



# Climate Action Workshop

---

## **Presentations Pack**

Event 1

6<sup>th</sup> October 2021

# Climate Action

## Event Summary Report 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021

---

### Welcome

Tony Green welcomed all participants to the event, provided the running order and online housekeeping suggestions. Tony introduced the first main speaker, Cllr Ian Nellins, Shropshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Natural Assets and the Green Economy.

### Introduction and Climate Change Overview

Cllr Ian Nellins provided attendees with an explanation of the Portfolio Holder role, commenting that it is allowing links to be created across services and departments. It is a cross cutting portfolio to best ensure a broad view in the work to address climate change. Areas of service covered include street scene, waste, recycling, active travel, climate change policy and planning and more. It is a broad and challenging area and one that required investment in order to save for the future.

Cllr Nellins provided an overview of the Climate Change challenges and opportunities facing Shropshire. He spoke about the climate impacts ranging from physical impacts such as extreme weather, flooding and water damage and impact on agriculture and food production, to the plant, animal and human health impact including disease, pests, impact on our diets and the way in which climate change can impact children and more vulnerable people, for example through extreme heat and cold or the impact of pollutants. Cllr Nellins described the organisational impacts of climate change including impact on staff productivity and increased demand for support and services. Lastly the financial impact of climate change will be significant.

To provide context, Cllr Nellins displayed a chart with Shropshire's carbon performance in 2017. At the time, Shropshire's total domestic

greenhouse gas emissions stood at 1.76 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Road transport, industrial energy use were significant contributors alongside domestic energy use. Cllr Nellins described how significant progress has been achieved since that time but that achieving net zero will require considerably more action. A reduction of 7.7% or 1335,000 tonnes per year is needed to reach the target of net zero by 2030.

Cllr Nellins spoke about the work taking place within the county. Shropshire Climate Action Partnership (SCAP) has been formed in recognition that change cannot be achieved unless we work together.

Targets include:

- insulating 20,000 homes to a higher standard and encouraging the use of heat pumps
- generating power using 500 acres of solar farms
- introducing 2,00 electric car charging points and swapping to electric vehicles
- encouraging active forms of travel and greater use of public transport
- reducing waste (a third recycling bin will be one of the measures introduced)
- focusing on land use with re-wilded or planted areas and renewal of peatlands and wetlands

Cllr Nellins was able to share the news that Shropshire Council's direct carbon emissions have fallen by 70% from 17,000 tonnes in 2017 to 5,000 tonnes in 2019. There is a recognition that Shropshire Council's influence extends far beyond its own direct impact and its Climate Strategy reflects that ability to influence. There are some overall themes: Power Down (reducing emissions from buildings and transport); Power Up (developing renewable energy sources); and Carbon capture and storage. Cllr Nellins also spoke about main principles for climate planning including prioritisation, clean growth, investment, working with others, influence and evidence. He ended the presentation by emphasising the need to improve resilience and adapt as we face the climate crisis.

Tony Green then introduced Andy Whyte from Sustainability West Midlands and highlighted how important all the work taking place across Shropshire and beyond is to address the challenges ahead. Tony explained that there are Climate Action partnerships and plans for Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire.

### **Sustainability West Midlands and the SWM Roadmap**

Andy Whyte provided some background to his role as an Associate for [Sustainability West Midlands](#), he described how the organisation works across the region and links to key partnerships such as the West Midlands Combined Authority, Construction companies, Local Authorities and Green Business Networks. SWM is an independent not for profit organisation aiming to achieve net zero by 2050. Andy is also a Sustainability Champion for Telford Business Board and involved in a range of activity designed to achieve sustainability, healthy inequality and inclusive growth.

Andy emphasised that sustainability must be based on some key elements: people, planet and profit. Each must be a focus to achieve effective change. Andy went on to describe some key themes:

- Resource efficiency: such as household recycling and reduction of plastics.
- Clean and active travel: walking, cycling, low emission vehicles, cycle hire schemes.
- Clean air and water: improving air quality, protecting water courses etc. Telford Love Your Rivers programme is a good practice example.
- Sustainable growth: e.g. moving to low carbon goods and services, and investment in the low carbon and environmental technology sector and renewables.
- Social equity and health: for example, work to reduce fuel poverty and prevent health inequalities.

### **ADD MORE IN HERE WHEN HAVE THE SLIDES**

Andy suggested that ways of working should allow for innovation, leadership, collaboration and a celebration of success.

