

EVEN FOR GIANT PROBLEMS YOU NEED TO START SOMEWHERE



Mike Childs, Head of Science, Policy and Research with Friends of the Earth offers some practical suggestions for all parish and community councils

A climate and ecological emergency. It sounds enormous. How can a relatively tiny town, parish or community council do anything worthwhile compared to the scale of this challenge?

Well I think we can all take inspiration from a small Swedish schoolgirl whose name is now known across the World – Greta Thunberg. Inspiration not just from what she's achieved but by her courage and determination not to be daunted.

And let us not be daunted, because we know that at our best humans have a great potential to be collaborative, innovative and empathetic.

Below are some thoughts on what parish councils can do. It's a summary of a longer list on the SLCC website. Some of the ideas may not be appropriate for your area. But hopefully it can help inform your thinking.

BE A FORCE FOR GOOD.

Being a force for good is about influencing others to act. We all have a voice and we need to use it and encourage others to do so as well. There is something very British about getting on and doing things quietly. But by speaking out and speaking up we create the space for others to feel comfortable to do so as well. So, I'd encourage you to support the formation of **Climate Action Groups** of like-minded people to deliver practical change and push for political change. I'd encourage you to **vocally support applications for new renewable energy in the area**. The UK needs to increase the amount of renewable energy it generates by around eight-fold. And how about bringing **together groups of people for bulk purchase** of solar PV or other renewable technologies such as heat pumps. It is a model used widely in the Netherlands and places such as Suffolk in the UK.

DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP THROUGH YOUR OWN ACTIONS.

Psychologists tell us that if we don't practice what we preach we'll suffer from cognitive dissonance and none of us want that. Practicing what we preach is however more than just about mental health, it also helps others know what is possible. As a species we are very adept at learning from the actions of others. So, the council could use **Salix funding for energy saving measures** and spread the word about what it's doing. It could **install renewable energy generation at council buildings**, for example heat-pumps and solar PV and use these as a showcase to help local people see these technologies first-hand, particularly the less familiar technologies. And it could **manage land for nature**, for example allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, commons and open spaces, and village greens. All of these can be managed to increase nature.

USE YOUR POWERS

Ensure you know the **climate change or nature implications of decisions before you make them**. Requiring every decision to be well-informed is common-sense as well as good practice. **Identify sites within the Neighbourhood Plan for trees, renewable energy and nature restoration**. As you know 90% of Neighbourhood Plans are led by town and parish councils working and while the process is far from perfect it does offer the community to demonstrate that it means business on protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Ultimately young Greta and the millions of young people with her across the world may not win. But she will be able to hold her head up high. We can do the same if we show similar determination. And if enough of us do so, then with human ingenuity, cooperation and empathy even the most giant problems can be overcome.



PLANNING AND CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION - WHAT SHOULD CLERKS BE AWARE OF?



Andrew Towlerton, SLCC's National Planning Advisor, looks at recent changes to legislation and how this affects clerks looking into climate change

Recent months have seen a raft of announcements and legislative changes by the Government aimed at strengthening the role of the planning system in addressing climate change. Some of the key ones clerk's should be aware of are:

- The Environment Bill published in October 2015 requires that developers in England must deliver a net biodiversity gain of "at least" 10% on housing and other developments. In situations where the 10% gain is not possible, developers will have to fund the creation of new wildlife habitats elsewhere. Any habitats created to deliver net gain must be maintained by the developers for "at least" 30 years. Further details can be found at www.gov.uk/government/news/government-introduces-ground-breaking-environment-bill.
- The same Bill:
 - Requires local planning authorities to create "local nature recovery strategies" to map out current biodiversity levels and identify opportunities for enhancement.
 - Commits the Government to set an "ambitious", legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter, PM2.5 (a major source of air pollution), and increase local powers to address sources of air pollution
 - States the Government will seek to better manage waste, including through new powers to ensure that producers take responsibility for the waste they create, introducing a nationally consistent approach to recycling, tackling waste crime, introducing bottle deposit return schemes and more effective litter enforcement.
- The Future Homes Standard will set minimum environmental standards for all new housing, including a commitment to removing traditional fossil fuel heating systems from 2025. The Government has launched a consultation on stronger building regulations "that will pave the way for the Future Homes Standard". Details can be found at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings.
- The statutory New National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and how local authorities can achieve quality and great design. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide.
- Additional funding has been made available for local communities (including parish councils) to transform unloved, neglected or derelict urban areas into new green 'pocket parks'. Further details can be found at www.gov.uk/government/news/vibrant-new-parks-set-to-benefit-communities-with-government-funding



EMERGENCY ACTION

Helen Bojaniwska, PSLCC, Town Clerk to Stroud Town Council in Gloucestershire, shares the steps that her council took in declaring a climate emergency

As the birthplace of Extinction Rebellion it will probably come as no great surprise that Stroud Town Council was among the first local councils to declare a climate emergency and set a target for becoming carbon neutral.

Established in 1990, for the majority of its history the council has been in Green Party political control, so there was already a strong focus on the environment and many positive steps had already been taken. In 2016, for example, we contracted out emptying litter and



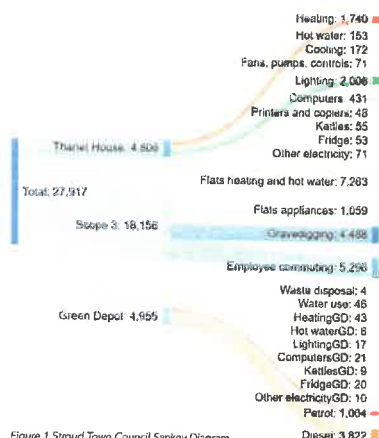
dog bins to our district council's contractors, immediately eliminating duplicated journeys and justifying the disposal of a diesel-heavy flatbed truck. We also bought an e-bike for our Green Spaces Manager to use.

An environmental policy covering issues like peat-free compost, ethical procurement and recycling was already in place, but the climate emergency declaration introduced greater urgency to our work. We have committed to:

1. Becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030

The first step was to commission a carbon audit looking at the amount of greenhouse gases generated from:

- **Scope 1** – direct emissions from owned or controlled sources e.g. petrol used in council vehicles or tools.
- **Scope 2** – indirect emissions e.g. the generation of purchased electricity
- **Scope 3** – all other indirect emissions, e.g. from purchased goods and services, travel and employee commuting.



A Sankey diagram (Fig.1) illustrates our current carbon footprint at 28 tonnes. Not unexpectedly the biggest contributors are heating, fuel (for vehicles and tools) and travel (staff and contractors). Some carbon savings will be relatively cheap and easy, e.g. switching to LED lighting or battery powered tools, but retrofitting our listed office building will be a costly challenge.



