



BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL

# CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL **EMERGENCY**

STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2020



**BRADFORD  
ON AVON  
TOWN COUNCIL**





# FOREWORD

by

*Councillor Dom Newton, Leader of the Council,  
and*

*Councillor Alex Kay, Chair of the Environment  
and Planning Committee*

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In March 2019, Bradford on Avon Town declared a Climate Emergency. In July 2020, it followed this with the declaration of an Ecological Emergency.

Each of these declarations highlight the plight of our planet, and the impact of human behaviours and activity on it - an impact that affects all life on our planet, from plants to animals, and from the smallest insects to the largest mammals.

As a Town Council, we know that the actions we can take will make only a small difference to the global picture . but if everyone who can takes their own small actions, these will quickly add up to major changes.

Since our declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Town Council has taken tangible steps to address climate change, and indicated in our original Strategy Paper, published in July 2019.

But we know that there is a lot more that we can and must do to serve our community.

We hope you will join us on this journey to reduce our community's carbon footprint and protect and restore the natural environment within and around Bradford on Avon.

Collectively, we can make a difference - which is why, as a Town Council, we must act now.

For If not now, then when?

Alex Kay

The Town Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in March 2019 was not our first actions to address Climate Change – but in itself highlighted the importance of the issue.

Addressing the Climate Emergency now feeds into many other policy areas – but these are some specific actions that the Town Council has taken to address Climate Change.

## Solar Panels

As part of addressing the urgent issue of Climate Change, the Town Council installed Solar Panels on the south-facing roof of St. Margaret's Hall in early 2019.

The 72 panels were officially 'unveiled' on March 3rd 2019 with a special event to mark the occasion, and have generated almost 15 megawatt hours (MWH) of electricity since installation. That equates to a saving of more than 14 tonnes of carbon, and a significant reduction in energy bills.

The Council invested £30,000 in the panels, which is expected to be recouped in around seven years.



## Dedicated web-pages

We have invested in the creation a dedicated Climate and Ecological Emergency section on our website, providing information on the Emergencies, the actions the Town Council has taken and what's planned, and advice for individuals on what they can do.

The site also provides links to local groups active on climate and ecology issues, and promotes events they hold which may be of interest.

We are also very active on social media @BoATownCouncil and we use appropriate hashtags to make sure posts and tweets reach the best possible audiences.

#ClimateEmergency #Biodiversity  
#EcologicalEmergency #ClimateChange  
#PlasticFreeBoA

## Woodland

Starting with Kingston Farm in 2019, the Town Council has added number of woodland areas to the areas it manages. It was gifted Arnold Wood in February 2020 and in March 2020, the Environment and Planning Committee voted to lead the purchase of Becky Addy Wood, supporting a successful community fundraising effort.

Taking on woodland allows the Town Council to protect these important habitats for future generations and they are a source of carbon-capture in their own right. We expect to take on management of the Strips and other wooded areas around the town as part of the Asset Transfer process, to be completed in early 2021.

Our **Climate** Actions  
2019-2020



## Environment and Planning Committee

We renamed our Planning and Environment Committee to become the Environment and Planning Committee in 2018 – an important change in emphasis. It discusses climate and ecology issues in every meeting, and drives policy on behalf of the Council.

Committee Chair, Cllr Alex Kay, also drafted our 2019 Climate Emergency Strategy.

This has included taking a stand on issues such as the proposed Westbury Waste Incinerator, and passing of key resolutions on Biodiversity, Wildlife Protection and providing a specific budget for communication on the joint Emergencies.

## Events

We have hosted two dedicated Climate Emergency Steering Group meetings, with a range of guest speakers and workshops. We've also held two dedicated themed events: our Bat Chat in October 2019 and our Green Homes event in January 2020. Further public events will be scheduled as and when permitted under COVID-19 restrictions.

External events relating to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies are also eligible to be advertised on both this site and our Explore Bradford on Avon site. If you are holding a live or online event you can register it via our Explore site [HERE](#) noting the category as 'Environment & Climate Change'.

