



WEST MOORS TOWN COUNCIL



**#CLIMATE
EMERGENCY**

CLIMATE CHANGE and BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Adopted 17.12.2020

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Introduction

Background and context

In October 2019 West Moors Town Council passed a resolution in support of Dorset Council's decision to declare a Climate Emergency.

As a result of this, a Climate Emergency Working Party was set up to identify activities that could be undertaken and/or supported by West Moors Town Council.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impeded further progress since March 2020. Members have not been able to meet face to face but have been meeting via Zoom.

Approach

About this document.

1. This document is part of the Town Council's Climate and Environmental Action Plan and now has a distinction between:

- a. **Policies** – principles of action to be formally adopted by the Council, that support the Council and Officers when making decisions in a range of activities; and
- b. **Planned Activities** – Proposed actions or events that support the Council's stated aims in respect of climate action and environmental sustainability.

By making this distinction it is intended that climate action and environmental sustainability become universal considerations for all Council decision-making that are supported by a clear roadmap of planned activities.

2. This document also distinguishes between Planned Activities that relate to:

- a. **The Town Council Estate**, i.e. where the Town Council has full control over the outcome; and
- b. **Community Engagement**, stakeholder support and lobbying, i.e. where the Council has the ability to exercise some influence over the outcome but does not have full control.

Making this distinction also helps to provide clarity around how the Council might wish to allocate resources and the extent to which activities are to be community, councillor, or officer led.

3. This document further distinguishes between the following categories of activity:

- **Carbon reduction**
- **Plastic reduction** – single use plastics/ plastic packaging/ disposable plastics
- **Waste reduction** – all other forms of avoidable waste
- **Biodiversity and trees** – trees and other plant life have an important role to play in carbon reduction as well as contributing to healthy, diverse ecosystems
- **Climate change readiness** – preparation for a world in which extreme weather events are much more commonplace

Categorising activities in this way helps to ensure that our portfolio of activities remains balanced and proportionate to the threats posed by inaction.

4. Finally, this document seeks to propose suggestions as to how activities might be funded as follows:

Proposal:

It is proposed that wherever possible the Council should:

- a) Seek in the first instance to fund activities through existing income streams, i.e. through continuing to make environmentally conscious decisions when updating, maintaining and renovating property on the Town Council Estate.
- b) Explore grant funding options where there is no existing income stream.
- c) Consider loans where available and only in proportion to the environmental risk that the planned activity seeks to mitigate.
- d) Consider raising funds from an increase to the precept only where absolutely necessary, and only in proportion to the environmental risk that the planned activity seeks to mitigate.

Policies

This document, Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Action Plan, represents a comprehensive, commitment to minimising environmental impacts of day-to-day Town Council Operations within its own estate. Whilst it does not explicitly address the impacts on the Town Council Estate of environmental changes that originate externally, it does make a clear commitment to 'identify and manage environmental risks and hazards.

The Town Council should consider the ever-changing environment we are experiencing and prepare for the future by identifying the hazard and mitigate the risk (for example, extreme weather).

Proposals

The following are proposed policy statements that the Council might consider adopting.

- Actively support small and large planning applications for new renewable energy in the area.
- Continue to replace all felled trees and continue to introduce new native trees that are of the highest possible benefit to wildlife.
- Lobby for new homes to be energy efficient
- Oppose high-carbon developments, promoting sustainable alternatives instead
- Endeavour to strive to invest any council funds safely in low-risk sustainable banks or investment funds.

- Encourage, enable ¹ and support community groups taking action to address climate change and promote environmental sustainability.
- Engage, inform and encourage the wider community to take action on climate change and make decisions that promote environmental sustainability.

