

Broadhempston informal Parish Council meeting 25 November 2021

Climate Emergency

Present – Cllrs Wright, Goddard, Sutcliffe, Head, White
Fuad Al-Tawil from ACT
8 members of the public
Clerk

Fuad explained that Action on Climate in Teignbridge (ACT) set up as a response to Teignbridge District Council's (TDC) climate emergency, with a target to reach a zero-carbon footprint by 2025 – a huge challenge.

ACT was set up as a support group to TDC and other local councils and organisations.

ACT quickly realised that ecology was also an emergency that needed support because our environment is being damaged severely, with species being lost.

ACT hold regular liaison meeting with TDC so have a level of influence.

Fuad is coordinating the effort to talk to local councils.

ACT has set up several groups to address both climate and ecological emergencies.

The biggest cause of ecological emergency is habitat loss.

The second is poisoning

The third is climate change.

Climate change has only one cause, the concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere which is causing the temperature to rise. The burning of fossil fuels is the principal cause.

CO₂e (CO₂ equivalent) = reflects the warming impact of all the different greenhouse gasses.

Approximately 75% of gasses comes from burning fossil fuels. Releasing gasses at a rate which will result in significant sea level rises and thawing of the permafrost which releases Methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Cllr Sutcliffe asked how we wean ourselves off fossil fuels. Fuad responded that the energy doesn't have to come from fossil fuels. If we stopped wasting things we could save 25% of our carbon footprint.

Fuad recommended that each parishioner to start small and that the Parish Councillors should start with themselves before moving onto families and the village. He also advised that we don't look for an immediate solution before understanding its impact. There is a need for everyone to understand where the emissions are coming from pick one where the numbers are higher and look at how to address. For example, taking the manufacturing process into account, an air source heat pump sometimes doesn't make a saving.

The first step is for us to measure our carbon footprint, both as individuals and as a parish.

Remember that once an emission has gone into the atmosphere it cannot be brought back and will take about 150 years to be naturally re-absorbed (the natural carbon cycle).

The Parish Councillors agreed to start by measuring their own footprint, Fuad emphasised they won't be able to convince anybody unless they are convinced.

The carbon footprint tracker on the ACT website will help make decisions about steps to take.

<https://actionclimateteignbridge.org/index.php/carbon-calculator/>

For Broadhempston, the biggest impact is heating oil so consider how to reduce the use of this with insulation, smarter heating controls and wearing jumpers.

ACT is encouraging Devon County Council (DCC) to set up a bespoke scheme where each person will be able to get a survey of their home which will inform the most effective way to make savings in carbon footprint, heating bills and improve comfort.

Publicity around COP26 has helped raise awareness in respect of how to reduce our carbon footprint. The problem is that no-one likes to be told what to do. However, we should remember that children being born now will live in a world that is uninhabitable unless action is taken.

We have five to eight years to take steps to halve our carbon footprint.

The PC could encourage parishioners to do their own tracker.

Other actions – talk to schools, join a climate action group. You can do more if you want to.

Perhaps the PC could consider buying an e-bike and making it available to parishioners. Fuad advised that we don't go for the big things that look great; go for the small things but more of them and that will involve/ engage more people.

ACT is happy to help with engagement, information, and advice.

It was noted that a green page on the parish website was considered, and this would be a good time to resurrect that.

Transition Totnes produced a guide for every household in Totnes which gives a guide on how to reduce carbon footprint.

It was suggested that a drop-in session to help people calculate their carbon footprint using the tracker should be held. Someone from ACT would be happy to attend.

Perhaps the PC could consider a community renewable energy scheme, such as in South Brent.

All the above will be considered further at the next Parish Council meeting on Thursday 9 November.