Both Town Councillors and Officers often attend Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon (CFBOA) meetings and events, with many CFBOA members also in attendance at Town Council Committee meetings.

The Town Council also partnered with Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) Council to co-host a Climate Action Day, facilitated by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) for Town and Parish Councils on 26th November 2020.

The event was aimed enabling co-working and sharing of ideas – acknowledging that the Climate and Ecological Emergencies do not stop at Town, Parish or County borders.

Other Councils in attendance include Winsley, Freshford, Monkton Farleigh and Corsham.

## Website audit

In 2020, an audit was undertaken of our websites – [bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk) and [bradfordonavon.co.uk](http://bradfordonavon.co.uk). The subsequent changes to the sites saw a massive 80% reduction in the carbon footprint of the sites.



## Our **Climate** Actions 2019-2020

**BOA  
CLIMATE  
EMERGENCY  
STEERING  
GROUP  
MEETING**

ALL WELCOME TO JOIN THE DISCUSSION ON  
PRACTICABLE STEPS OUR COMMUNITY CAN  
TAKE TO HELP AVERT THE GLOBAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

7PM THURSDAY 1ST AUGUST 2019  
ST MARGARET'S HALL,  
BRADFORD ON AVON

[www.bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Our **Climate** Actions 2019-2020

### Plastic free

The Town Council backed the community effort to become plastic free, and the town was awarded 'Plastic Free Community Status' in April 2019. The Town Council actively promotes plastic-free businesses via a dedicated section of its Explore BoA website, and also raises awareness of the need to 'Refuse, Re-use and Recycle'.

Local independent shop, Christine's Sustainable Supermarket, has been featured as a plastic-free 'hero' in our newsletter, website and social media feeds having installed dry goods re-fill stations.

The Tourist Information Office sells duck food in compostable bags as well as reusable water bottles and flasks to encourage people not to buy single-use bottled drinks.

We have also installed three water fountains across the town, enabling and encouraging residents and visitors alike to refill their bottles.

### Grow your own during lockdown

During the first COVID-19 lockdown, we set up GrowBoA linking our pandemic response to support with eco and climate issues. The project was aimed at supporting well-being during this time, helping people to re-engage with their natural environment and appreciate the biodiversity present in the town.

It did this by helping people to share seeds and plants at Grow Swap Stations in the town, made from reclaimed timber by one of our Councillors.

The project also encouraged people to grow their own produce, helping towards reducing food-miles and personal carbon footprints and showing people how simple, affordable and rewarding it can be to 'Grow Your Own'.



The Town Council are committed to taking action to preserve and restore biodiversity across the land which we own and/or manage, both now and in the future.

In June 2020 the Town Council's Environment & Planning Committee adopted a Biodiversity Resolution and declared an Ecological Emergency in July 2020, though we had already been taking action on these areas prior to this.

## Woodland

As well as helping to address Climate Change, taking on areas of woodland allows the Town Council to protect these important habitats for future generations.

They also provide a haven for wildlife, with the Town Council refusing permission for hunting and culling, and actively promoting green infrastructure under the Wildlife Protection Policy Statement passed in November 2020.

## Green Spaces Management

The Town Council manages green spaces from open parks and recreation grounds to historic ancient woodland, and is in the process of taking on even more. All of these spaces are managed to reduce climate impact – whether that's using non-peat-based compost, minimising use of powered tools in management.



We appointed a Green Spaces Officer in January 2020. This role plays an important role in promoting biodiversity, liaising with local groups like Clean Up Bradford, to advise on ground control and removal of some plants.

As the results of our Biodiversity Survey are published, the Green Spaces Officer will also play a key role in assisting Councillors on next steps to improve local habitats.

## Blue Heart campaign

The Town Council has worked with the Blue Campaign since 2019, and since then small areas of garden and parks have seen Blue Hearts appearing. These symbolise that they are being left to nature that little bit more – encouraging the growth of wild flowers and plant species that some might consider to be weeds. These in turn support creatures like bees, moths, and other insect life which in turn support birds and other wildlife.

