

Wiltshire County Council Climate Declaration Anniversary Action Planning Meeting 25.01.20

Participating organisations

Calne Community Climate Change
Climate Friendly Bradford
Malmesbury Climate Action Network
Melksham Energy Group
Sustainable Devizes
Sustainable Sherston
Sustainable Warminster
Transition Community Corsham (Transcoco)
Transition Marlborough
Trowbridge Environmental Community
Trowbridge Town Council
Westbury Gasification Action Group
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
Wootton Bassett Eco
Zero Chippenham
XR Bradford on Avon
XR Chippenham
XR Devizes and Marlborough
XR Salisbury

Introduction

45 representatives from 19 participating organisations, as listed above, took part in a meeting at Trowbridge Town Hall, organised primarily to plan for a day of action at the Full Council Meeting of Wiltshire Council which is due to take place on the 25th February. This action is borne out of our collective frustration at the lack of progress and sense of emergency displayed by the Councillors and County Council officers and staff.

During the morning session the participants took part in a Peoples Assembly, an inclusive method of participatory democracy, to agree:

- the key messages that we wish to communicate to the Council and
- the actions that the group envisage will best actively demonstrate and communicate these key messages.

It was agreed that the full list of issues that we want the Council to engage with (see Annex to be circulated to follow) will be written up as a document to be presented to the Council.

Sessions in the afternoon were run with break out groups carrying out further planning around some of the key actions proposed.

Proposals and Results from the Peoples Assembly

1. Messages for the 25th February Action

The highest priority was to make the Council aware of the need for urgency, using the following as slogans:

- Action not Words
- Positive message: Get this done!
- Less words more action
- We are in an EMERGENCY, ACT with URGENCY

The key areas that we want Wiltshire Council to address immediately are grouped below according to theme, with the full list of demands contained in annex 1 to this document.

- i. Planning and policies
 - Produce detailed investment and policy to reduce the county's other emissions (99.3%)
 - Net Carbon neutral/carbon negative planning policies applied to all development (construction, operation, decommissioning)
 - Review/cancel/amend existing plans that do not fit the carbon neutral goal (e.g. Westbury incinerator, roads, non-net neutral housing schemes)
 - All planning decisions to be made on basis of whether they meet climate criteria for net zero.
- ii. Energy, Transport and Waste
 - Promoting and enabling renewable energy for all (including wind)
 - Clean transport
 - Investment in public transport
 - Scrapping new road building
 - EV charging infrastructure
 - Promoting active travel (foot/cycle)
 - Focus on waste reduction and elimination not incineration.
- iii. Community
 - Positive measures to involve community (e.g. food collection) and increase well being
 - (household, parish, county to national)
 - Solutions will improve well being, of individuals and society
- iv. Communication and education

- Every single person person in Wiltshire should be communicated with by Wiltshire Council to help them understand the need for radical action at all levels
 - Wiltshire Council to increase social media presence, local radio, newspaper etc
 - Wiltshire Council to write to all households in Wiltshire and use area boards, etc to inform.
 - Thousands of people in Wiltshire care and have expertise. WC could ask for their assistance in developing plans for our net zero future.
 - Wiltshire Council need to proactively educate Wiltshire's population once a plan is developed, that all Councillors are committed to and push.
 - All councillors and council staff must urgently attend education on the climate emergency and the potential options available to them to achieve net zero
- v. Holistic
- Climate and biodiversity issue to inform every decision made by Wiltshire Council and to be on every agenda item (as TCs are doing)
 - Joined up thinking, planning, actions. Understand that we can't build or 'grow' our way out of this.
 - Big and small things are equally important. Nothing should be excluded.
 - Wiltshire Council need to appoint a full project team to plan and then implement the plan
 - Wiltshire Council should urgently produce a report on what actions they have taken to date and publish a baseline report of both council and county emissions on their website so that everyone can understand what is needed. Monitoring against the baseline should be carried out regularly in order that we can see clearly whether we are all on target (could incentivise parish, commercial and community action).

2. Actions to be taken on the 25th of February

- i. March
- March to county hall from train station (through town)
 - Samba Band
 - Funeral march
 - Colourful actions, placards, banners
 - Geographical representation
 - Make sure there are lots of people – everyone to publicise
- ii. Assembly
- Speakers outside County Hall
 - Representative from every political party to address crowd. Brief them.