### **Climate Action and Resilience in Shropshire**

Adrian Cooper, [Shropshire Council](#)'s Climate Change Manager spoke about the work taking place to reduce Shropshire Council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. Adrian recapped on the point made by Cllr Nellins that to achieve this target there would be a need to power down (reduce emissions), power up (move to renewable energy and efficiency) and increase work to capture and store carbon through use of Shropshire Council land and by working with land managers across the county.

Adrian explained that Shropshire is one of only 4 areas in the UK to trial new on-street smart EV charging and 50 charge points across Shropshire will be implemented using £200,000 of Government grant funding. In addition to this work to deliver local carbon transport, Shropshire Council is working with businesses and universities in the Midlands to test green hydrogen as HGV vehicle fuel. Shropshire is also delivering the first UK local authority carbon neutral road surfacing programme and has been shortlisted for the National Highways Awards 2021 as a result. This alone should deliver a reduction of over 280 tonnes of carbon.

Adrian updated on action to ensure buildings are more efficient. This includes libraries, offices, leisure centres, social care premises etc. Shropshire Council's energy is now sourced from renewable sources and a programme of improvement is underway to install additional insulation, low carbon heating, lighting and solar power generation with the aim of saving a further 210 tonnes of carbon per year. Lifetime carbon performance appraisal is now an integral part of the design of new council buildings.

Adrian explained that Shropshire Council has done a lot to ensure Climate Change action is incorporated into its governance such as climate and carbon appraisals as part of committee decision making and implementing changes to procurement policy and scoring. Another theme of work has been around a low carbon economy. Adrian spoke more about the work of Zero Carbon Shropshire, working with local Housing Associations and businesses to use energy and heating more efficiently through insulation and renewable energy installations. Adrian also emphasised the commitment of Shropshire Council to help others such as the VCS and town and parish councils through the provision of information and guidance and making resources available online.

Adrian shared the news that there is a Shropshire Goes Electric event on the 7<sup>th</sup> November to demonstrate new technology, electric vehicles of all kinds and chargers.

The aim of 'Power Up' is being achieved through renewable energy generation and storage. A solar farm will be completed on the old Masesbury Road landfill site, Oswestry, allowing the provision of renewable energy to local businesses. Heat networks are being established in north Shrewsbury and Shrewsbury town centre and other opportunities to move towards more renewable and sustainable energy sources are also being explored.

Under the theme of biodiversity, carbon capture and storage, work is underway to plant trees (although Adrian emphasised that we cannot plant our way out of the climate crisis). Biochar is offering one solution, improving soil quality while capturing and storing carbon. Adrian also explained that Shropshire Council can use its planning powers to promote effective design of public spaces and landscapes to incorporate trees, greenery, effective drainage etc.

Adrian finished his presentation by talking more about the role voluntary and community sector organisations and town and parish councils can play. He emphasised the importance of providing

community leadership for a low carbon future, sharing good practice, collaborating on bids and action planning, challenging any practice that fails to consider climate change, signposting, and taking action to make use of renewable energy and improve energy efficiency.

### **Climate Action and the National Association of Local Councils**

Justin Griggs, Head of Policy and Communications at [NALC](#), spoke about the range of work being undertaken nationally and locally to address flooding, the pandemic and climate change. NALC has collated 400 case studies illustrating the vital role town and parish councils have played in supporting people and communities through the Coronavirus pandemic. Being small and local, town and parish councils were not weighted down by bureaucracy but able to respond efficiently and effectively delivering support such as provision of food, medicines and social networks. Justin spoke about the importance of people power.

Justin described the Climate Emergency as the next pandemic. He commented on the hundreds of local councils declaring a climate emergency across England and Wales. They are demonstrating leadership and highlighting what a vital role town and parish councils play, not just in recovery planning but as a link between and within communities, making use of local knowledge and as part of communities, understanding needs in a way that can be more difficult for outside agencies.

NALC has been supporting local action on climate change by providing resources and information, sharing good practice, supporting networking between local councils, gathering evidence through surveys and working to overcome barriers lobbying Government for change. Justin provided examples including:

- Frome: Activities include solar power, electric vehicles, active travel schemes, a sharing hub, installation of a wind turbine, a

community fridge scheme to reduce waste and information events.

