



**BANWELL PARISH COUNCIL**  
**BIODIVERSITY & SUSTAINABILITY WORKING PARTY**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Sustainability and Biodiversity Working Party ('the Working Party') is a working party of Banwell Parish Council ('the Council') and is established to co-ordinate the Parish's overall approach to biodiversity and sustainability.

### Membership

The Membership of the Working Party shall be a minimum of three Members of the Council ('Council members'), and up to five other members of the community ('Community members'). N.B. These numbers are flexible – the Council recognises it is important to have the right skills and interest on the working party and, whilst membership will be generally reviewed annually at the Annual Council Meeting, it is possible that community membership may increase and go above eight.

The Chair of the Working Party will be a Member of the Council and shall be chosen by the Working Party Members at the first meeting of the Working Party.

A Parish Council Officer (Communications Officer or Clerk) will administer the meetings on behalf of the Council and Community. The Chair will convene meetings and liaise with the Officer regarding a schedule of meetings and agenda items.

### Decisions

The Working Party shall recommend actions / decisions to the Council who will vote on those requirements / motions at the next relevant meeting and feedback accordingly so as not to delay actions unduly. The working party has no budgetary or spending powers – if expenditure of any kind is expected because of the working party recommendations it must be referred to the Council, through the Officer, for approval.

### Meetings

The Working Party shall meet at least twice a year. Copies of the draft notes of the meeting shall be circulated to all Members and the Council within 10 workdays. Working Party meetings are not required to be held in public. The Officer will follow normal statutory regulations in terms of notice of Council meetings.

### Quorum

The quorum shall be three members of the Working Party with a minimum of two Councillors.

If the number of members present falls below the required quorum of three the meeting may be adjourned unless it is felt necessary, due to urgent requirements, to continue discussions.

The notes of that meeting will then be forwarded to Full Council for consideration as per usual (see Decisions above).

### Responsibilities

The key objective will be to develop a Sustainability & Biodiversity action plan.

The action plan will be designed using Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely (S.M.A.R.T) principles to:

- Promote positive opportunities for the environment.
- Identify more sustainable approaches and help address wider negative impacts on the environment including those caused by development pressures, pollution and climate change.
- To recommend options for more sustainable energy use including exploring solar energy potential.
- To identify further opportunities for enhancement of natural assets including potential for tree planting and hedgerow improvement.
- To identify ways to maximise recycling.
- To raise public awareness of the principles and opportunities offered through the Environmental Policy and seek their support in these issues.
- To make recommendations which fall beyond the Parish Councils capabilities, via the Council, to North Somerset.
- Members should all adhere to the Parish Council's Policy and Procedures as displayed on the Council web site

### Life of the Environment Working Party

The Working Party shall continue until the action plan is adopted by the Council, deemed unnecessary by the Council or until such time as the Working Party Members determine.

### Review

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Council in May of each year.



# **CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY**

## **ACTION PLAN**

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**Approved by full council:**

**This is a draft action plan and is a working progress. The environment working group shall add extra ideas and discuss. Ideas welcomed from all members of the public, either at the**

**working group sessions or via email. Contact Daisy on [comms@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:comms@banwellparishcouncil.org.uk).**

## **Introduction**

### **Background and context**

In August 2020 Banwell Parish Council passed a resolution in support of North Somerset Council's decision to declare a climate emergency.

As a result of this, a climate action and environmental working group was set up. Unfortunately, due to a change in personnel and the Covid-19 pandemic it has prevented the working group from meeting.

The Clerk has formulated this initial Climate Change and Biodiversity Plans which will be discussed, changed and finalised by the working group before going to full council.

- 1) A list of target activities has been produced by the Clerk which currently serves as the basis of a climate and environmental action plan.
- 2) A carbon emissions benchmarking exercise has been carried out by the Clerk on the 'Youth & Community Centre' which provides a baseline measure by which progress towards carbon neutrality can be measured.
- 3) The communication officer has begun the process of engaging with the community by taking part in the 'Climate Communications for Parish Councils' pilot run by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE).
- 4) The Clerk and Communications Officer attended a workshop held by The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and are working with Future Leap.