FACT FILE: STROUD

🏠 Population	13,740
👥 Staff (FTE)	9.7
💷 Annual budget (19/20)	£1,340,044
💷 Parish share of council tax at Band D	12%

The audit outlines potential reductions of 16 tonnes a year at a cost of about £120,000, which I am

currently costing for budgeting purposes. Even once all of the steps recommended are completed, there will still be a residual 12 tonnes to tackle, either by offsetting or potentially through advocacy schemes.

2. Creating a carbon reduction grant pot

Half of the initial £10,000 budget was used to buy a second-hand electric van for our Green Spaces team. Surprisingly we have yet to receive any applications for the rest. It may be that the need to demonstrate how much carbon is saved is putting people off, so I am writing some guidance notes, which hopefully will encourage local projects to apply.

3. Include environmental implications of recommendations in officer reports

Initially this was quite a challenge, but there are some very useful online calculators available. I calculated, for example, that swapping my 2.5 mile commute from car to bike would save 200kg of carbon annually. (Calculated at: <https://tinyurl.com/yb4e76af>).

4. Facilitate and encourage our community

We are blessed in Stroud with an environmentally aware community and many local groups eager to tackle the climate emergency. The challenge is keeping track of all of the different groups and finding ways to work with them.



We have been working with the Stop Ecocide campaign (www.stopecocide.earth) to develop a framework to support this and became the first Earth Protector Town in September. The scheme is due to be rolled out in 2020.

Our team have been documenting our projects so that other communities can learn from our experience. You will find a growing library of information at <https://stroudtown.gov.uk/information/climate-emergency/>

THE BIGGER EMERGENCY

We can no longer afford to aim towards sustainability – we have to be regenerative, because it is clear that we are facing a far wider emergency. The current rates of global species and habitat loss are truly alarming. This will mean extensive rewilding, so we are using our parks to demonstrate what this will involve, for example tree, hedge and wildflower planting.

Figure 1 Stroud Town Council Sankey Diagram

Top Ten Tree Tips

for your Parish or Town Council

Town and Parish Councils are at the forefront of local communities delivering action to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies we face. The points below are our top ten tips to harness the benefits of woods and trees in your area.



1. Declare a **climate** and biodiversity emergency.

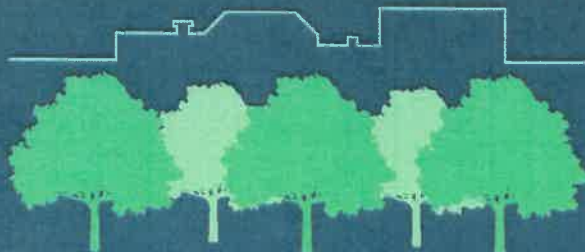


Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People

2. Agree to support the **10 Tree Charter** principles and consider passing a resolution to become a Tree Charter Branch.



3. Review your landholdings and ask local businesses, churches or landowners about tree and hedgerow planting opportunities. Once you have a suitable location, **order a free community tree pack**.



4. Ensure policies for protecting and planting trees and woods are part of local **neighbourhood plans**.



5. When responding to local **plan consultations**, support planting, protection and restoration of woods and trees.



6. Consider the opportunity to create a **community orchard** in your area.



8. Help track the effects of climate change by recording local impact with the **Nature's Calendar** project.



7. Recognise the heritage and cultural significance of old trees and ensure that any in your town/parish are recorded on the **Ancient Tree Inventory**.



9. Encourage, promote and support **positive behaviours** towards woods and trees in your community – for example commit to FSC certified only products across all community facilities and amongst local businesses.



10. Learn more about tree pests and diseases in your area via the **Observatree** website.

If you would like to know more, discuss this or have another tree or wood related question that impacts upon your town or parish council, get in touch with us via charter@woodlandtrust.org.uk

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Claire Goldfinch, Policy and Communications Intern at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), offers advice on tackling climate change

Today, the topic of climate change is inescapable. Everywhere you turn there is something new being discussed or prominent people, such as, Greta Thunberg, the famous ecowarrior teenager, highlighting the collective action necessary to tackle climate change. This has filtered to a local level, as many local (parish and town) councils have taken action and declared a climate emergency.

As a response to this, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) declared a climate emergency and hosted a climate change panel at its Annual Conference held on 28 and 29 October 2019 in Milton Keynes. The panel discussed ways that local councils can become more climate-conscious, by promoting green travel; using community green energy schemes, and, sharing examples of good practice.

NALC TACKLES CLIMATE CHANGE

In addition to declaring a climate emergency, NALC will tackle climate change by:

- Committing to stopping the use of single-use plastics in its offices
- Encouraging members to carry refillable bottles and reusable cups to conferences
- Travelling by public transport (where possible)
- Encouraging councils to plant trees
- Highlighting good practise examples.

Moreover, NALC supports eco-friendly communities through its alliance with The Woodland Trust and its Tree Charter project. The Tree Charter comprises of 10 principles and is aimed at producing climate-conscious 'Charter Branches'. Currently, over 300 local councils have signed up to the Tree Charter and are making a real difference in their communities.

On 30 November 2019, NALC will be celebrating Tree Charter Day which aims to get 1m people involved in tree planting and increase tree cover in England. Alongside The Woodland Trust, NALC encouraged Charter Branches to host tree planting events by supplying them with free trees and Tree Charter toolkits. (See more: www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/treearcher)

LOCAL COUNCIL ACTIONS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2018, Frome Town Council in Somerset declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The 17 councillors unanimously agreed to sign the Covenant of Mayors to track progress and link with others who are also cutting emissions. The council have shared its 'Climate Emergency Paper' and a 'Zero Carbon toolkit' online so that other councils may follow their lead. Additionally, the council introduced a solar funding project that helps residents install solar panels at a discounted rate. Frome's progressive outlook is educating residents to become more climate-conscious and is helping to challenge climate change locally.

Likewise, Penrith Town Council in Cumbria is a key member of the stakeholder group, Plastic Clever Penrith. They provide initiatives and advice to residents and businesses regarding the plastic waste reduction. Their vision is to have every business in Penrith sign up to a voluntary plastic-clever scheme which includes:

- Biodegradable alternatives to plastic bags and an incentive for customers to use their own
- To replace plastic cups and straws with biodegradable alternatives
- To replace plastic packaging with biodegradable alternatives
- To ensure that town events include plastic-free guidelines.

