

Climate Conversations, Wednesday 10th November 2021

Fifty-two people participated in the event in the Silvester Horne Institute. Following the model developed by South Shropshire Climate Action (SSCA).¹ Helen Fairweather introduced the proceedings and we were asked to choose which of five breakout groups we wished to join - Nature recovery, Food and land, Consumerism/Waste, Energy and buildings, Transport. A facilitator had been allocated to each group, and a volunteer rapporteur identified.

Each group was given the same briefing and the allocated time was kept to forty minutes to focus the contributions. Every participant was asked to name one positive action in the last year they were proud of. Then what they'd like to do next. As a group we were encouraged to consider the barriers, and what would help overcome them. Each group chose three top actions to feed back to the general audience, actions on which the group wants to work next.

Analysis

In the time allotted, each group came up with valuable and interesting issues and actions. Stretton Climate Care needs to decide how the actions are best pursued.

Following the 2020 Membership, three working groups were established – **Energy and Buildings**, a **Transport** group with others in the context of the Community Led Plan, and a **Consumerism and Waste** group. Many of the questions arising from suggestions and actions fall into one of these working groups.

The importance of the issues raised in the **Food and Land** and **Nature Recovery** discussions is recognised to achieve net zero emissions. Stretton Climate Care held an evening of discussion on “Food for a Healthy Planet” in September, but otherwise do not currently have any active projects in either of these areas.

Stretton Climate Care now needs to address whether they are best placed to further develop some of the issues into their remit, or to work with other organisations to progress actions. They will be discussing this at the SCC Management meeting early December. In the new year they will also be contacting those who volunteered on the night.

Conclusions

- Much work is required to turn these lists - see Appendices I and II - into a practical Plan of Action. It is possible that one or more working groups take this forward, including some or all of the individuals who signed up for specific actions - see Appendix III.
- Two topics receiving significant attention fall outside the current scope of Stretton Climate Care (Nature Recovery, and Food and Land). Stretton Climate Care acknowledge that they are an equally important component of the climate emergency, and will take this opportunity to review if SCC should continue to focus on what it has been doing extremely well for the last 14 years, or widen the remit.
- The principal downside of concentrating on Energy, Buildings, Transport, and Consumption and Waste is that it is challenging to attract young people, who do not have the same power over their living spaces, purchasing, and transport options as adults. However they will inherit

whatever outcomes are achieved and should be involved at all levels. They have a particular need for better public transport, cycling and walking facilities.

- A suggestion is that with some reworking, the menu options on the SCC website reflect the current content under four headings:
 - Energy and Buildings
 - Transport
 - Consumerism and Waste
 - Food
- A fifth area could pull together brief descriptions and links to the most appropriate organisations already active in “Nature and Land” in and around the Strettons. The emphasis would be on ‘local to Stretton’ links. Where appropriate, links would be made to SSCA and other websites to minimise duplication.

Lorna Taylor

18 November 2021

1. www.southshropshireclimateaction.org

Appendix I

The Summary

1. Nature recovery

- a. More tree planting
- b. Wetland and peatland restoration
- c. Hedgerows

2. Food and Land

- a. Connecting with young people – it's their future
- b. Connecting with farmers and their land
- c. Draw down – facts

3. Consumerism/ Waste

- a. Tackle barriers eg time pressures
- b. 'Stuff' – buy less
- c. Sharing skills
- d. Meal kits
- e. Pop-up veg stalls

4. Energy and Buildings

- a. Serious carbon taxes
- b. Enforcement of regulations
- c. Upgrading electricity: generation, supply, security, distribution
- d. Workforce training and expansion; companies expertise training and expansion to include villages, demand responsive for remoter area,

5. Transport

- a. Improve public transport: frequency, more destinations, integration of bus and rail network, reduce cost, seven days a week
- b. Hierarchy – shift down to walking and cycling: public education of benefits (health, carbon footprint etc), better infrastructure (network of dedicated cycleways, secure cycle parking, pedestrian facilities including crossings, encourage use of electric bikes, cargo bikes)
- c. Reduce speeds: on all roads, with 20s Plenty in towns (reduces carbon emissions, reduces road casualties, encourages walking and cycling, uses less fuel, quieter)

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Appendix II

The Detail

1) Nature recovery

- a) What we have been doing
 - i) Growing more wild flowers in our gardens
 - ii) Sowing yellow rattle to restore verges and wild areas
 - iii) Tree planting
 - iv) Leaving areas untidy
 - v) Making a pond
- b) Barriers
 - i) Weedkiller/ pesticide encroachment into gardens and onto wild areas from neighbours and farmers
 - ii) Damage to hedgerow scrub and trees during hedge cutting
- c) What we want to do more of
 - i) Planting trees
 - ii) Hedgerows – develop a better cutting regime to allow hedgerows to grow to a more reasonable height and depth
 - iii) More bird feeders
 - iv) Feeding hedgehogs
 - v) Projects and surveys eg Bilberry bumblebee, Mason bees
 - vi) Educating landowners and farmers

2) Food and Land

- a) What we have been doing
 - i) Better gardening (attention to wildlife and growing food)
 - ii) Influenced by daughter, moving towards a vegetarian diet
 - iii) Family pressure from daughters to move diet towards a vegetarian diet
 - iv) Avoided buying vegetables out of season
 - v) Increased purchase of vegetables in family shopping
 - vi) Avoided buying vegetables in plastic wrapping, or from outside Europe
 - vii) Experimented with growing sweet potatoes [and sold car!]
 - viii) Increased proportion of garden devoted to trees
- b) Barriers
 - i) Understanding impact of veganism
 - ii) Consumer choices
- c) What do we want to do more of
 - i) Involve youth – there were none present on the evening
 - ii) Listen to young people
 - iii) Bring climate change into the national curriculum
 - iv) Opportunities to grow more
 - (1) Gardening buddies
 - (2) Gardening clubs
 - (3) Sharing gardens
 - v) Land
 - (1) Stepping Stones Projects
 - (2) Work with farmers