## **Approach**

### **About this document**

1. The aim is for this document to be incorporated into the Parish Council's Climate and Environmental Action Plan and there will be a distinction between:
  - a. *Policies* – principles of action to be formally adopted by the Council, that support the Council and Officers when making decisions in a range of activities; and
  - b. *Planned Activities* – Proposed actions or events that support the Council's stated aims in respect of climate action and environmental sustainability.

By making this distinction it is intended that climate action and environmental sustainability become ubiquitous considerations for all council decision making that are supported by a clear roadmap of planned activities.

2. This document also distinguishes between *Planned Activities* that relate to:
  - a. *The Parish Council Estate*, i.e. where the Parish Council has full control over the outcome; and
  - b. *Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying*, i.e. where the Council has the ability to exercise some influence over the outcome but does not have full control.

Making this distinction enables us to manage the expectations of the taxpayers with regards what the Parish Council is empowered to deliver with regards Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability.

It also helps to provide clarity around how the Council might wish to allocate resources and the extent to which activities are to be community, councillor, or officer led.

3. This document further distinguishes between the following categories of activity:
  - Carbon reduction
  - Plastic reduction – single use plastics/ plastic packaging/ disposable plastics
  - Waste reduction – all other forms of avoidable waste
  - Biodiversity and trees – trees and other plant life have an important role to play in carbon reduction as well as contributing to healthy, diverse ecosystems
  - Climate change readiness – preparation for a world in which extreme weather events are much more commonplace

Categorising activities in this way helps to ensure that our portfolio of activities remains balanced and proportionate to the threats posed by inaction.

4. Finally, this document seeks to propose suggestions as to how activities might be funded as follows:

Proposal:

It is proposed that wherever possible the Council should:

- a) Seek in the first instance to fund activities through existing income streams, i.e. through continuing to make environmentally conscious decisions when updating, maintaining and renovating property on the Parish Council Estate.
- b) Explore grant funding options where there is no existing income stream.
- c) Consider Salix<sup>1</sup> Loans where available and only in proportion to the environmental risk that the planned activity seeks to mitigate.
- d) Consider raising funds from an increase to the precept only where absolutely necessary, and only in proportion to the environmental risk that the planned activity seeks to mitigate.

## Policies

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils>

Banwell Parish Council should compile and maintain an Environmental Policy Statement. The statement should represent a high level, but comprehensive, commitment to minimising environmental impacts of day-to-day Parish Council Operations within its own estate.

## **Proposals**

The following are proposed policy statements that the Council might consider adopting.

- actively support small and large planning applications for new renewable energy in the area.
- replace all felled trees and continue to introduce new native trees that are of the highest possible benefit to wildlife. To identify appropriate locations for planting.
- Develop a strategic plan for any new housing developments to require new homes to be energy efficient, nature friendly, and located close to public transport and amenities pushing for future housing to be zero-carbon and nature friendly.
- Working with the Local Plan team designate and protect sites as local green spaces, new play spaces (formal and informal) and green infrastructure networks, encouraging local residents into the fresh air, walking or cycling rather than using their cars for local journeys.
- oppose high-carbon developments, promoting sustainable alternatives instead.
- ensure any council funds are invested safely in low-risk sustainable banks or investment funds.
- encourage, enable<sup>2</sup> and support community groups taking action to address climate change and promote environmental sustainability.
- engage, inform and encourage the wider community to take action on climate change and make decisions that promote environmental sustainability.

## **Previous Activities: Progress to date**

### **Summary**

The following list represents the incredible achievements made by Council Officers before and since the Parish Council made a commitment to supporting North Somerset Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in August 2020.