# Our **Ecology** Actions 2019-2020





## Biodiversity survey

In June 2020, the Town Council decided to commission a Biodiversity Survey to provide it with baseline data on habitats and species around the town.

It selected local firm EcoSulis in July, and work is underway to provide detailed analysis of key sites, as well as an overview report of the town as a whole.

The report will inform our land management and nature stewardship practices across all of the places and spaces under Town Council control from ancient woodland to Westbury Garden. Each has its different but important part to play.

## Reduction in use of chemicals

Under both the Biodiversity Resolution passed in June 2020, and the Wildlife Protection Policy Statement of November 2020, the Town Council is taking steps reduce its use of chemicals to control weeds and pests.

It has banned the use of Glyphosates on Town Council land, and other chemical weedkillers, other than in exceptional circumstances. It will also limit, as far as possible, the use of pesticides and poisons in controlling pest-species – while acknowledging its legal duties to control certain species.

## Wildlife Protection

In November 2020, the Town Council's Environment and Planning Committee adopted a Wildlife Protection Policy Statement which aims to provide a haven for wildlife on Town Council-controlled lands.

includes withholding of consent, as far as possible under the law, for the hunting and killing of animals, and to look to non-lethal methods of animal control as far as possible.

It also includes elements such as reduction of the use of pesticides, and development of a lighting strategy for the town – to help protector important localbat populations.



Our **Ecology** Actions  
2019-2020

The Town Council has passed various resolutions on Climate and Ecological Emergency, but some actions take longer to deliver than others.

This section focuses on those elements of policy or projects which are in progress. Keep an eye on the News Page on our website for further developments.

## Electric Vehicle Charging Points

In November 2020 the Environment and Planning Committee committed the Council to installing EV charging points, subject to a business case, around Town Council premises such as St. Margaret's Hall, the Youth and Community Centre and Culver Close.

Councillors hope to be able to push forward with the 'quick win' elements of this within the next few months, taking advantage of the power produced by our Solar Panels, and our green energy tariff, to make sure that the charging points don't have an unintended climate impact.

## Bowling Club Borehole

Water use has a climate impact, so anything we can do to reduce the use of mains water is an improvement, and can also save money.

Given the close proximity of the Bowling Club to the river, watering the bowling lawn at Barton Farm with borehole - produced groundwater, rather than treated mains water, will reduce the Council's footprint, and also save it money within two years – a win on both counts.

## Insect Hotels

All creatures, great and small, are part of our ecosystem, and some of our small inhabitants play a key role in tidying up and sustaining larger life – aiding composting and decomposition, and pollinating plants which then support animals, birds and bats.

Insect hotels are a great way to assist in this, and the Town Council is collecting materials and supporting Ellie, a young person who lives in the town, in creating these in several locations.



Our **Next** Steps  
2021





## A new Pavillion

The existing pavilion on Culver Field is not fit for purpose, and work is underway with Bradford on Avon Cricket Club and other partners to replace it with a modern purpose-built facility.

This gives us the opportunity to ensure that the building is as efficient as possible, potentially approaching Passive Build standards, and that eco-technology is built directly in at design stage. Ensuring that these elements are captured will form part of the tender specification as the Town Council selects an architect to move the project forward.

This project will also act as a proof-of-concept for replacement of other buildings coming to the end of their life, and for renovations. It will also link closely with the deployment of EV charging points.

## Community Fridge

The community fridge project has taken some time to get going – and unfortunately has also fallen victim to the Covid-19 pandemic, with lockdown hitting just as a volunteer team was ready to embark on.

We are also now reviewing the location of the fridge, to make sure that it is more accessible, and easier to run by volunteers. We may also look at expanding the remit to other foodstuffs too, following a model established by Frome, for example.