Planned Activities: Progress to date

Summary

The following list details the progress made or planned before and since the Town Council made a commitment to supporting Dorset Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in October 2019.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Switched to green electricity (100% renewable energy with Opus) in September 2020 when the contract was due for renewal and committed to two-year contract.
- The Town Council installed instant hot water heaters in the pavilion bathrooms, which reduces electricity consumption and also saves money.
- Carbon footprint benchmark to be carried out on the Town Council estate by Town Clerk annually (initial one completed in September 2019).
- New heating systems and boilers in council buildings are chosen to be environmentally friendly where possible.
- Goods and services are purchased locally, where possible, to reduce mileage and packaging.
- Researched funding possibilities for establishing a Climate Action Fund, which is for groups that aim to reduce their carbon footprint sustainably and increase participation in community-led climate action.

Plastic reduction

- Only crockery is used in the office and pavilion. There are no plastic cups on offer. The 2019 Community event used recyclable products.
- Metal straws are used in the office.
- Wherever possible staff bring in their own lunch therefore reducing the use of single use packaging.
- Soap dispensers in the toilets, office toilets and kitchen are refillable.

Waste reduction and Recycling

- Office staff recycle paper along with recyclable plastic items, cardboard and tins via the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP).
- Glass bottles/jars are recycled.

¹ Enablement will require some level of financial support. See later proposal in the Planned Activities: 2021-2022 section

- All water meter readings are monitored, and action is taken immediately to identify the reasons when they are high, minimizing water loss if there is a leak.
- Councillors are encouraged to receive agendas and minutes by e-mail, which is the choice of the majority (although some documents do require printing).
- All invitations to Town Council events are sent via e-mail.

Biodiversity and trees

- Biodiversity in public spaces. The Town Council is not responsible for the highway verges but public consultation will take place if it has identified a suitable area that can be replaced with a wildflower area. The Town Council also supports the Dorset Council's Rangers with the introduction of wildflower area and grasses.
- Trees that are felled due to being dead, diseased or dying, are replaced with native species, where possible (Two Oak trees were felled in October 2020 and replaced the same month). Guidance is also sought from the Tree Officer at the Dorset Council.
- Signed up to the ten principles of the Charter for Trees, Woods and People (approved by council 27th January 2020).
- Continued provision of allotments.

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

- Established a Climate Change Working Party. Links established with Scouts and the University of the Third Age with regard to tree planting.

Carbon reduction

- Supporting the Dorset Council in its declaration of a climate emergency.
- Encouraging the Dorset Council to install Electric Vehicle Charge Points in its car parks and are looking into installing a charge point in Town Council recreation ground car parks.
- Publish information for residents on how to reduce carbon emissions via website and Social Media.

Plastic reduction

- Signed up to the free water refill scheme, offering refills to members of the public to reduce the use the need to purchase plastic bottles.

Waste reduction

- Supporting litter picking by providing equipment to volunteer members of the public.

Biodiversity and trees

- Promote the importance of trees for our community through tree planting schemes.

Planned activities: 2021-2022

Summary

Whilst we will still look for quick wins to reduce carbon and waste and promote biodiversity, work will begin on ensuring that the Town Council Estate is energy efficient and progressing towards carbon neutrality.

A carbon footprint benchmarking activity will be carried out by the Town Clerk each year to demonstrate progress being made and an annual report submitted to Full Council.

We will address Climate Change readiness and identify any adjustments that may need to be made to mitigate the risks of extreme weather events.

We will use data from the Department of BEIS carbon benchmarking tool to identify where West Moors Town Council needs to focus and use it to shape and delivery a Community Engagement Plan.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Energy audit for all council owned buildings in order to identify opportunities for reduction of energy waste.
- Explore funding opportunities for energy waste reduction measures on all council owned buildings.
- Implementing and scheduling energy waste reduction measures on all council owned buildings.

Plastic reduction

- Continued support for community-led activities.
- Explore opportunities for providing public drinking fountains on Fryer Field.

Other waste reduction

- Work with Dorset Waste Partnership to ensure appropriate bins are made available at events.

