

Middlesbrough Environment City Newsletter



It's been an extremely busy time for MEC, attending the Tees Valley Business Summit, running events and working within the local community to deliver help and change wherever possible. Read on for more about what we did throughout June and July.

MEC AT THE TEES VALLEY BUSINESS SUMMIT



Alex from the Middlesbrough Food Partnership (L) and Charlotte from Climate Action Middlesbrough (R) representing MEC at the Tees Valley Business Summit

MEC recently had a presence at the Tees Valley Business Summit, held at Teesside University. We were represented by Alex from Middlesbrough Food Partnership, as well as Jodie and Charlotte from Climate Action Middlesbrough. MEC attracted a lot of attention from businesses in attendance with our stand, as well as our brand new business cards. Well done team for representing us well at the Summit!

THE DEBUT OF 'GROWING FOOD IN A CHANGING CLIMATE'

Climate Action Middlesbrough and Communities Growing Together recently teamed together to deliver training on 'Growing Food in a Changing Climate', which was hosted by Jodie from Climate Action Middlesbrough and Dave from Communities Growing Together.

The session was very informative, with useful every day tips, and helped to showcase what attendees could do, as well as the challenges they'd face, in growing food in a climate that continues to change through the climate crisis.



Jodie from Climate Action Middlesbrough delivering the new 'Growing Food In A Changing Climate' workshop to attentive attendees

CELEBRATING GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK WITH CLIMATE ACTION MIDDLESBROUGH



Jodie from Climate Action Middlesbrough delivering the new 'Growing Food In A Changing Climate' workshop to attentive attendees

From June 8th to June 16th, Climate Action Middlesbrough ran several events to celebrate Great Big Green Week. The events centered around the GBGW theme of 'swapping', with events including furniture and clothes giveaways, an upcycling workshop to turn crisp packets into blankets for people experiencing homelessness, and a swap challenge to swap transport, diets, habits, energy, or goods for something more sustainable. The event was a success on social media, engaging with people from all walks of life to think more about green ideas and what swaps they can make for the betterment of the planet.

CAM REACH OUT TO JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL FOR BIODIVERSITY

Climate Action Middlesbrough also reached out to the James Cook University hospital late in June and carried out a biodiversity survey. The NHS have a net zero and biodiversity net gain plan nationwide and are encouraging all NHS sites to complete a biodiversity survey: For James Cook University Hospital to accomplish this, they enlisted the help of Climate Action Middlesbrough to conduct it! CAM walked around the hospital site and identified various species, including species on a forgotten wildflower meadow near the site. CAM agreed to help them manage the site in the future to hopefully maintain and increase biodiversity!



Staff from Climate Action Middlesbrough and the NHS on-site measuring biodiversity.

A NEW CEO INCOMING



Vicki Putson (Image from Handball England) will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from various sectors to Middlesbrough Environment City

Middlesbrough Environment City is excited to announce that our new CEO, Vicki Putson, will be starting in her new role on August 12th 2024.

Vicki brings with her a wealth of experience from organisations such as the RCVDA, England Handball, the Rugby Football Union and UK Coaching, to name just a few organisations on her impressive resume. As Vicki joins us, bringing her skills and experience, we look forward to the next exciting chapter of our story!

MEC SIGNS UP TO THE HLS PLEDGE

Middlesbrough Environment City signed up to the Health & Life Sciences Pledge to encourage, enable and empower more innovation in, and to collectively address, regional health and social care challenges.

Under the 3 C's (Communicate, Collaborate, Celebrate) and the 3 E's (Encourage, Enable, Empower), we hope to help address regional health and social care inequalities!

You can find our pledge page at <https://hlspledge.org.uk/.../middlesbrough-environment-city/>, and can find out more about the HLS Pledge at <https://hlspledge.org.uk/>!



Middlesbrough Food Partnership Lead Alex Young (L) and Hannah Gibson, Sustainability Project Manager at Health Innovation North East and North Cumbria (R)

COMMUNITIES GROWING TOGETHER, GROWING STRONGER

Communities Growing Together continues to grow from strength to strength ever since its inception. With close ties to a number of local community initiatives, including the Regeneration of Communities plot at Saltersgill Allotments and the Edible Forest Garden at Berwick Hills Nature Reserve. The Cooking Team, who form a core part of Communities Growing Together, have also been delivering numerous cooking sessions once again, including Let's Cook at St. Barnabas Church.



The new logo for Communities Growing Together



Kim working on the Sandy Flatts Community Garden!

Communities Growing Together hosts numerous regular events in its calendar, including volunteering at the Sandy Flatts Community Garden which is based outside our offices here at Sandy Flatts Lane in Acklam, as well as the Edible Forest Garden at Berwick Hills Nature Reserve and at the Town Farm Community Allotment.

There's also regular Volunteer Action Days at the Regeneration of Communities allotment, taking place every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month.

Contact david.scriven@mencity.org.uk to sign up to the regular events list that gets sent out regularly every month, find something you'd enjoy, and sign up to volunteer and help our communities grow together!



CGT Project Lead Dave Scriven tackling overgrowth at the Regeneration of Communities allotment.

