



Stinsford Parish Council

Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy

Overview

1. Global and national context

1.1 The state of the climate, the impacts of climate change and the unprecedented decline in biodiversity led the UK to be the first national government to declare an environment and climate emergency in May 2019. Dorset Council made a similar declaration shortly afterwards.

In March 2021, Stinsford Parish Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

1.2 The Parish Council moved quickly to draft its Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (its 'strategy'). Recognising that a parish can only do so much, it has set a target to achieve **net zero emissions by 2040** which aligns with the target set by Dorset Council but the Parish Council has also set itself wider related goals.

2. Policy context

2.1 The strategy outlines the evidence base for climate change and its impacts; it also draws on wide-ranging evidence of biodiversity loss. It sets out the global and national level ambitions and targets. Dorset Council has developed a strategy and action plan and this has been taken into account by Stinsford Parish Council when developing its strategy.

2.2 Stinsford Parish Council produced its *Neighbourhood Plan* after extensive consultation and resident engagement in February 2021. It contains **numerous initiatives linked to tackling climate change as well as protecting, restoring and improving our ecosystems**. The *Neighbourhood Plan* has informed this strategy and a number of its policies are being taken forward as part of it.



2.3 The strategy also provides for the engagement of residents and businesses in promoting change and developing innovative approaches to address the challenges that we face, while opening up the potential to work with partner organisations and business to achieve its goals. Stinsford Parish Council has produced a Communication Strategy (2 August 2022) with a view to strengthen community engagement.

2.4 Stinsford Parish Council also recognises the importance of monitoring climate change impacts in the parish.

2.5 While it is right to be ambitious, we also need to be realistic about what we can achieve in the parish through change in everyday practices, rewilding projects and community-based activities.

3. Why Stinsford matters in this context

3.1 It is important to recognise that Stinsford provides *a priceless heritage landscape* that can help offset greenhouse gas emissions from elsewhere in the county, but it is, in the main, unsuitable for large scale renewable projects.



3.2 While Stinsford is relatively rich in a diversity of habitats ranging from water meadows, heathland and woodland to the high chalk downs to the north of the parish, these habitats are *at risk from climate change and other human activities*, including some contemporary farming practices. Data suggests that there are a wide variety of species in the parish but this could rapidly change as a result of climate change.

3.3 *Climate change is already affecting how we live our lives* but it will bring increased risks for people, their health and wellbeing, and property. It will affect people in different ways but the vulnerable are likely to be most affected. We will need to adapt, and everyone can play a part.

4. Playing our part

4.1 The strategy sets out the means by which objectives might be achieved. It stresses *the important role that residents, business and the council can play in achieving net zero emissions by 2040*.

4.2 A delivery plan has been prepared. It provides an extensive range of suggested actions that might be taken forward in the short (1 year), medium (2.5 years) and long (5 years plus) term with the support of residents and businesses. These are initial proposals to generate debate around this issue. There are other possibilities that we hope will come from residents in the process of delivering our objectives. The important thing is that Stinsford plays a role in reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions and it stems ecological decline.



5. Conclusion

5.1 No one should lose by addressing climate and ecological change and with this in mind we recognise that climate change is also about climate justice. We cannot see this as a purely scientific issue – it is also a social one. It is our duty as a council to do whatever we can to address this unique and pressing challenge for the good of all.

Climate and ecological change

Just one of the challenges...

and some of the many opportunities...

in Stinsford Parish.



All photographs courtesy of Sarah Jane Pattison.

Strategy agreed by Stinsford Parish Council, 12 Oct 2021 and updated, 2 August 2022.