Everyone:
Mel, I love your shop and I'm a keen customer.

15:15:44 From Stacey O'Callaghan to Everyone:
When will the council provide recycling facilities for people living in flats?

15:17:25 From Mary to Everyone:
Hi Councillor Davis. Please can you tell me which items shouldn't be recycled that are being placed in recycling bins.

15:17:40 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
One min Mel

15:19:26 From Bronwen Smith-Thomas - WWF to Hosts and panelists:
Mel - can you mute?

15:20:05 From marian ryan to Everyone:
New:Joe Lycetts Got Your Back latest show was discussing the false promises retailer's make on their websites. Apparently only 1% of women's wear at Topshop is sustainable or recycled. Next 3%. ASOS 19% Gap 27%. Yet their advertising would tell you differently. Maybe we should take our retailers to task.

15:21:55 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
On a national and international level designing products for their 2nd life is key to their sustainability or recycling potential.

15:23:04 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
One min Sean

15:23:55 From Tom Ansell to Everyone:
We know that the more that areas are paved, the worse the effect is regarding flooding. We also know how important gardens are for wildlife. How can Woking Borough Council encourage homeowners to not pave over their front gardens?

15:24:43 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
That's five minutes Sean...

15:25:14 From marian ryan to Everyone:
what will you be doing different that will get to the gold level?

15:25:50 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
What is powering the energy centre in Poole Rd?

15:26:30 From marian ryan to Everyone:
transparency is key

15:27:03 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:
Good to hear about support for retrofitting of housing. What about ensuring that new developments cut emissions and are prepared for rising temperatures?

15:29:01 From marian ryan to Everyone:
trees are crucial to our health and well-being

15:30:04 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
Pirbright is part of Guildford

15:30:15 From marian ryan to Everyone:
will you be introducing free parking to woking electric cars

15:30:25 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:
At the Climate Lobby session in June, Mr Lord committed to writing to the Environment Minister, George Eustice, emphasising the need for more stringent sustainability standards in housing to avoid expensive retrofitting in future. An update on that would be welcome.

15:30:49 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
Still have a minute

15:30:55 From marian ryan to Everyone:
brilliant, trees are vital.

15:31:17 From Susan Clements to Everyone:

Any plans to extend electric charging points and car clubs to the peripheral areas such as Byfleet and not just central Woking?

15:31:27 From marian ryan to Everyone:

do we need more parks and green areas to balance out all this new build

15:31:50 From sarah Brown to Hosts and panelists:

fantastic to have the Lightbox - visionary and sustainable building

15:31:53 From Rupert Devereux. WeACT to Hosts and panelists:

Will the delayed new Planning Bill help Woking or developers. Will it be as forward thinking as Gordon Browns planning Changes that were over turned in 2015.

15:31:54 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:

What role do you foresee the several oil exploration companies both in Woking's future and going forward globally?

15:32:01 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

That's five mins

15:32:07 From marian ryan to Everyone:

woking park was very busy during lock down

15:33:09 From marian ryan to Everyone:

thanks for a very enjoyable tour of woking, Nick, it was very insightful.

15:35:39 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:

Can the various common lands in the borough be managed specifically for carbon sequestration when any cutting back is planned?

15:35:45 From marian ryan to Everyone:

it would be fantastic if WBC could lead the way by measuring air pollution and taking the necessary steps to provide a healthier air to breathe

15:36:46 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

One min Nick

15:37:12 From marian ryan to Everyone:

cycle lanes in woking would be brilliant. especially as we support the cycle races

15:37:36 From marian ryan to Everyone:

foot bridges over busy roads would be amazing, encouraging people to walk more

15:38:16 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:

That's five mins (sorry!)

15:39:07 From marian ryan to Everyone:

community gardens

15:39:31 From Teresa Bacon to Hosts and panelists:

Better and more flexible public transport is essential - get people out of cars. As a cyclist, busy roads are a nightmare if you want to turn right.