TEN TIPS TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE:

1. Declare a climate emergency
2. Sign up to the Tree Charter
3. Develop and promote green transport
4. Ensure that all council buildings are as energy-efficient as possible
5. Increase tree cover
6. Plan for a green community in a neighbourhood plan
7. Limit the use of single-use plastics
8. Recycle as much as possible
9. Create a task force to establish a green agenda
10. Consider a community orchard in your community.

NALC believes that collectively, across 10,000 local councils in England, climate change can be tackled locally. NALC is proud that many local councils are declaring a climate emergency and are working to help others do the same.

DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY



Jim Griffiths, Town Clerk to Machynlleth Town Council in Powys, discusses the historic moment of becoming the first Welsh town to declare a climate emergency

Machynlleth is a small town in Mid-Wales (pop 2500).

Machynlleth is the home of Ecodyfi, a locally controlled organisation that was set up to foster and support a greener community and economy in the Dyfi Valley. Also, of interest is the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) which is just a couple of miles away and is world renowned. For more than 45 years CAT has inspired, informed and enabled people to achieve practical solutions for sustainability.

Founded in 1973 on a disused slate quarry in Mid Wales, CAT has evolved from a community to a visitor centre to an educational charity specialising in sharing practical solutions for sustainability.

Machynlleth retains its strong Welsh character, with Welsh spoken alongside English.

On 1 April 2008, in a move thought to be unprecedented for a community council of its size, Machynlleth Town Council took ownership of the Plas and its parkland and facilities and the 1st and 2nd floors of the main building are rented out as office space. Medium-sized meeting rooms, a large hall and conference space are also offered for hire.

On 17th December 2018 Machynlleth became the first town in Wales to declare a climate emergency.

Machynlleth town council passed this historic motion following a petition with hundreds of signatures from local people in response to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) statement that governments had to take serious action within the next twelve (now eleven) years to prevent catastrophic changes in the climate. The town council agreed to launch a consultation to develop an action plan over the next 6 months to:

- make Machynlleth net-zero carbon as soon as possible;
- increase local resilience to climate impacts;
- maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as health, agriculture, transport and the economy;

It also agreed to:

1. Call on Wales and UK Government to provide the support and resources to make this possible;
2. Work with other local areas, particularly the community councils and other partners in the Dyfi Biosphere;
3. Report within six months with the actions the town can take to address this emergency, for example increasing the energy efficiency of the Plas, or working with the town's purchasing policy;
4. Discuss with Renew Wales how they might support this process.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS SO FAR

A public meeting in February led to the setting up of ten groups altogether: 1) a steering group to oversee the process, 2) an engagement group and the following topic groups 3) energy in buildings, 4) transport, 5) waste, 6) food, 7) biodiversity, 8) well-being, 9) planning & economic development, 10) energy supply

In the last 6 months there have been a total of more than 50 working group meetings, and an engagement presence at some local events. In June students at CAT conducted a 'systems analysis' of the consultation process so far to advise us on emerging priorities for action, i.e. the ones that have most leverage in the local community are likely to have most impact on reducing carbon emissions and increase well-being. The resulting report is well worth reading and can be provided for anyone who would like to read it.

We have done very little to date on quantifying the impact of actions or setting specific targets.

We aimed to make the process as transparent, open and well-advertised as possible but this has been a challenge. We have communicated by email with the people who signed the original petition and those who came to the public meeting. Some groups (waste and Energy in buildings) have attracted other people to specific public meetings but we have not managed to find a process that we could achieve easily that would mean that anyone in the community could see what was happening and how they could get involved.

There has been a lot of energy, enthusiasm, and work done in terms of forming groups, defining areas of interest, reaching out to stakeholders, and developing initial action plans.

On 17th December 2018 Machynlleth became the first town in Wales to declare a climate emergency.

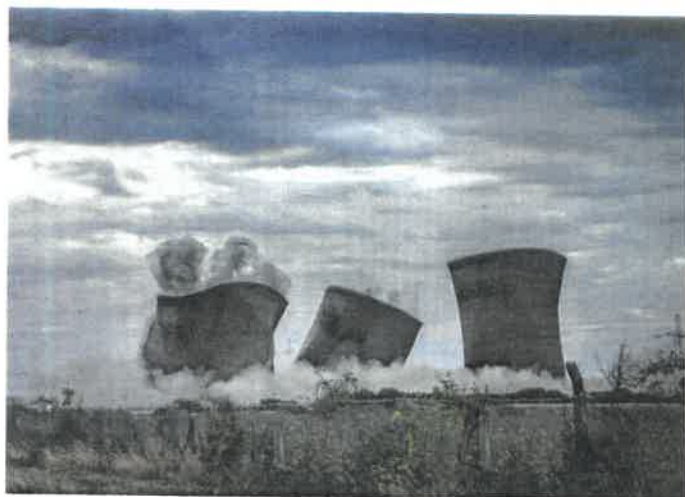
ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2030



Janet Wheeler PSLCC, Town Clerk to Didcot Town Council in Oxfordshire shares her council's pledge to carbon neutrality

CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2030 ...

CARBON ZERO BY 2050



Our pledge was agreed by the newly elected Council on 24th June 2019 – a pledge to achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2030 and Carbon Zero by 2050.

This was rapidly followed by motion after motion to ensure that action was taken by the Officers as soon as possible and in every area of Council business. The only problem for me was that I had only joined the Council at the beginning of June and – along with two thirds of the Councillors being new to the Town Council – it was a tall order to bring on board so quickly.

We agreed to recognise, promote and partake in:

- Earth Hour – 8.30pm to 9.30pm – 28th March 2020
- Earth Day – 22nd April 2020
- World Environment Day – 5th June 2020
- Clean Air Day – 18th June 2020
- Cycle to Work Day – TBC August 2020
- Zero Waste Week – 7-11th September 2020
- Zero Emissions Day – 21st September 2020
- World Car Free Day – 22nd September 2020
- International Walk to School month – 1st - 31st October 2020
- Continue to participate in the above and other Awareness events until Zero Carbon is achieved by the UK.

And that was just the first motion! Others followed including:

- A move towards a ban on all avoidable single use plastic items for the Town Council once our existing stocks are used up
- Changing our terms and conditions of hire to encourage Civic Hall users to follow suit
- Sourcing plant-based alternative products in site such as www.vegware.com
- Writing to all take-away outlets and businesses in Didcot to reduce their waste
- Plus, consideration of steps to minimize the use of fossil fuels and replacing our vehicles with electric alternatives as soon as a vehicle fit for purpose become readily available.

