

AGENDA 8, Enc ii) Unleashing the Power of Local Councils to Tackle the Climate Emergency

Unleashing the Power of Local Councils to Tackle the Climate Emergency training session was an online event designed to equip local councils with the knowledge, tools, and strategies needed to effectively address the pressing issue of climate change within their communities.

Save Our Shropshire

This presentation emphasises the importance of local councils in leading climate action through education, community engagement, and practical initiatives to reduce carbon emissions.

Core Beliefs and Activities:

- Education leads to action.
- Action improves lifestyles.
- Pioneered "carbon literacy" for local councils.
- Deliver the SLCC's Carbon Literacy Qualification.
- Local councils as leaders for climate change.

Carbon Literacy:

- **Definition:** Awareness of carbon costs and impacts of everyday activities with the ability to reduce emissions on individual, community, and organisational levels.
- Participants complete a day of learning accredited by The Carbon Literacy Project, including assessments and commitment to specific actions.

Problem Analysis:

- **Root Cause:** A human crisis rather than a carbon crisis.
- Our actions have created the problem, so we can also create solutions.

Role of Parish, Town, and Community Councils:

- Lead by example.
- Fulfil statutory and regulatory responsibilities.
- Engage in local and neighbourhood planning.
- Educate by sharing good practices.
- Lobby for policy changes and funding.
- Enable practical actions by local people.

Pathway to Engagement:

- **Steps:** Commitment, Education, Organisation, Low Carbon Training, Engagement, and Action.
- Aim to engage 220,000 people in Shropshire using a Cascade Education Approach involving parish leaders, local climate champions, educated community leaders, and town councillors.

Examples of Successful Initiatives:

1. **Pontesbury Village Hall:**

- Local group engaged in SOS Carbon Literacy course.
 - SOS and parish council grant facilitated building a shed and creating allotments, leading to local engagement.
- 2. Sussex Repair Cafe:**
- Initiated by a local councillor who attended the SOS Carbon Literacy course.
 - The cafe helps reduce costs and carbon emissions, benefiting both people and the planet.

Unleashing the Power of Trees & Woods to Tackle the Climate & Nature Emergency

The Woodland Trust's mission is to emphasise the critical role trees and woods play in addressing the climate and nature emergencies.

Key Points:

- 1. Introduction to Woodland Trust:**
 - Founded in Devon in 1972 by Kenneth Watkins.
 - UK's largest woodland conservation charity with over 1000 sites.
 - Focus on protecting ancient woodland and veteran trees.
 - Vision: "A world where trees and woods thrive for nature."
 - Over 500,000 members and supporters.
- 2. Strategic Goals:**
 - Declare a nature emergency and implement clear responses.
 - Increase access to nature, aiming for everyone to have nature-rich green space within 10 minutes' walk.
 - Embed Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) in local plans and policies with adequate funding.
- 3. External Affairs at Woodland Trust:**
 - Focus on Westminster and English local government.
 - Collaboration with mayors, combined authorities, and town and parish councils.
 - Examples of successful local council initiatives: Wellington Town Council (Green Corridor), Windermere Town Council (Woodland management plan), and Woodbridge Town Council (Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee).
- 4. Support for Councils and Communities:**
 - Providing input for neighbourhood plans and strategies.
 - Advising on policy implementation, finding tree planting sites, and accessing match funding.
 - Offering free trees for community groups, councils, and schools with easy online applications.
- 5. Finding Tree Planting Sites:**
 - Conduct desk studies to identify potential sites.
 - Utilise the tree equity score tool.
 - Check landscape character, landowner permissions, and ecological sensitivity.
- 6. Protect and Restore Initiatives:**
 - Engage with the Ancient Tree Inventory.
 - Participate in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
 - Implement Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and management plans for woods.
 - Educate and engage the local community.
- 7. Free Trees Program:**
 - Two delivery periods annually in March and November.
 - Applications for November 2024 close at the end of August.

- Packs available in various sizes (30 to 420 trees) for different purposes.
 - Since 2017, around 14.5 million free trees have been distributed, with only 2.5% going to local councils.
- 8. Call to Action:**
- Encourage local councils and communities to actively participate in tree planting and conservation efforts.
 - Emphasise the need for policies supporting nature recovery and climate mitigation.

Corsham Town Council

Corsham Town Council's commitment to environmental sustainability through active community involvement and structured action plans targeting key areas such as transportation, waste management, and biodiversity.

Biodiversity Project Group

- **Internal Environmental Task Group (ETG):** Meets every three months to monitor progress on the Climate and Biodiversity Action Plans, involving staff and councillors.
- **Full ETG:** Open to everyone, meets every three months, 55 members. Acts as a forum for discussing environmental action in Corsham.

Sub-Groups and Actions

- **Bus Action Group:**
 - Focuses on improving bus infrastructure with clearer stops and electronic signs
 - Works with Wiltshire County Council to enhance bus services and promote usage
 - CO2e reduction: 14 tons
- **Active Travel Group:**
 - Promotes activities related to active travel, creates active travel maps, improves infrastructure, and tackles related issues
 - CO2e reduction: 14 tons
- **Plastic/Waste Community Group:**
 - Manages Corsham Recycling Hub, aims for a Plastic-Free Corsham, provides recycling bins, and organizes litter picks
- **Biodiversity Activity Group:**
 - Engages volunteers in various activities including tree planting, growing plants from seeds, planting hedges, and preparing areas for wildflowers