

Buckingham's Annual Town Meeting 24th March 2022

Theme: Climate Change

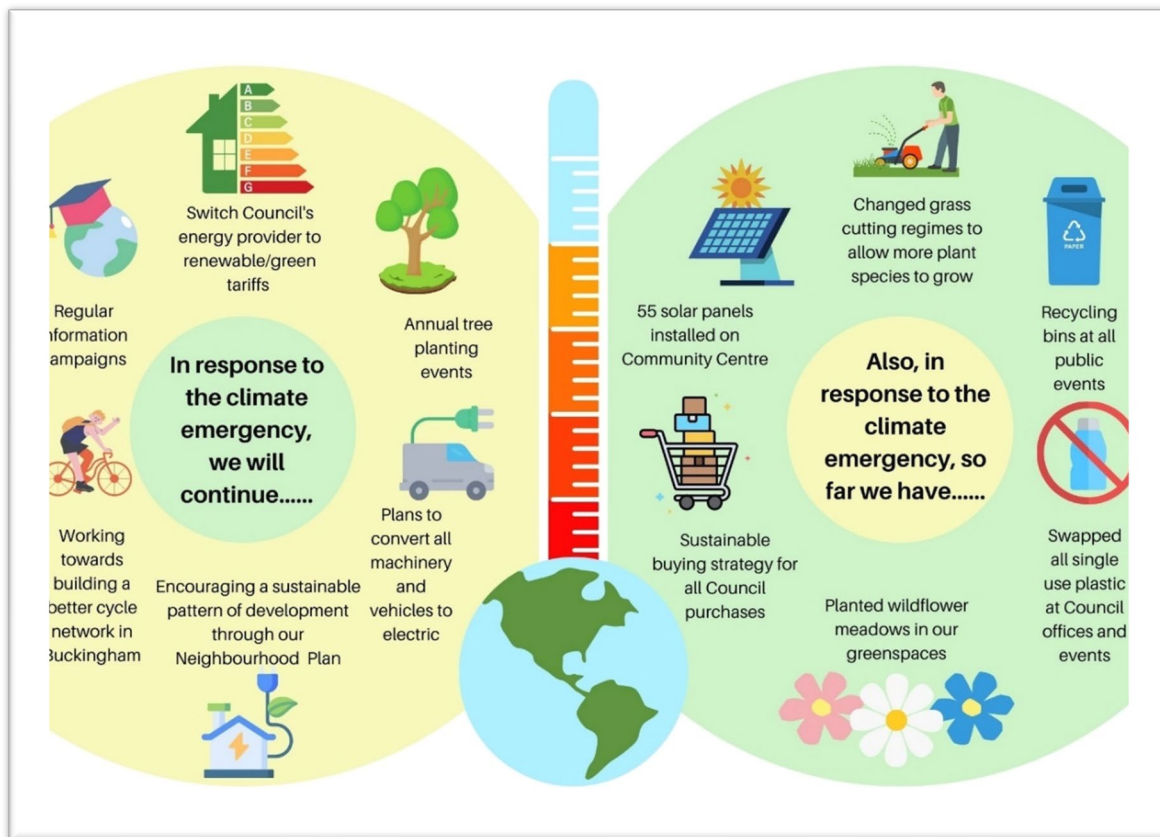
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1. Buckingham Town Council Climate Emergency Action Plan

1.1. Background

Buckingham Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. Since then, the Council has created a plan that sets out the practical steps and timelines to enable the Town Council to meet its own climate emergency target of net-zero by 2030. The Town Council's Action Plan identified five areas of change to be addressed within specific, measurable, actions. Measures that have already been implemented can be viewed below. More information of the various measures can be found on the [Town Council's website](#).



Buckingham Town Council hosted the Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 24th March 2022, which focussed on ways to work together to address the climate emergency. The meeting enabled everyone to share ideas and visions for change, and to explore ways in which the community can work together to make Buckingham net-zero carbon as soon as possible.