It is true to say that some of the councillors feel that we have not made enough progress in the last five months since making that pledge. However, such whole scale change can take time. For instance, the Council is tied into the 48-month utilities contract that was only signed last March – so no change there without being in breach of contract. However, we have taken key steps:

- We have created a new role for an Environment Officer to take the lead on projects relating to the motions passed at Council.
- We are working with a Community Group called "Sustainable Didcot" to ensure that we complement each other's projects without duplication
- We have a Group booked in January to assess our Civic Hall for energy-saving measures
- We have joined a body called "Green Tourism" – to promote Green ideals and give us staff training on further energy-saving measures

Plus, I have found that our budget cost centres need to be significantly increased to enable us to seriously address these ideals!

Next target to persuade my twenty-one Councillors to stop requesting paper agendas – some of our agendas are over 100 pages long. That is a lot of paper; printing; staff time and postage that could be saved!

HELSTON CLIMATE ACTION GROUP



Chris Dawson FSLCC, Town Clerk to Helston TC in Cornwall, explains how his council is responding to the climate emergency

It was 7.15pm on a January evening and I'd not seen the Council Chamber public gallery so full since we tried to ban A-boards from the High Street a few years back...! Members listened intently to a heart-felt plea from one of our residents, supported by many others, to take climate change seriously and to declare a climate emergency. The topic couldn't be discussed because it wasn't on the agenda but the Mayor assured everyone that there would be an item in February. February came and so did the same 30+ residents in the public gallery. Members agreed that the subject was of the upmost importance and urgency and so agreed to invite everyone to an informal meeting on 7th March to fully discuss what the Council could do to help mitigate this global issue.

First things first, it was agreed to form a Steering Group and name it the 'Helston Climate Action Group' (HCAG). Cllr David Potter was elected Chair and resident Jules Lewis Vice-Chair. The HCAG's Mission Statement - 'addressing the global climate emergency at a local level'. Katharine Lewis took on the role of Secretary. Members learned a lot from our new friends at this meeting which concluded with everyone agreeing a draft Motion for the Mayor to put to the March Full Council meeting: -

That Helston Town Council:

- a) Declares a climate emergency;
- b) Pledges to work towards making Helston carbon neutral by 2030;
- c) Work with Cornwall Council to assist them with their declaration to make

Cornwall carbon neutral by 2030;

- d) Act as a voice for the community to lobby for action on climate change, raise the profile and share lessons with higher levels of government;
- e) Continue to work with the community of Helston and its surrounding parishes to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans; and
- f) As a member of the Helston Climate Action Group, assist with the preparation of an Action Plan within six months to address this emergency.

The Motion was carried unanimously on 21st March and so the clock started ticking to produce the promised Action Plan.

As much as I would love to claim credit for organising and recording the numerous meetings, I can't. I made it known that my office didn't have the capacity so the community members stepped forward to lead the various working groups which all contributed to the Action Plan. The six groups are: -

- Green Spaces
- Food and Consumption
- Energy & Transport
- Communication & Education
- Business Engagement
- Health & Well-being

To be able to show progress we needed a base line so the Helston Downsland Trust commissioned a town carbon audit. This was completed in May and recommends areas and ways that Helston can reach carbon neutrality in a reasonable timeframe by embracing a number of technologies.

To gather public opinion and to promote the cause, members of the Steering Group attended local markets and organised a

day-long public Envisioning Event in June. Each of these helped to recruit new volunteers onto the working groups and latterly to assist with specific projects.

It was not a totally smooth journey. There was one difficult conversation about the methods being adopted by Extinction Rebellion and that the Town Council could not be associated with disruptions and therefore neither could the HCAG, although individuals had a personal choice. This was understood and we moved on.

Time was getting tight but at 10am on Monday 30th September the Helston Climate Action Group launched its Action Plan which was endorsed by the Town Council on 17th October.

<https://bit.ly/2OIU2UG>



There is a very long way to go but now the concentration is on the individual projects contained within the Action Plan. The Town Council has included £20k in its 2020/21 as a starting point to seed-fund some of these projects.

HCAG has kindly indicated that it is happy for other Action Groups to copy parts of the Action Plan and adjust to suit their needs - Ed.

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL – ADDRESSING CLIMATE EMERGENCY



Helen Ball FSLCC, Town Clerk to Shrewsbury Town Council in Shropshire, shares her council's climate emergency plan

Over the 10 years I have been Town Clerk in Shrewsbury, I have tried to instil a sense of efficiency in our workforce, both in terms of the Council's finances and its resources. We buy renewable energy, we use modern technology to determine best routes, we recycle and reuse, and in our Bloom campaign, we've invested in water retaining planters and started using peat-free compost.

So when in March 2019 we were lobbied to pass a Climate Emergency Resolution it was a bit of a shock. This concept was gathering huge momentum and more and more Councils were in the limelight in declaring a Climate Emergency and doing something about it. The Council meeting was attended by 150 campaigners from all age ranges and walks of life; the Council Chamber was full of placard-waving individuals and even a choir that sang.

But the resolution was the easy bit. How do we get to the point of having a meaningful Action Plan that will lead us to being Carbon Neutral by 2030; who is going to own and manage the plan and more pertinently who will be in a position to develop it. Town & parish councils do not have the benefit of specialist Biodiversity and Sustainability Officers as principal councils do and at times clerks struggle to just do the day job.

Sector advice was scant so we decided the best route was to meet with Xtinction Rebellion locally and see how they might be able to assist. Whilst the national picture of XR was one of individuals gluing themselves to taxis in London, locally they have come across as well-educated and well intentioned people who want to seek change locally, using their expertise to drive that change. Locally there are transport specialists who were advising government on climate policy, ecologists and environmental specialists with skills on maximising carbon sequestration and there is a wealth of volunteers willing to help. We let



FACT FILE: SHREWSBURY

🏠 Population	72,000
£ Total Budget	£3,452,414
£ Parish Precept at Band D	£50.20
👥 No of staff (FTE)	8

them take over part of the park this year to raise awareness of Climate Emergency.

Our first task was to understand our own carbon footprint, because if we didn't know where our starting point was we couldn't measure success. Using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scope 3 Accounting and Reporting Standard we set out to measure our direct and indirect carbon footprint. We have limited our calculations to Scope 1 (our direct fuel costs), Scope 2 (our indirect electricity costs) and part of Scope 3 (our business mileage and staff commute). Taking 3 years of Gas, Oil, Electricity, Mileage Expenses and Staff Commute data we have ascertained we generate 300,000kg of carbon a year (equivalent to 40 domestic dwellings generating an average 8 tonnes a year).

Developing a 10-year plan to become carbon neutral by 2030 has been difficult, particularly since it is based on current data in an environment where the pace of technological change is ever-changing means that this is no exact science. Key principles were established that can be reported on annually to ensure the direction of travel is the right way.