Food production accounts for a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions – so reducing food waste is a simple but effective way to reduce the town's carbon footprint.

## Lighting strategy

Part of the Wildlife Protection Policy Statement passed in November 2020 was the creation of a Lighting Strategy for the town. This will enhance the habitat of creatures including bats, which can be adversely affected by pools of light, and also reduces energy consumption.

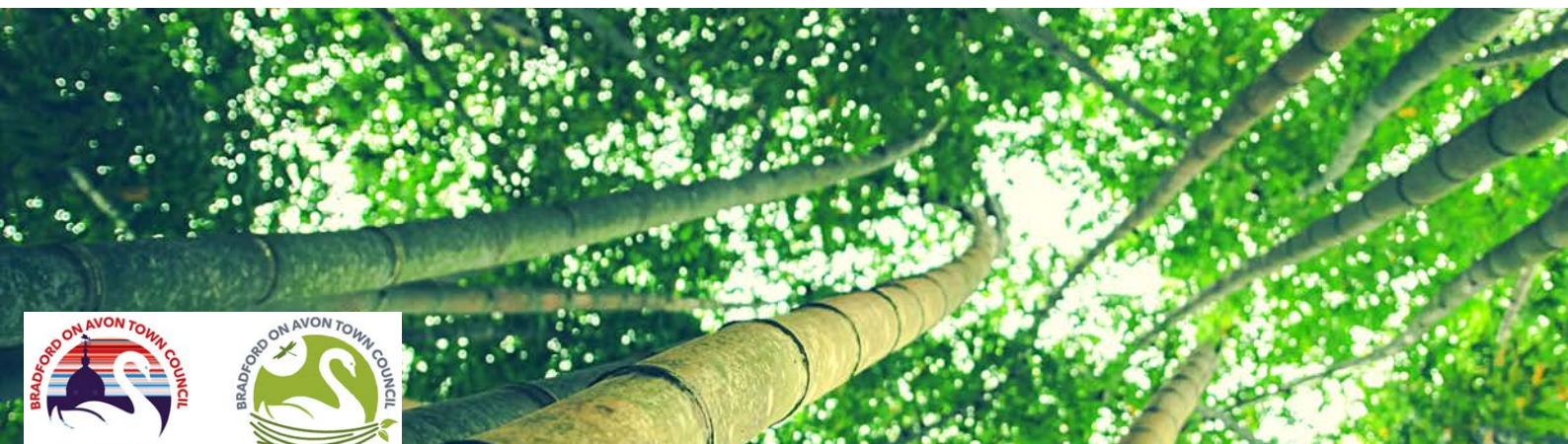
While the Town Council may not directly control lighting infrastructure such as street-lighting, it does play a role in the planning process. It can comment on lighting spill from facilities such as sports pitches and commercial premises – and also ensure that new Town Council developments have a positive impact.

The strategy may also extend to advising business and other public sector agencies in the town to reduce their own lighting 'spill', and assist with the creation of a 'bat corridor'.

## Living Wall

The community-led project to build a Living Wall in Lamb Yard is primarily to improve the aesthetics of that area. However, the chosen design integrates bird-boxes, which will provide a haven for species like Swifts and Housemartins.

The plants chosen will also be those provide a good level of carbon-capture – the walls proposed town centre location making this highly desirable. The project is ongoing, with build likely to be towards the middle of 2021, subject to planning and fundraising.



## Biodiversity Forward Management Plan

This survey was commissioned in July 2020, and will produce a report of baseline data showing biodiversity levels across the Town and surrounding area. Draft reports on some sites were received in October and November, and a draft of the full report is expected in November 2020.

Once the report is available, a management plan will be developed to promote biodiversity across Town Council controlled lands. This will include mowing patterns, elements of re-wilding where appropriate, and potentially changes to use of some land. It will also certainly include the continued protection of woodlands like Becky Addy and Arnolds wood, could also involve supporting areas like the Strips and the wooded area near Kingston Farm potentially towards a more self-sustaining state.