#### **Carbon reduction**

- Supporting the North Somerset Council in its declaration of a climate emergency.
- Carbon footprint benchmark carried out on the Parish Council estate by the Clerk in 2020 & 2021.
- Goods and services are purchased locally, where possible, to reduce mileage and packaging or combined with already planned journeys.

#### **Plastic reduction**

- Using glasses instead of plastic cups, as well as avoiding where possible the use of plastic plates and cutlery (anything in stock is being used up). Covid slightly changed this as one-use disposable items were needed. However, where possible recyclable or recycled products have been used.

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<sup>2</sup> Enablement will require some level of financial support. See later proposal in the Planned Activities: 2020-2022 section.

- For refreshments at meetings the measures include use of crockery, metal teaspoons and glasses where possible.
- No usage of single use condiments sachets (anything in stock is being used up).
- Straws are not used in the office or at events (unless required for assistance with drinking).
- Staff try, where possible, to bring in their own lunch therefore reducing the use of single use packaging.
- Soap dispenser / Anti-bac gel in the toilets, office toilets and kitchen is refillable.
- Programme of replacement of old Streetlights to LED
- Replacement of old YCC doors to make building
- Establishing an Environment Working group.
- Supporting Sustainable North Somerset / CSE by sharing social media communications

### **Waste reduction**

- Annual litter picking event incorporated with spring clean.
- Providing litter picking equipment to members of the public when requested.
- If the office staff cannot make use of wastepaper, it is recycled (except confidential papers) along with recyclable plastic items, cardboard and tins via the North Somerset Waste.
- Glass bottles/coffee jars are recycled.
- All water meter readings are monitored, and action is taken immediately to identify the reasons when they are high, minimizing water loss if there is a leak.
- Councillors are encouraged to receive agendas and minutes by e-mail.
- All invitations to Parish Council events are sent via e-mail, where possible.

### **Biodiversity and trees**

- Biodiversity in public spaces. The Parish Council is not responsible for the highway verges although, they support North Somerset's rewilding policy.
- Trees that are felled due to being dead, diseased, or dying, are replaced with 2 native species, where possible. Guidance is also sought from the Tree Officer at North Somerset Council.
- Edge/boundary of YCC & Rec are left and only strimmed once a year

### **Climate change readiness**

- Sharing social media communications from North Somerset & CSE
- Comms communications plan in association with CSE

## **Planned activities: 2022/2023-2023/2024**

### **Summary**

Whilst we will still look for quick wins to reduce carbon and waste and promote biodiversity, work will begin on ensuring that the Parish Council Estate is energy efficient and progressing towards carbon neutrality.

A carbon footprint benchmarking activity was carried out in 2020, 2021 and will again in 2022. An annual report submitted to full Council.

We will use data from the Future Leap / CSE carbon benchmarking tool to identify where Banwell needs to focus and use it to shape a Community Engagement Campaign.

### **Carbon reduction**

- Replacement of remaining Streetlights to LED
- Replacement of old YCC lights to LED
- Explore funding opportunities for energy waste reduction measures on YCC.
- Engage with the Local Plan and future developments regarding different sources of energy generation, i.e. solar panels.
- Encourage walking by promoting the walking routes identified. Employees and Councillors should also be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share where possible.
- Encourage / support community minibus initiatives
- Reduce energy waste from YCC.
- Introduce solar panels on the Youth & Community Centre if possible.
- To consider and research a potential collaboration with other local groups to create an impartial local guide that provides information on accredited local businesses and could include information on local accredited energy assessors and renewable energy installers for solar panels, batteries, EV charging points and heat pumps, eco-friendly retailers, green builders and landscape companies, etc. It can also encourage sustainable transport options.

### **Plastic reduction**

- Continued support for community-led activities such as Tera Cycle
- To research and cost the possibility of PPE recycling schemes for the Y.C.C.
- To consider starting a Refill Revolution scheme in Banwell.

