

Appendix 1: Website text for Parish/Town Council Support on Declaring Climate and Ecological Emergencies

Why declare a Climate and Ecological emergency?

Declaring a climate and ecological emergency shows that a council acknowledges the need to act on the causes and impacts of the climate change and biodiversity crises. For the declaration to be meaningful, it needs to be accompanied by determined action. South Cambridgeshire District Council declared climate and ecological emergencies in 2019 and stepped up to reduce its own carbon emissions and support others in the district to do the same.

Many Parish Councils in South Cambridgeshire have already declared a Climate Emergency. At a local level, Parish Councils can deliver a noticeable difference to people in the community. This page provides information and resources on how to declare a Climate and Ecological emergency and some ideas on taking action following this.

Declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

One of the first steps to taking climate action is declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency. In a formal meeting, the Parish/Town Council should put forward a Climate and Ecological Emergency motion and do the following:

- Use the phrasing 'declare a climate emergency' and 'declare an ecological emergency'.
- Set target dates of reducing your own emissions and local climate impacts.
- Set up a working group to work on climate issues and provide regular reports to the Parish/Town Council.
- Work out are what the council and the community are most interested in working on. Think about what might have the most impact, but also what the local community will want to support.

Acting on your Declaration

Once you have declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency there are some actions that you can take to make a difference. You might be able to do some of these straight away, others might require some planning, the key is to keep up the momentum from the word go. Our [Climate Emergency Toolkit](#) provides ideas, tips and guidance on taking action.

The consultancy ARUP have created a [resource](#) which provides in-depth information on some of the actions you can take.

Parish Council Emissions

An important first step is to calculate your carbon emissions to establish a baseline of where you are and where you need to go. We provide guidance to Parish Councils on [calculating your carbon footprint](#).

Once you have worked this out, there are a number of ways that you can reduce these emissions.

Energy Saving

Improving the energy efficiency of your community buildings is one of the most effective ways of reducing your carbon emissions and also reduces energy costs. An energy survey can tell you the best ways to improve your energy efficiency. You could also review community building energy use, change to a green electricity tariff, or upgrade your lighting to LEDs. Are you due a boiler replacement? How about changing the way you heat your building, such as using infra-red heating panels or heat pumps? Funding is available for such projects through the [ZCC Grant](#).

Renewable Energy

Do you have a space suitable for solar PV panels? Funding is available through the [ZCC Grant](#) for such projects. Alternatively, if you think that there might be a good site near you for renewable energy, such as solar or wind turbines, how about suggesting these as part of your Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Protecting Biodiversity through Land Management

There are some great ideas for what you can do in Natural Cambridgeshire's [Local Nature recovery toolkit](#), which helps you to prioritise the best actions for your community.

How about changing your verge mowing routine to enhance biodiversity in your local area. You can also designate sites for tree planting, so that when schemes such as the [6 Free Trees scheme](#) come up, you are able to take full advantage of them.

Recycling and Waste

Make sure that your Council is minimising waste where it can and recycling properly. If you are having an event – how about reducing the amount of plastic that you use, such as using re-usable cups. See our [Waste Less guide](#) for more details.

Within the Community

Manage Land to Enhance Nature

Encourage members of the community to think more about [biodiversity](#), set up bird boxes and bat boxes around the area. Have you thought about how people can grow their own food? Make sure that those in the area know about opportunities in the community such as allotments. Have you thought about setting up a community fridge like the [Gamlingay Food Project](#) did? Encourage people to buy seasonally or local to support businesses nearby, the [Visit South Cambs website](#) gives information on where to shop locally.

Sustainable Travel

Raise awareness about sustainable travel choices. Share information on cycle routes or car sharing clubs. More information on sustainable travel is available on our [Sustainable Living webpage](#). How about installing cycle racks or shelters in public areas so that there are more places for people to leave their bikes?

Energy Efficiency in Homes

Encourage residents to think about energy efficiency in their homes. SCDC runs a [Thermal Imaging](#) camera loan scheme where people can use a thermal imaging

camera to see where they might be losing heat from their homes so that they know what improvements they can make.

Minimise waste

Repair cafes are a great way to encourage people to mend their items rather than throw them away. There are a number of repair cafes around the district. More resources are available to support them on the [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](#) website.

Other activities

There are a number of other ways you can promote a climate friendly lifestyle. Eco festivals, open evenings or even signposting on your website can create greener lifestyles in your local area.

Churches and Religious Buildings

There are a number of resources that can help churches to consider how they may address the climate and ecological emergencies. [The Collaborative Carbon Calculator](#) helps Churches / Religious buildings to calculate their carbon footprints so that they can identify where they can reduce this. [Eco Church - An A Rocha UK Project](#) is an award scheme for Eco Friendly churches, can you be awarded for your eco action?

Collaboration

Remember that there are other Councils who are in the same position as you, who have declared climate and ecological emergencies, or have done similar projects as you. There are some great ways that you can connect with others to find out more about doing similar projects. Sign up to the [ZCC Newsletter](#) to keep up to date with environmental news in the District. The monthly [ZCC Green Connect](#) sessions give you an opportunity to link up with others near you doing similar projects.