This plan will also be shaped by the Wildlife Protection Policy Statement issued in November 2020, which provides for creations of havens and creation of 'green infrastructure' in the town to support wildlife habitats. That resolution also commits the Town Council to reduction of pesticide and other chemical pest-control products as far as possible.



## Town Council Procurement and Supply Chain

The Ecological Emergency Declaration provided that a review of procurement would be undertaken to ensure that consumables used are sustainably sourced, and that the carbon and ecological footprint of the Council is mapped.

It also committed that procurement and management practices will be consistent with the two declarations, with appropriate instructions draft and delivered to Town Council suppliers. This has not yet been completed, and will be prioritised early in the new year.

# Future Strategy 2021-2025

As a Town Council we can make a difference in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies in two distinctive ways.

As this strategy document shows, we can make tangible changes to how we act as an organisation - reducing our carbon footprint, and improving habitats in our local area.

We can also lead by example - building relationships with other councils, community organisations and experts from partnership organisations, and sharing messages and information to help the public understand the impact that the choices they, and the Council, make can have.

## Finance

The Town Council has committed over £60,000 since the end of 2018 to environmental projects, around half of which paid for the installation of solar panels on St. Margaret's Hall.

Other main items have included:

- Environmental community fund (£10,000 in 2019 and 2020);
- Climate Emergency and Ecology Communications (£4,000 in 2020);
- Biodiversity Survey (£5,000 in 2020).

However, this equates to less than 4% of Town Council spending in a single year, albeit that some costs will be born in other budget lines, for example in changes to procurement practices.

This level of spending does not equate to prioritising the Ecological and Climate Emergency. The Council will therefore look to allocate no less than 10% of its budget to items and project directly addressing the joint Emergencies.



## Public Authority partnerships

The Town Council has established strong partnerships with other Public Authorities, community groups and national organisations.

The policy positions that it has taken since 2019 have been held up as examples of innovative and progressive work to address the joint emergencies.

Given our geographic position, it is important that will continue to engage both with Wiltshire Council as our own Principle Authority, and also Bath and North East Somerset Council - which also forms part of the West of England Metropolitan Area, with an elected Mayor.

All three of those separate Public Authorities can have an impact on Bradford on Avon and its surrounding area - positive or negative - through the environmental and other policy positions that they take.

The Town Council's role must be to engage, inform and shape those policies. Maintaining links both at Cabinet and senior Officer level will be a focus of the Town Council in the coming years.

## Community Partners

At local level, the Town Council has built very successful partnerships, in particularly with Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon (CFBOA). Sharing of events, and co-working on major projects has boosted this relationship and built up trust - while also enabling a level of constructive challenge.

Both CFBOA, and the Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust have been financial partners on eco-projects in the last two years.

As well as established community groups, ad hoc groups have also become important to specific projects, taking a lead on fundraising and building community support.



Friends of Becky Addy Wood formed as a result of the Council's support for the purchase of the woodland. A similar organisation has formed to support the installation of Living Wall in Lamb Yard. Meanwhile, the Town Council continues to advise and support activities by Clean Up Bradford and other green volunteering groups, to help maintain areas of the town, including those focussing on recycling and plastic-free.

Building and maintaining these partnerships will be key both to controlling costs as Community Assets are delegated to the Town Council, and also influencing and informing the activities of these groups so that operate in a way consistent with responding to the Emergencies.

Engagement of young people in this work will also be key. Offering meaningful opportunities to be involved in decision-making and creation of projects will support the Town Council's work, while also ensuring the young people have a positive experience that encourages future involvement.

Finally, we cannot ignore local independent and other businesses. Shopping locally and sustainably is a great way for individuals to take action, and supporting local independent traders who take action on schemes like Plastic Free is both important in maintaining a thriving town and reducing the town's carbon footprint.



## Advice and support

As far as possible, the Town Council will offer advice and support on how individuals and other organisations can start to tackle the joint emergencies. However, we also acknowledge that we are not experts.

