BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY & NATURE ACTION PLAN

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Introduction

Background and context

In May 2019 Blandford Forum Town Council passed a resolution in support of Dorset Council's decision to declare a climate emergency.

As a result of this, a climate action and environmental working group was set up to identify activities that could be undertaken and/or supported by Blandford Forum Town Council.

Since the formation of the working group several important activities have taken place that constitute a 'strong start' for Blandford Forum Town Council's climate and environmental agenda.

1) A list of target activities has been produced by Town Council officers which currently serves as the basis of a climate and environmental action plan which Town Council Officers have worked incredibly hard to deliver on a 'best endeavours' basis. This has quite rightly received positive feedback from Low Carbon Dorset.
2) A carbon emissions benchmarking exercise was carried out by Pat Osborne on the 'Town Council Estate' in February 2020, which provided a baseline measure by which progress towards carbon neutrality can be measured. This was repeated in April 2022.
3) The working group began the process engaging with the community by inviting environmentally focused community groups and schools to join the working group.
4) Pat Osborne attended a workshop held by The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), who were working on a carbon footprint benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils. The CSE is now working in partnership with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to deliver the tool. There is currently no indication of when this might be made available for use. However, it is anticipated that its arrival will enable the creation of a community engagement plan targeting engagement activities and/ or campaigns on the areas identified as being most in need of focus. To date, the working group has tended to 'go where the energy is' amongst community groups rather than identify campaigns from data.
5) The Town Clerk attended the three Carbon Literacy workshops designed for town and parish council, in March 2022, which totalled 7.5 hours of sector-specific training managed via the DAPTC.

The Covid-19 pandemic impeded further progress since March 2020 however it did provide an opportunity to review the Town Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity Plans. This document is the outcome of that review and has now incorporated the original list of activities.

The working group meets online once a month and notes from the meeting are uploaded here: https://blandfordforum-tc.gov.uk/the-town/climatechangebiodiversity

Approach

About this document

1. This document has incorporated the Town Council's original Climate and Environmental Action Plan and now has a distinction between:
   a. *Policies* – principles of action to be formally adopted by the Council, that support the Council and Officers when making decisions in a range of activities; and
   b. *Planned Activities* – Proposed actions or events that support the Council's stated aims in respect of climate action and environmental sustainability.

By making this distinction it is intended that climate action and environmental sustainability become ubiquitous considerations for all council decision making that are supported by a clear roadmap of planned activities.

2. This document also distinguishes between *Planned Activities* that relate to:

a. *The Town Council Estate*, i.e. where the Town Council has full control over the outcome; and
b. *Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying*, i.e. where the Council has the ability to exercise some influence over the outcome but does not have full control.

Making this distinction enables us to manage the expectations of the taxpayers with regards what the Town Council is empowered to deliver with regards Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability.

It also helps to provide clarity around how the Council might wish to allocate resources and the extent to which activities are to be community, councillor, or officer led.

3. This document further distinguishes between the following categories of activity:
   - Carbon reduction
   - Plastic reduction – single use plastics/ plastic packaging/ disposable plastics
   - Waste reduction – all other forms of avoidable waste
   - Biodiversity and trees – trees and other plant life have an important role to play in carbon reduction as well as contributing to healthy, diverse ecosystems
   - Climate change readiness – preparation for a world in which extreme whether events are much more commonplace

Categorising activities in this way helps to ensure that our portfolio of activities remains balanced and proportionate to the threats posed by inaction.

4. Finally, this document seeks to propose suggestions as to how activities might be funded as follows:

Proposal:

It is proposed that wherever possible the Council should:

a) Seek in the first instance to fund activities through existing income streams, i.e. through continuing to make environmentally conscious decisions when updating, maintaining and renovating property on the Town Council Estate.
b) Explore grant funding options where there is no existing income stream.
c) Consider Salix[1] Loans where available and only in proportion to the environmental risk that the planned activity seeks to mitigate.
d) Consider raising funds from an increase to the precept only where absolutely necessary, and only in proportion to the environmental risk that the planned activity seeks to mitigate.