- Felixstowe: Actions have ranged from EV charging points, a repair café, cycle to work scheme, car sharing to working with a renewable energy supplier.
- Woodbridge: Here work to address climate change has included tree planting and tree preservation orders, thinking carefully about land use and environment.

NALC is working to support a wide range of local activity through national action including a task and finish group, developing resources and advice, sharing ideas, seeking powers to address climate change and engaging with the Environment Bill. Partnership with the Woodland Trust also means that NALC can offer free trees to members under a Queen's Jubilee project.

Justin provided a link to the NALC Climate Change Case Studies here: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/climate-change/3297-climate-change-case-studies/file>

Justin emphasised the importance of engaging young people in the work taking place locally and this was something the audience commented on following his presentation. Alan Moseley, Shrewsbury Town Council, spoke about the need for young people to be involved and the work Zero Carbon Shropshire is doing in schools.

Others commented on the work of South Shropshire Youth Groups, the work of the Lightfoot Charity in primary schools and the connections being made to the national curriculum. Telford & Wrekin's work to recruit Climate Champions is also seen as an example of good practice. Tony mentioned his experience attending the Clun Climate Day where school children had developed a song to communicate the need for climate action.

## **Panel Q&A**

There were a wide range of questions and comments and some of the key themes are summarised below:

### **Public Transport**

Members of the audience highlighted how important the availability of public transport is to reduce car use and encourage active travel. Concerns were highlighted that rural services can be limited. Cllr Nellins offered to cover this theme in more detail at the next event so he could describe some of the services in place and the planning work currently under development to place more emphasis on active travel and sustainability (this includes the Bus Strategy).

### **Procurement**

A question was asked concerning whether all Shropshire Council officers with commissioning and procurement roles had been trained in climate change. Cllr Nellins explained that training has been undertaken but it has not yet rolled out to commissioning leads. Green champions across the organisation are in place and form a focus for sharing information widely across the organisation. Other action has been delivered to improve procurement practice including building climate change considerations into policy and procurement scoring. Supply chains, carbon status etc. are considered and it is becoming increasingly difficult to win contracts if climate considerations are not in place.

### **New Build Developments**

The audience highlighted the importance of action by developers and in designing and delivering new build sites. There was an acknowledgement that the Local Plan is not agile enough, but the new Local Plan will include higher standards and at the national level the Government is making changes to building regulations.

## **Biochar**

It was commented that this is seen as a game changer and that biochar has significant potential to make a difference in Shropshire. A partnership is in place with Aston University and the roll out of technology is underway with an active pilot in Birmingham beginning later in October.

## **Working with town and parish councils**

Janet Marsh from Claverley Parish Council and Maggie Rowlands from Weston Rhyn Parish Council both emphasised the importance of local action planning and how support would be beneficial for parishes in knowing where to begin. The panel agreed that it can be more challenging in parishes but explained that there was lots of support available and some good examples to follow from some of the town councils. Parishes may not be able to deliver the wide range of actions in the same way but there are steps everyone can take to reduce waste and improve energy efficiency. Jane Cullen Chair of [South Shropshire Climate Action](#) offered to share information and the group have made a wide range of resources available on their website for others to use (covering transport, buildings and energy, land and biodiversity, and community and education).

Another key theme raised by the audience were concerns that there are people within communities denying that climate change is occurring, and this can be challenging when trying to gather support and deliver change. All agreed that the establishment of local networks and making use of volunteers is critical to success. It was acknowledged that clerks and parish councillors cannot be expected to lead work alone.

## **Funding**

Finding funding was raised as a challenge. Justin Griggs encouraged use of council funds but also emphasised that NALC would share information on funding opportunities and that collaborative bids may be an opportunity for some to explore. He explained that some local

councils have been supported by local businesses and have not needed to spend any of their own budgets.

## **Workshop 2 and Next Steps**

Tony Green closed the event with an introduction to the second Climate Action event taking place on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. Tony spoke about the range of work taking place in locations throughout the county, commenting on the Market Drayton Go Green Day on the 29<sup>th</sup> October led by Eric Davis, the work of the Marches Energy Agency to address fuel poverty and a range of other local examples. Tony explained that the next event would look in more detail at the action that can be taken locally and should support those hoping to develop local action plans. Gail Power from SALC reminded town and parish council representatives of the Climate Training events taking place on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October. Tony thanked the speakers and attendees and drew the event to a close.