1.2. Why did Buckingham Town Council declare a climate emergency?

Local Councils that have declared a climate emergency do so to provide leadership and help educate their communities about both the threat of and solutions to the climate crisis. This is intended to harness “people power” to make that change possible at all levels, especially driving higher levels of government to act and ultimately

encourage them to pull the economic and legislative levers needed to reverse global warming and restore a safe climate.

1.3. Why did Buckingham Town Council host a public meeting on Climate Change?

The Town Council committed to hosting a meeting from within their 'Community Engagement' section of the Council's Action Plan. The meeting was intended to give the Town Council a clear understanding of what residents of Buckingham would and wouldn't support, and why.

It would answer the question: "*what is the community's appetite to tackle Climate Change in Buckingham?*"

1.4. What was the aim of the public meeting?

To engage, share ideas, ask questions and to discuss ways of addressing climate related issues within the town.

To seek volunteers for the creation of a Climate Action Group to address the town's priorities, supported but not run by the Town Council.

Engagement of young people.

1.5. What happened on the night?

The public meeting brought together representatives from local environmental organisations and over 65 participants, including Town and Buckinghamshire Councillors and Buckingham's MP Greg Smith.

Attendees had the opportunity to visit information stands from the [Electric Vehicle Centre](#), [Planet Refill](#), [Buckinghamshire Recycles](#), [The Buckingham & Villages Community Board](#) and [Canal Society](#). There was also an exhibition of artwork from Buckingham School pupils, made from recycled materials that was then put on public display in the Tourist Information Centre.

The Mayor opened the meeting, giving a brief on how Buckingham Town Council has declared a Climate Emergency and developed its own [Action Plan](#) to drive the organisation toward carbon neutrality by 2030. The meeting had six tables, each with a different discussion topic, with people moving around each table, the results of which are detailed further in the report.



1.6. Land & Food: ideas put forward

- a) More wildlife friendly planting across town
- b) Promotions of the Buckingham in Bloom competition and an award for the most productive patch
- c) Car Park with raised solar panels
- d) Devolve powers to Councils
- e) Community Fridge
- f) Review of canteen suppliers to schools
- g) Less meat on school dinner menus
- h) Linking older people who can no longer maintain their gardens with younger people that do not have their own garden
- i) New allotments on the Tingewick Road
- j) Promotion of local food projects
- k) Fruit harvesting and gleaning – involving youth groups and schools
- l) Liaison with local farmers to redistribute surplus food



1.7. Recommendations to the Town Council

1.7.1. Contacts for adding to BTC's website:

- Green Winslow
- [Greener Padbury](#)

- [Boycott Farm Shop](#)
- [Wolverton Community Fridge](#)
- [Grow & Share Schemes](#)
- [Free Fresh Food Pantry Jedidiah](#)

1.7.2. Increased promotion of community gardening guidance and liaise with Global Feedback over the publicity of Grow & Share in Buckingham.

1.7.3. Buckingham Town Council are already undertaking the following actions regarding Food and Land from within their Climate Emergency Action Plan:



Action	Updates
Finalise Flood Plans with local partners	Additional properties have been added to the list of vulnerable addresses. A number of volunteers have come forward and investigation is underway to determine the appropriate policies, procedures, insurance and training for volunteer flood wardens. Initial meetings have been held between Buckinghamshire Council and the Town Council to discuss how to ensure a coordinated response to future flood plans. Flooding advice has been added to the Town Council website. All properties at risk will be written to each year with details of the Council's plan and sources of support.
Advise residents on steps to increase resilience	
Promote the community flood warden scheme	
Protect and enhance native species and habitats. Promoting and supporting opportunities for environmental enhancement and regeneration	Installation of wildflower boards in Bourton Park to promote the planting of native wildflower species (April 2021) completed. Thousands of native Woodland bulbs were planted around Bourton Park in September 2020. For 2022 the popular wild flower, meadow in Bourton Park will be reseeded with native flowering wildflowers. Within Autumn 2022, additional bulb planting will be planned for sections of Lace Hill, the Holocaust Memorial and Otters Brook Play Area. Three new bird boxes are installed in Bourton Park by volunteer Michael Hunt, providing nesting sites for small birds.
Support local food production including the provision of more allotments for people to grow their own food.	The Town Council continues to signpost new applicants to the Allotment society and Edible Woodland and is working with Buckinghamshire Council on potential sites for community gardening sites in 2022. The Town Council is in the process of purchasing land and developing a new allotment site along the Tingewick Road.
Seek adequate garden space or community spaces for growing food in all future development.	To be reviewed within the refresh of the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Action	Updates
Purchase (where possible) locally produced and fair-trade food for the Council's use and civic events.	Incorporated within planning for all Town Council events as well as all day to day activities. Referencing the Town Council's new Sustainable Procurement Strategy
Review of grass verges and hedges to identify areas to be trimmed less and later in the year to support more wildflowers and insects	The grass cutting plan will be reviewed annually by Environment Committee in March. The paddocks and sections of the bypass are cut later in the year to support and promote biodiversity. There will be three large sections of the Bypass planted with wildflower seed; the rotavated sections are now visible along the bypass.
Each year allocate a section of land to be planted with wildflowers.	A new section of wildflowers was planted in 2020 in Bourton Park, on the car park side of the river. Plans are in place to 're-wild' sections of verge along the bypass with wildflowers and grasses during 2022. Wildflower seeds to be distributed at Spring Green Fair – April 2022.
Plan a new eco-friendlier cemetery to include planting more trees and wildflowers.	Proceeding with the tender process for the first phase of the planning and design of the new cemetery. To enable this a sustainable design approach is to be taken in all aspects of the new cemetery. In particular; to reduce energy demand, improve energy efficiency and convert to renewable, low or zero carbon technologies for energy and heat as well as recycling materials and ongoing resources e.g. water.
Work with the Tree Wardens, in promotion of the Tree Charter.	Tree Wardens are regularly contact by the Planning Clerk for input into Tree Applications and several Wardens took part in January's tree planting event in Heartlands Park.
Look to legally protect the future of the riverside parks in Buckingham, including Chandos Park, Bourton Park and Heartlands as parkland.	To be reviewed following resolution of devolution discussions.

1.8. Transport: ideas put forward

- a) [Community Speed Watch](#) – more volunteers needed
- b) On-going review on the HGV through traffic in the town centre
- c) Town Centre air quality is perceived to be low
- d) More on street charging points for electric vehicles
- e) Walking and cycling routes to be promoted
- f) Rights of way maps and local walking trails to be advertised
- g) Explore options for more electric bike parking, parent child bays, motorbike parking and bike racks
- h) Greater connectivity via public transport to popular destinations such as Stowe and Silverstone
- i) Promotion of the [BART Community Bus](#)
- j) Connecting the villages with Buckingham via regular bus services or cycle paths
- k) Partial pedestrianisation of the High Street



1.9. Recommendations to the Town Council

- 1.9.1. On-going programme of refurbishment and promotion of Buckingham's benches to assist walkers to take short rests. Buckingham is advertised as a 'pedestrian friendly town' on the Council's ['Walks and Maps'](#) section of the website.

- 1.9.2. Work with Buckinghamshire Council to extend and improve cycle/walking network and the installation of more EV charging points in Buckingham.
- 1.9.3. Information on [Electric Vehicle Charging](#) sites in Buckinghamshire is available.
- 1.9.4. Buckingham Town Council are already undertaking the following actions regarding Transport from within their Climate Emergency Action Plan:

