



West Yorkshire Eco Educators Network

New School Year Newsletter September 2021

Hi! to you all and hope you have all had a good holiday and had a real break. We know you all deserved a holiday!

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Welcome back to the new term, and we have lots to tell you about!

We have all seen the news showing the impact of Climate Change around the world throughout the summer. At the time of writing the Southern States of America are being battered by Hurricane Ida, there have been floods across Europe, in China there has been severe flooding with 48cm falling in one day!

Our pupils and communities have seen this and all surveys of children and young people's mental health are now showing eco-anxiety increasing. We must now address the Climate Emergency in our schools.

In Wakefield, the Council's Museums and Library services has really joined in over the summer in educating for the Climate Emergency and have put on a great Festival of the Earth through the holidays. If you have visited Wakefield in the past 10 days you may have visited the Cathedral to see Gaia - the massive model of the Earth. This finished on 20th

August but the **Fire and Ice Light** and sound installation goes on until 5th September so do try and catch it. There have been queues through the last couple of weeks so many of your pupils in Wakefield will have seen it, and a spectacular Parade is planned for Sunday 6th Afternoon at 3 and 7pm.

This is a really important term for students to understand some of Climate issues that are being discussed across the media in the run up to COP26, to be held in Glasgow 31 - November 12th and that our schools respond to this Agenda.

Fortunately there have been some fantastic resources developed to assist in this, and the Eco-Educators who came to our summer holiday meetings said they were really good so please do follow links.

There is CPD for you all

Developed for secondary teachers this is an hour's on-line inset, please do make time so you feel more confident to address these issues in the classroom.

UK Schools Sustainability Network INSET video on Climate and Sustainability

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbbyzLhmKkk&list=PLYBrVh3nGjzAAbJ4rKj35NkGwvPWnqxb8&index=1>

They have also produced a whole pack of excellent resources to help schools in their work for COP26.

This adds detail to the short ideas circulated earlier by the DFE

<https://www.transform-our-world.org>

You will see in the sponsoring logos the UK Gov Dept of Digital, Media, Culture, and Sport.

Aim Hi has also produced an online live course of 4 sessions of 1 hour that will be delivered in September in several classes during the week. One of our West Yorkshire Eco Educators did it in May and said it was "outstanding" and "life changing". Some of us have registered for September courses, please do join in too.

<https://www.aimhi.co/climate-course-for-teachers>

It will be delivered online, there is no homework, but plenty of reading and further information to follow up as desired. The training has been very carefully developed, and is very highly rated, and gives teachers the confidence and skills to teach the climate.

The NEU is aiming to put a whole bank of Curriculum resources up on the NEU website. Just as our West Yorkshire Eco Educators is open to educators from across West Yorkshire and from all unions, and the resources will be open to all part of the NEU website - so please do take a look when they are ready (very soon) .

Great Big Green Week 18th -26th September

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com>

Promoted by a whole range of Environmental charities like the RSPB and National Trust have come together to ask schools and other community groups to get communities talking about green issues. They have produced a whole range of resources and ideas and handbooks of suggestions (all available online) to get people involved.

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com>

Perhaps your school could organise a biodiversity walk around the local area and/or a litter pick, or an outdoor climate coffee morning? Classes could make posters to encourage recycling, or walking to school, or to cycle more. Children could be encouraged to plan vegetarian menus, for their family or parties, or collect tree seeds to start tree nurseries for later tree planting. They could write letters to newspapers or the local MP to make sure they understand how much children care The ideas are endless, please take a look at the website, persuade your colleagues in school to do something in your school, and talk to your Head Teacher about taking on the Great Big Green Week initiative as a school.

<https://greatbiggreenweek.com>

This could also help you in your efforts to stay Covid safer, by planning activities to take your classes outside.

Does your school teach Spanish?

On October 15th a group of Spanish marchers are coming through Wakefield District on their way to **Glasgow to take part in the COP26**. They will be walking from Darton on the edge of Barnsley on a route probably following the A61, into Wakefield for a lunchtime rally and on to Middleton for them to continue into Leeds.

We are looking for Students to help with translation for the Spanish marchers as only one of them speaks English, this is a perfect opportunity to practice Spanish in context with native speakers.

This is a really visible and real way to make COP26 visible and real to Wakefield pupils. The Council with Mayor and the Cathedral with the Bishop are going to welcome them to the city.

We would love to have delegations from schools coming to join us in town for the Rally.

