

History of the founding of the Halesworth Environment Group and its evolution into a charity.

In November 1997 a few interested people alongside the Halesworth Town Council started a Halesworth Environment Group which had its first meeting at the school as part of a 'Vision for Halesworth Conference'. 35 acres of grazing marsh was offered to the town to purchase and it was agreed this group would work to take on the purchase of this land. This group included Richard and Judith Woolnough, Sue and John Bainer, Arthur Forrester, John Hoffman, Martin Aumonier and Linda Owen who continued after the Conference to meet regularly erecting an exhibition in the library in 1998 of proposed plans for the future. In 1999 work parties started and we all attended these for many years, monthly.

In 2000 The Halesworth Millennium Green Charity was formed to be a vehicle for buying the land, protect its future and enabling fundraising. The first Chair was Arthur Forrester a retired Land Registry employee. Other founder trustees were Sue Bainer, retired from a background in business development in education and conveyancing in charge of marketing and fundraising. John Hoffman a retired bank manager became Treasurer. Richard Woolnough, Conservationist and Peter Downing, a local farmer led the management and work groups. In 2002 the trustees were joined by Linda Owen, Biologist who took over the finances when John Hoffman left as Treasurer. Linda left in 2009 and John Bainer who was an Educational Psychologist having been treasurer for the largest self-build housing development in the U.K. for many years as a volunteer, took over as a Trustee and Treasurer. In 2011 the Trustees were joined by Sal Jenkinson, a retired lawyer and Nicky Rowbottom, a freelance environmental education consultant and later by Mike Jackson, Mark Fisher, Don Foster, Paul Hyden and Jane Kirkeby.

The group played a significant role in the community's environmental initiatives and conservation efforts over the years. The commitment of the founding members, their diverse backgrounds, and the various roles they played in the organization showcase the collaborative and community-driven nature of the group. It is sad to acknowledge the passing of 5 founding members, especially those who contributed significantly to the group's success. Their legacy, however, lives on through the positive impact they've had on the community and the environment.