Work is well underway to convert 500 footway lights to LED, trial solar lighting and convert an oil dependent grounds maintenance operation into one that can be powered through renewable energy sources. It is also about changing the culture of both the elected members and staff to do things more energy efficiently



The town council's drive to Eco-friendly vehicles and equipment led to an electric vehicle and tools

from moving towards paperless council meetings to embedding a more environmentally conscious decision making in undertaking tasks. Whilst some areas have been quick to embrace a new way of working others have not been that accommodating. Our Operational Teams have all been keen to test out battery operated mowers and vehicles, yet only half of the 17 Councillors have been willing to stop receiving paper agendas.

The key to those step changes to carbon neutrality for a Parish or Town Council is being able to step into the climate change market at the right time. Currently there are no economically viable alternatives to our diesel van fleet, but we have entered the LED street light market at the right time where leading providers can offer soft ambient lighting that doesn't burn your eyes out with its brightness.

Whilst our Climate Emergency resolution focusses on us ensuring our own carbon neutrality, we have a key role in influencing others to become more environmentally conscious. We generate the same carbon as 40 houses, yet Shrewsbury has 32,000 houses each generating on average 8 tonnes of carbon a year. Our biggest role therefore is to create a community that can become more environmentally friendly.



Locally, we are really proud of the Shrewsbury Cup <http://www.shrewsburycup.co.uk/>. Every day, 7 million single-use cups are thrown away and yet only 1% of those are recycled. The Shrewsbury Cup aims to address that in a local way. There are now 3,000 Shrewsbury Cups in existence being used by 22 different cafés and restaurants including Shrewsbury College. Customers simply pay £1 deposit for a Shrewsbury Cup, enjoy their drink and then return the cup to any participating café to get their £1 back. The cups are then washed ready to be used again. Now a CIC, Shrewsbury Cup is making headway with many of our large events eliminating the use of single use plastic. The Town Council is now looking at ways at how it can support this concept not only locally, but promote it nationally.

Zero Waste Events <https://www.zwevents.org.uk/> locally has also revolutionised the way that event organisers in Shrewsbury manage their waste. This local social enterprise has come up with innovative and economical ways of working with event organisers to ensure that over 70% of all waste can be recycled.

But simply declaring a Climate Emergency is not just it; there are many other ways that the Town Council is looking to support a more conscious environment. Council has adopted the Ramblers Association Charter for Walking Neighbourhoods

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/walking-neighbourhoods/charter-for-walking-neighbourhoods.aspx> to encourage people to become more active and with £100,000 in the budget to enhance paths and promote safe walking routes, the health of Shrewsbury residents will also be enhanced.

The Town Council has also adopted the Tree Charter <https://treecharter.uk/> promoted by the Woodland Trust. Planting 15,000 trees could mitigate against our 300 tonnes of carbon. Trees play a huge role in creating better well-being, reducing carbon and other greenhouse gases and improving air quality and combatting flooding, which is hugely important to a place like Shrewsbury, through which the River Severn flows and which we have seen flood defences erected on numerous occasions this year. Encouraging more tree planting, better planning conditions on the use of tree cover in developments and the management of a Victorian tree stock also plays its part.

Much of this has fallen on my shoulders to initiate, but it is the ever changing role of Town & Parish Councils and their principal officers to become drivers in their communities. This has been a huge learning curve as what I knew about Climate Emergency eight months ago, when we passed the resolution, was limited. Our sector needs to push for better support to develop such initiatives, facilitate networking events so that we can learn from others and work with other partners to bring a richness in what we do.

COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE IN A SMALL COMMUNITY WITHOUT CHANGING YOUR NAME TO GRETA



Catherine Camp FSLCC, Clerk to Barby & Onley PC in Northamptonshire discusses how small changes can make a big difference when combatting climate change

Ever felt that there was no point in doing something, because the problem is just so big, that the small things won't make much of an impact?

Barby & Onley Parish Councillors decided that they should try to raise awareness about the effects of climate change on our environment, so we arranged a public meeting to ask for ideas on what we could do as a community to try and combat the negative effects of climate change.

We played this short YouTube video to set the scene:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOctIuyVfnA>

We then listened to presentations from our local District Councillor, and a lady who ran a local zero-waste shop- where products are sold by weight in your own containers, thus reducing single use plastic.

We then held a discussion and asked people for ideas.

The parish has already put some things in place that reduce the impact on the environment:

- LED Street lighting – All 72 street lights in the village have been replaced with 20W LED lanterns that dim by 50% from Midnight to 0600.
Dimming of the lights saves energy and is not noticeable to the naked eye when it is really dark. This has significantly reduced both our electricity supply and maintenance bill.
The £45,000 cost of the project was met partly by SALIX a Social Enterprise lender who will fund any project that is environmentally friendly at 0% interest, so long as the financial benefit can be seen over a 5 year period.
- We have planted a community Apple Orchard, and now arrange an annual Apple Day where we encourage parishioners to pick and use the apples.
- We have planted woodland along a footpath, on land owned by a village charity. Trees were provided free of charge from the woodland trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/tree-pack-application/>

FACT FILE: BARBY & ONLEY

📍 Population	1,250
💷 Budget	£55,000
👥 Staff FTE	(0.4 FTE) Clerk

The woodland is used by the cub scout group who have some of their meetings there.

- Our Neighbourhood Development Plan also supports sustainable development.

The following ideas have been suggested as a result of the village meeting:-

- A local farmer has offered the corners of his arable fields for tree planting.
- Roads into the village could be kept clear of litter by community groups (insurance needs checking!)
- A page will be set up on our village website to promote sustainable ideas.
- Residents to be encouraged to let their gardens become wildlife havens.
- The Parish Council are considering mowing some areas less often, and planting wild flower seeds.
- Residents to be asked to contact their MP to influence the Government Agriculture and Environment Bill to ensure that the ban remains on nicotinoid sprays that kill bees and insects, and to lobby to get subsidies on renewables rather than on fossil fuels.
- A feasibility study of the Solar potential of the village could be carried out, and an Energy Day held to educate about renewable energy.
- The village shop is reluctant to get rid of plastic bags entirely as elderly residents struggle to carry shopping home without a bag – The shop has been supplied with canvas alternatives for people to borrow and return.
- A Car Sharing scheme could be set up to reduce the number of car journeys in and out of the village.
- An "Opt- Out" for the parish newsletter was suggested to reduce paper copies. It was felt that this would marginalise those without internet access, but it will now be printed on 100% recycled paper.



DO SOMETHING TODAY THAT YOUR FUTURE SELF WILL THANK YOU FOR...



