

Parish Councils - resources for responding to the Climate and Nature Emergency

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019, committing the Council to provide the leadership to enable Bath and North East Somerset to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. [This is the first progress report.](#) It explains the work that has taken place since March, and highlights the results of the first phase of research into the area's carbon footprint, including recommending three immediate priority areas for action (Energy efficiency improvement of the majority of existing buildings (domestic and non-domestic) and zero carbon new build; A major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce transport emissions and a rapid and large-scale increase in local renewable energy generation), and demonstrating the scale and speed of ambition needed. For further information see the Council's Climate Emergency webpage [here](#).

Growing numbers of parish, town and county councils are declaring a climate emergency. We have compiled a list of useful resources to support parish councils across B&NES and provide information to enable you to take action where and when you can. Individual parish councils can determine which initiatives could be explored, depending on your resources and capacity.

Key first steps

- A key first step for a parish council seeking to take action would be to declare a climate emergency, make climate change a Parish Council priority and set up an action group to discuss ideas and initiatives.

Local examples

- Freshford Parish Council have passed a resolution recognising the Climate Emergency. Key learnings from this experience in Freshford include the importance of community buy-in and input into initiative planning to generate momentum. Freshford Parish Council's Climate Emergency declaration - "Freshford PC resolves to recognise the existence of a climate emergency. The PC fully supports the B&NES declaration on the climate emergency. The PC will work with the Freshford community and community organisations, B&NES and other parish councils to establish specific local initiatives that will contribute to and enhance all aspects of our locality including transport, the built environment, the natural environment, ecology and renewable energy."
- Keynsham Town Council have recently established their own Environment and Sustainability Working Party, holding their inaugural meeting in October 2019, and are in the process of formulating an Action Plan for the Town Council's own activities, and community engagement.
- In January 2020 Timsbury Parish Council decided on a Climate Emergency Resolution, recognising the science of a climate emergency and resolved to take action with others to reduce its causes. They have established a Green Action Working Group, for more information see their website [here](#).

- There are a number of actions outlined below that can be taken to reduce the carbon footprint of activities and infrastructure directly controlled by parish councils, relating to parks and recreation areas, public buildings and facilities, and infrastructure, such as street lighting. These actions can be promoted through the neighbourhood planning process.
 - **Save energy - consider converting streetlights to lower energy LED lamps**
 - **Renewable energy - propose sites for renewable energy generation, including PV solar panels or wind turbines**
 - **Manage land to enhance nature - designate sites for tree planting, nature conservation and local food growing, reduce pesticides.**
 - **Encourage sustainable transport - push for zero-carbon homes in close proximity to local services, identify safe walking and cycling routes and support electric car charging facilities and encourage car sharing schemes**
 - **Minimise waste – encourage the setting up of a Share & Repair Café scheme and promote the minimisation of single use plastic**
 - **Encourage the buying of local and seasonal food**

For more detail on these actions please see – [‘Friends of the Earth – 20 actions parish and town councils can take on the climate and nature emergency’](#)

- Parish councils can use their own buildings and land to develop local, clean energy projects. Although parish councils are unlikely to have direct funds to cover renewable energy projects, there are other sources of funding that can be accessed, such as Salix loans, grants, or a community share offer. See next page for more information on these.

Local examples

- In 2019, Marksbury Village Hall received £5,000 from Bath and West Community Energy’s community fund towards installing new insulation and low energy lighting in the hall.
- In 2017, Stanton Prior Village Committee received £5,000 to insulate the village hall and install ceiling mounted heaters in order to improve energy efficiency.
- The Freshford & Limpley Stoke Community Association (FLiSCA) have installed a row of 64 solar panels to generate electricity for the Galleries Shop & Café. Funding for this project was generated through a community-share offer.
- The Saltford Community Association have carried out a number of energy improvement projects to their building, including the installation of destratification fans, insulation, double glazing, solar panels and LED lighting, with grants from the EU Rural Development LEADER programme and from the Enover Trust – outlined [here](#).

