



What's happening in Holmedale?

When Whashton resident Lizzie Rumble contacted us to see if we would be interested in a biodiversity project in Holmedale, we jumped at the opportunity.

Significant funding is available from Highways England, as compensation for the loss of habitat resulting from the A66 improvement works.

Barningham's nearest neighbours (Newsham, Dalton, Gayles, Ravensworth, Whashton) are in Holmedale, where a series of becks converge and ultimately flow into the Swale. By joining with nearby villages, we may be able to do more to improve the local environment – for ourselves and for nature.

What is biodiversity and why is it important?

Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area - the variety of animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms like bacteria that make up our world. Each of these species and organisms work together to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity describes how many different types of organisms live in a location – the more variety present, the better the health of the ecosystem.

The UK is one of the most biodiversity depleted countries in Europe. This is not a good thing for us as it impacts the food we grow, the quality of water, the natural environment and resources, our health and wellbeing.

What is the project plan?

Representatives of the local communities agreed that the first step was to get community input into what the project should include. That activity has now been completed through the Holmedale Community Nature Project survey and the results are currently being analysed. A substantial number of Barningham residents responded to the survey and your input at this early stage is much appreciated! Updates on the project plans will be provided as available.

Barningham Net Zero Community Interest Company
Meeting the Climate Change Emergency in Barningham
www.barninghamnetzero.com

Barningham Net Zero formed in April 2020, our primary aim being to reduce energy costs for local residents and businesses and work towards a net zero carbon footprint for the village. We also undertake activities which have an environmental benefit. **Our team:** George-Anne Brooks, Judith Lewis, Martha McBarron, Steve Ottevanger, Mike Peach and John Terrill.

Lighting success!

Nineteen Barningham households took up our free light bulb offer and participated in our lighting project. They are now benefiting from lower costs and better quality LED lighting, thanks to a grant from Durham County Council and great support from Harbro Electrical, our bulb supplier.

During the winter project, our Net Zero team replaced over 400 bulbs with LED (Light-emitting diode) bulbs in Barningham properties. Half of the original bulbs were incandescent and the remainder were a mixture of halogen and fluorescent, all less efficient than LEDs and more expensive to use. We estimate that these households will save over £2,700 a year in electricity costs – a good return on the grant outlay of about £1000.



Old bulbs for disposal



Over half of the participating households are occupied by residents over 70 years old. Many residents were pleased to get assistance in identifying which bulbs to change and fitting the new ones; other households preferred the DIY option. In some cases, existing lighting levels were too low and we were able to provide brighter bulbs, more appropriate to the need. All participants received a detailed report indicating the energy use, cost and savings per light fixture with LEDs fitted.

The project reduced Barningham's electricity consumption by 7217 kWh a year, equivalent to an annual reduction of nearly 1400 kg of lighting-associated carbon emissions. Although a relatively small amount, it is an easy win in the drive to reduce electricity consumption. If all 28 million homes in Britain switched to 100% LED bulbs, the Energy Savings Trust estimates that 1.7 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions could be saved annually.

During the project work, at least fifteen additional households reported to our team that they had already replaced old bulbs with LEDs at their own expense. This means that at least 50% of households in Barningham now use LED bulbs for their most energy demanding lighting fixtures. The reduced electricity consumption is a win-win for people and the environment!

Little acorns....

Our volunteer planters have completed another successful winter season, our third year. Planting was undertaken at eight properties, seven in Barningham and one in Newsham. We planted 225 trees, mostly in fenced enclosures or areas protected by stock-proof fencing, and 1275 hedge whips, making 221m of new or repaired hedgerow. The total plantings amount to around 1500.

Over 25 volunteers and landowners helped make this happen, generously giving 250 hours of their time. That's quite a lot for a small village like Barningham!

At the Bull Acre, we were joined by 35 members of the 7th Darlington Sea Scouts (aged 4-14 years' old), with scout leaders and parents – thanks to George Campbell-Wilson, one of the scout leaders, who assists Ivan Brown in managing the sheep that are grazed there. The copse planting provided an exciting day out for the scout troop. All of the kids had an opportunity to plant some trees and do a local nature walk, followed by a hot lunch and tree-themed activities in Barningham Village Hall.



Barningham volunteers Alison, Robin, Steve, Mike and Martha supervised the planting in the Bull Acre, while Judith, George-Anne, Jenny, Jane, Stef and Janet put on snacks and lunch at the Village Hall. The team's hard work made the day a big success and we certainly ignited some enthusiasm in the next generation of planters. Mike, one of the Net Zero team, commented: *"The children were a credit to their scout troop, their parents and themselves. Their good behaviour, enthusiasm and engagement in the task made them a pleasure to work with."*

George sent a lovely thank you note afterwards, commenting that *"...the kids have had an amazing day, many of them asking when they can come back and finish off. The food and drinks at the hall were superb, whoever made the soups should apply for Masterchef, they were divine!"* Barningham soup makers Judith, Jenny and Steve take note!



What's next?

We're currently checking over previous years' plantings and starting to plan work for the next winter season (2023-24). If you would like to help out in any capacity, please contact us on info@barninghamnetzero.com. Landowners can offer space for trees or hedgerows, while volunteers are needed to help with planting and on-going maintenance activities. Anyone is welcome to donate trees, tree guards or fencing materials!

The 2022/23 planting work and community event was funded by Durham County Council from the Neighbourhood Budgets of our local Councillors George Richardson and James Rowlandson, and the National Lottery Community Fund.