Helen Tinson, Clerk to Fownhope Parish Council in Herefordshire discusses the journey her parish have taken in actioning a climate emergency

"We have just a few years to avert climate catastrophe, and every wasted month makes the challenge ahead far more difficult" (Ashden)

I am delighted to share with you the journey Fownhope Parish Council have embarked upon to reduce our community carbon footprint. Since declaring a Climate Emergency, we have created a document that explains what this means and an action plan to identify and timetable significant actions. We are seeking funding for an innovative and effective community engagement tool which will calculate the carbon footprint of the community as a whole and provide the starting point by which to measure improvement.

Parish Councils are directly able to facilitate the daily changes we need in order to create a more sustainable future. But many parish and town clerks are already working at full capacity, and councillors already volunteering significant spare time to support their communities. They may be unable to dedicate the time needed to identify and implement a programme of supporting change, and have minimal budget available to do so.

Our vision is to create a model for others to replicate in order to maximise impact. Although our action plan is still evolving, we have already begun to share this with our local county association and neighbouring councils and are setting up regular informal networking events to share ideas and solve problems.

Images of the recent flooding in Fownhope in October 2019



We realised early on that community engagement is crucial and we have been working on improving our communication with the different groups in our community. As the Clerk, this has been my main challenge so far, balancing the need to develop a strategy to engage with the parish in a professional, business-like way without parishioners feeling the parish council are telling them how they should live their lives.

I recently attended a training session on communication and learned that it is simply not enough to just say something: it needs to be heard, understood and believed before it can be actioned. And as I was listening I thought just how relevant this was to the message we are trying to get across to our parish. For years we've heard about the climate emergency but how many of us have actually taken significant steps to change the way we live, to change the choices that over the years have become habits?



We need everyone to genuinely believe in the actions they are taking and to value every little win. And believe me little wins are just as satisfying as the big

FACT FILE: FOWNHOPE, HEREFORDSHIRE

🏠 Population	825
£ Precept	£30,000
✉ Email	fownhopeclerk@hotmail.com

ones. Recently I was tasked with ordering a replacement post-hung litter bin and I was surprised to find there were none available in a recycled plastic. They are all made to order but the smaller post-hung bins were all made from new plastic. I telephoned one of the suppliers who informed me that this was indeed the case, but to their credit they called their manufacturer to ask if they could make one for me - they could and have since added it as a standard line now available to everyone.

We feel there is enormous benefit in providing a system that instigates cultural behavioural change and we want to show how a small parish council can move towards a zero carbon goal and encourage and inspire other rural communities to do the same. Please get in touch if you would like to join our journey, we'd love to hear from you.



PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF THE ENERGY SYSTEM / PEOPLE POWERED FUTURES

Emma Bridge, Chief Executive at Community Energy England offers some top tips for clerks looking at tackling climate change



CAN YOU HELP COMMUNITY ENERGY PLAY A ROLE IN TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

Our vision is for community groups in every village, town, city and in rural areas across the country to have the opportunity create energy projects, with community energy powering millions of homes and realising additional benefits for the environment, investors and local communities. Using the expertise, connections and political will of councils at all levels to help community energy projects develop offers a clear and realistic way to support local people in taking practical and meaningful action to tackle climate change.



Children from Irlam Primary School and Fiddlers Lane Primary School, at an event organised by Greater Manchester Community Renewables to celebrate the installation of solar arrays on their school roofs. Photo credit: Bill McLaughlin

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENERGY?

Communities across the country are working to deliver renewable energy and energy efficiency projects that benefit and are owned by the local community. These, mainly volunteer-led groups, are dedicated to making their neighbourhoods less reliant on fossil fuels; tackling fuel poverty and having warmer homes; and embracing new technologies to reach the net zero carbon goal. Many of these projects are developed in partnership with public and private sector organisations.

WHAT COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECTS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

School roof-top solar schemes are one of the most popular community energy projects. The impact is obvious, with lower energy bills for schools, young people learning about the need to switch to cleaner, greener, energy sources and a ready-made, engaged, local community to approach as investors in the scheme. But community energy is much more; examples of live projects across the UK include community-owned solar farms, hydroelectric schemes, energy advice cafes, community solar powered trains, insulation installation, battery storage projects and electric vehicle clubs. In Somerset, Wedmore parish is aiming to be the UK's first zero-carbon village. The Green Wedmore Group has already installed solar on the village hall and the bowling club, as well as running energy advice sessions and starting an electric car club.

INSPIRED?

The best bit about the community energy sector is that people are passionate about sharing what they've learnt. So you don't have to start from scratch! Here are some next steps to take to help you on your journey to delivering a community energy project in your local area.

- Do you know any community assets that could be used for a roof-top solar scheme? It could be a school, library, village hall or a church. Make sure they are listed on powerpaired.org - a matchmaking service to bring together community energy groups and the owners of sites with the potential for renewable energy generation.
- Use your connections! Community energy projects tend to work best when they are developed by a group of people. Use existing networks, events and activities to bring together people who are interested in tackling climate change and improving the local environment to start the conversation about community energy. The Community Energy Hub has a whole section on 'Getting Started'. There are plenty of existing groups who are happy to talk about their experiences and events you can attend, either on your own, or in a group, to find out more.
- Find the funding...depending where you are in the country, there are different types of funding available to develop community energy projects. From the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Rural Community Energy Fund to the National Lottery Climate Action Fund, as well as regional and specific project type funding. Community Energy England keeps an up to date list on its website.

Local councils at every level can play an important role in supporting community energy. Our members tell us that it's often having the working relationship and backing from a local council that can make all the difference to the success of a project, so do not underestimate the value of a council's openness to and interest in community energy.

You can find out more at:

communityenergyengland.org

hub.communityenergyengland.org

wedmoregreengroup.co.uk

powerpaired.org

THERE'S A CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN FEOCK PARISH - FAC-T!



Debra Roberts, Clerk to Feock Parish Council in Cornwall discusses her council's call to action on climate change

Not what the majority of our residents would expect to read about leafy, rural Feock parish but it is exactly what they saw in the local press earlier in 2019 following the Parish Council declaring a climate emergency.

What did we do next? We held a "Call to Action" meeting at our office for all residents to come and tell us their thoughts, concerns and to give us their ideas about what could be done locally about Climate Change. Those who were really keen joined 4 focus groups – 'What can the Parish Council do?', 'Energy', 'Green Spaces & Recycling' and 'Transport'.

