

Climate Emergency and Environment Working Group Update

1. Background

The Council's Climate Emergency and Environment Group was established in September 2021. Over the subsequent four years, the Working Group focussed on raising awareness about climate change and sustainability, and practical projects to support the natural environment.

These included the following:

- Climate survey of residents.
- Two Energy Saving and Nature Events at the village hall.
- Wellbeing and Sustainability Weekend, in collaboration with the Community Committee.
- Free thermal imaging camera loan scheme.
- Collaboration with the Bristol Avon River Trust on restoration of the River Marden.
- Free Tree Scheme.
- Promotion of the Calne Community Nature Reserve Scheme.
- Community Orchard.
- Bicycle Rack Planters.
- Linking local landowners with Wiltshire Council's GAPS team for tree planting grant funding.

An informal relaunch meeting of the Working Group was held on Monday 16th March, which was attended by five parish councillors, the Clerk and five members of the public. The purpose of this report is to update Council on the ideas discussed.

2. Working Group Aspirations

Aspirations for the Working Group were confirmed as:

- Raise awareness and sign-post residents to more sustainable ways of living.
- Make a positive difference to our local environment with practical nature recovery projects.
- Support the transition to net zero carbon within the parish.
- Engage with and support wider initiatives, such as Wiltshire Council initiatives.

3. Ideas and Suggestions

The following ideas and suggestions were discussed:

Raising awareness:

- Evening meetings/talks in village hall (e.g. Bremzero model):
 - Heat Pumps
 - Reducing our carbon footprints
 - Insulation
 - Wildlife friendly gardening – hedgehog highways, ponds, etc.
 - Films – e.g. National Emergency Briefing, 6 Inches of Soil, etc.
 - Keeping homes cool in the summer.

- Regular Column in inSPIRE
- Participating in Wiltshire Climate Alliance Green Open Homes Weekends.
- Advice Guide – where to go to for advice, e.g. Centre for Sustainable Energy, Trusted Trader Schemes.
- Solar Farm – talk/presentation plus subsequent site visit.
- Bat walk.
- Blossom Festival – rural crafts.

Practical nature recovery projects:

- Solar Farm – making sure the environmental commitments are carried through.
- Bats – bat surveys followed by installation of bat boxes – Bowood and/or W&B Canal.
- Bowood Sports Ground – wildflower meadow, hedge planting, butterfly bank.
- Supporting the Wilts & Berks Canal Trusts with projects.
- Plan for developing wildlife corridors to, e.g., link up woodland.
- Could we link up with and support local landowners with conservation initiatives?
- Eradicating Himalayan Balsam from tributaries of the Marden.

Supporting the transition to net zero:

- Promoting Solar Farm Community Ownership opportunity.
- Public EV Charging Point in the village.

Wider Engagement:

- Link in with Sustainable Calne and BremZero.
- Engage with Wiltshire Council's GAPS and other nature recovery and sustainability initiatives.
- Link with with Canal Trust projects.
- Avon Needs Trees (Hazeland & Pudding Brook Wood).

4. Next Steps

A WhatsApp Group, Email List and Teams Channel is being set up for the wider group (councillors and volunteers).

The next informal meeting has been arranged for Monday 20th April at 7:30pm in the Lansdowne Arms, at which the ideas will be prioritised into a plan.

5. Recommendation

That the Report be noted.