MIDDLESBROUGH FOOD PARTNERSHIP GOES FOR GOLD

Momentum has been building in Middlesbrough for a healthy and sustainable food environment since the inception of the Food Partnership. The Middlesbrough Food Partnership are continuing to push forwards for the Sustainable Food Places Gold award. The journey towards gold incorporates the town's past and present achievements stemming from those based on our silver award. Middlesbrough Food Partnership has begun to push diligently for the Gold award, via the 24 Carrot Gold campaign which launched with much pomp and circumstance at an event based at Middlesbrough College in March of this year, helmed by a number of guests and speakers.



Attendees at the launch campaign for 24 Carrot Gold at Middlesbrough College



Guest Speaker Dominic Watters at the 24 Carrot Gold launch campaign.

While we did have to bid farewell to long-time Middlesbrough Food Partnership lead Joe Dunne earlier this year, we're excited to see what the new project lead, Alex Young, has in store and how she will finish off the hard work already done to secure the Gold Award!

Plenty of work is going on behind the scenes in order to ensure that the application can be delivered swiftly and smoothly, and we can't wait to share it with you when we do finally secure that much desired Gold Award!

JENNY'S PASTA PILOT PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR PEOPLE WITH SMI



Packages of Jenny's Pasta at a local Eco Shop, delivered for and by people with SMI.

Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC), along with Teesside University and Tees Esk and Wear Valley Trust (TEWW), set up a pilot research project to support people living in Middlesbrough who live with severe mental illness (SMI) to enable them to eat well.

TEWW identified a small group of people who wanted to participate in the project and work with MEC's Cooking Team, our very own Les and Kim, to create healthy recipes, cook and prepare a healthy ready meal and then evaluate the findings: These sessions ran for 15 weeks at Teesside University. One recipe was chosen to be made into a frozen ready meal, and then mass produced to be distributed to 3 selected Eco Shops. Each Eco Shop had 10 volunteers to take the microwave meal away and answer a questionnaire about the products taste, its packaging and more to ensure it was suitable for them.

Teesside University academics are now in the process of assessing the success of this project. They are looking at how the group improves the diet of people with SMI, and whether the ready meal is suitable for Social Supermarket customers. Researchers will also assess how well the organisations worked together on this project with the findings being shared in a research article, research newsletters and blogs.

Findings will be used to develop a larger funding application with the three organisations' partners to enable the project to work on a larger scale to produce more meals, supporting more people access healthy, affordable food and have a better diet.

CYCLE TO WORK DAY!

Cycle to Work Day is the UK's biggest cycling commuting event. Everyone is encouraged to get on their bike and cycle to work! Cycling (and walking) have the lowest rates of emissions of any mode of transport. Transport contributes to one quarter (24%) of carbon emissions from energy use and 74.5% of transport emissions come from road vehicles. Using a bike instead of a car for short trips would reduce travel emissions by around 75%. That's because cycling has a carbon footprint of just 33 grams of CO₂ per mile travelled, whilst a car produces 185 grams per mile.

As part of Cycle to Work Day, Climate Action Middlesbrough are hosting a competition to encourage MEC staff to Cycle to Work, or walk instead, with the winner getting free Bikeability lessons.

CYCLING TO WORK: THE BENEFITS

- 1) Boost your immune system - On average, cycle commuting employees take one less sick day per year than non-cyclists and save the UK economy almost £83m.
- 2) Save money - The cost of maintaining a bike is far lower than the equivalent costs of running a car
- 3) Get fit! - It's a low-impact, adaptable exercise that can burn calories at a rate of 400-750 calories per hour, depending on the weight of the rider, speed and type of cycling you're doing.
- 4) Live longer - A study looking at active commuting found that those that cycle to work have a massive 41% lower risk of dying from all causes.
- 5) Reduce your carbon footprint - The total CO₂ emissions per kilometre of riding your bike is about 21g – more than 10 times less than a car - even when considering the carbon needed to create a bicycle.

(Adapted from Cycling UK's "21 Reasons to Cycle to Work" which can be found at <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/21-reasons-cycle-work>)

JOB VACANCY

We are currently advertising an exciting position here to help spearhead an exciting new project aimed at delivering real change to the local area here at Middlesbrough Environment City: We're looking for a Food System Coordinator to deliver and implement a localised food system change, across a three-year project based in Middlesbrough. You'll support Middlesbrough Food Partnership and Middlesbrough Food Action Plan to help implement a blueprint for localised food system change.

If you want to make a change to your local area, then we wholly encourage you to apply for the post by visiting <https://menvcity.org.uk/food-system-coordinator/>, downloading the application form and sending it to us via e-mail by 1pm on Thursday 8th August 2024!

ON OUR CALENDAR

- Volunteering @ Sandy Flatts Community Garden - Every Tuesday, 10am til 12pm - MEC, Acklam, TS5 7YN
- Volunteering @ Edible Forest Garden Group - Every Thursday, 10am to 12pm & 9.30am to 12.30pm (Alternating) - Berwick Hills Nature Reserve
- Sandy Flatts Growers Drop-In Celebration - Tuesday August 13th 10am til 1.30 pm - MEC, Acklam, TS5 7YN
- Volunteer Action Day - Friday 9th August & Friday 23rd August - Regeneration of Communities @ Saltersgill Allotments