Action	Updates
Explore more bike parking facilities around the town, including local schools and businesses.	All new development housing has either a shed big enough to house a bike, or (for flats) a room for cycle parking, generally at the rate of 1 per flat: St Rumbolds Fields 398 houses & flats Hamilton site 33 flats + 17 houses. Funding application being prepared for new bike racks in Bourton Park 2022.
Consider holding an event that promotes cycling around the town	An electric bike company invited to the Spring Green fair in April 2022 with demo models.
Replace BTC owned vehicles and green spaces equipment with suitable electric models when existing petrol, and diesel vehicles come to the end of their usable life, resulting in full replacement with electric vehicles by 2030.	Electric vans (total - two Renault Kangoo) leased in Winter 2019 and Summer 2020. Aim for full replacement of all vehicles with electric alternatives by 2030. Once the new cemetery is up and running there are plan to purchase other electric powered machinery, such as ride-on mowers.
Refurbish and promote the town's benches to assist walkers to take short rests. Advertise Buckingham as a 'pedestrian friendly town' on the Council's 'Walks and Maps' section of the website.	Walking trails regularly promoted via Buxplore along with healthy outdoor activities. Greenspaces team have refurbished or repaired a number of park benches throughout the town and funding has been approved for another 8 benches/picnic tables via the Buckingham & Villages Community Board.
Work with Buckinghamshire Council to extend/ improve cycle/walking network	The Greenspaces Team have maintained walking and cycling routes across the Council's land holdings and under agreement with others. The Town Council have provided feedback to Buckinghamshire Council to support the introduction of a cycle scheme between Gawcott and Buckingham via the Emergency Active Travel fund. The Greenspaces Team are preparing a bid to the community board for the installation of 3 bike rack in Bourton Park.
Work with Buckinghamshire Council on increasing EV charge points on public land	Buckinghamshire Council have agreed to install 8 charging points in Cornwall's Meadow and Western Avenue.

1.10. Energy & Housing: ideas put forward

- a) Flooding and possible causes resulting from blocked drains and blocked river course
- b) Promotion of the [flood maps](#)
- c) New developments must reduce the effects of surface water run off
- d) [New Homes rule 2025](#)
- e) Influence the government to improve quality of specifications to which houses are built
- f) Houses in the [conservation area](#) are limited in what they can do to improve insulation, this should be explored within Buckingham - Are we sacrificing improvements for aesthetics?



1.11. Recommendations to the Town Council

- 1.11.1. Increased promotion of the community flood warden scheme
- 1.11.2. Buckingham Town Council are already undertaking the following actions regarding Housing and Energy from within their Climate Emergency Action Plan:

Action	Updates
Implement an Energy Audit of all Council buildings, operations and vehicles	Eco Audit is currently taking place across a number of stages. It is hoped that a final report will be ready for Spring 2022.
Change BTC energy provider to renewable/ green tariffs	Solar Panels installed October 2021 at Lace Hill.

<p>Offset carbon emissions by planting more trees (whenever possible)</p>	<p>Tree planting sessions took place on the 12th March and 7th November 2020. This year's event took place on the 16th Jan 2022 to coincide with arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee/Commonwealth Canopy Project. There were 250 trees planted, including 12 x Black Poplars. An additional tree planting was undertaken by the Greenspaces Team at Lace Hill sport pitches on 17/02/2022 including 7 x Silver birch, 3 x Gingko and expansion of the hedge line with 125 hornbeam whips.</p>
<p>Investigate options for carbon offsetting Town Council event e.g. Bonfire & Fireworks</p>	<p>To be in place by March 2022</p>
<p>Minimise the climate impact from development and encourage a low carbon economy through our Neighbourhood Development Plan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a sustainable pattern of development supported by a low carbon transport infrastructure • Promote sustainable design in and in the overall town by interrogating every planning application (large or small) with our developing set of 'zero carbon planning questions' • Protecting against the needless destruction and/or removal of tree from our parish 	<p>To be considered through consultation on the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan refresh. Consultation to be rolled out in Summer 2022. Draft design guide prepared which takes account of this.</p>
<p>Install renewable energy generation on Council owned buildings</p>	<p>Greenway Solar Panels commissioned and installed 55 Trina Solar Vertex S 380W all black split cell mono photovoltaic (solar) panels at the Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre.</p> <p>Plans in place to install Solar Panels on the Tingewick Road Cemetery building.</p>

