

# PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TOWN COUNCIL



## CLIMATE CRISIS REPORT JANUARY 2021

Since the Town Council's acknowledgement of the Climate Emergency in May 2019 the Council has created a Climate Emergency Working Group which drew up an action plan/policy approved later that year. Copies of the policy are on the Council website.

The action policy is designed to ensure the Council places climate concerns at the top of all decision-making and actively communicate climate related matters to the community of Presteigne & Norton. As part of the 2020-21 budget a fund of £1000 was precepted to enable the council to support some small projects that might be brought forward. The Council agreed that due to the importance of the situation it would be referred to as the Climate Crisis or Climate Emergency rather than Climate Change to reflect our understanding of the severity of the problem and the need for action.

Decisions brought before the Council in the last 12 months have been considered with their potential environmental impact as a key part of the decision-making process.

Examples of the Council's action includes:

- Recommended to the LDP that conservation area protections should be balanced with environmental improvements to property's like double glazing, heating systems etc.
- Commented that we couldn't support a change of use planning application on an industrial site without further information on the potential environmental impact of the proposed factory.
- All planning applications put forward to the council are responded to with a statement that all new property built or renovations to old property must be to the highest environmental standards.
- School buses idling engines outside school premises. Operators and Schools have been contacted and asked to stop this practice.
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points: The Council pressed for charging points in Presteigne town and with the support and pressure from Cllr. Baynham the County Council installed two such points in the Hereford Street Car Park.
- Roundabouts and Verges: Working closely with the County Council, Cllr. Baynham and Caring for God's Acre the Council has supported reduced grass cutting for verges (see more detail below) and wildflower planting and seeding on the town roundabouts.
- Joined Renew Wales and hosted a facilitated meeting with interested parties.
- Installed recycling bins on Went's Meadow to enable users to dispose of their cans, bottles etc responsibly.
- Use of sustainable energy in Council Buildings.
- Pressed for initial two phases of the Active Travel Route in Presteigne and continuing to press for the extension of that route to Norton.
- Sought to improve the bus routes via the Tri Towns initiative and a request for the Traws Cymru route to include Presteigne and Norton.
- Written to Walkers Crisps re. crisp packet recycling.

- Supported Norton Community Speedwatch to try to reduce speeds through the village and thus fuel consumption.
- Pressed repeatedly for a 20mph limit in the town centre – something that the Welsh Government is now implementing throughout Wales.
- Pending due to covid but users of Council sites to be encouraged to reduce their use of single use plastic.
- Again pending due to covid – to publicise climate events via the TC facebook page and newsletter.

To create links with the community and tap into fantastic knowledge and expertise that we are very fortunate to have in our community the Climate Crisis Working Group held a series of meetings early in the year with the aim of bringing together interested members of the community and see if there were any projects we could work together on. A representative of Renew Wales also attended one meeting and the Council has had its details included on the Renew Wales website.

From these meetings a few projects evolved.

- Woodland (members of the Council attended a fantastically informative day run by the woodland trust and CADW in Llandrindod which highlighted the need for increased biodiversity). A tree group was formed from the Climate Crisis meeting and a site found for planting and in November, with donated trees from The Woodland Trust, a new woodland was created. Since then the woods around Presteigne have been designated to become part of The National Forrest of Wales and further work is being done by Town Council members to identify areas of land that might be bought to link together woodlands.
- School drop down day. A community group formed to run an environmental themed school drop down day at John Beddoes. Six sessions were designed for the pupils to take part in throughout the day.
- School garden, part of the dropdown day included designing a new garden for the school with the input of the students to improve the outside space, support wildlife and increase biodiversity. A wildlife garden kit was supplied by the Place for Nature fund and is ready to be installed when access to the school is safe.
- With the support of a very knowledgeable group from the community and our county Councillor, discussions of how to manage the verges more sensitively to support wildlife were held with PCC and a plan put into action, brilliantly illustrated and publicised by the group to help raise awareness of the aims of the project.
- A Facebook page - Presteigne Climate Action was created to share information and connect those interested in making a difference.
- Extensive work was carried out by members of the TC to investigate the possibility of using the old Kaye's factory site as a solar farm to supply the towns electricity. It was discovered that the electricity infrastructure is not currently compatible with this type of project (although in private ownership).