

Sustainable Communities Action Plan

Shaftesbury Town Council

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1 Introduction

Nothing is inevitable except that Climate Change changes everything.
(Klein, 2015, p. 37)

- 1.1 Shaftesbury Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, resolving to form a working group with members of the community to draw up a plan for action. (Shaftesbury Town Council, 2019)
- 1.2 The Council's strategic plan had already identified some projects which supported the Climate Change agenda and these are included in the action plan below to show a comprehensive plan.
- 1.3 The action plan aims for the Town Council to be carbon neutral by 2030 and provide opportunities for the community of Shaftesbury to also attain that target.
- 1.4 Plastic free shops and refill stations are growing in popularity, social media frequently promotes shop-local, renewable and green initiatives. Through community engagement, the Council will encourage these habits.

2 The Plan

- 2.1 Starting by calculating the Council's carbon footprint, the plan sets out the high-level actions for the Council to take in addressing Climate Change. Looking at community engagement and other authorities, recognising connections at local, county, national and internal levels on the changes that we all make. The plan also identifies which actions are Town Council changes and which are for the wider community as well as identifying when those changes are planned to be made by.
- 2.2 Energy – to improve energy efficiency in Council owned and let buildings leading to generation of local energy to support the community.

Action	Council benefit	Community benefit	When
Improve energy efficiency of Council operated buildings	✓		18 months
Improve energy efficiency of Council let buildings		✓	5 years
Create energy hub providing renewable energy for Shaftesbury Town Council	✓		5 years
Develop energy hub CIC to provide energy for the whole town		✓	10 years

2.3 Transport – to promote transition to greener forms of transport for the Council and the community.

Action	Council benefit	Community benefit	When
Move to electric vehicles as each requires replacement	✓		18 months and ongoing
Invest in covered cycle rack at the Town Hall and promote cycle to work scheme		✓	6 months
Encourage flexible work from home to reduce commuting	✓		6 months
Promote walking and cycling routes		✓	6 months
Invest in bus shelters and promote public transport		✓	1 year
Create carpark with electric vehicle charging points in the town		✓	5 years
Promote carshare and rent my drive		✓	1 year

2.4 Food and Drink – to reduce food miles and food waste and encourage local production and economy.

Action	Council benefit	Community benefit	When
Provide locally sourced refreshments for Council hospitality	✓		3 months
Priority market pitches to local producers		✓	3 months
Promote allotments and community farm		✓	3 months
Plant community fruit trees		✓	1 year
Introduce water butt policy for allotments to limit mains water use		✓	3 months
Set up a community fridge		✓	2 years

2.5 Waste – to eliminate dependency on plastics generated from fossil fuels, wasting resources such as water and reduce landfill.

Action	Council benefit	Community benefit	When
Eliminate single use plastics and reuse and recycle existing plastic	✓		1 year
Eliminate hard copies of meeting papers	✓		Immediate
Install digital noticeboards		✓	5 years

Promote plastic free Shaftesbury		✓	6 months
Priority market pitches for sustainable / plastic free providers		✓	3 months
Install recycling public waste bins		✓	1 year
Replace public toilets with composting toilets	✓		10 years or when replacement is needed

2.6 Community – to work with the community on a joint journey making changes to combat climate change

Action	Council benefit	Community benefit	When
Regular meetings with Planet Shaftesbury	✓		6 months
Annual ‘Sustainable Communities’ meeting to update on progress and seek community feedback and ideas	✓		6 months
Organise ‘open house’ events to demonstrate sustainable energy homes		✓	18 months
Community Grant focus on sustainable / climate projects		✓	1 year

2.7 Biodiversity – to improve biodiversity of flora and fauna thereby decreasing intervention in green areas and increase carbon absorption

Action	Council benefit	Community benefit	When
Increase wildflower areas¹	✓		3 years
Increase tree planting		✓	6 months

3 Engagement and the wider context

3.1 This plan above distinguishes between those actions which provide a direct benefit to the Town Council and those with a direct benefit to the community. Any action addressing climate change has global benefit through a ripple effect, by displaying the table in this format, the community can see what direct benefit they will receive for their money (council tax).

3.2 The Council has a working group made up from the community to help shape the development of the climate action plan. Also, through a thorough neighbourhood plan

¹ Strimmers release small particles of plastic into the ground as they are used. Since the cessation of glyphosate use by the Council, the use of strimmers has increased. Strimmers are currently petrol powered adding to the carbon footprint of the Council.

consultation process, many climate change objectives were identified and reflected in some of the projects above.

- 3.3 Some of the actions will require support and collaboration with the Unitary Authority (electric car charging) to implement. There will also be a need to draw on national and international companies as they develop technologies in order for some of the more ambitious projects to be implemented (energy hub).
- 3.4 Engagement is key to managing expectations of the community, particularly in a period of financial instability heightened by the effects of Coronavirus.

4 Tensions

We are stuck because the actions that would benefit the vast majority are extremely threatening to an elite minority that has a stranglehold over our economy. (Klein, 2015, p. 22)

- 4.1 Discussions around climate change can often challenge people and bring their defences up. 'It's too expensive', 'What can I do?', 'It's a political bandwagon', 'the world goes through natural cycles'. Anything which requires someone to change their way of life will naturally also bring resistance. Conservative governments tend to look back at what has worked in the past rather than take risks.
- 4.2 Community engagement and awareness will help to address that. Bringing about changes which make people's lives easier and more enjoyable will bring people on board. They can embrace the changes because they can see a direct benefit, the global benefit is almost a side effect.
- 4.3 The cost to implement some of these projects is daunting however, options like the energy hub will, after initial investment, generate their own income. It is anticipated that within 5 years the new carpark will generate enough income to fund the community grant scheme which, if focussed on climate change actions, will become a self-funding climate change action.

5 Conclusion

...we need to see less consumption (except among the poor), less trade (as we relocalize our economies), and less private investment in producing for excessive consumption. These reductions would be offset by increased government spending, and increased public and private investment in the infrastructure and alternatives needed to reduce our emissions to zero. (Klein, 2015, p. 110)

- 5.1 The Council has already taken many steps to improve and minimise its climate impact. It is important to acknowledge these and see the action plan as a continuation of a journey which is already well underway.
- 5.2 The community is waking up to the need to change and showing a strong desire to be involved in that change and amend their habits and routines.

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