

CLIMATE CHANGE

ABOUT

The rise in the public consciousness of climate change in 2019 was evidenced by the Collins word of the year, Climate Strike. Figures such as Greta Thunberg and India Logan-Riley have familiarised climate change amongst young people worldwide and drawn attention to the action needed to combat climate change locally and nationally.

NALC responded to this appeal by organising a climate change panel session and declaring a climate emergency at its Annual Conference in October 2019. NALC is proud that many local (parish and town) councils declare a climate emergency and are working to encourage others to do the same.

NALC believes that, collectively, across 10,000 local councils, we can tackle climate change locally and create more climate-friendly communities.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change refers to the long-term shift in the Earth's weather patterns and average temperatures. For the past 250 years, humans have contributed to the increased release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, which causes an increase in global temperatures.

Burning fossil fuels, such as coal, produces energy while releasing greenhouse gases. The long-term challenge is addressing this build-up of greenhouse gases and ensuring a clean future for future generations. For example, according to the MET Office, atmospheric carbon dioxide rose by 40% during the 20th and 21st centuries and is now over 400 ppm (parts per million). This level of carbon dioxide is higher than at any time in the past 800,000 years.

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT 2021

The report aimed to accurately depict how climate change is being tackled by local councils and identify their challenges. In doing so, NALC can better understand how to support local councils in creating more sustainable communities.

NALC is committed to guiding and supporting local councils in accessing funding, expertise and power to influence to tackle climate change within their communities.

Over four months, data were collected from local councils across England through an online survey of 211 respondents. The survey explored the sustainable actions local councils are implementing, including climate emergency declarations, neighbourhood plans, carbon-reducing measures, and climate working groups.

CLIMATE CHANGE CASE STUDIES

The *Climate change case studies* publication is for local councils and county associations to use as examples of work carried out in their communities. These are examples of best practices and demonstrate actions to tackle climate change locally.

The publication is divided into various topics; biodiversity, carbon offsetting and reduction, climate change forums, community projects, greener housing, electric charging points, energy and heating, environmental improvement, flood assistance, green travel, plastic reduction and trees and tree management. It is designed to incorporate all areas of climate change.

WHAT CAN YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL DO?

- Declare a **climate** emergency
- **Create a task force to establish a green agenda** that includes developing a resilience policy and engaging in flood defence measures
- **Develop and promote green transport plans, including safe routes to school**
- **Ensure that all council buildings are as energy-efficient as possible** and that energy is not wasted through unnecessary heating and lighting
- **Use green energy sources** and environmentally friendly products
- Plan for a green community in a neighbourhood plan
- **Limit the use of plastics**, especially single-use plastics, in your council
- Reduce waste and recycle as much as possible
- Protect important open spaces and carbon sinks and consider creating a community orchard and/or wildflower meadow and/or allotments
- Look at the existing powers of councils regarding climate change — [find out more](#)

What can councils do?

In the simplest terms. Biodiversity refers to the variety of species on Earth. The latest [State of Nature Report](#) 2019 from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds showed that 56% of our species declined between 1970 and 2013, with 15% already extinct or threatened with extinction from our shores. To counteract this local council could:

- Protect ancient woodland in their area
- Look to increase tree cover, where possible
- Plant and seed native shrub species, where possible
- Look to include wildflowers, where possible, for nectar provision and to bear seed as food for birds.

What can councils do?

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Tree Charter

Between 2017 and 2020, NALC partnered with the Woodland Trust, the National Union for Students (NUS), and the Tree Council to embed the ten principles of the Charter for Trees, Woods, and People (the Tree Charter) within communities across the UK. The Big Lottery funded the partnership.

The Tree Charter was launched at Lincoln Castle on 6 November 2017 and set out the principles for a society where people and trees can stand stronger together. The charter branch network included local (parish and town) councils, schools, community woodland groups, artists and campaigners.

The ten principles are:

1. Sustain landscapes rich in wildlife
2. Plant for the future
3. Celebrate the power of trees to inspire
4. Grow forests of opportunity and innovation
5. Protect irreplaceable trees and woods
6. Plan greener local landscapes
7. Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees
8. Make trees accessible to all
9. Combat the threats to our habitats
10. Strengthen our landscapes with trees