

Bingley Town Council

Climate Emergency – revised motion for full council 28th May 2019

A previous version of this document was presented to the full council on 26th March 2019 (item 819/255 Climate Change). The Council resolved to acknowledge that Bradford Council has declared a Climate Emergency and also to urge the new council to address the emergency at the earliest opportunity and commit to take an active role.

I am therefore bringing the issue back to the new council in order to request that the council addresses the emergency and commits to taking an active role. Suggested proposals are on pages 2 and 3 and an outline of suggested actions the council could take are in Appendix A at the foot of the document.

1. Background

a) IPCC report and context

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report on 8th October 2018¹ on the subject of ‘Global Warming of 1.5°C’ (www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/). The report is an international effort to summarise the current scientific consensus on how society might limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, as well as the likely consequences of this and greater levels of warming. The report states that:

- Human activity has already caused 1°C of warming to the earth.
- To limit warming to 1.5°C it will be necessary to halve global carbon emissions by 2030 and to achieve near-zero net emissions by 2050.
- The consequences of 2°C warming are significantly worse than 1.5°C warming across all areas considered in the report.

At present, humanity is falling far short of the action necessary to limit warming to even 2°C. The likely global failure to achieve this target would result in increasingly severe consequences including very large-scale water and food shortages, widespread flooding, heat related morbidity and large-scale destruction of the natural world. These would result in substantial political and economic instability. These changes are already in progress, and are likely to severely affect all of society before the end of the century.

b) Local authority activity

Since the publication of the IPCC report, local authorities in various parts of the country have passed motions declaring a Climate Emergency and committing to making their areas carbon neutral by 2030. Bradford Council passed an energy procurement motion in January 2010, and has already exceeded its initial aims of achieving a 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020. In January this year, Bradford Council declared a Climate Emergency and voted to go further, adopting a number of additional measures to tackle climate change.

c) Recent developments

A great deal has happened in relation to climate breakdown in the past two months:

- April onwards – increasing action by school climate strikers and by Extinction Rebellion activists
- 1 May – The House of Commons votes to declare a climate emergency
- 2 May – A report from the Committee on Climate Change¹ states that the government must set a legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050. Measures to achieve this include abolishing petrol and diesel cars and gas boilers, reducing meat consumption, an enormous increase in renewable/clean electricity generation and planting around 1.5 billion trees.
- 6 May – a global assessment report on a study of biodiversity and ecosystem services was released by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). It states that people living today, as well as wildlife and future generations, are at risk unless urgent action is taken to reverse the loss of plants, insects and other creatures on which humanity depends for food, pollination, clean water and a stable climate.

d) Additional benefits of action on climate breakdown

I have proposed the actions below for the purpose of reducing carbon emissions and averting the climate emergency that scientists have been warning of for the past thirty years. However, other advantages to taking this action are, briefly:

- Health and well-being – less fossil-fuel pollution and so cleaner air; reducing incidence of respiratory conditions; new technologies bring cleaner and safer working environments; electric cars reduce noise pollution. This will also have clear benefits for the funding of our health services.
- Economy – opportunities for new technologies and innovation that create resilience and enhance competitive advantage. This will aid economic growth and job creation

2. Proposed resolutions

I believe it is important to work to achieve targets at the local and domestic level, rather than attempt to rely simply on the uncertainty of carbon offsets or the expectation that others take an unfair share of the burden.

I propose that Bingley Town Council:

¹ an independent, statutory body established under the [Climate Change Act 2008](#).

1) Acknowledges the urgent need for global society to reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gas emissions, recognise the part which we have to play and commit to taking an active role in achieving this, by:

- Pro-actively reducing our CO2 emissions as an organisation
- Seeking to encourage and enable our community to decrease their emissions and improve their resilience to climate breakdown
- Seeking to influence the policies of other organisations to encourage them to reduce their emissions.
- Acknowledging that ‘business as usual’ is not an option in the face of the climate emergency, and that society in its current form is unsustainable. To meet our obligations, we will strategically reassess and adjust the scope of our current activities, including refocusing the scope of our community grants.

2) Sets up an Environmental Working Group, comprising both Councillors and non-Councillors, to investigate ways for the Town Council to become a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030 and produce a strategy for achieving this.

The Working Group will:

- support the Council to examine, alongside legal and financial implications, the environmental implications regarding CO2 emissions of all the decisions it makes.
- seek ways to help and encourage our community to reduce direct and indirect CO2 emissions² and become resilient to changes caused by the changing climate.
- research funding available and make recommendations for budget provision for grant schemes from 2020-2021 onwards which will enable carbon-reduction activities in Bingley and provide guidance on grant criteria.

3) Signs up to the Covenant of Mayors (<https://www.covenantofmayors.eu/en/>) to track progress and link with towns around the world who are cutting emissions.

4) Contacts Bradford Council to ask to be kept up to date on progress on the reduction of carbon emissions and request involvement in the new Bradford District Change Board to be set up by the Chief Executive.

5) Writes to Philip Davies MP to ask him to seek information on government action on climate emergency from Claire Perry, Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and to advise on any sources of funding to facilitate action at a local level. Mr Davies has recently refused requests from residents to support both an EDM promoted by another MP and a parliamentary vote on climate breakdown.

² Scope 1 and 2 emissions are direct emissions sources (e.g. fuel used in company vehicles and purchased electricity). Scope 3 emissions cover all indirect emissions due to the activities of an organization.

www.carbontrust.com/resources/faqs/services/scope-3-indirect-carbon-emissions/

Appendix A – suggestions of the kinds of actions Bingley Town Council could take:

- In our neighbourhood plan, ensure any development is planned with the need to reduce carbon emissions, e.g. prioritise measures such as designating land use for renewable energy providers – wind turbines, solar arrays etc – and for tree planting; requiring a high level of energy efficiency in all new-build property; ensuring all new property includes electric car charging points/renewable energy provision
- Encourage and lobby for more sustainable transport - better bus transportation and linked train services
- Make policies that benefit visitors who arrive by train or bus.
- Encourage electric cars in town centres – perhaps providing free parking for electric cars. Promote installation of electric charging points.
- Co-operate with organisations seeing to develop low-carbon and community-led affordable housing in Bingley
- Start grant schemes and find funding to enable people in the community to retro-fit their homes with better insulation or to introduce other low-carbon projects. The Council could adjust its own grant-giving policy to promote activity that promotes a low-carbon lifestyle.
- Use a renewable energy supplier for all public buildings/street lighting etc.
- Become a dark sky town or parish and turn lights off after 12pm
- Encourage people living and working in Bingley to reduce energy use in homes, businesses and elsewhere and/or switch to renewable energy sources
- Cut less grass – rewild areas and plant wildflowers
- Plant large numbers of trees in public spaces and encourage others to do so. Grants for tree planting and maintenance are about to be made available through the Urban Tree Challenge Fund open to individuals, local authorities, charities and NGOs
- Make play areas more natural so they need less maintenance
- Promote the production, sale and consumption of locally-sourced food
- Encourage a reduction in consumption of animal products (methane produced by livestock is an important greenhouse gas; meat production requires unsustainable amounts of land and water)
- Introduce a food-saving facility whereby people donate food that would otherwise be thrown away, saving on production and transport costs as well as emissions.

ES – 20/5/2019