



Fownhope Environment Group Impact Report, 2019-2020

“A better world is possible – we CAN make the ‘new normal’ better than before!”

Fownhope Parish Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and, since then, have been working on a plan to turn this into meaningful action. We have focused on five main areas: Transport, Energy, Waste, Land Use and Buildings, and considered ways of providing support and facilities, and encouraging the change in habits which have a positive impact on our community carbon footprint. To this we can add Community Engagement, possibly the most important of all as without that, nothing will change.



It is fair to say that 2020 has been a year like no other. However, whilst progress certainly slowed during the pandemic and some actions

have had to be postponed because of COVID, others have been completed and progress has been made. There has been an increase in communication and engagement and a renewed drive forward to build on past achievements into 2021.

“Covid-19 highlights that people are willing to change their lives in response to a large-scale threat – taking action together for a larger purpose. Individual change is part of systemic change – if we all make changes, collectively we can make a significant difference” (climateoutreach.org).

The climate has of course been one of the few winners in the coronavirus pandemic, with carbon dioxide emissions dramatically reduced worldwide. But what we need to do now is to work out how we can maintain these improvements as life slowly returns to normal. It is said that ‘moments of disruption challenge established habits’ and we wish to share the changes we are making in Fownhope in this impact report.

This is our first impact report and details the actions completed during 2019 and 2020.

Building Community Engagement:

Without the support of the community, our chances of success in reducing our community carbon footprint are limited. It is vital that our early actions are engaged in building community engagement, and to this end we have begun to develop relationships across the community. Our environment group meetings are open to all and actively encourage ideas and engagement. We have built a database of 185 subscribers for our newsletters (including over 50 local businesses), write features for the Fownhope Flag, and post on the Village Facebook page, which has over 1690 followers.

We have engaged with our local primary school, St. Mary's C of E School and have found valued support from the headteacher. Before the onset of COVID, we presented to an assembly of Reception to Year 6 children and a small number of parents, and began to discuss a strategy with the school for ongoing connections and activities. Sadly, much of this has been postponed because of the effects of COVID but will be re-activated when the time is right. The school have, however, agreed to share our newsletters with their database of parents which helps to spread our news and information further.

In 2019, the village supported the first Fownhope Market Trail, at which the environment group manned a stall giving out information and engaging with residents. The market trail was a success and planning began for a 2020 event, though this was also cancelled because of COVID.

Caplor hosted a sustainability event which was well supported by Herefordshire companies, and Stuart and Helen (councillor and clerk) attended an event at Envirosort in Worcester to



understand the process of waste and recycling.

This led to an article being published in the Flag, though plans to arrange a community visit have had to be placed on hold.

Networking and Building Support:

We became members of Herefordshire Green Network (HGN) and have attended a series of workshops called The Great Collaboration, designed to bring other local councils and community groups together to encourage a collaborative approach. We share their weekly newsletter with members of our environment group and actively encourage attendance on their variety of events (all currently via Zoom).

We have achieved several successful interactions with other parish councils and environment groups and plan to continue working collaboratively into 2021.

In the past 12 months Gareth has continued working hard to champion climate and sustainable activity at both local and national level. Currently he sits on several boards as listed in this [document](#) and in 2020 headed up the work and creation of the energy section for

the counties carbon reduction plan with a group at Herefordshire Council.

He has spoken at various NALC and HALC events (National Association of Local Councils; HALC the Herefordshire branch), and has attended several meetings with other parish councils and environment groups. We have openly shared our Declaration and Action Plan with the aim of helping others move forwards more quickly.

Actions:

1. Community Climate Engagement Platform (Community Engagement)

One of the main actions of 2019 and 2020 has been the development of the Community Climate Engagement Platform, a Fownhope idea picked up by HGN. HGN successfully applied for MCS funding and have worked collaboratively with Fownhope, and Caplor Horizons to develop the platform which will be brought back to Fownhope for trial. The project included the development of a new website for Fownhope, www.fownhope.org.uk, a multi-faceted site to promote the village to visitors, provide information to residents and host the new climate engagement platform.