Biodiversity and trees

- Continue to pursue the provision of tree/hedge planting and wildflower areas

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

Carbon reduction

- Encourage the community to use the focused carbon benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils co-created by Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE).
- Use information from community focused carbon benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils to create a community engagement plan.
- Launch Green Grant Scheme, matched funding for community groups wishing to start up an environmental initiative. (2x £500 per year).
- Consider installing renewable sources of energy generation on Council property, i.e. solar panels.
- Use the expertise of Low Carbon Dorset to advise on solar panel installation (40% grants available).
- Encourage walking. Employees and Councillors should also be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share where possible.
- Support the introduction of safe walking and cycle routes including safer routes to school and signage to promote them and, where necessary, work in partnership with Dorset Council to deliver them.

Other waste reduction

- Offering the use of reusable items to the community (e.g. swop shop or Repair Shop facilities).

Biodiversity and trees

- Encourage residents to increase biodiversity in their back gardens.
- Encourage residents and local landowners could be encouraged to take part in tree planting. The Tree Charter, developed by the Woodland Trust, provides excellent guidance on how to increase tree cover. The National Association of Local Councils website provides case studies where it has been used.
- Consider the provision of additional allotments

Planned activities: 2023-2030

Summary

The process of transitioning into a carbon neutral and sustainable organisation with a focus on moving further towards using and generating renewable energy and reducing electricity consumption plus environmental improvements.

Organisational learning will be shared with the wider community.

The Town Council will seek opportunities to install renewable energy generation facilities on its own property.

We will showcase what has been achieved and learned and attempt to bring together community groups who can benefit from our organisational learning.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Reduce energy waste from all Town Council owned buildings.
- Introduce solar panels on council buildings where possible and other renewable energy generation like heat pumps.
- Change to LED lighting where possible.
- Heat pumps may benefit from a government grant that will partially cover the cost.

Biodiversity and trees

- Reduce use of harmful pesticide and weedkiller on Council property
- Control light pollution.

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

Carbon reduction

- Work with other groups to create an impartial local guide that provides information on accredited local businesses and could include information on local accredited energy assessors and renewable energy installers for solar panels, batteries, EV charging points and heat pumps, eco-friendly retailers, green builders and landscape companies, etc. It can also encourage sustainable transport options i.e. car sharing possibility with parking.
- Buildings using renewable energy should also be used as a showcase to help local people see these technologies first-hand, particularly less familiar technologies such as heat pumps.
- Work with Dorset Council to use their economies of scale to assist groups of people for bulk purchases. The costs of installing solar PV, or other renewable technologies such as heat pumps, should be much lower if done in bulk, street by street, or area by area. Local homeowners and businesses could be brought together to develop such a scheme.

- With partners promote a lift-sharing scheme. By convening local businesses and car-sharing schemes, such as the social enterprise Liftshare, it is possible to help local people reduce the carbon pollution from car use, save money and foster new friendships. Liftsharing may often be a solution for people when public transport, cycling or walking to work is not. Car-sharing schemes for non-commuting journeys would also be promoted.

Biodiversity and trees

- To encourage others, promote the actions taken, for example use signage on council-owned land where peat-free compost is used.

APPENDIX A

Climate Emergency Working Group

Terms of Reference

Remit

To support the development of a Climate Action Plan, following the Council's Declaration of a Climate Emergency at the Full Council meeting on 31st October 2019 *Min No 19/199*. The declaration set a target decarbonisation date for the Council of 2030.

Constitution – 3 Members

(To be elected annually by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.)

- The Climate Emergency Working Group is to consist of 3 members minimum
- Non councillors are permitted as members.

Aims

1. Strive to achieve 100% clean energy across the councils' full range of functions by 2030.
2. Ensure that all strategic decision, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2030.
3. Support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area zero carbon within the same timescale.
4. Enable the council to work alongside local groups, relevant agencies and statutory organisations towards making the entire area zero carbon within the same timescale.
5. Work with, influence and inspire partners in the local area to help deliver this goal through all relevant strategies, plans and shared resources by developing a series of meetings, events and workshops.

Roles and responsibilities

Meetings

- The Climate Emergency Working Group members will call their own meetings as they deem necessary.
- A minimum of 6 meetings per year are to be held.
- Members will hold meetings in a venue that is appropriate for them, it does not need to be the pavilion and a public notice of the meeting (in accordance with Schedule 12, Para 10(2) of the Local Government Act 1972) is not required.

Documentation

- Proper records of the deliberations of the working group will be taken by members of the working party and kept in the parish office.
- The reports of all meetings will be circulated at each relevant Council meeting.

Accountability

- The working group is advisory and has no decision-making powers.
- The Climate Emergency Working Group must not act ultra vires.

- All recommendations will be directed to the Council

Public communication

- The relationship between the working group and the media should follow the council's communications protocol at all times.

Organisation

Tasks will be structured in the following themes:

- Buildings and Energy
- Transport
- Products and Waste
- Finance
- Green Spaces
- Behaviour Change and Engagement

Scope

- Support the council to examine, alongside legal and financial implications, the environmental implications of CO2 emissions and other greenhouse gas emissions of all the decisions it makes
- Research funding available and make recommendations for budget provision for grant schemes from 2020-2021 onwards which will enable carbon-reduction activities within the council. Provide guidance on grant criteria.
- Seek to influence the policies of other organisations to encourage them to reduce their emissions.
- Strategically reassess and adjust the scope of the council's current activities, including refocusing the scope of its community grants.

Freedom of information /Environmental Information Regulations

The papers and notes/minutes of the working group will be the subject of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and will be documents that the public may have unless an exemption or exception applies.

Interests

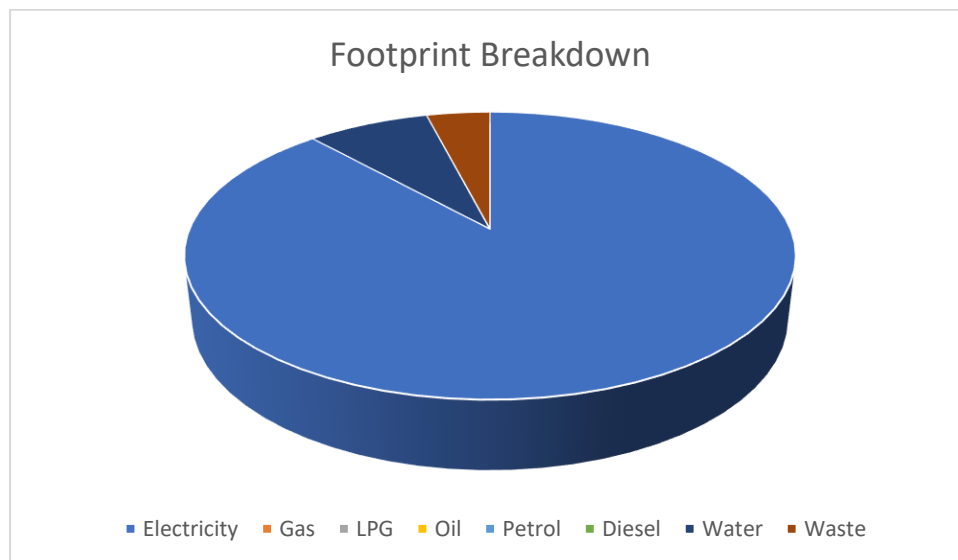
Councillors should treat the working group as a formal meeting of the council for the purpose of the declarations of any interests and withdrawal from the meeting.

APPENDIX B

West Moors Town Council Carbon Footprint

Completed September 2019

| Source | Emissions tCO ₂ /yr | % Footprint |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Electricity | 4.3 | 88.3% |
| Gas | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| LPG | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| Oil | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| Petrol | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| Diesel | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| Water | 0.4 | 7.7% |
| Waste | 0.2 | 4.0% |
| Total: | 4.9 | tCO₂e/yr |



APPENDIX C

Report from Site Visit for Tree Planting, etc., 10 February, 2020

Present: Cllrs Mike Hawkes and Alex Clarke, Douglas Locke, John Boyce.

During a tour from the Memorial Hall car park of the sports areas, Footpath 5, land behind Fryer Field, land behind Brookview, the most appropriate sites for possible tree and hedge planting were considered.

