

Tonbridge and Malling Climate Change Forum

Meeting – 21.04.2022

Minutes

Present

Anthony Bales - Tonbridge and Malling Friends of the Earth

Cllr Anita Oakley - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Cllr Georgina Thomas - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Cllr Kim Tanner - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Cllr Mark Hood - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Cllr Robin Betts – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council **(Chair)**

Cllr Wendy Palmer - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Gill Fox – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Guy Nevill – Birling Estate

Henry Saunders - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Jennifer Lewis – Tonbridge Town Team

Tom Shelley – Parish Council Representative (Aylesford PC)

Apologies

Derek Whitehead – Medway Valley Countryside Partnership

Elizabeth Milne – Kent Local Nature Partnership

Gemma Record – Youth Forum

Jim Mawby – West Kent College

Karena Harmer – Youth Forum

Lizzie Lowery – Volunteer and Community Sector

Lucy Breeze – Has now left: Contact KCC for a new Representative

Mario Caccamo – East Malling Research

Paul Hickmott - Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Rev David Green – Faith Sector Representative

1. Introduction & Climate Change Officer

All members introduced themselves to the new Climate Change Officer.

2. Update on Woodland Trust tree packs

GF updated the group on this project, with news that all 970 trees had been received and subsequently planted. However, it was noted that the large delivery window for these trees and the short time frame for planting did not allow for community planting of the trees.

GF also highlighted that the council has committed to matching the initial 970 trees with a further 1000 for planting in the 2022/23 planting season. This will present more of an opportunity to engage in community planting. It was suggested that the CCF could have a key role in engaging with community volunteers.

GT mentioned that through the Woodland Trust that members can personally apply for free tree packs. It was also suggested that the local tree and pond partnership would be a useful resource to call upon to help with the further 1000 trees scheme later this year.

3. Update on webpage progress

HS provided an update on the improvement to the council's climate change website pages, noting that new pages are currently being developed.

RB suggested that the website would be a good outlet to promote case studies of work that the council is doing.

GN suggested that the council could possibly contact residents going through major life events, such as moving house, to promote ways to reduce emissions, as well as provide advice and link to website. It was also suggested that wider engagement with parish councils through the website would be a useful avenue to explore.

AB said that he would email Climate Change Forum updates to the emailing list of Tonbridge and Malling Friends of the Earth.

AO suggested that TMBC could use parish councils to distribute climate change news and wider advice.

4. Update on planning meeting + questions

RB explained that he held a meeting with planning policy officer to discuss wider ways to enforce climate change policies outside of the local plan. It was noted that current resources are stretched and under pressure to produce the new local plan.

RB and GF highlighted that it would be difficult to enforce a new supplementary planning policy that is not through official planning policy process. It's likely that if developer challenged such a policy, then any decision based on it, wouldn't be upheld.

RB highlighted that we can make a difference even without such a policy. The new Aldi development was given as an example, where their new proposed development in the district did not align with their net zero goals (orientation of roof with no solar PV). It was refused on these grounds and were encouraged Aldi to come back with an application which supported net zero goal.

HS and GF explained that there were also already significant changes happening to building regulations in June 2022. The following information was summarised:

Future Homes and Buildings Standard

- The Government has made a commitment that from 2025 the Future Homes Standard will ensure that **the average home will produce at least 75% lower CO₂ emissions than one built to current energy efficiency requirements**. Homes built under the Future Homes Standard will be 'zero carbon ready', which means that in the longer term, no further retrofit work for energy efficiency will be necessary to enable them to become zero-carbon homes as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.
- As part of the journey to the Future Homes and Buildings Standard, changes to the Building Regulations in respect of the conservation of fuel and power will **come into effect from 15 June 2022**. Under the new regulations, CO₂ emissions from new build homes must be around **30% lower than current standards** and emissions from other new buildings, including offices and shops, **must be reduced by 27%**.
- The uplifted standards will pave the way for the Future Homes and Buildings Standard in 2025.
- Press Release: [New homes to produce nearly a third less carbon - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-to-produce-nearly-a-third-less-carbon)

Electric Vehicle Charge Points

- From **15 June 2022** new Building Regulations will come into effect requiring the following:
 - Every new home, including those created from a change of use, with associated parking within the site boundary to have an electric vehicle charge point;

- Residential buildings undergoing major renovation, which will have more than 10 parking spaces within the site boundary after the renovation is complete, to have at least one electric vehicle charge point for each dwelling with associated parking within the site boundary and cable routes in all spaces without charge points;
- All new non-residential buildings, with more than 10 parking spaces within the site boundary of the building, to have a minimum of one charge point and in addition to this, cable routes for one in five of the total number of spaces;
- All non-residential buildings, undergoing a major renovation, which will have more than 10 parking spaces within the site boundary after the renovation is complete, to have a minimum of one charge point and in addition to this, cable routes for one in five spaces.
- Approved Document providing technical guidance on the charge point requirements in Part S of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations: [Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles: Approved Document S - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infrastructure-for-charging-electric-vehicles-approved-document-s).

It was further suggested that such info could be provided on the website to help with awareness raising.

5. Existing emissions

HS highlighted that work has begun on the council's carbon audit for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 to assess how much TMBC is emitting on an annual basis. HS also explained that the district emissions are released by the department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) every June, which will detail emissions from 2020. These are the main emissions reported for Local Authority areas and have a two-year lag.

GB mentioned the need to tackle current building stock, especially for hard-to-treat buildings we need to understand what can be done. It was suggested that there needed to be an open discussion with planning department. There are significant issues with permissions due to large AONB areas.

RB mentioned that the solar together scheme encourages homeowners to tackle emissions and investigate renewable energy options. For business, the council provide the Green Business Grants.

It was highlighted that we again use website to promote the above.

MH suggested that TMBC need to do a deep dive into assessing all the council's property assets.

GT queried how is waste would be accounted for in the audits. HS highlighted that accurate waste data was hard to obtain, however, it will be investigated when conducting the audits.

6. Partner updates

AB queried how we could feed into the LP plan as a forum, specifically how we have representation. RB responded, suggesting that representation could be through individuals, the forum and through our parish councils, when feeding into the local plan.

RB provided a quick overview of the meeting for TS.

7. AOB

Time / Frequency of meetings

- Early evening (18:30) time agreed.
- Future scheduled meetings:
 - o 14th July 2022
 - o 20th October 2022

Actions

- Engagement with homeowners on actions they can take.
- Promote website through parish councils.
- Awareness raising of forthcoming planning changes through website.
- Deep dive into assessing all the council's property assets.
- AONB and renewables to discuss with planners (RB to take forwards)
- Agreed 18:30 start to meetings.
- Free tree pack details (GT).

Agenda items

- No items suggested by members for the next agenda.