

Fownhope Parish Council

June 2019 (to review annually)

Declaration of a Climate Emergency



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Background

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity.

In order to mitigate catastrophic climate breakdown it is imperative that we, as a species, act to reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes. Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation and infrastructure to make low carbon living easier and the new norm.

[Carbon Brief](#) analysis has shown that those born today will need to have lifetime carbon budgets almost 90% lower than someone born in 1950.

Carbon emissions result from both the production and consumption of energy and fast, deep cuts in global emissions from energy, transport and food are needed: the world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreements 1.5 degree Celsius limit before 2050.

[The IPCC](#) (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) [Special Report](#) on Global Warming published in October 2018 describes the enormous harm that a 2 degree Celsius rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5 degree Celsius rise, and reported that we have twelve years to limit climate catastrophe. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub national authorities, civil society, the private sectors, indigenous peoples and communities.

Local authorities have an important role in delivering carbon emission reductions, particularly in transport but also in other areas such as buildings and supporting local residents to make changes to their carbon footprint. Because action on climate change brings many co-benefits, it is also important in addressing other areas of public concern, such as public health.

Councils around the world are responding by declaring a 'climate emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency. On 8th March 2019 Herefordshire Council showed leadership by unanimously declaring a Climate Emergency. Kington Town Council, Leominster Town Council and Brockhampton Group Parish Council have also declared, and are putting in place action plans to support their declarations.

2019 has already seen a significant increase in coverage of these issues and the urgency of the action required. From [David Attenborough's Committee on Climate Change](#) to significant protests by the [Extinction rebellion](#) movement and a visit to the UK from the inspirational activist [Greta Thunberg](#).

The Proposal

As one of the counties larger and leading Parish councils we have followed the lead of Herefordshire Council and declared a climate emergency.

In keeping with other councils that have taken this step we suggest that our declaration will be more than a statement and incorporate plans to develop local actions.

Fownhope Parish Council Climate Emergency Statement

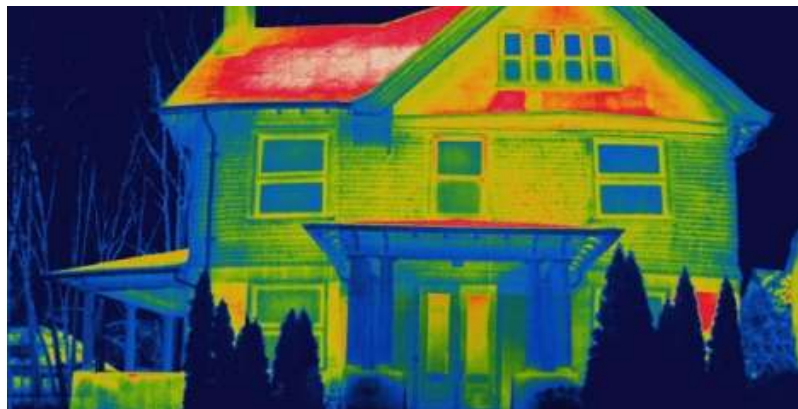
Fownhope Parish Council believe that

- All governments (national, regional and local) have a responsibility to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown. This statement acknowledges that responsibility within Fownhope parish.
- Local governments should not wait for national governments to change their policies, but act independently, and further, use this pledge to push local and national Government to act as part of this commitment.
- It is important for the residents of Fownhope and the UK that councils commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible. We propose that this begins with this statement.
- The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius will be so severe that preventing this from happening must be our number one priority and thus built into our decision making process and plans going forwards.
- Climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of jobs, financial savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide). Action now will certainly reduce long term cost and suffering.



In declaring this climate emergency - Fownhope Parish Council agrees to:

1. Commit to an accelerated reduction of our carbon emissions, with the aspiration to become a carbon neutral community by 2050 at the latest in accordance with [CCC recommendations](#).
2. To work with local partners to produce a carbon reduction plan and action plan covering all relevant council strategies. This should include an impact report on the previous year and specific action plan for the forthcoming year. These documents should be reviewed annually each January, to be circulated by March, and approved by the Chairman of the Parish Council at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May.
3. To work with our local community to enable them to take all possible measures to match or better our efforts, and to support our community at both an individual and business level to demonstrate, inspire and share best practice - within the parish and further afield.
4. To ensure our community buildings only use 100% renewable energy and lowest carbon where not possible.
5. To focus on local key issues, including public and community transport, recycling, management of our open spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity, and other areas where we have a positive role to play.
6. To strongly encourage Herefordshire Council, and departments within it, to act in accordance with wider international agreements relating to climate as an absolute minimum. For example - planning conditions for all new developments in Herefordshire, both residential and commercial, should be close to zero carbon or passive house standard and include renewable provision.
7. To help provide the necessary resource to deliver on this carbon reduction commitment, and to monitor and report annually on our progress.



Possible Actions – What we will do

As we imagine a way of working to achieve our targets it is perhaps simplest to organise our actions into three categories: actions that will be best achieved by the parish council; actions that can be championed by local community or special interest groups; actions that can be implemented by us all as individual households.

Alongside this there are recognised areas where we can immediately start to make reductions. These are listed below with some considerations for specific actions.

It should be noted that these opportunities will inevitably evolve as the UK and other countries develop a reduced carbon future.

