

Hanley Environment Group – 2025/26 Annual Report



Objective

The Group was established in 2019 to work towards making Hanley Castle Parish carbon neutral and to pursue positive environmental initiatives for the benefit of its residents and businesses. The Group's objectives are to:

- Encourage good environmental practices which reduce carbon reliance
- Nurture and increase biodiversity, and
- Support a pollution-free environment within the parish

Membership – Jackie Bass, Alan Rogers, Suzanne Bennet, Bidli Kings, Janet Lomas, Malcolm Fare, Steve Gogerty, Tom Sidwell & Cllrs Sue Adeney and Steve Pennant. Verge Officer- Nigel Hawthornthwaite

Volunteers – The group is blessed with many volunteers who participate in planting and maintenance work whatever the weather.

HEG would love more people to be involved – the contact is carbonhanley@gmail.com

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Verges / Hanley Habitats – Janet Lomas suggested a new cutting regime this year to reduce the grass at the critical growth time in the Spring for better results. The group is also working with the High school on appropriately enhancing the highways verges on either side of the junction of Church End with the main road. Native daffodil and snow drops were planted by that junction and at St Mary's in the autumn which appeared beautifully in the spring. The lengthsman cleared vegetation to reveal old signs to the church and pub.

Village Hall shrubs – To encourage wildlife in the parking area at the village hall HEG planted shrubs to attract and benefit insects, for example Mahonia. Mahonia has sprays of small, bright- yellow flowers which provide an important food source in winter for buff-tailed bumble bees. Mahonia's berries ripen in spring, at a time when berries are scarce, and are appreciated by blackbirds and thrushes.

Toad Watch - Volunteers were out at dusk in the early spring assisting and protecting toads migrating across Picken End to find the ponds where they were spawned to begin a new cycle of mating and spawning. A new sign was put up asking drivers to take care.

E-Bikes - Two community e-bikes are available for locals to try out. They're securely stored, insured, serviced and registered on the Smart Water scheme provided by the parish. Several residents have bought their own e-bikes after trials. We are now able to offer a **cycle to work scheme**. The scheme has its own e-bikes for hire, or applicants can get a kit to convert their own good quality bike to an e-bike. For more details contact carbonhanley@gmail.com.

Village Hall wall insulation - The Parish Council has paid for the walls of the greater hall to be insulated. The newer smaller hall already has cavity wall insulation. The exercise was undertaken by HEG with the approval of the Village Hall Committee.

The winning tender was provided by Evolve. The Evolve engineers drilled small holes into the external wall of the hall. The insulation material, tiny polystyrene beads, were injected into the cavity. Once the cavity is filled, the holes were sealed, ensuring the insulation remains effective. The insulation will reduce heat loss, lower energy bills, and stabilise indoor temperatures

Water Quality in Rivers and Brooks – Some volunteers are participating in the project Earth Watch and Waterblitz which involves taking samples and recording on line the level of phosphates and nitrates. Several volunteers did not receive test kits from Earth Watch. Of the four that did, one returned a very good reading (Poolbrook tributary, Days Coppice), one moderate (River Severn, Quay Lane) and two poor (Poolbrook, Holloway Dip and behind St Mary's church). Contact has also been made with the Rivers Trust

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Litter pick- as usual groups picked litter in the villages encouraged by the bacon butties to follow. There are several locals who make a point of picking up litter whilst out walking so our environment is kept fairly clear. The main roads and the route to Three Counties is a problem.

Educational events

- Ideas session 7th June which has fed into the HEG communication strategy
- Ponds for wildlife 4th September – which has resulted in at least one new pond in the village
- Visit to Crowle solar energy project – 13th October
- Let's talk about Farming – 26th February – very interesting presentations from 2 local farmers and Geoff Samsone MBE Natural England, Oxford Farming Conference and Worcestershire farmer.
- In addition, events in other neighbouring parishes are promoted and supported.

Partnership- Black Poplar Project. Castlemorton Environmental group are leading on this, but we are seeking suitable locations to plant these local species in the parish, and to increase the knowledge of these trees, their importance and how they should be maintained. Treescapes organised a trip to Birtsmorton to plant Black Poplars.

Communications strategy

To ensure the group makes the most of its limited resources and has a genuine positive impact on the local environment, the group has commissioned a communications strategy. The group invited 3 quotes, and the winning consultancy was Creative Tendency, which happens to be based in the parish. The strategy will establish:

1. Who HEG are really trying to reach, with a special emphasis on young people;
2. What the optimum communication channels; &
3. How to exploit new ways of communicating to different groups.

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Street trees, field trees and hedges

Street Trees

The parish council funded HEG to commission a further 6 trees on the Welland Road in Hanley Swan. This brings the total of street trees planted in the last couple of years to 15. All the trees have been chosen for suitability to streets or verges. They will not grow too large and have benefits for wildlife, as well as attractive leaves, blossom and bark.

Field trees

TreeScapes planted 4,400 saplings in and around our Parish with the help of our volunteers

Site	No. Trees	Planting Type	How
Spring Meadows	30	Hedgerow	Landowner
Blanford Close	270	Hedgerow	Volunteer day
Walk Farm	420	Restocking	Volunteer day
BPF	100	restocking	Landowner
Watery Lane	25	Tree Rows	Landowner
Coverside	185	Restocking	Volunteer day
UDC	100	Restocking	Volunteer day
Stable Farm	1100	Shelterbelt	Volunteer day
Cotton Cottage Farm	900	Hedgerow	Volunteer day
Coverside	1100	Shelterbelt	Contractors
Cotton Cottage Farm	50	Willow Planting	Volunteers
Coverside Farm	100	Woodpasture and restocking	Volunteers
John Clements	5	Black Poplars	Treescapes
Stable farm	3	Woodpasture	Treescapes
TOTAL =	4388		

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Hedges

More volunteers helped plant new hedging at Cotton Cottage Farm (just beyond the Three Counties Showground). That was another 900 plants done in conjunction with Treescapes and CPRE. The two new hedges at The Glebe, planted one and two years ago, were weeded and mulched.

Many trees planted by HEG in previous years have flourished. For example, the 150 trees planted in November 2021 below:



October 2021



November 2021



August 2025



May 2026