1.12. Waste: ideas put forward

- a) Consumers want more action from producers and need support from local authorities
- b) Individual action such as self-directed litter picks and real nappies
- c) Who should lead on climate action? Local/National/Individuals?
- d) There is lots of scope to do more but not enough is being done.
- e) If individuals can do more, how can we encourage it?
- f) Individuals and organisations can share top tips and best practice
- g) Education is key



1.13. Recommendations to the Town Council

- 1.13.1. Increased promotion/sharing of messages from Recycle4Bucks

1.13.2. Buckingham Town Council are already undertaking the following actions regarding Waste from within their Climate Emergency Action Plan:

Action	Update
Provide recycling facilities at all Town Council Events and within Town Council owned buildings.	Recycling bins are now being provided at all Town Council events. In particular, noting the success of recycling Biffa bins at Music in the Market & Bandjam. Recycling in all BTC offices (including Lace Hill Centre's public areas) now implemented.
Work with and support litter picking initiatives around town including the increased promotion of annual River rinse events.	Quick Litter Pick project launched in Bourton Park in June 2020 and second bin to be placed in Chandos Park. Litterlotto scheme to be publicised in conjunction with the Chandos Park Quick Litter Pick bin. April 2022 - Assisted Lace Hill primary school with advice and the supply of litter pickers for this year's Great Big School Clean. Buckingham Community Board (from the Build Back Better fund) are donating: 50 x litter pickers and hoops 100 x rolls of biodegradable bin bags (these come in boxes of 20) 50 x hi-vis 50 sets of gloves 2 x pop-up storage bins All of the equipment will be housed at the Town Council's depot for community use.
Investigate possibilities of rainwater harvesting for all new town council buildings and use the water for planters and hanging baskets	To be considered within the construction design stage of the new cemetery buildings and all Town Council owned buildings are considered for retrofitting rainwater harvesting for watering the town's planters and hanging baskets.
Promote the installation of the water bottle refill station in Chandos Park and the national refill initiative	Water bottle refill station installed and positively received.
Eliminate the use of single-use plastics within Council offices/buildings.	The Council no longer purchases single use plastic items for events and for use within its offices. The plastic-free message was promoted as part of the 'Rubbish Campaign' and launch of the water bottle refill station in Chandos Park.
Implement waste education and promotional campaigns	October's Local Democracy Week was focus on Climate Change and the office have been asked back to the Buckingham School to further discuss how they can get involve in Climate Community Action. The Office Apprentice is running a Recycling Mosaics competition with the two senior schools to create artworks for display at the Annual Town Meeting.

<p>Request a carbon footprint of any Town Council investment and seek to reduce this by switching to investments supporting renewable energy projects and eco-enhancements.</p>	<p>To be considered within the forthcoming Eco Audit commissioned by Resources.</p>
<p>Buy local, fair-trade, recycled, plastic free, repairable and sustainable products wherever possible/available.</p>	<p>Wherever possible sustainable materials will always be sourced. The most recent example being the 7 new recycled plastic litter bins for the Brackley Road cemetery.</p> <p>July 2021: Full Council adopted a Sustainable Purchasing and Procurement Policy</p>
<p>Ask grant applicants to consider the impact on the environment of their project and any steps they can take to mitigate them. Members to consider these responses when allocating grant funds.</p>	<p>From 2021/21 each applicant must state how their organisation is working to reduce the environmental impact of their project.</p>

1.14. Community & Change for the future: ideas put forward

- a) Importance of taking all of the neighbouring parishes on the same climate journey, educating and informing as a community and not in silos
- b) Challenge and persuade people with messages tailored to the audience
- c) More needs to be done to keep our community spirit in the face on continued growth
- d) How do we connect the local schools with the community and University of Buckingham
- e) Is there mileage in creating an Environmental Buckingham Group, to be run during the school holidays so as to encourage youth engagement?
- f) The creation of a Youth Council could help develop a sense of community and engagement in local issues.
- g) Creation of a living wall in Buckingham
- h) Local school assemblies on the work of the Town Council
- i) School representatives to meet with local councillors and discuss important issues
- j) Explore publicity opportunities with local radio stations
- k) Town Council to possibly provide newsletter to local schools
- l) Bucks Scout Radio might want to expand or become involved in the promotion of climate awareness?