- Carry out outreach on day – engage passersby
 - Bring leaflets, information, etc. on climate crisis
 - Stickers on vehicles ‘I should be electric’
 - Inform the public what we/the council are doing. Encourage discussion.
 - NVDA outside/inside council offices, including targeting car park access (entrance/exit) to ensure engagement with councillors and staff.
 - Make sure all groups are visible: placards with towns and organisations (including town councils)
 - Keep it positive, encourage and support – stunts, artwork, visual
- iii. Council meeting
- People to raise questions in Council Meeting (group to make sure these are coordinated and focussed as limited numbers)
 - Speak at Council about transport Cabinet member
 - Start a petition for the council to act now (take to students March on the 14th February).
 - Ask people to write letters to the council and to their councillors – prepare a template to circulate and print out
- iv. Media
- Carry out a media campaign - not just XR (TV, radio, all local papers).
 - Spokespeople/press team with press releases, press briefings.
 - Have a count down to the event
 - Leaflets and posters to advertise event
 - Target young people
 - Have an umbrella name for the groups present
- v. Wider strategy (beyond the Meeting on the 25th February)
- Systematic lobbying at all levels of local government, council meetings and area boards and on every agenda item – make it different and make it fun. Public knowledge that its useful to attend
 - Responding to consultation – raise awareness these opportunities and available and share your view
 - Connect with client earth campaign

Action planning for 25 February: over lunch and afternoon

i. Communication, media, messaging and petitions

Developed by: Hannah Griffin, Liz Stephens, Shirley McCarthy, Stu Farrimond, Juliette Winyard, Sarah Prinsloo, Eva McHugh, Margaret Cavanna

Overall contact: Stu, with Juliette.

Actions discussed: Countdown to 25 Feb, interviews and spokespeople, social media, involving young people, key messages, publicity strategy, petitions and letters.

Actions

- Create a correlated media outlet list of Wiltshire papers, local mags, local groups and local radio. **Juliette, Eva, with input from wider group.**
- Create social media hub. Facebook to report on information re what Wilts Council is doing, and to share our messages (closed group, need to register with name first). **Juliette**
- Countdown: Facts and visuals countdown once a day to Climate Emergency anniversary.
- Letter template: Create letter templates to MPs and councillors which people can use to write to local policy makers. **Stu** to create, share, edit ideas via email.
- Graphic: For umbrella group and for social media hub. **Brad and Eva**
- Petition: Need to decide on clear message, one large petition to distribute widely, rather than lots of smaller ones. To distribute via list of media channels correlated. Turn messages into petitions and standard format letters. Email and social media campaign to get sign ups. 14 Feb: stands for climate strikers to get sign ups from young people. **Eva McHugh** (can't do 14th), **Hannah Griffin, Shirley McCarthy, Margaret Cavanna** (wording of letters, petitions).

Gaps and additions?

- *Contact already made with BBC Wiltshire (interview 24 Jan), who are keen to follow up (Rebecca Rooney, Marie Lennon). Ask them to do a week of coverage with a different interview each day? Provide diverse range of interviewees. **Bill Jarvis, Jane L.***
- *Email list as well as Facebook? Perhaps a weekly update leading up to Feb action? Needs 2 or 3 people to co-ordinate. Important to use Mailchimp, as emails above 10 or so go into spam. Also set up generic email.*

ii. Parade and gathering outside county hall

Organisers/participants: Sustainable Warminster (Colin French), Westbury Gasification (Marie Hillcoat), Trowbridge Environmental Community (see FB), Chippenham BEES, XR Salisbury (Samba band), Jo Ripley (coffin for funeral march), Christian Lange (PA and projector), Richard Ecclestone (police liaison plus access with Council), Brig Oubridge and Karin Kennedy (interaction with councillors).

It might be helpful to have 2 or 3 people (or email contacts) who can co-ordinate overall.

Actions discussed: Times, routes, signs, banners, placards, stewards, outreach, police liaison.

Actions: Interaction with councillors (Brig, Karin): Information points at the two entrances to the councillor car park, with polite and humorous interaction as councillors arrive and depart. Quiz on climate action in Wiltshire: need clipboards, leaflets and prize – Karin to co-ordinate.

Timetable: Provisional until we know if Councillors are willing to speak outside/ talk to those assembled, and if so, when (before Council meeting, lunch etc). **Jane Laurie** to check - Note: Richard Clewer (deputy leader) has agreed to speak at 9.30.

