

Climate Change Forum

Minutes of Meeting 30 January 2023

1. The Chair introduced new members to the Forum and noted apologies.

1.1. Attendees list is provided in the Annex below.

2. Communications

2.1. The discussion opened with how to improve and sustain communications within the Climate Change Forum (CCF). There was agreement to the suggestion by TS that more frequent communication to share issues, experiences, good and bad practice examples was important for the Forum going forwards. It was decided that email was best for contact between group members and officers, who do not have official mobile phones, and that CCF would continue to meet quarterly. If urgent issues emerged between CCF meetings, the Chair invited Forum members to raise directly with him.

2.2. There was agreement to a light-touch process for gathering suggestions from the Forum, forward planning, and tracking achievements. This tracker would be a 'living document' to be discussed at future Forum meetings.

Action (CS): circulate a list of suggestions collated by previous CC Officer for Forum members to check for completeness.

2.3. It was raised that there could be greater visibility within the Forum on the climate change actions that have already been achieved or are in progress by TMBC. For example, the deep retrofit measures for social housing that have been delivered through the BEIS funded project with Clarion. It was also noted that Forum members were also working with Parishes and other organisation on climate change actions.

Action (Chair): to contact Jenny Bates at Shipbourne Parish Council for the CC Action Plan that could be used as a template for other parishes.

2.4. The visibility of the CCF to the public and communications to promote the Forum's work and climate action was also raised. This is a positive area for partnership working, such as through public promotional events at farmer's markets or similar.

Action (CS): work with partners to gauge interest in public events to both promote the CCF and raise awareness of climate change related information.

Action (CS): circulate analysis on the cost-effectiveness or pay-back period of different home energy efficiency measures.

3. Sustainable Travel

- 3.1. Fran Long gave the TBUG presentation on barriers to cycling, particularly cycling to primary and secondary schools. There is a lot of carbon reduction potential from cycling, particularly for the large proportion of journeys that are under 5 miles. There was a discussion about the ongoing issues with the poor maintenance of cycle routes, grit, debris and overgrowth. It was noted that KCC is responsible for this maintenance and has been having issues, including after some trials of cycle ways.
- 3.2. The disconnections between cycle routes that are fragmented or repeatedly cross over roads busy with higher speed traffic was also discussed. KCC infrastructure planning has responsibility for addressing these issues.

Action (TBUG/ all): encourage cycle route users to raise issues directly with KCC, rather than raising on user groups, Facebook groups, etc, so that KCC sees the scale of issues.

- 3.3. The group discussed the lack and reduction of rural bus services, as well as the possibility of introducing electric buses, particularly on routes that pass through air quality hotspots (e.g. the number 7). There was also a discussion of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding that is expected to be available from April 2023. TMBC will be working with KCC (who will distribute the funds) on priority projects.
- 3.4. Bart Wren provided an update on bus, rail and active travel, highlighting potential and forthcoming grant funding and ongoing partnership working across Kent. The update highlighting the broader context of the impact of the pandemic both on bus and rail patronage, as well as on finances with operators continuing to receive support monies. The challenging issue of rolling back rural bus services and the leveraging of Section 106 funding was also raised as an ongoing barrier to modal choice. Rail timetable updates have included a new direct service from Ashford into Charing Cross. Further discussions about other key rail links, e.g. to Gatwick, to take place this year, along with discussion between operators and Network Rail regarding station facilities. Updates on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) were also given.

4. Date of next meeting and future agenda items

Action (CS): canvas dates for the next CCF in April, including gauging interest for an in-person meeting, possibly not on Monday. Circulate tracker of suggestions to develop agenda and forward look for the year.

5. No AOB were raised. The meeting ended with a summary of actions agreed.

Annex: Attendees to 30 January 2023 meeting

Attendees

Cllr Robin Betts (Chair)
Cllr Anita Oakley
Cllr Wendy Palmer
Cllr Mark Hood
Gill Fox (TMBC)
Carrie Spencer (TMBC; CS)
Bart Wren (TMBC)
Fran Long (TBUG)
Dr Tom Shelley (Aylesford Parish and KALC; TS)
Kim Tanner
Guy Nevill
Anthony Bales (FoE)
Georgina Thomas
Katie Traylen (KCC)

Apologies

Rev David Green (Faith Sector)
Elizabeth Milne (Kent Local Nature Partnership)
Andrew Stevens (Kent & Medway Growth Hub)
Gemma Record (Youth Forum representative, TMBC)
Derek Whitehead (Medway Valley Countryside Partnership)
Chris Lydon (Education representative)