1.15. Recommendations to the Town Council

- 1.15.1. Refresh of the Climate Emergency webpage to enable discussion, idea sharing and extend public awareness of the issues.
- 1.15.2. Information to be made available in Buckingham library and on notice boards to maximise public awareness and access to information
- 1.15.3. Encourage practical action by local people through proactive communication campaigns and awards.
- 1.15.4. Town Council to host an information stall on climate change at public events in Buckingham, as deemed appropriate. Feedback from each event is to be reviewed in line with the objectives of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

1.15.5. Buckingham Town Council are already undertaking the following actions regarding Community Engagement from within their Climate Emergency Action Plan:

Action	Update
Climate Emergency webpage to enable discussion, idea sharing and extend public awareness of the issues.	Page created on the Town Council's website and has generated 124 page visits during the last year and, 114 unique page visits. Monthly social media content planning sessions allow for a regular programme of environmental campaigns and initiatives.
Information can be made available in Buckingham library and on notice boards to maximise public awareness and access to information	It is hoped we can arrange something with the Buckingham library – Summer 2022
Encourage practical action by local people through proactive communication campaigns.	The Climate Emergency Webpage is the 2 nd most popular page on our website. Environmental social media campaigns are planned during the office's regular content planning meetings. The office has engaged with local schools to discuss our Action Plan and how they can get involved in community climate action.
Consultation on the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan refresh will enable detailed consultation on the proposed changes.	Consultation to be rolled out in Summer 2022.
Encourage the formation of Local Climate Action Groups.	To be reviewed following first public meeting on March 24 th 2022.
Host a public meeting on the issue.	Public meeting took place on 24 th March 2022.

2. Buckingham and other issues: ideas put forward

- a) Waitrose car park trees need attention.
- b) The Waitrose car park should be in the ownership of Buckingham Town Council.
- c) The loading bay in front of the Town Hall should not have car parking on it.
- d) We should focus on the conversion of existing building rather than new buildings. Retrofitting the existing housing stock with green energy.
- e) New development should be on brown field sites rather than green field sites.
- f) How often has the North Buckinghamshire Planning Committee met in the last 2 years and who Chairs the meetings?
- g) Buckinghamshire Council's pension fund should be ethically invested. The fund currently sits with Barclays who invest in fossil fuel extraction and exploration.
- h) The Town Council should encourage the Unitary Council to invest their pension funds more ethically and educate residents about ethical banking and investments.
- i) Ordinary bank debit/credit card should be usable in electric vehicle charging points rather than the suppliers own charge cards.
- j) Air pollution from the Buckingham bypass will only be exacerbated with new development and increased congestion.



- k) Community should lobby central government to change policies on planning permissions

3. Outcomes

The meeting was well attended and the Town Council received positive feedback from both stall holders and residents. The discussion tables provided an opportunity to share ideas and air concerns.

Ahead of the public meeting, the office had engaged with local senior schools to discuss ideas and how they could become involved in the community meeting.

Pupils and teachers from the Royal Latin attended the public meeting and artwork (made from recycled materials) from the Buckingham school was exhibited.

There were only three residents who expressed an interest in forming a Community Climate Action Group. It is suggested this action is revisited at future public events.

The Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan will be refreshed, following feedback from the public event, a copy of which can be found on the [Council's website](#).

We would love to hear your views on tackling climate change Buckingham so please get in contact at:

Email: estates@buckingham-tc.gov.uk

Phone: 01280 816426

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