Visits were arranged to the local recycling centre to find out more about what happens following the kerbside collection, a selection of climate change books were delivered to our Community Library, an audit carried out of how the Parish Council works, including reducing paper, stopping the use of insecticides for weed control, changing energy suppliers to green providers and replacing the office kettle with a one-cup hot water boiler. We have also formed a partnership with Cornwall Council and Kea Parish Council to plant 2000 trees on an area of waste land in our neighbouring parish of Kea. We wanted to get our message out to residents and held a "Climate Emergency – What can you do?" Saturday afternoon information event with displays from our focus groups, Cornwall Council Recycling



team, a local electric bike company, speakers including a local Doctor from XR and our Cornwall Councillor and as an incentive held a free raffle for everyone attending with prizes kindly donated by local businesses. Children's activities were put on where they made blue 're-wilding' hearts with a local ceramics artist, which proved very popular with adults too!

A Facebook project page 'Feock Action Climate Today' (F-ACT) www.facebook.com/FeockACT/ has been set up to promote the project and help get information out to residents, together with another group for 'Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose – Feock, Devoran & Carnon Downs' for residents to give away items rather than adding to landfill and also to get information out about recycling. Our next steps are to get the groups to make an action plan of what they feel should be done next and the Parish Council has budgeted £5000 for Climate Emergency work in 2021/22 including looking at the installation of electric car charging points. We hope to hold a larger information event in 2020 too!

FACT FILE: FEOCK

👤 Population	3,500
👥 No of staff (FTE)	1.6
💷 Annual Budget	£138,000
🏛️ Parish share of council tax at Band D	£61.30
🏆 Runner up in NALC Council of the Year 2019	



TOP TIPS!

- Involve residents from the start in your focus groups, this isn't something the Parish Council can do on their own
- Don't be afraid of campaign groups, they can help you!
- Try to find local experts to help and join your focus groups
- Work with your neighbouring Parish Councils – you'll all be doing the same things
- Make it about local issues so it is more personal and real
- Hold public meetings and information events to get the facts across to people



TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL HAS DECLARED A CLIMATE (& ECOLOGICAL) EMERGENCY

Jacqui Hodgson, Mayor to Totnes in Devon, tells us how her community is tackling climate change



As many people are becoming increasingly aware there has been a series of international scientific reports that has led to Local Authorities across the UK and further afield Declaring a Climate & Ecological Emergency. Totnes Town Council took a first step in December 2018 and Declared a Climate Emergency; it later amended this in October to include Ecological Emergency in response to further reports about major losses of wildlife and biodiversity.

Since last January Totnes Town Council has been hosting monthly meetings to discuss how to take this Declaration forward and create a plan with the community. We are very fortunate in this area to have a large number of people with good experience and many with expertise in the skills and knowledge needed to make such a plan. A wide number of different people attended the early meetings and this led to a number of themes and ideas for actions being put together as an outline draft plan.

In July, we partnered with Transition Town Totnes and Extinction Rebellion Totnes to host a Community Conversation which resulted in a People's Climate and Ecological Action Plan, full of ideas and

visions for taking us forward. In August the Town Council hosted a further 2-hour public session to invite more ideas for actions around the themes identified. Both events were well attended and led to a much more enriched set of proposals for actions we could take. The outputs of the August session were circulated as the Totnes Town Council Climate Emergency draft Action Plan – version 6 to an ever growing MailChimp circulation list of interested people.

This November, the Town Council hosted a week of sessions, workshops, discussions and an exhibition to pull together all this work and turn it into a framework Action Plan. The week was designed to bring people together in sessions and discussions on all the themes identified to date, then sort out ideas and proposals for actions put forward, into timelines or pathways of steps across the next few years to help us reach zero carbon by 2030.

The week started in the Civic Square where we invited the young people (the future of our town) to assemble with their placards and posters for the changes they seek. Over 60 people gathered in the rain with an array of posters and starting off with a three-year old who asked us to “help the hedgehogs”, we were treated to a wide range of inspiring soapbox speeches and demands. We then proceeded to the Guildhall for the official

launch where the posters and placards were placed around the rooms to inspire the week's deliberations and ideas.

The week closed with a day of celebration and public scrutiny. We invited attendees to express their views on the proposals and actions using different coloured dots: Gold, (Brilliant idea), Silver (very good), Green (it will work okay), Red (no thanks). Very few reds dots were used. After a delightful community lunch we enjoyed some innovative performance and celebratory singing, cake and fizz.

Typing up and filling in the gaps with the framework created during the Action Planning week is now underway. The next stage is to bring the draft plan to the Town Council meeting in December for approval for 6-week public consultation and engagement.

The news about global warming is frightening and very real, but as this is a man-made crisis, it's up to us and within our abilities to change our ways and stop polluting our world. We face uncharted times and challenges, but if we work together we can think this through and make plans to help ourselves, our families, our towns and the wider world. Together we can find a way forward that will bring about the changes we need to make in our lives and the way we live to reduce our impact on the natural world.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF AND HOST AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE



Chetna Jones, Deputy Town Clerk at Exmouth TC, reports on a successful event for young people

Like me, many of you would have alarm bells ringing when you hear your Chairman say "I would really like to host an environmental conference for Children"

This was what my Chairman said following his visit to a school where children spoke to him about their projects on reducing plastic waste and wildlife areas and he was overwhelmed by their enthusiasm.

Well that was my initial reaction but bearing in mind that we all need to do our bit to help protect the environment for future generations, I said "Although we are not educators, why don't we speak to the local primary schools and see if there is an appetite".

I did just that and consulted with headteachers of all 8 primary schools in Exmouth and received some very enthusiastic responses. The headteachers went on to provide me with some 'do's and don'ts'. The advice included providing me with topics that were part of the curriculum, what information they would need to see prior to attending and some even told me about budget constraints. Where schools were not within walking distance, providing transport was key as this would be the one factor that would prevent them from attending.

Having had such a positive response, I was now left thinking where do I go from here and what do I know about teaching young children. Little did I know at the time just how many fantastic outreach programmes there are, all being delivered by some amazingly experienced people.

I knew I needed to get the Council's approval before proceeding with the detailed planning. I wrote a report highlighting how the conference would work, how many children would be involved and the benefits to the town council and the community. I explained that through generous support the costs for hosting this event were minimal. The report was well received with Councillors fully behind it.

I needed to move quickly and use the school summer holidays to plan the conference and confirm details to the schools at the start of the new school year. I first approached our District Council's Countryside team and Devon County Council's Waste Management team as I knew they arranged school visits.

Speaking with the right people is key as they were able to give me all sorts of advice and contacts. Give yourself plenty of time and keep everyone involved of your progress.

Through careful planning and persistence, I ended up with 12 different organisations delivering environment related workshops across two half-day sessions for approximately 350 children.



Organisations such as the Environment Agency, the Met Office, Devon Wildlife Trust as well other local organisations were honoured to be asked and gave their time freely as well as providing additional follow-on material for the schools to take back and continue in the classroom.

