



Fownhope Parish Council

Declaration of a Climate Emergency



Declaration made in June 2019

Reviewed May 2021, October 2023

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1. Foreword to the original Climate Declaration

Humans have 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 possible.

[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 1.5degree Celsius limit before 2050.

[The IPCC](#) (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) [Special Report](#) on Global Warming published in October 2018 described 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 also declared, and put in place action plans to support their declarations.

2019 saw 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](#).

2. The Declaration

As one of the counties larger and leading Parish Councils, in 2019 we 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 will incorporate ongoing 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 1.5degrees 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.



Agreement

In declaring a 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. Work collaboratively with local partners to develop actions based on emerging opportunities and local needs.
3. Produce a carbon reduction action plan integrating environmental actions with the Parish Council's 5-year Business Plan.
4. 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.
5. Ensure our community buildings only use 100% renewable energy and lowest carbon where not possible.
6. 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.
7. Strongly encourage Herefordshire Council, and departments within it, to act in accordance with wider international agreements relating to climate as an absolute minimum.
8. Help provide the necessary resource to deliver on this carbon reduction commitment.
9. Develop an annual impact report on the previous year, and
10. Develop a specific action plan for the forthcoming year.

These documents will be reviewed annually each year, and approved by the Chairman of the Parish Council at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May.

Impact Reports

2019 - 2020: <https://fownhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk/s/Fownhope-Impact-Report-2019-2020.pdf>

2021 - 2022: <https://fownhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk/s/Impact-Report-2021-2022-pwfr.pdf>

3. Action Planning

As we imagine a way of working to achieve our targets it is perhaps simplest to organise our actions into three categories:

1. Actions that will be best achieved by the parish council
2. Actions that can be championed by local community or special interest groups
3. Actions that can be implemented by us all as individual householders and businesses.

It should be noted that our plans and actions continue to evolve in response to local need, collaborative opportunity and the availability of funding - and as Herefordshire, the UK and countries across the world develop strategies for a reduced carbon future.

Opportunities

There are recognised areas where we can immediately start to make reductions. These are outlined in below with some considerations for specific actions. All of the suggestions are indicative and not restrictive, and should be supplemented and altered as new ideas emerge.

Transport

1. Ongoing support for the Fownhope Community Car Club (see: <https://fownhopeparishcouncil.gov.uk/fownhope-car-club>).
2. EV charging - this should be put in place at council owned locations, along with support to 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. Lobbying for improved bus services - eg the extra monthly bus service to Ross and a summer bus to Ledbury. Could we also have busses that run later into the evening.
5. 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.
6. Safer cycleways - these are needed around the village, and connecting us to the towns.

Buildings

1. Continue to lobby for minimum energy efficiency standards in private rented sector.

2. Push for higher standards than the current national standards for new build. All new homes and commercial properties in Fownhope should be close to zero carbon or passive house standard and include renewable provision.
3. Provide support for 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.

Work with Dinedor Repair Cafe, and offer of local 'Make Do & Mend' sessions to reduce household waste and build local skills around repair and up-cycling of household goods.

4. Work as a community to stop unwanted junk mail deliveries to the village.

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. Encourage the use of green energy tariffs generally and certainly only use for our own consumption in community buildings.

7. Consider setting up a village-wide community renewable energy scheme.



Green Infrastructure

1. Use council land where possible to drawdown carbon (e.g. tree planting).

2. Help in providing advice – local authorities are well placed to provide advice to individuals and businesses.

3. 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.

4. 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.

Working together as a community

1. Our ideas for action should be regularly updated in conversation with Fownhope community, householders and local businesses, so that this becomes an ongoing dialogue that includes the whole village. Local village events and Fownhope ‘Activity Saturdays’ are an opportunity to bring this conversation to the community.

2. The Fownhope Environment Group currently continues to lead on local actions, with support and input from the Parish Council and local people. The Environment Group is open to all local people, and the Parish Clerk has details for anyone wishing to join.

3. Groups wishing to form within the primary school, church, local pubs, local sporting community and local businesses in order to take actions themselves will also be supported and encouraged.
4. The Fownhope Flag, Website and Facebook page include regular updates about actions happening in the village and about actions we can implement in our day to day lives.

Our work to address the climate crisis is most effective when we work together as a community, finding support from our friends and neighbours as we all start to make changes.

4. 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.

CSE's carbon-footprint calculator is designed to help local communities in parishes, towns and wards tackle climate change: <https://www.cse.org.uk/impact-community-carbon-calculator/>

* **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".

5. Other Support for our Action

Sharing our work with other parish councils and communities both locally and across the UK supports the development of meaningful action and increases inspiration and opportunities for all of our work.

Local support continues through [Herefordshire Green Network](#), an alliance of more than 80 Herefordshire based groups, organisations and businesses who work together to share best practice and support each other's environmental action. The HGN '[Great Collaboration](#)' project specifically supports parish councils towards action on their Climate emergency Declarations. Fownhope PC are members and can thus benefit from this engagement.

Many other sources of support continue to become available. We need to be positively open to these to succeed in this declaration.

Signed and agreed by:

Chairman, on behalf of Fownhope Parish Council.

Date: