

# Brightling Environment Group



In February 2023, a group of local people came together to explore ways our local community could reduce carbon emissions, reverse biodiversity loss, and tackle the challenges of climate change. Since then, Brightling Environment Group has met regularly, and held a series of what we hope are informative and enjoyable events. The group is open to all: for details of all our events, to join our mailing list or to become a member, please contact [brightlingenvironmentgroup@gmail.com](mailto:brightlingenvironmentgroup@gmail.com)

## ***Events last year***

At a **Moth Breakfast** in July, Caroline Moore revealed that in the three moth traps set in our area over two nights, 98 species were found. There were no rare species but we were able to see up close the beauty and variety of the moths, while realising at the same time how external lighting really disrupts their limited time to feed, mate and pollinate.



At Brightling Flower and Dog show in July our **Dark Sky stall** saw more than 40 people pledge to reduce their external lighting and help tackle light pollution.

As part of the **High Weald Wild About Dark Skies Festival** in October and November, we held two events:

In **Darker Brightling** our three expert speakers brilliantly convinced the 80+ audience members to reduce their external lighting, which adds to the pollution of the night sky, and disrupts the feeding and breeding patterns of bats, insects and other night-dwelling creatures. Doug Edworthy, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, spoke of the beauty of our galaxy, Ryan Greaves from Sussex Bat Group made the case for bats, and bumblebee expert Professor Dave Goulson from the University of Sussex explained why protecting pollinators is vital for human survival. Sadly, the weather was too poor for Sussex Sidewalk Astronomers to show us the stars, but we are planning other events with them soon – watch this space.

**Into the Night** Later that week, 22 people met at a private Brightling location for an exciting, after-dark walk through woodland, hay meadow, orchards and other examples of typical local habitats. We discussed the stars visible at this time of year, identified local light-pollution

hotspots, and learnt about the nocturnal creatures who live in the dark – the world's largest habitat.

**Dead-hedge Laying Workshop** In November, BEG teamed up with High Weald National Landscape to run a one-day workshop exploring a new technique, developed locally, for restoring overgrown hedges, and which creates both a dense, useful and attractive barrier, and a browse-proof habitat for birds and invertebrates. This workshop generated so much interest from landowners, farmers, hedging contractors and conservationists that the project is expanding this year (see more details below).



## ***Events for 2025***

### **Spring Dark Skies SkyWalk, 17 April, 7.30 pm**

Stargazing and Nature Walk with refreshments, at a private Brightling location. To book, visit [www.tickettailor.com](http://www.tickettailor.com) and look for Wild About Dark Skies Walking Tour (<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/highwealdnationallandscapepartnership/1533564>) or email [brightlingenvironmentgroup@gmail.com](mailto:brightlingenvironmentgroup@gmail.com)

### **Great Green Garden Party, 7 June, 1-5pm**

Linked to the Weald to Waves project, this is an afternoon in a Brightling garden looking at how to encourage wildlife and bio-diversity in our own backyards, and encouraging local people to join the Weald to Waves nature-friendly garden network. Includes a pollinator-friendly plant sale, refreshments, garden tour, and lots of helpful information and resources from specialists such as the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Sussex Bat Group, Butterfly Conservation.

**Stall** 19 July at Flower and Dog show

### **Warmer Brightling 2, October (date tbc)**

Following on from our successful event in 2023 about using alternative energy sources to heat our homes we return with a first-hand report from a Brightling resident on how an airsource heat pump has actually performed in their old property across a whole year, and answering the critical question - were they warm enough? We'll also be joined by retrofit specialist Martin Turner from Energise Sussex Coast, who will answer questions and give an overview of how to heat even old homes greener.

**Dead Hedge Laying: a multi-year project**

BEG is looking for local landowners and hedging contractors to attend our planned training week in September, with a view to a joining a multi-year, landscape-level project. There will also be an opportunity for those without hedges to get involved as volunteers, beginning this summer with citizen-science monitoring of birds and invertebrates in and around existing hedges.