Considerations for Fownhope Parish Council:

Transport

1. Support the development of car-sharing – for example through extensive parking for car clubs or the development of a car club in Fownhope.
2. Put in place EV charging - at council owned locations and facilitate rapid rollout of private and business charging facilities.
3. Help in the uptake of energy efficient vehicles generally. This can be delivered in a variety of forms from informative community meetings to vehicle discount negotiation, to the purchase of vehicles for a car club and demonstration unit, or the provision of e-bikes for loan on a try-before-you-buy basis.
4. Press for the use of electric and carbon efficient buses. In England local authorities can use the Buses Act to work in partnership with bus companies to move towards low carbon buses for all routes.



Buildings

1. Lobby for minimum energy efficiency standards in private rented sector.
2. Push for higher standards than the current national standards for new build – ideally all new homes and commercial properties should be zero carbon or even better.

3. Help all property owners and especially fuel poor or vulnerable households with energy efficiency understanding and measures.
4. Retrofit council-owned properties to Energy Performance Certificate C or higher.
5. Enforce building standards - enforce planning/building conditions to ensure all new builds are meeting the targets they were granted permission for.
6. Help individuals to feel empowered to improve their own properties be they domestic or commercial. This might be through information sharing or by practical intervention, the latter could be setting up a revolving loan fund for example.



Waste

1. Help individuals to feel empowered to improve their own practice. Again through information sharing or by actual practical intervention, the latter could be setting up or encouraging community recycle plans and simple intervention including a recent example of reducing plastic bag use for dog waste.
2. Lobby and influence where possible that there is ZERO waste to landfill - ensure biodegradable waste, such as food waste and paper/cardboard, is recycled, composted or used to generate biogas or power.
3. Adopt circular economy waste policies as well as promoting community sharing, reuse and recycling.

Energy

1. Identify and promote areas suitable for individual or collective renewable energy. Encourage community and individual investment in these renewable energy opportunities.
2. Reduce energy use in council buildings and add renewable energy.
3. Ensure Parish Council funds are not invested in fossil fuel or negative carbon companies.



Encourage and inform individuals to take the same stance.

4. Commit to opposing fracking and other fossil fuel extraction – both on council owned lands and more widely.
5. Consider district heating - map out and develop district heating from low carbon sources.
6. Explore forming a non-profit green energy company (eg see Bristol City Council's Energy Company (Bristol Energy) which aims to be in profit in 2021)
7. Encourage the use of green energy tariffs generally and certainly only use for our own consumption in community buildings.

Green Infrastructure

1. Use council land where possible to drawdown carbon (e.g. tree planting).
2. Influence LEPS. Local authorities need to actively influence the development of LEP strategies and proposals to ensure they embed carbon reduction.
3. Help in providing advice – local authorities are well placed to provide advice to individuals and businesses.
4. Encourage our local and national authorities to develop and adopt policies in line with the crisis that we are trying to avert in this declaration.
5. Fownhope is a rural community with significant farmed area and hosts several farming businesses. Agriculture has a significant role to play in Carbon reduction and as a PC we must help and support our farming community. [NFU](#) and work of others very helpful here.

All of the above suggestions are indicative and not restrictive, and should be supplemented and altered as new ideas and opportunities emerge.

Considerations for Fownhope Community Groups:

Members of Fownhope Environment Group have made a number of suggestions for possible local action including:

- Setting up a regular local Repair or 'Make Do & Mend' Cafe, to reduce household waste and build local skills around repair and up-cycling of household goods.
- Setting up a village-wide community renewable energy scheme.
- Working as a community to stop unwanted junk mail deliveries to the village.

These ideas will be supplemented over the coming months, and form part of the plan of action we develop as a community. The Fownhope Environment Group is open to all local people, and the Parish Clerk has details for anyone wishing to join.

Similarly groups might form within the primary school, the church or local pubs, or local sporting communities who would like to take actions themselves to reduce waste / plastics or energy use as a group.

Considerations for Fownhope Parishioner Households and Businesses:

There are lots of websites and organisations offering ideas about ways we can save energy as individuals, and these ideas generally result in saving money, and making our lives and homes more healthy, convenient and comfortable. Many actions are simple and cost-free to initiate, such as switching off and unplugging appliances when not in use or switching to a green energy supplier.

Going forwards, the Fownhope Flag, Website and Facebook page will include regular updates about actions we can implement in our day to day lives, so that we can find support from friends in the local community as we all start to make changes.

Community Carbon Calculating

Successful carbon reduction requires an understanding of our current baseline in order to reduce emissions. Fownhope may want to look at a community carbon calculator in order to understand our current baseline and provide a means for ongoing monitoring.

What is carbon calculating?

It is defined by the website [Carbon Footprint](#) as "a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide".

Accessing Support for our Actions

To help in this understanding there are many evolving resources available - for example - [Friends of the Earth](#) have produced a Briefing with 33 actions local authorities can take to deliver carbon pollution reductions. A selection of their suggested actions are included in our plans, the full FOE document and accompanying information can be found here: <https://hgnetwork.org/?mdocs-file=2958>

Local support for this action can be found through [Herefordshire Green Network](#), a local alliance of more than 40 Herefordshire based groups, organisations and businesses who work collaboratively to share best practice and support each other's environmental action. Fownhope PC are members and can thus benefit from engagement. The HGN 'Great Collaboration' project could be helpful to Fownhope on this declaration.

There are many other sources available now which will evolve over time. We need to be positively open to these to succeed in this declaration.

Signed and agreed by:

Cllr Kevin Braybrook

Chairman, on behalf of Fownhope Parish Council.

Date: 5th May 2021