These are numbered on the attached map.

Hedging

At **1a**, scope for infill hedging along the west of the football field on the west side of the fence. Some bramble clearance may be needed. Similarly, at **1b** along the north side of the football field, west of the Youth Club, hedging could replace brambles (or, if preferred, be planted just outside (north) of the brambles, although there would be maintenance required to prevent brambles overrunning the planting.

At **2**, hedging could be planted along the south side of the fence (set about 2 metres in) running along Footpath 5. This would have minimal encroachment on grass. It would require tending in dry spells in the summer as some would be under tree cover.

Trees

In the northwest corner of the football field (**3**) there is an overgrown area (where the tractor clearly cannot turn). There is a tree nearby but also scope for two or three additions.

Possible sites are marked as **4** on the field behind the football pitches. This should be designed so as to have minimal encroachment on the open grass area which is well used by walkers, including dog walkers. Much of the area indicated is soft and wet in the winter and in wet weather in summer. As such, walkers tend to avoid it in those conditions and keep to the centre path or the path along the fence/hedge on the east side of the open field.

Planting would simply bring forward the tree line to the depth of one tree (probably planted in a zig zag pattern). This would connect with Hatchards Copse and the hedging/trees along the west (bottom) side of the field. Similarly, in the northwest corner which is very soggy most of the time, trees one or two deep could run across the corner.

NB Siting would need to consider overhead wires near the location.

In the land behind Brookview, the tree line could be advanced on the west side at **5** by a single zig zag pattern. Again, this would have very limited impact on the grassy, marshy, scrubland centre of the field, if that is a consideration.

On the same piece of land at **6**, there is scope for some infill and/or slight stretching forward in a corner of variable, dispersed tree cover.

Consideration needs also to be given to the types of hedging and trees. Woodland Trust offer a choice of hedging for bird food, blossom and colour. By Footpath 5, some existing shading would need to be considered.

Regarding trees, clearly willow type would be well suited to the marshy areas, although there may be others. Advice should be sought from the Woodland Trust as to which free pack would be best. Other advice would also be useful, particularly if the Parish Council decided to go beyond or outside the Trust's packages, either for the type/size of tree or because it required a higher number.