Policies

Blandford Forum Town Council maintains an Environmental Policy Statement. The statement represents a high level, but comprehensive, commitment to minimising environmental impacts of day-to-day Town Council Operations within its own estate. Whilst it doesn't explicitly address the impacts on the Town Council Estate of environmental changes that originate externally, it does make a clear commitment to 'identify and manage environmental risks and hazards'.

The Town Council should consider the ever-changing environment we are experiencing and prepare for the future by identifying the hazard and mitigate the risk (for example, extreme weather. The Town Council could prepare for this now by introducing canopy shelters in amenity / play areas to address warmer weather or flash flooding, which would also raise

[1] See https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils

awareness to the public). The public art seating at Persimmon has a canopy for shade/raincover and the Persimmon Homes play area tender should also include such provision. However, there is scope for updating the policy to also include activities where the Council has the ability to exercise some influence over the outcome but does not have full control. Planning is one area, for example. Most recently, in 2023, the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan has been reviewed to include mention of Dark Skies and the importance of low lighting limiting the impact on biodiversity.

Proposals

The following are proposed policy statements that the Council might consider adding to the Environmental Policy Statement. Section A are policy statements that have been drawn directly from the Town Council's original Climate Change and Biodiversity Plan that aren't currently included in the Environmental Policy Statement. Section B are new policy statements that the Town Council may wish to consider adopting.

Section A: Policy statements from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Plan

- actively support small and large planning applications for new renewable energy in the area.
- continue replace all felled trees and continue to introduce new native trees that are of the highest possible benefit to wildlife.
- use the Neighbourhood Plan to require new homes to be energy efficient, nature friendly, and located close to public transport and amenities. Neighbourhood Plans identify sites for future housing and should push for these to be zero-carbon and nature friendly.
- designate and protect sites within the Neighbourhood Plan as local green spaces, new play spaces (formal and informal) and green infrastructure networks, encouraging local residents into the fresh air, walking or cycling rather than using their cars for local journeys.
- oppose high-carbon developments, promoting sustainable alternatives instead.
- ensure any council funds are invested safely in low-risk sustainable banks or investment funds.

Section B: New policy statements (adopted October 2021)

- encourage, enable[2] and support community groups taking action to address climate change and promote environmental sustainability (e.g. Blandford War on Waste, Blandford Environmental Trust, Clean Up Blandford Campaign).
- engage, inform and encourage the wider community to take action on climate change and make decisions that promote environmental sustainability.
- use the Neighbourhood Plan to require new development to consider climate change readiness and, where available, use s106 monies to improve town infrastructure in readiness for extreme weather events.
- future inclusion – marine citizenship statement: A Motion for the Ocean was approved and adopted by full council on 25th July 2022, with Blandford Forum being the first inland council to do so.

[2] Enablement will require some level of financial support. See later proposal in the Planned Activities: 2020-2022 section.

Planned Activities: Progress to date

Summary

The following list represents the incredible achievements made by Council Officers before and since the Town Council made a commitment to supporting Dorset Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in May 2019.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Carbon footprint benchmark carried out on the Town Council estate in February 2020 (reviewed in April 2022).
- Switched to green electricity (100% renewable energy) in October 2020 when the contract was due for renewal and committed to five-year contract.
- The Town Council installed eco hot water boilers in two of our venues and the office kitchen, with built in ECO mode, which reduces electricity consumption that saves money and helps the environment.
- Removal of water dispenser, because it used plastic cups and it only made the water colder so it was not felt to be an efficient or justifiable use of energy.
- New heating systems and boilers in council buildings are chosen to be environmentally friendly where possible. One of the boilers under stage in the Corn Exchange failed checks in February 2022 but was not replaced prior to the closure of the building in April 2024, due to the timeline for the refurbishment project. Councillors were made aware that the temperatures may be lower, but it would not be prudent to replace it.
- Goods and services are purchased locally, where possible, to reduce mileage and packaging. In addition, staff try to combine meetings with picking up goods from local suppliers (e.g. Dorchester).
- Ensuring money is invested wisely. Across the UK, local authorities are investing tens of millions of pounds each into fossil fuel companies, despite having declared a climate emergency. Although Town Council investments are tiny in comparison, the Town Council ensures any council funds are invested safely in low-risk sustainable banks or investment funds.
- Researched funding possibilities with The Climate Action Fund, which is for groups that aim to reduce their carbon footprint sustainably and increase participation in community-led climate action.
- The grounds staff have continued to transition, as much as is practical, to battery powered hand machinery (strimmer's and hedge cutters).
- All the planters use peat free compost

Plastic reduction

- Using glasses instead of plastic cups, as well as avoiding where possible the use of plastic plates and cutlery (anything in stock is being used up).
- For refreshments at meetings the measures include use of crockery, metal teaspoons, loose tea and coffee and glasses where possible.

- No usage of single use condiments sachets (anything in stock is being used up).
- Straws are not used in the office or at events (unless required for assistance with drinking).
- Staff try, where possible, to bring in their own lunch therefore reducing the use of single use packaging.
- Soap dispenser in the toilets, office toilets and kitchen is refillable.
- Promoting the use of re-usable bags. The Market Manager and stallholders distribute bags free of charge to customers, to help reduce the use of plastic bags and advertise the market.
- Switched from handwaving flags with plastic sticks to an eco-version with paper sticks for civic events/Freedom Parades.

Waste reduction

- If the office staff cannot make use of wastepaper, it is recycled (except confidential papers) along with recyclable plastic items, cardboard and tins via the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP). The Town Council pays for these regular collections.
- Glass bottles/coffee jars are recycled.
- All water meter readings are monitored, and action is taken immediately to identify the reasons when they are high, minimizing water loss if there is a leak.
- Councillors are encouraged to receive agendas and minutes by e-mail, which is the choice of the majority (although some documents do require printing).
- All woodchip produced is either reused or sent for recycling if possible.
- All invitations to Town Council events are sent via e-mail, where possible.

Biodiversity and trees

- The Town Council requested the transfer of Elizabeth Road allotments from Dorset Council. This would ensure the status of statutory allotments and there would be no infill of houses, ensuring biodiversity.
- Provision of insect hotels, bird feeders, swift/swallow nests and bird nests in Woodhouse Gardens. Environmentally friendly slug repellent now in use.
- The use of Glyphosate based weedkillers was stopped by Councillors at the Town Council meeting held on 28th July 2025. Acetic acid based weedkillers should be used or if not practicable then the weeds should be left.
- Biodiversity in public spaces. The Town Council is not responsible for the highway verges although, following a public consultation, it has identified a suitable area that can be replaced with a wildflower area (installed April 2021 on Jubilee Way). The Town Council also supports the Dorset Council's Rangers with their introduction of wildflower areas and grasses.
- Trees that are felled due to being dead, diseased or dying, are replaced with native species, where possible, and research is carried out to determine which species benefit the wildlife the most. Guidance is also sought from the Tree Officer at the Dorset Council.
- Signed up to the ten principles of the Charter for Trees, Woods and People (approved by council 27th January 2020).
- £100 of wildflower seeds purchased to give to residents for free to encourage residents to grow a wildflower area in their gardens.

- Sunflower seeds distributed to residents during the 50th anniversary of the Town Council in March 2024.
- The Deputy Mayor planted a cherry tree in Woodhouse Gardens as part of The Queen's Green Canopy on 11th March 2022, the 70th day of 2022. The Dorset Council Chairman spoke about the benefits of a cherry tree to wildlife at the event. Pupils from Archbishop Wake Primary School were gifted with packs of sunflower seeds to sow, encouraging biodiversity. Residents were encouraged to plant a tree or a hawthorn bush in their garden as part of the initiative.

Climate change readiness

- The Town Council took on the installation and maintenance of cycle parking in several locations, to help encourage people to cycle into town instead of driving.
- Public art installation at Badbury Heights is designed to provide shelter from sun and rain.

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

- Establishing a Climate Change working group.
- Supporting Sustainable Dorset and Blandford Environmental Trust in promoting the annual Sustainability Fair held in Angus Wood.

Carbon reduction

- Supporting the Dorset Council in its declaration of a climate emergency.
- Encouraging the Dorset Council to install Electric Vehicle Charge Points in its car parks and are looking into installing a charge point in Town Council recreation ground car parks.
- Events are held at the Corn Exchange to provide local entertainment at a reasonable cost or free of charge, helping residents to socialise in their town without travelling further afield.

Plastic reduction

- Signed up to the free water refill scheme, offering refills to members of the public to reduce the use of purchasing additional bottles.

Waste reduction

- Promoted the work carried out by the volunteer group 'Blandford War on Waste', as well as local shops and businesses that are taking steps to improve the environment, reducing their carbon footprint or supporting nature.
- Offering of reusable items to the community (e.g. windows from Woodhouse Gardens pavilion).
- Providing litter picking equipment to members of the public and Blandford War on Waste.

Biodiversity and trees

- Promote the importance of trees for our community through the annual tree photography competition introduced in 2019.

Climate change readiness n/a

Planned activities: 2020-2022
Summary

Whilst we will still look for quick wins to reduce carbon and waste and promote biodiversity, work will begin on ensuring that the Town Council Estate is energy efficient and progressing towards carbon neutrality.

A carbon footprint benchmarking activity will be carried out by the chair of the working group each year to demonstrate progress being made and an annual report submitted to full Council.

We will begin to focus on Climate Change readiness and identify any adjustments that may need to be made to mitigate the risks of extreme weather events.

We will use data from the Department of BEIS carbon benchmarking tool to identify where Blandford needs to focus and use it to shape and delivery a Community Engagement Plan.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Explore funding opportunities for energy waste reduction measures on all council owned buildings.
- Scheduling of energy waste reduction measures on all council owned buildings.
- Central heating is now turned off when staff are not in the office or hirers in the community room.
- Explore the use of electric strimmer's etc as an alternative to petrol powered. Initial order of replacement electric tools placed.
- Explore the use of electronic recording of daily Health and Safety checks instead of using paper. Expenditure approved by council in 2022 for devices and an app, with a purchase due in 2023-24.

Plastic reduction

- Continued support for community-led activities such as 'Blandford War on Waste'.
- Continued reduction of plastic products within the Town Council.

Other waste reduction

- Work with Dorset Waste Partnership to ensure appropriate bins are made available at events and find out how additional recycling bins can be returned to locations where they have been removed.
- Ongoing reduction of waste within the Town Council's portfolio.
- Support for and promotion of use of the Blandford Community Fridge to encourage reducing food waste.

Biodiversity and trees

- Replacement trees have been planted where trees have been removed.

Climate change readiness

- Following efforts to explore opportunities for providing public drinking fountains, work was completed on this with Wessex Water in 2021 with the introduction of a bottle refill point in the Market Place. Any other opportunities will also be considered.
- Explore opportunities for shaded/sheltered areas on Town Council maintained outdoor areas, with the Badbury Heights public art canopy/seating area as an example (transfer pending).
- Parasols/bases purchased for Woodhouse Gardens in July 2022, due to lack of shade for the public. The staff put these out when it is hot and sunny.

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

Carbon reduction

- Roll out community focused carbon benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils co-created by Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Centre of Sustainable Energy (CSE) at https://impact-tool.org.uk/.
- Use information from community focused carbon benchmarking tool for Town and Parish Councils to create a community engagement plan.
- Launch Green Grants matched funding for community groups wishing to start up an environmental initiative (2x £500 per year). This was well received, and the Blandford Environmental Trust was the first applicant and was awarded with a green grant.
- Engage with the Local Plan and future developments regarding different sources of energy generation, i.e. solar panels.
- Encourage walking by promoting the walking routes identified by the Information Centre. Employees and Councillors should also be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share where possible.
- Encourage the Dorset Council to use differential car-parking charges to support low carbon vehicles.
- Press local authorities and MPs to demand national changes to bus services regulations, so all areas can regulate buses as London does, and urban profit-making routes can cross fund loss making rural routes.

Plastic reduction

n/a

Other waste reduction

n/a

Biodiversity and trees

- Explore the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity and consider attempting to qualify as a signatory.

- Encourage residents to increase biodiversity in their back gardens. This was done via social media for The Queen's Green Canopy with trees or hawthorn bushes, which encourage biodiversity.
- Encourage residents and local landowners could be encouraged to take part in tree planting. The Tree Charter, developed by the Woodland Trust, provides excellent guidance on how to increase tree cover. The National Association of Local Councils website provides case studies where it has been used.

Climate change readiness

- Support the introduction of safe walking and cycle routes and, where necessary, work in partnership with the local authority to deliver them.

Planned activities: 2022-2025

Summary

The process of transitioning into carbon neutral, sustainable organisation begins in earnest with a focus will on reducing waste and transitioning to electric.

Organisational learning will be shared with the wider community. A dedicated webpage was created in 2023, on the Town Council's website, which provides updates on initiatives and progress to date.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Energy audit for all council owned buildings in order to identify opportunities for reduction of energy waste. Low Carbon Dorset were contacted about this but were unable to provide this service due to capacity.
- Reduce energy waste from all Town Council owned buildings.
- Introduce solar panels on council buildings where possible.
- Inclusion of green initiatives in the refurbishment of the Town Hall / Corn Exchange complex.
- Transition to electric vehicles as vehicles need to be replaced, subject to budgets and logistics.

Plastic reduction

n/a

Other waste reduction

n/a

Biodiversity and trees

- Reduce pesticide use and other harmful activities. It's possible to reduce activities that harm wildlife, from using peat-free compost to shunning pesticides and ensuring light pollution is controlled.
- Stop using glyphosate weed killer switch to a hot foam system.
- Support for Dorset Council extension of the Milldown Nature Reserve and planting of 70 trees, with costs covered by the Town Council and community involvement.

Climate change readiness

- Full council approved and adopted a Motion for the Ocean, being the first inland council to do so.

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

Carbon reduction

- Work with other groups to create an impartial local guide that provides information on accredited local businesses and could include information on local accredited energy assessors and renewable energy installers for solar panels, batteries, EV charging points and heat pumps, eco-friendly retailers, green builders and landscape companies, etc. It can also encourage sustainable transport options.
- Buildings using renewable energy should also be used as a showcase to help local people see these technologies first-hand, particularly less familiar technologies such as heat pumps.

Plastic reduction

- Work in partnership with Blandford War on Waste to become a plastic free community (surfers Against Sewage scheme).

Other waste reduction

n/a

Biodiversity and trees

- To encourage others, promote the actions taken, for example use signage on council-owned land where peat-free compost is used.

Climate change readiness

n/a

Planned activities: 2025-2030

Summary

Any Council buildings that have not already transitioned to electric will be transformed.

The Town Council will seek opportunities to install renewable energy generation facilities on its own property.

We'll showcase what we've achieved and learned and attempt to bring together community groups who can benefit from our organisational learning in order to bulk buy for their privately owned properties.

Town Council Estate

Carbon reduction

- Produce green energy. Install renewable energy generation, like heat pumps and solar PV, at council buildings. Heat pumps benefit from a government grant that will partially cover the cost. Several energy companies provide a smart export tariff, which pays for any electricity generated that isn't used by the building, including offering top prices if the solar PV is used in conjunction with a battery.

Plastic reduction

n/a

Other waste reduction

n/a

Biodiversity and trees

n/a

Climate change readiness

n/a

Community engagement, stakeholder support and lobbying

Carbon reduction

- Bring together groups of people for bulk purchases. The costs of installing solar PV, or other renewable technologies such as heat pumps, should be much lower if done in bulk, street by street, or area by area. Local homeowners and businesses could be brought together to develop such a scheme – it's a widely used model in the Netherlands and places such as Suffolk and Frome in the UK. Bulk purchases of energy audits or energy insulation is also possible. Transition Streets is an example of this approach.
- Promote a lift-sharing scheme. By convening local businesses and car-sharing schemes, such as the social enterprise Liftshare, it's possible to help local people reduce the carbon pollution from car use, save money and foster new friendships. Liftsharing may often be a solution for people when public transport, cycling or walking to work isn't. Car-sharing schemes for non-commuting journeys should also be promoted.

Plastic reduction

n/a

Other waste reduction

n/a

Biodiversity and trees

n/a

Climate change readiness

n/a

Notes: Ensure the climate change or nature implications of decisions are known before making them. It isn't credible to accept the need for rapid action on climate change and nature and then make decisions without knowing whether they'll be harmful or helpful. Requiring every decision to be well informed is common sense as well as good practice. This Action Plan will be a flexible, working document that can be added to and updated as and when required.

Appendix A

Blandford Forum Town Council estate carbon footprint benchmark

21 February 2020

Introduction

The following report provides a carbon footprint benchmark to help focus carbon reduction activity across the Blandford Forum Town Council estate.

Method

Blandford Forum Town Council's carbon footprint has been calculated using a carbon footprinting tool provided by Low Carbon Dorset. The report has been backdated to April 2019 to provide a benchmark at the start of the Council year. Another measurement will be taken in April 2020 to track any progress made over the 2019/20 Council year.

Scope

The footprint relates to the Blandford Forum Town Council estate only. The Town Council estate includes: Corn Exchange and Town Council offices, Larksmead pavilion and floodlights, Woodhouse Gardens, Glenmore Workshop, Park Road Recreation Ground (including Pavilion), Cemetery Chapel and workshop, Marsh and Ham toilets, Tabernacle toilets, and motor vehicles and mowers.

Summary of findings

Between April 2018 end March 2019, the Town Council estate consumed:

- 52,153 kWh of electricity
- 16,058 m3 of mains gas
- 1,429 m3 of water
- 1,062 litres of unleaded Petrol (estimated on consumption from Jan-Dec 2019)
- 3,361 litres of Diesel (estimated on consumption from Jan-Dec 2019)
- The council does not use liquified petroleum gas (LPG) or fuel oil anywhere on its estate.

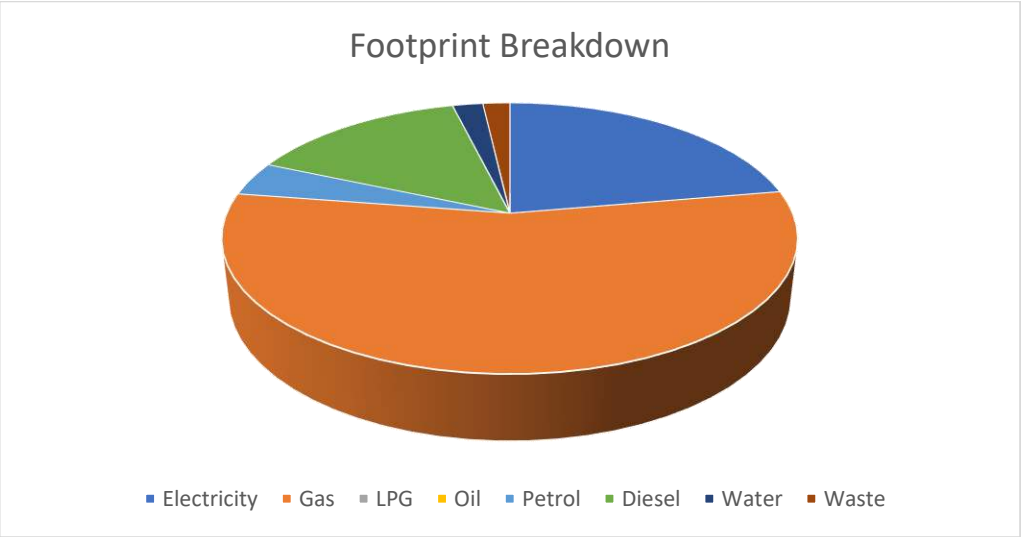
Between April 2018 and March 2019, the Town Council estate also produced:

- 61.4 tons of black bag (estimated)
- 104 bags of paper recycling

The table below shows how this translates into 74 tons of CO2 emissions each year:

Source	Emissions tCO2/yr	% Footprint
Electricity	16.5	22.3%
Gas	40.8	55.1%
LPG	0.0	0.0%
Oil	0.0	0.0%
Petrol	3.0	4.1%
Diesel	10.8	14.6%
Water	1.5	2.0%
Waste	1.3	1.8%

Total:	**74.0**	**tCO2e/yr**



The footprint breakdown above, shows that 55% (41 tons of CO2) of the Town Council estate carbon footprint comes from consumption of mains gas at 3 sites: The Corn Exchange (including Town Council offices), Larksmead, and Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion.

This is followed by electricity (22.3% of emissions/ 16.5 tons of CO2), and then diesel (14.6% of emissions/ 10.8 tons of CO2).

Strategies for reducing the Town Council's carbon footprint and challenges that we expect to encounter will be discussed at the next working group meeting on 16 March.

Appendix B

Motion for the Ocean

This Town Council declares an urgent need for Ocean Recovery. Members of the council recognise that we need ocean recovery to meet our net zero carbon targets, and we need net zero carbon to recover our ocean.

We also recognise that inland communities, like our own, have an important role to play in ocean recovery through acting as the custodians of the rivers, waterways and tributaries that run through our towns and villages on their way to the sea.

The Town Council therefore pledges to:

1. Report to Full Council within 6-12 months on the actions and projects that will contribute to protection and recovery of the River Stour and its tributaries and the nature and wildlife that they support within the Blandford Forum Town Council area. Please note that tributaries are included in the actions even if not stated in the subsequent pledges.

2. Embed protection and recovery of the River Stour in all strategic decisions, plans, budgets, procurement and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning and regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements, and considering ocean-based and river-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.

3. Ensure that local planning recommendations support ocean recovery by embedding the protection and recovery of the River Stour in the Neighbourhood Plan at the earliest opportunity.

4. Ensure that the Town Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity Plan strives to support ocean recovery through a focus on the protection and recovery of the River Stour.

5. Work in partnership with other Town and Parish Councils along the Stour and local community groups, clubs and other organisations that have a recreational, economic or other interest in its protection and recovery.

6. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in Blandford Forum, including:

    a) Ensuring primary school aged children in Blandford Forum are encouraged to engage with the River Stour first-hand - striving to include home-schooled children;

    b) Promote sustainable and equitable access to the River Stour through physical and digital experiences for all residents.

c) Through these actions, embed understanding of the ‘source to sea’ approach and how all people, wherever they live, impact and are impacted by ocean health.

7. Use the Town Council website and other communications channels to update on the River Stour recovery progress and signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities and marine citizenship pledges.

8. Encourage Dorset Council to introduce filters to their drains, to prevent items from polluting the county’s rivers and tributaries.

9. Lobby the Government asking them to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by:

   a) Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.

   b) Work with coastal communities to co-develop marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes in local placemaking.

   c) Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.

   d) Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.

   e) And by listening to marine and social scientific advice to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:

      i. Enable the recovery of marine and river ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.

      ii. Consider levelling up, marine and river conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.

      iii. Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.

      iv. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits of ocean and river recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.