



REG

NEWSLETTER

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[Ryedale Environmental Group](https://www.youtube.com/ryedaleenvirogroup)



Who are Ryedale Environment Group (REG)?

Ryedale Environment Group (REG) is a developing grassroots organisation helping local communities reduce Ryedale's carbon footprint, by promoting positive projects to reduce environmental impacts across the district.

It acts as a discussion forum for established environmental groups such as Kirkbymoorside, Pickering and Hovingham, as well as fledgling groups including Helmsley, Malton/Norton, Lastingham, Kirby Misperton and Slingsby. New groups are encouraged to join and monthly online meetings allow us to share successful initiatives and brainstorm new ideas. We are strictly apolitical and welcome new members from all political persuasions and walks of life.

REG Talks

Our online talks via Zoom remain popular, and recent topics have included: North Yorkshire Climate Strategy; Keep Ryedale Buzzing with Claire Ivey from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Nature-Friendly Farming with Mark Palmer from Systems4food; A Swift Recovery: Keeping the Skies Alive with Edward Mayer from Swift Conservation; and The Green Transformation of Community Buildings with Ray Newton from Monk Fryston and Hillam Community Centre.

Please check www.ryedaleenvirogroup.co.uk for details of future events and recordings of previous talks. We're also always delighted to receive ideas for topics you'd like to hear about!

REG now has Registered Charity status

The Ryedale Environment Group (REG) recently achieved charity registration, with the object *"to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, primarily but not exclusively through encouraging recycling and providing educational events and activities related to the conservation of the environment"*.

We hope that this will enable us to stimulate more and better environmental improvements and conservation projects across Ryedale. As part of this change, we need to confirm who among our supporters wish to be members with the right to vote at general meetings and influence its activities and approach. If you would like to join us at this critical time for the environment and help us make a difference, all you have to do to become a member of REG is contact us at membership@ryedaleenvirogroup.co.uk.

www.ryedaleenvirogroup.co.uk

2023 Highlights: Eco Fairs, Give or Take, & Repair Cafés

Eco Fairs: showcasing the green business and climate action

Whatever your interest in the environment, the eco fairs organised across Ryedale in 2023 provided wonderful opportunities to learn about the projects and businesses doing inspiring things all over Ryedale.

Following the success of its second Eco Fair in September 2022 – the first to be held at the Milton Rooms – REG returned to the same venue last June, as our contribution to the Climate Coalition's Great Big Green Week. We welcomed local group and projects, Harmony Energy, wildlife charities, a range of eco, handmade and vegan makers, as well as a special guest appearance from a mermaid made entirely from waste materials!

But before that came Pickering's eco extravaganza to mark Earth Day on 22 April. With a bee trail throughout the town, and an inspiring and creative "Bee Amazing" event at Beck Isle Museum, the town's very own fair held in the Memorial Hall welcomed residents of all ages through its doors.

Next came Kirkbymoorside Environment Group's edition, held at the Memorial Hall on 30 September and welcoming an inspiring range of stalls on the first floor – from environmental projects and wildlife charities to eco crafts and upcycling. Meanwhile, the ground floor became an auditorium for talks about composting, the Ryevitalise project, Helmsley Walled Garden, green energy solutions, efficient energy use, flood prevention, and swift conservation. The end of the day saw the same space transformed into a Conversation Café inviting visitors to share food and drink as they pondered and chatted about different environment-themed questions.



Plans are already underway for the return of Earth Day celebrations in Pickering (on **Sat 20 April**) – this time, nature and wildlife will be the theme for the fair and the [Blue Heart Campaign](#) will be the focus for encouraging the community to choose a pledge that will help support biodiversity.

On **Sat 4 May**, KMEG will hold its second Eco Fair at Kirkbymoorside Memorial Hall. If you'd like to get involved in or stay updated about either of these events, contact ryedaleeg@hotmail.com to be added to our mailing list!

Ryedale embraces the circular economy

Eco fairs weren't the only event to become a regular feature of Ryedale's sustainability calendar. The ever-popular Give or Take events organised in Kirkbymoorside and Pickering have inspired local groups in Slingsby and Malton/Norton to run their own, and these have proved just as busy!

The feedback we receive is that local residents appreciate the opportunity to look for items they or their families need – all free-of-charge, which is a huge help in today's economic climate – while knowing that they can take along items they no longer use and thereby prolong their life. First-timers at GoT events are sometimes perplexed by the lack of money changing hands, but find the approach refreshing and hassle-free. And what better way to encourage more conscious consumer behaviour and promote a shift away from the throw-away economy.

