

SUSTAINABLE KIRTLINGTON: Activities October 2023 – May 2024

The first two meetings in the autumn focused on regenerative farming:

October Screening of *The Biggest Little Farm*, about the experience of a young couple in California who took on 200 acres of barren land and transformed it into a vibrant farm, rich in biodiversity.

November Talk: 'What is Regenerative Farming?', a discussion of the conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming, focused on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity to increase resilience to climate change and strengthen the health and vitality of farm soil. We were fortunate in having a neighbouring practitioner, Tim Thompson from Manor Farm, Hampton Gay, talk about his farm. He has no vet's bills for his pasture-fed cattle and the farm flourishes without any chemical additives in the form of fertilisers or pesticides and so is rich in wildlife.

January Talk: Ashley Prior: 'Air source heat pumps - an inside and outside story.' Ashley has had 2 heat pumps for 4 years and gave a very informative account of the way they work and his experience. The talk was well attended in particular by people considering installing one.

February Film: *Thank You For The Rain*, A powerful film tracing the efforts of a subsistence farmer in Kenya to grow trees and encourage other villages to do so in order to protect their land from the unpredictable weather patterns brought by climate change. The footage is shot largely by the farmer, Kisulu, himself and his wife and offers a rare opportunity to get to know and share the daily life of some of those most adversely affected by the climate crisis.

March: Talk: an introduction to the now global Transition Movement, started by Rob Hopkins with his Transition Totnes. SK is a member of this movement of communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild our world and show that making even small changes in one's community matters. The discussion was led by members of Transition Chipping Norton: Marcus Simmons and Cara Hedges.

May Film: *How To Let Go Of The World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change*, a powerful film focused on some of the most dramatic effects of climate change and some of the remarkable people committed to trying to mitigate them in their communities all over the world.

This year also saw the launch of a new initiative: **Veggiemeet** - a series of plant-based meals in peoples' homes, open to any who would like to come, enabling cheerful get-togethers and the chance to discover some new recipes. The recipes - tasty, simple and inexpensive will be published at the end of the year for those who would like to try them at home. So far this year there have been three meetings, hosted by Joanna and Paul Clifford, Celia and Christy Hawkesworth and Jan and Mike Shackleton. They have been jolly, friendly opportunities to try out new dishes. It has proved difficult to encourage new people to sign up either as hosts or guests, but we hope that the idea will catch on in one form or another.

Celia Hawkesworth, May 2024