Don't be frightened to ask your local businesses and community organisations for help. I was pleasantly surprised how generous everyone was.

My advice is to anyone considering doing this is speak to the experts and don't try and do it yourself. Communicate regularly with everyone involved and plan as much as possible to ensure the day goes smoothly. Create some promotional material and shout about what you are doing. Most town and parish councils do some amazing work but very rarely shout out about it because we are always too busy. Creating a short video in this case, cost us next to nothing and has resulted in making it easier for me to send key messages to the community.

Watch the video <https://www.exmouth.gov.uk/exmouth-primary-schools-environmental-conference-pledges/> and make a pledge today to do something with your Council.

CAN'T SEE THE TREES FOR THE WOODS



Arren Roberts, Town Clerk to Oswestry TC in Shropshire, explains the approach the TC is taking in response to a mammoth tree planting challenge.



Following a successfully adopted notice of motion, Oswestry Town Council has set itself an aspirational target of planting a tree for each resident in the town – that's 17,000 plus residents and therefore 17,000 trees - all in a three-year timescale.

This comes on the back of a series of initiatives to support the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. Action taken includes:

- Significantly reduced use of single use plastics;
- Electronic agendas by default;
- Energy sourced from wholly renewable sources;
- Electric vehicle charging points to be installed;
- Reduced consumption of consumables;
- Installed a public tap to encourage re-filling;
- Solar panel on park toilet to reduce energy consumption.

The Council has reduced its carbon footprint (top tip we need to measure by how much by carrying out a carbon audit) saved a little bit but spent it on the increased cost of sourcing renewable gas. There is a recognition and awareness amongst staff and councillors (generally), and a commitment to consider the environmental impact of what we do.

TREES

Prior to the tree planting aspiration, we had already agreed to sign up to the tree charter and we look after 500 trees in prominent public locations. There is quite a lot of work involved in the management and maintenance of these, especially as most fall within the town centre conservation area.

More trees are needed and the Woodland Trust proposes that a new tree per head of the UK population is planted per year, EVERY year for the next 30 years, and if other carbon reduction targets are not met, the rate of planting would need to be greater still.

17,000 IS A BIG NUMBER

Despite being a large local council, we are not a significant owner of open space, so it is not entirely within our gift to deliver this aspiration. We will need to do what Town and Parish Councils' do better than other tiers of government and work with others.

Ultimately it will need a community movement to deliver on this aspiration whether this is a tree in a back garden, several community orchards or a landowner with several spare acres of land.

An Oswestry Facebook page will be set up to allow people to share, like and comment on

their tree planting. Gamification is a good way to encourage engagement with an initiative. Think Parkrun for trees.

As a Clerk, I recognise that I don't always have the skills, knowledge and experience across all of the areas of our responsibility and therefore will work with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and the Tree Officer.

Elisabeth Skinner will be pleased to note that I have been paying attention her words of wisdom on "Power and influence" – I have a two post its on my desk with these words written, they are a useful reminder for me to think strategically. A strategy is a tool for both exercising power and for influencing others, in this case planning policies need to reflect the tree planting aspiration and developers need guidance.

NEXT STEPS

The approach to date has been a little bit frantic and we need to stand back and to re-focus our energy, a plan is needed.

A tree is for life and a number of factors need to be considered when trying to make sure the right tree gets planted in the right place. Alongside this there is a need of consider the whole issue because we will need to plant a whole load more trees that 17,000 if we do not reduce the carbon footprint.

Oswestry Town Council has a precept of £404,000, a band D £76.54 and a workforce of 17 FTE's

CASE STUDY: HAYWARDS HEATH



Steve Trice, Town Clerk to Haywards Heath TC in West Sussex, explains his Council's response to climate change

Haywards Heath Town Council is very conscious of the issues around climate change and has been proactive in looking at ways the Council delivers services, promotes and develops new initiatives within the Town and how it can act as a signposting/supporting body for residents, local businesses and voluntary organisations. This work has been led through the creation of an Environment Working Group in July 2018, which reports into the Council's Environment and General Purposes Committee.



The culmination of the Working Group's commitment, was a Climate Pledge being made by Full Council in September 2019, which is supported by an Environment Matrix and a set of Environmental Policies/Projects that will be delivered by the Council over the next eighteen months. The Environment and General Purposes Committee will hold a budget for the adopted policies/projects in next year's budget along with funding for a major capital project.

The Environment Matrix, with assistance of local green focused experts in the town, was developed to underline the complex nature of the environment agenda and points to legislation, best practice and commits to work with Mid Sussex District Council and West Sussex County Council through their pledges. This document will be reviewed and updated sitting as a background document directing policy.

The policies adopted by the Council lead the direction of its work under the headings of Planting, Weed Control Processes, Policy Development and Neighbourhood Planning, Best Practice of Council services, premises and land, the production of a Carbon Offset and Bio Diversity Strategy, Communication and Signposting, Retail and Food Waste, Transport and Air Quality.

From my and the Council's perspective the first meeting of the Working Group flagged up the reality that the Council had a limited remit and ability to work in this area so looked at what the Council could actually achieve with its resources. There was a fear that residents could turn around and say what are you actually doing. It was then agreed to communicate what the Council couldn't achieve and why along with what the Council was doing. This was a very difficult process as expectations were high, as would residents have been if the

Council had gone and just declared a climate emergency. From my point of view the development of the Matrix, and indeed the policies, was very challenging as this area of work is so very current and important but also very complicated and there is so much information, which sometimes is conflicting. The Council cannot cover everything or have all the information available for the bigger picture so this is where Matrix is crucial as it contains high level information and direction for residents.

Finding a happy medium has been very difficult. So, what is the Council doing? The Council runs campaigns on grass verge parking, milk bottle top recycling, plant pot recycling, a programme of litter picks and has planted a large number of trees across the Town including 36 trees along town's main shopping area. The big-ticket project is the purchase of land, which includes ancient woodland to develop a Country Park and Allotments linked to the development of a primary school. It is intended, once the land is secured, that the site will accommodate a large tree planting scheme and discussions with a company called Carbon Footprint who provide trees for free paid for by large and small companies contributing finance to pay for the trees against their carbon footprint have already started. Obviously, the Council has committed to also ensure that it reviews all of its services to ensure it practices what it preaches, which includes a desire to put solar panels on the Town Hall roof to help serve an electric charging point for a local community transport provider, which fits into the policies adopted and the Council business plan 'Destination Haywards Heath', which drive the Council's strategic aims for the development of the Council and indeed the Town.

All documents Steve refers to can be found at
<https://haywardsheath.gov.uk/Town-Council-Policies.aspx>