

Hello, I'm Jenny, from Burwell Parish Council. Richard has asked me to say a few words about the attempts of the Council to tackle climate change.

My colleague Paul and myself had a meeting with Richard at ECDC way back at the start of February 2020. He explained to us about the ECDC climate change policy, and gave us a start on developing our own policy for Burwell Parish Council. Our starting point was to use the Holme Valley Parish Council Climate Emergency Action Plan as a template, with their kind permission, and after a lot of graft, Paul and I managed to come up with what we thought would be a good working document.

The Burwell Parish Council Climate Emergency Action Plan was approved by Full Council in early 2021, but the lack of dynamics due to meeting by Zoom let things slide for the better part of a year. During this time, many small groups had sprung up around Burwell: parishioners independently worried about climate change got together and formed groups such as Wild Burwell, Burwell Environmental Group, and others. With meeting in person renewing everyone's vigour, it seemed a very good idea for the Council to work with these groups, and so a few months ago it formed the Burwell Climate Forum. This comprises of a handful of Councillors, and a representative from each of these groups.

Our starting point with the Forum was to look at the Climate Emergency Action Plan and to begin getting its teeth into it. The Action Plan has an introduction, a section that divides the local causes of carbon emissions into 7 basic categories, a breakdown of these categories and the Council pledges, followed by short, medium, and long term aims, and the final preamble.

The seven categories are:

Energy Usage and Sources

Transport and Travel

Agriculture and Food

Housing, Infrastructure, Home insulation

Local Business

Waste and Resources

Environment and Land use

In almost all cases, the best that the Parish Council can actually do is to lend support, share knowledge, petition, and engage, but there are some more material things within its power, such as the setting up of a local repair Cafe, applying for grants for EV charging points etc. These things are co-ordinated by the Climate Forum, with recommendations going to Full Council where necessary. Members of the Forum have initiated an Open Day at the local allotments, encouraged environmental stalls at our local nature reserve Open Day, and drawn up a little information leaflet. We have representatives on the East Cambs Climate Partnership Forum and the Wicken Fen Forum. We try and submit a regular article to the local bi-monthly community magazine, and have had an article about the Forum in a local newspaper. We commit to maintaining the green areas of Burwell, and searching for alternatives to fossil fuels in the Parish. We lobby for carbon neutral new builds, and support the local environmental group hosting educational days in one of the Parish halls.

All in all, this doesn't sound like much, but little ripples make bigger waves, and I'm proud that our council is part of this. If any other Parish Council wants to use our policy as a template, or ask questions about our Forum and how we are moving forward on it, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

The Action Plan is available on the Burwell Parish Council website, and I have brought some leaflets about the Climate Forum with me today.