We have built, and will continue to build, relationships with expert partners, both on a commercial basis where necessary, and, where possible, draw on support from trusts and charity organisations to help inform both Council policy and operational delivery of projects.

Commercial partnerships have included EcoSulis, based in Bath, selected to deliver our Biodiversity Survey, and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), who have facilitated the Climate Action Day which Bradford on Avon Town Council cost-hosted with BANES Council in November 2020.

In each case, the relationship also involved value-added elements. Through their access to external funding CSE in particular have also supported the Town Council providing input on our general programme, and also specifically on 'greening up' the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

As well as these commercial relationships, organisations like the Mammal Society, the Blue Campaign and Sustrans have each provided expert input and support on specific areas of policy, from biodiversity and wildlife protection, to reviewing impact transport on air quality.

The national campaigns and organisations have supported our work in inception, and also actively promote it - building the Town Council's reputation

and in so doing enhancing the awareness of what we're doing among other towns and parishes across the region and the UK.

This means that we reach further in encouraging others to take action - which in turn means a 'butterfly effect', multiplying our impact in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.

## Talking about the problem

As well as engaging with other organisations, among the greatest impact the Council can have is informing our own residents, and making them aware of what they can do to make a difference.

As a public authority, we cannot campaign - but we can inform, and share information from authoritative sources.

The science on Climate Change and habitat loss is indisputable - but the messages supporting that can be difficult for people to hear. Investing in communication and providing digestible and accessible information is a way to cut through that.

The dedicated section of the Town Council website seeks to address this, providing a huge range of information. This is supported by the print Newsletter and social media presence. The Council will continue to invest in this area as a major multiplier of efforts to address the Emergencies.

Deploying clear Climate and Ecological Emergency signage around the town will also help to highlight the importance of the issues, and should be deployed in the near future.



## Green growth

A major part of the Town Council's activity in the last 12 months has been the acquisition of new green space - notably the woodlands that have been taken on on behalf of the community. With the completion of the Asset Transfer process, the Town Council will own or manage a further 160,000 square metres of outside space too.

As identified in the Wildlife Protection Policy, this gives the Town Council the opportunity to bring into reality the idea of a Green Corridor - or more properly a green wheel running through and around the town.

This could and should be added with further acquisition of green spaces, to protect and maintain them, and bring them into line with the Biodiversity Forward Management Plan, and also extend to protection of waterways that flow through the town.

This may include land outside of the parish boundary - including where it will achieve other ends, for example flood risk attenuation or protection of amenity areas used by residents.

Green growth will also include the planting of hundreds of additional trees in the town and areas surrounding it - which will act to reduce greenhouse gases, and provide a cleaner environment in the town and for our wider world.

## Green planning

While the Neighbourhood Planning process is in some state of flux, and subject to national government changes under the National Planning Policy Framework, the Town Council will persist in seeking to insert additional Climate and Ecological Emergency countermeasures into the revised plan, which will need to be prepared by the end of the next Town Council Administration.



In addition to this, the Town Council will support home-owners and businesses in understanding technologies available to them, through partnership working with groups such as the CSE.

While the Neighbourhood Planning process is in some state of flux, and subject to national government changes under the National Planning Policy Framework, the Town Council will persist in seeking to insert additional Climate and Ecological Emergency countermeasures into the revised plan, which will need to be prepared by the end of the next Town Council Administration.

It will also continue efforts to support Neighbourhood Planning through collaboration with other Councils, and seek to support and enhance local protection and promotion of the Green Belt and other green areas around the town.

The Town Council will also work with partners to establish a 'standard' by which it will assess strategic or other impactful planning applications, to test the environmental impact of the development. This will feed directly into the review of planning applications.

## Air Quality

The Town Council has placed improvement of Air Quality at the heart of its Highways and Transport policies, which is consistent with address the Climate Emergency, alongside Pedestrian Safety.

This position will continue, and the Council will support and promote actions to improve air quality across the town.





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