8.00	Set up, including at car park entrances. Or even earlier. Need to be there before councillors arrive to attend pre-meetings.
8.45	Parade assembles at railway station.
9.00.	Parade to County Hall
9.30.	Councillors to address people, then mingle among participants
10.00.	People attending Council meeting inside to check in.
10.30	Full Council meeting starts. Activities etc outside. Parade round Trowbridge centre?

iii. Council meeting

Organisers/participants: Sustainable Warminster, Trowbridge Environmental Community. **Overall contact/co-ordinator: Adrian TB**

Actions and issues

- Publicise meeting agenda.
- Co-ordinate letters and questions to the Council. Questions on every item.
- Find out how many are allowed in to the Council chamber.
- Find out from groups who is coming, then agree who asks questions and makes statements – ensure new faces, diversity. (NB. They can restrict questions to three, with only 15 minutes on the agenda. See https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s173729/Part_04_RulesofProcedure.pdf Paragraph 16).
- Involve other groups? eg. Wildlife Trust, WI, churches

Longer term actions: afternoon discussion in small groups

i. Communication and outreach

Participants: Graham Martin, Andrew Nicholson, Jess Thimbleby, Jenny Joyce. Others?

Actions

- Discussed specific questions, such as areas of council policy/problems, schedules of meetings, how to get information on Council/board meetings and agendas to the public, and how to reach young people.
- 12 month rolling programme. Focus on specific issue. Raise the profile starting with a bang.
- “Wiltshire Community organisers” training on engagement with the public. Use ideas on 25th and for future actions. **Chrissie Cartmell.**
- Positive and practical community action to engage and involve – planting trees, repairs cafes etc.
- Travelling climate circus (XR Salisbury)
- Periodic newsletter for all groups – **Jess** (Wiltshire Wildlife Trust)
- Activities that young people are interested in eg art, bat boxes etc.
- Wilts Climate Alliance website (Note: *see also Facebook proposal under Communication*)
- Regular newspaper column. **Jenny Joyce**
- Local radio and TV
- Getting together twice a year. Could WWT organise?
- Travelling climate circus. **XR Salisbury.**

ii. Local government

Participants: Adrian TB, Matt Callaway, Nick Murry, others ?

Issues/opportunities discussed: how to engage all groups, eco-fest in towns, take over area board, farming (may need more thought, not a Wilts Council issue), food procurement, engagement with the general public about climate in a positive way - not giving them the negative impacts.

Actions:

- 1 to 1 with councillors. Development of relationships at area boards.
- Kick out redundant councillors and replace with more understanding, more involved councillors (2021 elections).
- Energise people to write a letter. Stand up at meetings? Come through community groups if unsure and to do it on their behalf
- Open up opportunities for wind energy within Wiltshire. Is Wiltshire an appropriate place for wind farms? Comment on routes for bats.

- Sustainable planning developments: ensure employment land and social elements as well as housing.
- Wild flower verges: change mowing regimes. Trials are happening in Wiltshire but areas could be expanded sooner.
- Bigger enhancements within developments. Better, widened green corridors.
- Open up land available to community groups to apply for to plant trees, orchards or use for the community.
- Tackle Cabinet that is undermining the climate emergency.
- Hierarchy of 4 engagement opportunities: local MP, county councillors, community area boards, town councillors.

iii. Lobbying MPs

Participants: Cate Watson (MP: James Gray, North Wilts), Rowena Quantrill (MP: Michelle Donelan, Chippenham)

Notes

- There is scope for cross county action lobbying on onshore wind.
- Maybe best to concentrate on one big issue at a time.
- Greenpeace, Oxfam and others provide important information for lobbying.
- Important to keep on good terms with your MP.
- James Grey is chair of the Environment Committee, so influential.

iv. Formation of countywide umbrella group

This was proposed and agreed during the morning discussion group feedback, although there was no discussion over its structure and remit. It was noted that the name should describe what we are, and suggested that it might include general groups, such as the Women's Institutes and other members of the national Climate Coalition.

Names were suggested, with people choosing their favourite with ticks (numbers in brackets) on a flip chart:

New Wiltshire Climate Alliance, Wiltshire Environmental League (WEL) (3), Wilts Action on Climate (WAC), WREN: Wiltshire Range Environment Network, Wiltshire Climate Action (1), Wiltshire Environmental Alliance, Wiltshire Eco Alliance, Wilts Can! Wiltshire Climate Action Now. W(i)CAN (8), Climate Action Wiltshire CLAW(2), Sustainable Wiltshire Community Group, Wiltsy McWiltFace, Wiltshire Climate Alliance (14).

Wiltshire Climate Alliance was the most popular and was selected. **Nick Murry** offered to help set this up.

Feedback

At the end of the day, participants were asked to feedback their thoughts about the day on post-its. Most people particularly liked meeting other groups and activists, making contacts and planning joint action with the potential for greater impact. Some also said they appreciated learning more about XR People's Assemblies. However, there was some criticism that there wasn't enough clarity re plans, actions and responsibilities, and a certain amount of confusion. It was felt that future networking meetings would be useful, perhaps every 6 months, as well as a regular Zoom conference call. We also need to feedback to others.