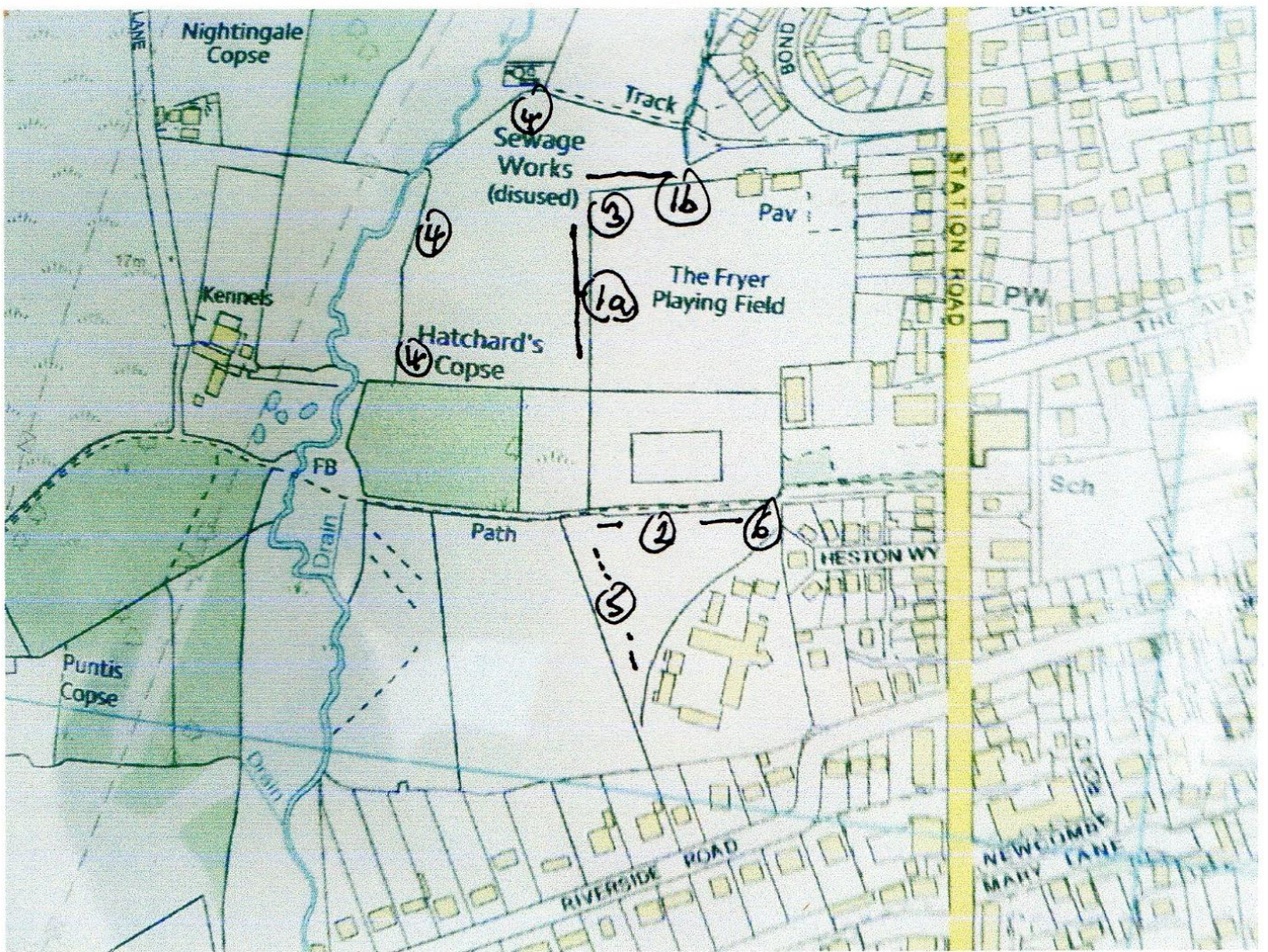
It is recommended that the Parish Council are asked to give approval in principle for preferred sites for trees/hedges and also for the ordering of packs from the Woodland Trust by the April, 2020 deadline for November 2020 planting. It is also recommended that the Council consider resourcing the clearing/planting. Whilst volunteers would be very useful, the timescale for planting may require some paid assistance.

Any scheme, can, of course, be spread across more than one phase, although it must be recognised that the packs provided by Woodland Trust contain plants are only 20 – 60 cm high and will need some years to establish any height.

It is likely that good communication with residents will produce significant support for such a scheme in the current context of national awareness and concern on climate matters.

On a financial note, regarding budget, as this is an 'emergency', it is hoped that the Parish Council would grant resources from reserves, if necessary.

Finally, there is the issue of land ownership. Only area 3 in the corner of the football field is currently in the ownership of the Parish Council. Given the very slow process of the transfer of the remaining land to the Parish Council, it is possible that an order may need to be placed for the trees, etc., before this is completed. Urgent consideration should thus be given to obtaining consent from Dorset council for any proposed planting on what is currently their land. This could simply be in principle for all the areas considered to allow maximum time for a response before ordering any trees. Such an application would need to stress that this project stems directly from the Climate Emergency declared by Dorset and seeks to take action in response to it.