### **Other waste reduction**

- Work with North Somerset Waste Team to ensure appropriate bins are made available at events and find out how additional recycling bins can be returned to locations where they have been removed.

### **Biodiversity and trees**

- Encourage residents to increase biodiversity in their back gardens through wildlife friendly gardening.
- Encourage residents and local landowners could be encouraged to take part in tree planting. The Tree Charter, developed by the Woodland Trust, provides excellent guidance on how to increase tree cover. The National Association of Local Councils website provides case studies where it has been used.
- Researching alternatives to glyphosate weed killer and the possibility sharing a hot foam system with neighboring Town & Parish Councils.



## Climate change readiness

- Large trees have been planted to provide shaded areas on Parish Council owned outdoor areas
- Support the introduction of safe walking and cycle routes and, where necessary, work in partnership with the local authority to deliver them.
- Ensuring money is invested wisely by researching the eco status of banks used.
- Researched funding possibilities for climate projects.

## Planned activities: 2024-2030

### Summary

Any Council buildings that have not already transitioned to electric will be transformed.

The Parish Council will seek opportunities to install renewable energy generation facilities on its own property.

We'll showcase what we've achieved and learned and attempt to bring together community groups who can benefit from our organisational learning in order to bulk buy for their privately owned properties.

### Carbon reduction

- Produce green energy. Install renewable energy generation, like heat pumps and solar PV, at council buildings.
- Bring together groups of people for bulk purchases. The costs of installing solar PV, or other renewable technologies such as heat pumps, should be much lower if done in bulk, street by street, or area by area. Local homeowners and businesses could be brought together to develop such a scheme – it's a widely used model in the Netherlands and places such as Frome. Bulk purchases of energy audits or energy insulation is also possible.
- Promote a lift-sharing scheme. By convening local businesses and car-sharing schemes, such as the social enterprise Liftshare, it's possible to help local people reduce the carbon pollution from car use, save money and foster new friendships. Liftsharing may often be a solution for people when public transport, cycling or walking to work isn't. Car-sharing schemes for non-commuting journeys should also be promoted
- Buildings using renewable energy should also be used as a showcase to help local people see these technologies first-hand, particularly less familiar technologies such as heat pumps.

### Plastic reduction

**IDEAS WELCOMED TO BE DISCUSSED AT WORKING GROUP. CURRENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Switch to plastic milk bottle deliveries at Y.C.C
- Consider signing up to Surfers Against Sewage organisation to work toward becoming a "Plastic Free Community". Facilitate the formation of a local Plastic Free Banwell group.

### Other waste reduction

**IDEAS WELCOMED TO BE DISCUSSED AT WORKING GROUP. CURRENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Promote food waste reduction to parishioners, e.g. home grown produce sharing, scrappy cooking.
- Investigate harvest festival for home grown produce sharing.

## **Biodiversity and trees**

### **IDEAS WELCOMED TO BE DISCUSSED AT WORKING GROUP. CURRENT SUGGESTIONS:**

- Identify suitable locations for plug planting and wild flower seed planting. Work with community to plant.
- Install wildlife habitats, e.g bat boxes, hedgehog homes, bug hotels, log piles.
- Research possibility of community orchard.
- Promote citizen science schemes such as Bioblitz and Mammal Trust harvest mouse monitoring schemes.
- Creation of Environment page on Parish Council website to regularly update with news and opportunities.
- Promote hedgehog highways in local gardens, and to install highways at Parish Council owned sites.

## **Climate change readiness**

### **IDEAS WELCOMED**

**Notes:** Ensure the climate change or nature implications of decisions are known before making them. It isn't credible to accept the need for rapid action on climate change and nature and then make decisions without knowing whether they'll be harmful or helpful. Requiring every decision to be well informed is common sense as well as good practice. This Action Plan will be a flexible, working document that can be added to and updated as and when required

## **Appendix A**

## **Banwell Parish Council estate carbon footprint benchmark**

**31 March 2020**

### **Introduction**

The following report provides a carbon footprint benchmark to help focus carbon reduction activity across the Banwell Parish Council estate.

