



**QUETHIOCK**  
PARISH COUNCIL

Draft

**Climate Change  
Action Plan**

## BACKGROUND

Climate change is a fact. Glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising and wildlife is lagging behind the changes. Most of these effects are caused by our use of 'greenhouse gases', these trap heat close to the Earth affecting our climate and impacting all aspects of the natural world. Most of these gases are produced as a result of our continued use of fossil fuels to provide us with the increasing amounts of power that our modern lives need.

Global warming and climate change are not synonymous. Indeed changes in climate can result in both raising and lowering of temperatures and complex shifts in our weather patterns; not only changing our weather, but also resulting in more extreme weather events. Average temperatures have remained fairly constant up until about 150 years ago, but the rate of change in our climate, particularly over the past few decades, has meant that species are unable to adapt to the changing conditions sufficiently quickly to survive.

As temperatures rise, ice sheets in both hemispheres are melting, resulting in rising sea levels. If this continues, then it has enormous implications for coastal areas particularly, an article suggests that nine towns in Cornwall could be lost to rising sea levels by 2050 **(1)** if changes are not made to reverse global warming.

Since 1990 the world has lost 690,000 square miles of forest, and area the size of Libya, a figure of great concern as 45% of carbon on land is stored in trees and forest soil. When forests are cut down, CO<sub>2</sub> is released into the atmosphere.

In January 2019 Cornwall Council declared a climate emergency.

'Recognising the need for urgent action to address the climate crisis. While the whole world needs to adapt, in Cornwall we have an opportunity to lead the way in demonstrating what is possible. The sooner we change, the sooner we can create a Cornwall that provides a clean, prosperous and fair future for all.

As a council we have a leading role to play in the climate emergency. But we cannot deliver these ambitious outcomes alone. We will need support from all of our residents. From our communities, businesses, schools, public sector partners, the voluntary sector and many more. You have an important role to play in making change happen. Not just as residents, but in your working lives too.'

Being a small parish our ability to make a significant impact on our carbon footprint and improve the environment is limited. This does not mean that we

cannot put plans in place to maintain and improve the environment and the impact of our community upon it we need to consider actions which could have a positive impact to decrease our carbon footprint.

### **Short term changes.**

1. Declare a climate change emergency.
2. Establish a local Climate Change / Environmental action plan.
3. Pull together local people who are interested in pushing the climate change agenda forward.
4. Ensure that planning applications do not have a negative impact on the local environment. Consider establishing policies that promote high standards of energy efficiency and include renewable energy provision where possible using guidance that may be available from Cornwall Council and their policies to achieve a carbon neutral Cornwall by 2030.
5. Environmental improvements in land and assets we control (playing field and car park). In the short term we can begin by supporting insect populations which then provide food for other species. Over 40% of insect species are threatened with extinction **(2)** and this includes many pollinators vital for food / crop plant pollination. While a small council cannot have major impact, good practise at all times can boost local insect populations.
6. Introduce a less paper based system where we can, including less printing where feasible.

Measures could include :-

- a) Planting of suitable food plants for a wide range of insect species. This includes food plants for insect larvae as well as successional planting of flowering plants to provide food for adults. A full list of suitable species can be found in a number of locations including Cornwall Wildlife Trust **(3)**, RHS website **(4)** and others. Planning would need to be in place to ensure a wide range of plant species flowering across the year.
- b) Provide a range of habitats to encourage diverse species to multiply and thrive. This could include insect hotels, log piles and other relevant habitats, as well as areas of undisturbed vegetation. The RSPB provides an excellent guide to insect hotels which can be constructed from recycled / donated materials. **(5)**

## Land Management

- a) Minimise the use of chemical weedkillers to protect insect populations and their predator species.
- b) Reduce the number of times grass is cut to encourage native wild flowers.
- c) Rewild areas where possible (corners, low traffic areas etc).  
Introducing native plants to encourage diversity of species in the area.
- d) Plant trees where feasible to reduce atmospheric carbon and thus help to reverse the effects of excess CO<sup>2</sup> in the atmosphere. Exploring the Forest for Cornwall initiative (4) would give us information and resources to increase tree planting around the parish.
- e) Install bird boxes around the periphery of managed areas, focusing on those for species that are in decline.

## Short and Medium term aims

As well as directly taking action, we can also as a parish council provide information, resources and education for local people about changes that they can make to support wildlife, reduce their carbon footprint and improve the environment.

- A. Provide information about resources such as reduced price compost bins **(6)** that can both reduce waste and produce a good quality compost for gardeners.
- B. Help people to cut their water use, directing them to products available to cut down water use and store water from gutters **(7)**
- C. Encourage people, including local landowners, to plant native species around the edge of fields, directing them to providers of native plants etc.

This information could be included as part of our website and / or our Facebook page.

We need to develop policies that more effectively support the drive for a carbon neutral Cornwall such as

### 1. Waste reduction.

- a. Encourage residents to reduce / reuse and recycle as much as they can.
- b. Increase community recycling rates
- c. Provide advice to local residents on recycling, composting and other waste reduction initiatives.
- d. Advertise initiatives for recycling waste currently not collected by the local council.

## **2. Energy use.**

- a. Encourage more use of clean energy by supporting developments that use materials that lower the carbon cost of the building and are energy efficient.
- b. Support initiatives that are aimed at increasing environmental standards in planning reforms and local plans.
- c. Provide information about grants that are available to increase the energy efficiency of local homes.

## **3. Transport**

- a. Explore options for a better transport system that served the needs of local residents. This might need exploration to establish what local people need in a public transport system.
- b. Engage with highways to see if traffic calming measure to slow traffic are possible, with resultant reduction in fuel use.
- c. Investigate the feasibility of a car charging point within the parish to encourage the use of electric cars by parishioners, as well as ensuring that any new build housing has charging points.

## **References**

1. <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/nine-towns-cornwall-could-lose-4211744>
2. Biological Conservation, Volume 232, April 2019 Pages 8 – 27
3. <https://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife/wildlife-gardening>
4. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/>

5. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>
6. <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/grow-nature/about/forest-for-cornwall-programme>
7. <https://getcomposting.com/en-gb/>
8. <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/save-water/free-products/>