

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21 OF HAYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP

1. Introduction

1.1 This report summarises the second year's activities of the Council's Climate Emergency Working Group.

1.2 The Working Group was established by Hayfield Parish Council after it had declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and resolved to 'examine how the Council's policies and practices could be made more climate-change friendly'. The Group, comprising three members of the Council and representatives from Sustainable Hayfield, normally meets monthly/bimonthly.

1.3 The Group's terms of reference were agreed, and ratified, by the Council. They concern both the Parish Council as an entity and the wider parish in which the Council plays a prominent part. Throughout the year in question, Cllr Mick Conway was the Chair of the Group, which is serviced by Andy Barker, Parish Council Clerk.

2. The Work of The Group

2.1 The Group's activities were predictably affected by restrictions placed upon councils, and the wider community, by the COVID pandemic. In particular, meetings were effectively suspended for five months, in line with guidance issued to councils.

2.2 Nevertheless, the Group's work has continued. It continues to address the issues, and actions, set out in its Action Plan (attached to this brief report). In particular:

- the Group had secured pledged support for its analysis of local carbon emissions from secondments from the Office of National Statistics, but these were withdrawn once the pandemic started. However, the Group has contributed to the development of the 'Carbon Impact Tool' produced by the

Centre For Sustainable Energy (CSE), and now in operation. This has provided objective, comparative data to assist our understanding of the parish's profile. We have raised questions with the CSE about its methodology and its future plans, to help our understanding of the local profile set out in the tool, which is publicly accessible at <https://impact-tool.org.uk>, and continue to consider its findings and their implications;

- prompted by the work of the Group, the Parish Council funded and installed a new low-carbon heating/cooling system in the council office and is in the process of switching its energy supply to that of a 100% green supplier;
- again, part-prompted by the group's efforts, the council, with the local Allotment Society, has embedded climate-friendly standards and expectations of tenants into a more coherent set of documents governing their operation;
- has identified carbon offsetting as a local, medium term priority and, in this respect has:
 - encouraged the Parish Council to sign up to the Tree Council's 'National Tree Charter' via a presentation it helped organise;
 - produced a briefing sheet for volunteers and landowners on 'woodland development', supported by expert advice;
 - secured two willing two local landowners who are keen to develop some part of their land for woodland development;
 - planted, with DCC Ranger support, several dozen small oak trees and hundreds of acorns along the Sett Valley Trail;
 - via a group member, assisted the council to develop proposals for planting/fencing alongside the Old School Field.
- has identified 'energy' as a further medium-term priority, which has resulted in the group:
 - arranging presentations by DCC Decarbonisation funding initiative for energy efficiency improvements for small and medium-sized businesses, securing Parish Council support for local promotion of this scheme;
 - drafting, and getting Parish Council agreement, to a leaflet about the initiative, which group members are taking to local small businesses, to encourage take-up;
 - drafting, and getting parish Council funding support for a local leaflet about the government's (then) Green Homes Grant scheme, and arranging distribution of this this house to house within the parish.
- has secured agreement that the group's meetings, and annual reports, be made available to the public via the council's website.

2.3 Action continues in other areas bearing on the need to reduce the council's, and the wider parish's, overall carbon footprint.

2.4 The proceedings of each of the Group's meetings, and the associated Action Plan Progress Chart (see Annex A) detailing actions taken and planned, are now submitted to all Parish Councillors in advance of the Council's monthly meetings. Regular verbal feedback to the Council is also made by Councillors serving on the Working Group.

3. Summary

3.1 This report, and its Annex, summarises the activities of the Climate Emergency Working Group in the year 2020-2021, since production of its report of its first year.

3.2 It has been an unusual year, for reasons already given, but with a number of achievements made. The profile of the Parish Council has perhaps increased. The Working Group has been grateful for the support of the Parish Council, and its Clerk. With the developing commitment of other statutory bodies to take co-ordinated action to manage down carbon-equivalent emissions, and the imminent appointment by the Borough Council of a Climate Change and Biodiversity Officer, it is possible that more collaborative work with other public bodies may arise.

3.3 The Parish Council is requested to note, and support, this report and the continuing work of the Working Group.