### **Method**

Banwell Parish Council's carbon footprint has been calculated using a carbon footprinting tool provided by Future Leap.

Another measurement will be taken in April 2021 to track any progress made over the 2020/21 Council year.

### **Scope**

The footprint relates to the Banwell Parish Council Youth & Community Centre only.

### **Summary of findings**

Between April 2019 end March 2020 (pre covid), the Youth & Community Centre:

- To be completed for two comparative years

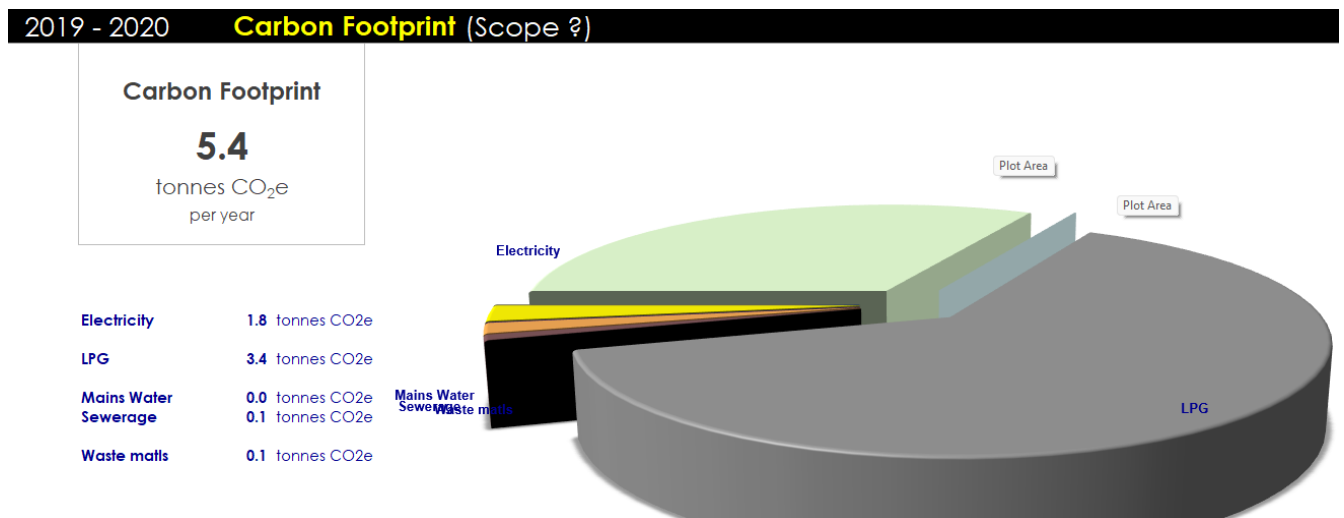
Between April 2019 and March 2020, the Parish Council estate also produced:

- To be completed for two comparative years

The table below shows how this translates into 5.4 tons of CO2 emissions each year.

- To be completed for two comparative years

Source	Emissions tCO2/yr	% Footprint
Electricity	1.8	22.3%
Gas	0.0	0.0%
LPG	3.4	0.0%
Oil	0.0	0.0%
Petrol	3.0	4.1%
Diesel	0.0	14.6%
Water	0.1	2.0%
Waste	0.1	1.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>tCO2e/yr</b>



The footprint breakdown above shows that 3.4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e of the Parish Council estate carbon footprint comes from consumption of LPG gas at the YCC.

This is followed by electricity at 1.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Mains water sewerage accounts for 0.1 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, and waste at 0.1 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

Strategies for reducing the Parish Council’s carbon footprint and challenges that we expect to encounter to be discussed by the working group.