Could your pupils make placards or Banners to welcome them or with their concerns for the future? Perhaps with some in Spanish and some in English?

There will be planning meetings for this in the next few weeks – do get in touch if you, and/or your school want to be part of this: Catherine.porridd@neu.org.uk

Jenny Foskitt from Wakefield Council Climate Change Team updated the group about the range of arts and environmental projects on in libraries, galleries and museums during the summer and into the autumn term with the launch of the new exhibition in Wakefield Museum, The World of Good, about the World's first Nature reserve at Walton Hall.

Wakefield's Museums and Libraries have some really exciting exhibitions and events planned **through October with a Word Fest planned for October half term. This will be in** the Ex Market Hall with nature biomes. The BBC nature science broadcaster Liz Bonnin is going to be working with secondary pupils - Liz Bonnin has made programmes like Drowning in Plastic. They want schools and young people to be involved in the development of the area-wide Climate Plans.

Please join our meeting on 20th September to hear how to get involved

<https://experiencewakefield.co.uk/event/a-world-of-good/>

Jenny also added more information about the Council's plans for **planting mini forests** across the district with an ecologically balanced selection of trees to encourage biodiversity. Schools are being asked if they could designate space for a hedgerow or a mini forest.

At NEU Conference it was agreed to try to get all schools to sign up to start on the path to zero emissions: <https://letsgozero.org> and we really want to push this over the next weeks so that schools have it in their plans for this year. It would be good to get school leaders to join in and take the first step of making the commitment to start the journey to zero. There is real practical support information and advice on funding etc for schools to respond to Climate Emergency. Please speak to your school leaders and ask them to look at the website.

At our Summer meeting we had reports from our member of the network in a Delta school who has been really active following our Educating for the Climate Emergency Workshop. Rachel had persuaded school to look at energy providers, and passed on details of how to finance solar panels for the soon to be refurbished buildings

<https://www.solarforschools.co.uk>

At De Lacy they have already planted 250 trees, and have reserved a further 250 free trees from the Woodland Trust to be planted during the COP26 week.

All schools were able apply for free trees to be planted over the next year, and although the free trees for November are now gone, there are some available about £1 each.

<https://shop.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-mixes-and-packs>

The next free ones will be available to be ordered in March, and then again in August

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/press-centre/2021/06/free-tree-packs-scheme-now-open-for-schools-and-communities/#:~:text=The%20Woodland%20Trust%20is%20delighted%20to%20be%20a,to%20mark%20Her%20Majesty's%20Platinum%20Jubilee%20in%202022.>

Rachel has also circulated to all departments in her school links to Leeds DEC climate curriculum plans so that teachers can plan starter activities linked to climate issues across the timetable, and let teachers see the wealth of planning support already there to help them.

One of the members, Yvette, updated us about the Stanley Goes Wild event she ran with local community groups as part of the Festival of the Earth. There are some great out door learning ideas

<https://experiencewakefield.co.uk/event/stanley-goes-wild/>

<https://www.stanleygroveprimary.co.uk/environment-video/>

To help explain COP26 to your classes

This is such an important year for the Climate and we in the UK have such an important role to play as the UK Government is hosting COP26 in Glasgow, in November.

The **C**ongress **O**f the **P**arties meets for the 26th time to discuss the Climate Crisis that is here and already wreaking havoc with nature and the climate. New actions need to be taken, we need to push our Government to take these actions now, and to push the rest of the world to do the same. For all the talk and targets over the past 26 meetings (27 years!) the crisis continues to escalate. **We must act now.** This is explained beautifully in a short kids-made film.

<https://youtu.be/hPMt03eZAoA>

Just a reminder

Schools Climate Education South Yorkshire organised a brilliant online conference in July. The whole programme, with most of the best projects working on climate, biodiversity and sustainability, is still available online for you to watch to see which projects might be best for your school.

<https://www.scesy.org.uk/conference-programme-2021/>

There are sessions by Hope for the Future, WWF, the Eden Project, Leeds DEC and so many others.

Dates for the Diary - next meeting

Enjoy the start of term and see you all on the 20th September at 7pm for our next teach meet. Meeting invitations will be shared via the WhatsApp group, or email Catherine for the link.

Great Big Green Week 18th - 26th September

Bike to School Week 27th September – 3rd October

Spanish Marchers to COP26 – 15th October

If you do want to get in touch, or have ideas you want some help with please use WhatsApp or email

Catherine.porritt@neu.org.uk