APPENDIX D

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

TOWN COUNCIL ESTATE

| | Achieved | Planned 2021-2022 | Planned 2023-2030 |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| Carbon Reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switched to green electricity (100% renewable energy with Opus) • Instant hot water heaters in properties • Carbon footprint benchmark carried to be carried out on the Town Council estate (initial one completed in 2019) • New heating systems and boilers in council buildings chosen to be environmentally friendly where possible. • Goods and services are purchased locally, where possible. • Town Council endeavours to invest council funds safely in low-risk sustainable banks or investment funds. • Researched funding possibilities for establishing a Climate Action Fund. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy audit for all council owned buildings • Explore funding opportunities for energy waste reduction measures on all council owned buildings. • Implementing and scheduling energy waste reduction measures on all council owned buildings. • Consider installing renewable sources of energy generation on Council property, i.e. solar panels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to reduce energy waste from all Council owned buildings. • Introduce solar panels on council buildings where possible. • Change to LED lighting where possible • Produce green energy. Consider installing renewable energy generation, like heat pumps and solar PV, at council buildings. |
| Plastic Reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No plastic cups/plates used in council premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support for community-led activities. | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metal straws are used where required • Wherever possible staff bring in their own lunch therefore reducing the use of single use packaging. • Soap dispensers in the toilets, office toilets and kitchen are refillable. | | |
| Waste and Recycling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office staff recycle paper along with recyclable plastic items, cardboard and cans via the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP). • Glass bottles/coffee jars are recycled. • All water meter readings are monitored. • Councillors are encouraged to receive agendas and minutes by e-mail. • All invitations to Town Council events are sent via e-mail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Dorset Waste Partnership to ensure appropriate bins are made available at events. | |
| Biodiversity and Trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees that are felled due to being dead, diseased or dying, are replaced with native species, where possible • Signed up to the ten principles of the Charter for Trees, Woods and People (approved by council 27th January 2020). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to pursue the provision of tree/hedge planting and wildflower areas • Biodiversity in public spaces. The Town Council is not responsible for the highway verges but public consultation will take place if it has identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce use of harmful pesticides and weedkiller on Council land. • Control light pollution |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | a suitable area that can be replaced with a wildflower area. The Town Council also supports the Dorset Council's Rangers with the introduction of wildflower area and grasses. | |
| Climate Change readiness | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for providing public drinking fountains on Fryer Field | |

Community Engagement, Stakeholder Support and Lobbying

| | Achieved | Planned 2021-2022 | Planned 2023-2030 |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| Carbon Reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a Climate Change working group. Links established with Scouts and the University of the Third Age with regard to tree planting. • Supporting Dorset Council in its Declaration of a Climate Emergency. • Encouraging the Dorset Council to install Electric Vehicle Charge Points in its car parks and are looking into installing a charge point in Town Council recreation ground car parks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the community to use the focused carbon benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils co-created by Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Centre of Sustainable Energy (CSE). • Use information from community focused carbon benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils to create a community engagement plan. • Launch Green Grant Scheme, matched funding for community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other groups to create an impartial local guide that provides information on accredited local businesses and could include information on local accredited energy assessors and renewable energy installers for solar panels, batteries, EV charging points and heat pumps, eco-friendly retailers, green builders and landscape companies, etc. • Buildings using renewable energy should also be used as a showcase to help local people |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | <p>groups wishing to start up an environmental initiative. (2x £500 per year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the expertise of Low Carbon Dorset to advise on solar panel installation (40% grants available) • Encourage walking. Employees and Councillors should also be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share where possible. • Promote Safe routes to School and install new signage to promote them • Publish information for residents on how to reduce carbon emissions via website and Social Media | <p>see these technologies first-hand, particularly less familiar technologies such as heat pumps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Dorset Council to use their economies of scale to assist groups of people for bulk purchases. • With partners promote a lift-sharing scheme. By convening local businesses and car-sharing schemes, such as the social enterprise Liftshare. |
| Plastic Reduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed up to the free water refill scheme, offering refills to members of the public to reduce the use of purchasing additional bottles. | | |
| Waste and Recycling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting litter picking by providing equipment to volunteer members of the public. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider offering the use of reusable items to the community (e.g. swop shop or Repair Shop facilities). |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Biodiversity and Trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the importance of trees for our community through tree planting schemes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage residents to increase biodiversity in their back gardens. Encourage residents and local landowners to take part in Woodland Trust Charter. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage others, promote the actions taken, for example use signage on council-owned land where peat-free compost is used. |
| Climate Change readiness | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the introduction of safe walking and cycle routes and, where necessary, work in partnership with the local authority to deliver them. | |