Funding opportunities

We understand that many parish councils don't have the expertise or capacity to develop renewable energy projects on their own, however there are numerous sources of funding available to help. This includes support with the crucial project development process prior to submitting a bid for project funding, as well as grants for projects that have already been defined.



Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) Sustainable Neighbourhood Planning Support

CSE is offering free, hands-on, tailored support and advice and assistance for neighbourhood planning groups, as follows:

- Initial advice on the relevant sustainability and climate issues and opportunities in your area
- Advice on gaining support for sustainability measures
- Support with policy drafting and wording for your neighbourhood plan
- Delivering public engagement events and workshops
- Research for developing an evidence base.

They also have a range of online resources and guides to help, including [this guide](#) to policy writing and community engagement for low-carbon neighbourhood plans. For more information see the CSE webpages [here](#).



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Rural Community Energy Fund

The Rural Community Energy Fund is being delivered by the South West Energy Hub and offers support to eligible communities for renewable energy projects. A feasibility grant is available for communities at an early stage of exploring the possibility of a renewable energy project, or development funding is available for projects that have a good chance of securing planning permission. For more information on how to apply for these grants see [here](#).



Bath and West Community Energy (BWCE)

The BWCE Community Fund is used to support community projects that reduce the impact of peak oil, climate change and tackle fuel poverty in Bath and surrounding areas. The BWCE Fund grant programme opens once a year and is due to open again in Autumn 2020. For more information on the fund and to see examples of past projects that have received funding see their webpage [here](#).

Community Solar 2020 – BWCE are installing free solar panels on businesses, schools and community buildings, cutting energy costs and combatting the climate emergency. Suitable buildings in your parish would have a southerly facing pitched roof in good condition (ideally 300 square metres – around the size of a tennis court) or a shallow pitched roof which faces due East and West and a building that uses a significant amount of power year-round. For more information see [here](#).



[Salix provide funding](#) for parish, town and community councils looking to undertake energy efficiency projects. Salix can support over 100 different energy efficiency technology types, including boilers, LED and lighting upgrades. Projects commonly involve upgrading street lighting and footpath lights, and public buildings such as village halls.



Bath and North East Somerset Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Neighbourhood Portion of CIL can be used by town/parish councils for funding to improve infrastructure or address the demands of development in the Parish. Examples of climate change-related projects that have been funded by CIL include allotments, green space improvements, sustainable transport projects, and solar lighting. For more detail on the CIL for parish and town councils, see [here](#).



The Wessex Water Community Fund Grant Programme offers funding for organisations that build cohesion in communities, with a focus on projects in areas of deprivation/rural isolation that are saving water. The Wessex Watermark award provides grants to schools, youth groups and community organisations for projects which help to improve the local environment and bring people closer to nature, such as allotments or community gardens. For more information see their webpages [here](#).



Bristol Water

Bristol Water award £500 to a different charity or community scheme each month towards a project that will benefit the community. See [here](#) for more information.



Quartet Community Foundation

The Quarter Community Foundation (QCF) awards grants to support charitable community based work – they have a list of available grant programmes on their website [here](#).



Wessex Energy Efficiency Loans

Wessex Energy Efficiency loans are offered for all B&NES owner occupiers or landlords for home energy efficiency measures, including solar panels, heat pumps, replacement boilers and insulation at a fixed interest rate of 4.2%. See [here](#) for more information.

The B&NES Funding Journal is a comprehensive list of both local and national funding sources, which is updated monthly and can be found [here](#).

Additional climate change resources

[IPCC Special Report](#) on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.

[UK Met Office Climate Projections](#) - the most up to date (September 2019) national climate projections for the United Kingdom.

[Ashden Climate Action Co-Benefits Toolkit](#) - Ashden has developed a toolkit to support local authorities and others on their climate ambitions. It demonstrated how action on climate change can also deliver many local benefits, including improved health, increased equity and social cohesion, economic opportunities, and increased resilience.

[The Local Government Association](#) have some useful resources focused on climate change.

[Climate Emergency UK](#) lists all the Council's across the UK who have declared a climate emergency, including Town and Parish Councils. It provides case studies of how other councils have approached the issue and other resources and guides.