Branded for us as Five for Fownhope, it launched in March 2021 and we would urge anyone reading this report to log on and sign up: <https://www.fownhope.org.uk/>

2. Fownhope Car Club (Transport)

Towards the end of 2019 and the early part of 2020, our focus was on the development of a car club in Fownhope. It has been proven that one car club car can remove up to 15 cars from the roads, and that members are much more careful about planning journeys, which in turn reduces the levels of carbon emissions. We assessed that a large number of cars within the village were second cars, used only occasionally, and it was felt that these car owners may benefit from becoming a member of a car club. The car club would reduce carbon, and provide choice and cost savings for members. A number of environment group members visited the St. James Car Club in Hereford, and a representative from St. James later gave a demonstration at a community event. A representative from Malvern Hills Car Club attended a couple of environment group meetings and offered the franchise of their car club to Fownhope. Various articles have been written and published promoting the prospect of a Fownhope Car Club but further work has been postponed because of COVID.

3. Tree Planting (Land Use)

Planting trees is a great way to offset carbon. In November 2019, we held a Tree Planting event and distributed over 7,000 trees within the parish, courtesy of The Woodland Trust and National Tree Planting Day, an amazing achievement and community commitment.

The Parish Council and a personal donation from a Fownhope resident provided a number of tree stakes and guards. Unfortunately, a further event was not possible in 2020, though a further 420 trees were received from The Woodland Trust and distributed throughout

the parish, and a number of additional volunteers came forward to help with the planting.



4. HWT: Common Hill (Land Use)

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust sought help to extend one of its oldest nature reserves at Common Hill, by purchasing and restoring the adjoining 2-3 acre grassland that was on the market for sale. The land is to be held in trust in perpetuity and is open to members of the public. The Parish Council made a donation of £300 from the Community Projects budget, and helped to publicise the project to the community to secure further funding for the successful purchase of the land.

5. Bins and Bags (Waste)

A waste bin that needed to be replaced was replaced with a bin made from recycled plastic, and 20 new grit bins were replaced with new bins also made from recycled plastic.

‘Stick and Flick’ signs have been erected in various wooded locations, and 100% compostable dog poo bags have been purchased and stocked in the village shop.

6. Textiles Bin (Waste)

To encourage community recycling, a textiles bin was sited in the car park of Faulkner House. Parishioners are able to donate unwanted clothes, shoes and household textiles and raise money for the Firefighters Charity. A second textiles recycling bin is also available for community use within the school grounds, to raise money for the local primary school. However, access to this is likely to have been restricted during the pandemic.

7. Consultations:

A consultation response on planning and building standards was submitted and support was given to Herefordshire Council’s Climate Change Compliance Checklist. All planning consultations are considered in accordance with the Fownhope Neighbourhood Plan which has a strong requirement for environmental and sustainable actions. Response to Herefordshire Council’s survey on waste and recycling was encouraged over multiple forums.

8. Investments:

The Parish Council has assessed its investment portfolio and is satisfied that none support the extraction of fossil fuels.

Many more actions are planned for 2021.

Advertising and Promotion:

To help with all of the above, we increased the number of articles, newsletters and posts we shared and wrote during 2019 and 2020. Relevant and informative TV programmes were shared, including the Panorama programme on climate change; David Attenborough’s Extinction programme; Prince

William's a Planet for All; as well as Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's war on plastic, to name a few. We shall continue to look out for interesting and engaging media to share in 2021.

A full-page editorial feature was written and submitted to SLCC Clerk Magazine (which is sent to all members of the Society of Local Council Clerks) and which was shortlisted for 'SLCC 2019-2020 Best Magazine Article written by a Member' Award.

Articles were written and published in the Ross Gazette and the Hereford Times, and an agreement reached to send regular features going forwards.

A press release was sent to NALC to promote the tree planting event in November 2019, and newsletters have been sent by Mailchimp or published in the Fownhope Flag, on a variety of topics discussed above.



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