15:41:46 From marian ryan to Everyone:

what are you monitoring? particulates?

15:41:51 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:

I regularly cycle between the local towns and when I mention this people frequently tell me to be careful. I'm sure that many more people would ditch their car and also use their bike were it safer to do so. The path that runs alongside the A320, for example, is in a terrible state of repair; it is frequently overgrown; and not wide enough. Could something be done in partnership with Surrey Highways to address this?

15:42:07 From marian ryan to Everyone:

you're not currently monitoring particulates

15:42:15 From Susan Clements to Everyone:

Or just NOx?

15:42:39 From marian ryan to Everyone:

I read the report and it's only NOx

15:43:05 From marian ryan to Everyone:

WHO have serious concerns about particulates

15:43:25 From marian ryan to Everyone:

will these changes be transparent

15:43:45 From marian ryan to Everyone:
was this discussed at your climate changes last night

15:44:07 From marian ryan to Everyone:
can you confirm that wbc will measure particulates

15:44:26 From Susan Clements to Everyone:
Particulates associated with a whole range of diseases

15:44:43 From Rupert Devereux. WeACT to Hosts and panelists:
On our WeACT visioning walk we noticed some of the Schools could have more Green Walls should National Government or local government lead on this?

15:46:46 From marian ryan to Everyone:
can woking borough council aim to be the leaders in purer air for residents

15:48:17 From marian ryan to Everyone:
have we exceeded our target for houses

15:51:13 From marian ryan to Everyone:
what environmental changes are we putting in place to ensure the 'supply chain' is not negatively impacting the health of woking residents

15:56:09 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:
Another Climate Lobby topic was around procurement and WBC's supply chain. WBC has a goal to make its own properties meet climate targets, but nothing about making its procurement partners meet any such targets. Given how much procured services contribute to Woking's carbon footprint, this seems a major gap to be addressed.

15:58:46 From Teresa Bacon to Hosts and panelists:
Going back to homes, it's not just a matter of keeping people's houses warm during winter, but also providing protection from the heatwaves that we can expect incoming years. Shading (trees help) and shutters...

16:03:10 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
Is it just the company's operations which you look to being sustainable or do their business model need to be green also? A case point is Heathrow, where their operations are quite green but their business of flying is considerably less so.

16:05:08 From marian ryan to Everyone:
should we be taking our stores to task when there are false promises

16:05:10 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
If you control how sustainable consumerism works in the town you could also push for sustainable packaging.

16:06:15 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
Can you turn off the lights inside the empty Debenhams unit in the Peacocks which are still on despite the store having closed months ago?

16:06:41 From rachel to Everyone:
but it's important to have things available for people on low, incomes

16:07:17 From Mel Hemmings to Hosts and panelists:
'Offshoring' our carbon emissions is another negative impact of our reliance on cheap imported goods. The emissions from their manufacture may not be counted in our territorial emissions but are still happening

16:07:37 From marian ryan to Everyone:
can't we have both - sustainable and affordable

16:07:53 From rachel to Everyone:
exactly

16:07:58 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
On the Debenhams unit. What are the plans to utilise the vast amount of empty space?

16:08:28 From Nick Gardner - WEAct to Everyone:
Great point Mel - can we trailblaze local carbon reporting based on consumption emissions, not just production emissions locally?

16:09:17 From Nick Gardner - WEAct to Everyone:

(Mel - you can repost your comment to "Everyone" ... I think it was just visible to panellists)

16:09:21 From marian ryan to Everyone:
should we allow diesel in the town centre?

16:09:47 From Mel Hemmings to Hosts and panelists:
Legislation is only recently catching up with correct use of terms like kcompostable', 'natural', eco friendly' and even recycled

16:10:10 From marian ryan to Everyone:
this would be a great way for woking to be the leaders - more transparency - across the board

16:10:16 From Mel Hemmings to Everyone:
'Offshoring' our carbon emissions is another negative impact of our reliance on cheap imported goods. The emissions from their manufacture may not be counted in our territorial emissions but are still happening

16:10:25 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
Hi Mel, you are currently on 'hosts and panelists' setting - change to 'everyone' in the message box to share with attendees too :)

16:11:01 From marian ryan to Everyone:
this would be great - a healthier woking - inside our stores and outside in the air we breathe

16:11:05 From Mel Hemmings to Everyone:
Legislation is only recently catching up with correct use of terms like kcompostable', 'natural', eco friendly' and even recycled

16:13:11 From Nick Gardner - WEAct to Everyone:
<https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/uks-carbon-footprint>

16:13:13 From Teresa Bacon to Hosts and panelists:
A proposal in the Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill is that we should count our offshore emissions in UK's total.

16:16:42 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
One of the cycle routes the council set up in the town before is suicidal if you you follow the signs!

16:17:04 From Bronwen Smith-Thomas - WWF to Hosts and panelists:
Panelists: To wrap up I'd like to ask you all to comment on the ONE thing that you think would be most important to make Woking a climate leader (<1 minute). I'll introduce this when we have about 10 mins to go - just giving you a few mins thinking time.

16:18:39 From marian ryan to Everyone:
Jonathan, according to the government's environmental bill 2020 and March's air quality fact sheet Part 4. The policy paper on air quality September 2021. section Headlines point 3 states the government will be required to update its National Air Quality strategy. what are your plans for woking?

16:19:39 From Mary I Tobin to Hosts and panelists:
Bronwen: please could you check that chat saving is enabled, as I don't seem to have that option?

16:20:41 From WEAct - Host to Hosts and panelists:
I have the chat save option

16:20:54 From WEAct - Host to Mary I Tobin and all panelists:
Hi Mary I can confirm I can save the chat and will do this

16:21:28 From Mary I Tobin to Hosts and panelists:
Thanks Bronwen

16:21:42 From marian ryan to Everyone:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-bill-2020/10-march-2020-air-quality-factsheet-part-4>

16:22:58 From marian ryan to Everyone:
the air we breathe

16:24:25 From rachel to Everyone:

yes the green spaces and encouraging gardening and allotments

16:24:49 From marian ryan to Everyone:
they are exceptional, I've visited many times, well done

16:26:28 From marian ryan to Everyone:
start with children in schools, find ways to engage them

16:26:37 From Mary I Tobin to Everyone:
Take a look at <https://wokingenvironmentaction.com/2021/09/23/community-building/>
for an upcoming free course on community building

16:27:37 From WEAct - Host to Everyone:
Also great work in some areas around community owned 'Climate Emergency
Centres' - check out Zero Carbon Guildford and Talking Tree in Staines as examples...

16:28:28 From marian ryan to Everyone:
trees are crucial, maybe we should jump on the Queen's jubilee and ask residents to
plant a tree or a shrub

16:28:45 From marian ryan to Everyone:
can we bring more green into the town

16:29:13 From marian ryan to Everyone:
more wildlife

16:29:22 From Kevin Davis to Everyone:
I'm always happy to answer questions and listen to new ideas, please send me an
email at cllrkevin.davis@woking.gov.uk if you wish.

16:29:46 From samrobinson to Hosts and panelists:
hedgehog underpasses?

16:30:01 From marian ryan to Everyone:
we have bats that fly around my house every evening - beautiful

16:30:11 From WEAct - Host to Everyone:
Thanks everyone for attending. To be kept up to date of further events from WEAct
please go to www.wokingenvironmentaction.com and sign up to our mailing list. Also follow
@actionwoking on Twitter.

16:30:39 From rachel to Everyone:
many thanks very interesting 👍

16:30:45 From Kevin Davis to Everyone:
We're looking at wildlife underpasses on the A322 to link up the two country parks.