- (a) Conservation holidays
- (b) Tourism
- (c) Rewilding
- (d) Compassion or conservation

3) Consumerism/ Waste

- a) What we have been doing
 - i) Car sharing
 - ii) Recycling
 - iii) Composting
 - iv) Water butts
 - v) Walk or cycle as default
 - vi) Electric and hybrid cars
 - vii) Air source heat pumps and PV panels
 - viii) Double glazing and insulation
 - ix) Go meat free three days a week
 - x) Repair more, replace less
 - xi) Less flying
 - xii) Using public transport
 - xiii) Reduced purchasing of 'stuff'
- b) Barriers
 - i) COVID-19 (for public transport)
 - ii) Poor technology eg recharging e-vehicles
 - iii) Wide social and political problems
 - iv) Chaotic lifestyles
- c) What do we want to do more of
 - i) Repair café
 - ii) Purchase second hand
 - iii) Classes eg introduction to carpentry, sewing, cooking, gardening for children and adults
 - iv) Salvage materials
 - v) Avoid things made in China
 - vi) Spread the word
 - (1) Lead by example
 - (2) Reduce number of pets
 - (3) Visible projects eg community projects
 - vii) Pop-up stalls eg veg from allotments
 - viii) Could foodbank do something similar to Hello Fresh (ingredients plus a recipe)

4) Energy and Buildings

- a) What we have been doing
 - i) Climate-proofing bungalow
 - ii) Improved home to EPC B
 - iii) Given up meat 7 days/week
 - iv) Removed gas fire
 - v) Solar panels now breaking even; using the FIT for further improvements, probably double glazing
 - vi) PV panels
 - vii) Helping daughter climate-proof her home
 - viii) Major retrofit including triple glazing, air source heat pump

- ix) Planning to retrofit a 1960s house
- x) Air source heat pump fitted to replace oil heating
- xi) Air source heat pump installed; survived (and secured) Green Homes Grant
- b) Barriers
 - i) Poor advice
 - ii) Cowboys
 - iii) Cost
 - iv) Disruption
 - v) Grants for small improvements insufficient eg small project cavity wall insulation less than 75%
 - vi) One-off payment of £5k will not in any way cover complete cost of air source heat pump installation
 - vii) Need to expand and upskill workforce and company expertise
 - viii) Shortage of surveyors
 - ix) Lack of will by Shropshire Council planning requirements
 - x) Inconsistency and short-termism in Government policies
 - xi) Leading to companies going out of business
- c) What do we want to do more of
 - i) PV panels
 - ii) Thermal imaging survey eg to show weaknesses in cavity wall insulation
 - iii) Home energy assessment
 - iv) Insulate walls and lofts
 - v) Loft insulation
 - vi) Underfloor heating
 - vii) Underfloor heating
 - viii) Underfloor heating
 - ix) Cavity wall insulation
 - x) More PV
 - xi) Makes plans with Energy Assessor
 - xii) Go vegan
 - xiii) Use batteries to store PV output
 - xiv) Government direction and planning
 - (1) Standards
 - (2) Apprenticeships
 - (3) Consistent support for training through colleges

5) Transport

- a) What have we been doing
 - i) Buying/ renting e-cars
- b) Barriers
 - i) Lack of evening and weekend bus services
 - ii) High cost of electric cars
 - iii) Car tax on electric cars over £40k
 - iv) Integration of bus and rail network
 - v) Better public transport for people to access health services
 - vi) Concern about the damage caused by mining rare earth metals used in electric vehicles
 - vii) Lack of car charging for households without a driveway
 - viii) Need a car to do shift work in the Strettons

- c) What do we want to do more of
 - i) Mayfair seeking to be more environmentally sustainable
 - ii) Integration of bus and rail network, with timetables that allow people to get to work
 - iii) Expand Ring & Ride
 - iv) A community funded and owned bus service
 - v) Provide demand responsive transport for remoter rural areas
 - vi) Reduce all speed limits by 10% to reduce CO2 and accidents
 - vii) Just switching to EVs creates more congestion; we need to switch to walking and cycling, and reduce car mileage
 - viii) Hydrogen would be a good fuel for EV's
 - ix) Set up a transport club
 - x) Local shopping and other facilities are important to reduce car trips
 - xi) Incentives to change public behaviour
 - xii) Informed decision making eg publicise the carbon footprint of different modes of transport

Appendix III

Participants volunteering to be part of working groups

- Topic 1 More tree planting - Ruth Davies, Hilary Hymas, Christine Dunne, Meriel Blake, Derrick Tapscott, Jane Edwards, Mike Mann, Mr and Mrs Church, + 1 (illegible)
- Topic 3 Hedgerows - A. Bradley, Christine Dunne,
- Topic 4 Connecting with young people - Mr and Mrs Church,
- Topic 6 Draw down – facts - Michael Nielsen
- Topic 10 Meal kits - ME Matthews, Christine Dunne
- Topic 14 Upgrading electricity network - David Edwards, +1 (illegible)
- Topic 15 Workforce training and expansion - Michael Fryer
- Topic 16 Improve public transport - Steve Rooney, Noel and Suzanne Beattie