Local Repair Cafés in Hovingham (run by Project Purple) and Pickering are held every 3 and 2 months respectively, and are also becoming better known as more people realise the benefits of extending the life of equipment, devices, toys, bikes and clothes (to name a few!), as well as picking up tips and skills from the amazing volunteer repairers.



Stories from Local Environmental Projects

Restoring Ryedale' through rewilding

Grass is very widespread and good for recreational purposes such as football as well as pasture. It has, however, very limited benefits for wildlife, and restricts the growth of other fauna. Meanwhile, the UK has lost 97% of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s, and it is no coincidence that numbers of butterflies, bees and insects continue to decline.

One of our functions as a community environmental organisation is to encourage new wildflower areas and many new projects are underway in Ryedale, including in Helmsley, Malton, Kirkbymoorside, Kirbymisperton, Pickering and Slingsby. Some are instigated by local groups, and others by schools and local councils.

Roadside grass verges are a major target for our campaign, with the aim of turning many of them into wildlife havens. Grass is usually cut many times a year and the clippings left in place. These clippings then act as mulch, preventing wildflower seeds from reaching the soil. The clippings then rot and act as a manure for the grass, helping to maintain its monopoly on the area. Remove the clippings however, and you then give wildflowers a chance, while scraping the soil and adding wildflower seeds hastens the process further.

Engagement with the county council, parish councils and schools has already started, with some great results. Do you have good contacts with local authorities or want to help with raking and seed planting? We would love to hear from you at ryedaleeg@hotmail.com if you are interested in helping!



Pickering's blossoming wildflower project: the story so far

Pickering Environment Group have been working with Pickering Town Council to take action to manage verges in a way that supports wildflowers and other wildlife, by cutting just twice per year and collecting the clippings.

A trial along Middleton Road has been ongoing for three years now and has proved very successful, with over 30 species of native wildflowers and grasses appearing there last year: an impressive 400% increase in biodiversity, for minimal effort (and expense).

The Town Council have now agreed to expand the areas of verge managed in this way. The wildflower verge along Middleton Road will be doubled in size (to include the whole bank) and a new area of verge along the A170 - the wide part of the verge next to Keld Head Pond - will be managed using a similar approach. Other Town and Parish Councils in Ryedale are starting to take similar action, which is great news.

More Stories from Local Environmental Projects

A Path for Everyone: from Malton to Helmsley via Hovingham

Now that REG has charitable status, we can now legally apply for bigger project grants, including sections of the proposed Path for Everyone.

Though the whole Path for Everyone route will be over 10 miles long, local people's regular journeys on the Path, between and through villages, may be much shorter distances. We will draw on the expertise from North Yorkshire Council's Rights of Way and Highways teams, but local involvement in deciding the route is also very important. Because of the challenges of finding funding, there will also be a section-by-section approach to installation.

The Department for Transport has decreed that all new path installation projects that include cycling also have to demonstrate a 10% increase in biodiversity along the route. To decide on how to do this, we have to know the current base-line.

REG has set up a whole-route Steering Group, which includes local people and NYC representatives, and is also inviting interested people to join Parish Path sub-groups. There will be council assistance at both these levels. Whether your interest in the route is for cycling, horse-riding, dog walking, disabled access, or biodiversity – or maybe several of these – we would love to hear from you if you would like to get involved.

For more information about whole-route Steering Group or Parish-based meetings, please contact our Sustainable Travel Officer at jackie.speakman@northyorks.gov.uk.

You can also support our funding efforts by signing the on-line petition at: change.org/p/create-two-important-path-for-everyone-routes-for-our-region-to-help-people-travel-safely



Library of Things Malton & Norton

Did you know that borrowing from the Library of Things is not only good for your wallet, but also great for the planet? By borrowing instead of buying, you're reducing waste and promoting sustainability. Join us in our mission to create a more eco-friendly community here in the heart of North Yorkshire.

News from Local Environmental Groups

Slingsby Parish Environment Group (SPEG) organised two community litter picks in 2023, with October's event combined with a "community climate café" at the Sports Club. Visitors were invited to enjoy hot/cold drinks and cake, learn about local businesses and services that help us all to live more sustainably, and there were nature-based crafts for children. In November, the group held its 2nd Give or Take, which proved just as popular as the first! It also received 30 "free trees" (native hedgerow saplings) from the Woodland Trust, planted as a community project along the boundary of the play area and ready to be nurtured by group members, school children and local families. Finally, December saw the group receive an invitation to sponsor and decorate a potted 'eco' Christmas tree for the festive display in All Saints' Church.



The recently reformed **Malton/Norton Environmental Group** has now met several times and welcomed several new faces. A REG display was exhibited in Malton Library for 3 weeks last September, and its Give or Take event in January was well received. Check out 'Malton/Norton Envirogroup' on Facebook for all the latest!