

Climate Change Forum

Minutes of Meeting 16 January 2024

1. The Chair welcomed Forum members and noted apologies.
 - 1.1. Attendees list is provided in the Annex below.
2. Actions from previous meeting. A number of actions are complete. Actions to be carried forward:

List of repair cafes: KCC is now putting this list together. CCF webpage to link to KCC list once it is published.

Farmers market: RB to investigate dates for an Aylesford Farmer's Market stall

Repair café: JB looking into possibility in Shipbourne

Climate change information pack: TS to coordinate development going forward (KCC speed safety pack as reference example). CS to see if KCC comms have materials.

Link to Clarion information on condensation, mould and ventilation: includes a video on mould prevention. <https://www.myclarionhousing.com/repairs-and-maintenance/home-maintenance/condensation-damp-and-mould>

3. Survey results and 2024 draft work plan.
 - 3.1. The Chair introduced the survey results and action areas for the CCF. The survey results had been circulated in advance of the meeting and it was agreed they should be available on the CCF webpage.

Action CS: survey results on CCF webpage

Action complete: <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/3535/climate-change-forum-residents-feedback-survey-results>

Improved advice and information for residents, communities and businesses about climate change and environmental action

- 3.2. There was agreement that CCF should increase its communication and community engagement on climate action.
- 3.3. SC opened the discussion of how to reach as many people as possible, along with advice on the actions that most people can do every day. KT agreed that there were simple tips and easy wins, such as from the TMBC internal Christmas card, that could be shared with people.
- 3.4. FL updated the Forum that she had given a talk for seniors in Tonbridge that was accessible for people, and realistic about choices, when some options (such as purchasing an EV) are out of reach for many people. KT noted groups around Kings Hill that would be interested in Fran's talk. JB noted that WI would also be interested in the talk.

Action KT: get in touch with FL about possible future opportunities for the talk with local groups.

Action JB: put FL in touch with local WI about a talk.

- 3.5. KT also raised working with Parish Councils, their publications and websites to promote information and advice, such as the simple tips. JB noted that Shipbourne and Plaxtol Parish Councils had climate change communications and easy wins, but that taking action is more complicated once the next step is a larger action. Ideas for tackling comms on bigger steps welcomed!
- 3.6. RB noted that TMBC is working with Parishes on developing climate change action plans. There was general agreement to AO's suggestion that the CCF could provide short updates at both the Parish Partnership Panel (PPP) and the Tonbridge Community Forum. RB noted that he already attends PPP and could provide the update.

Action RB / CS: follow up with Sarah Barker (KALC climate change working group).

- 3.7. AO raised the possibility of additional communications from TMBC, such as through the My Account app, email signatures, and on letters. It was generally agreed there was potential for this and the need for consistency on

communications and messages. RB suggested this could be one clear message per month, that went out via all potential routes.

3.8. TS suggested the possibility of communications through local Facebook groups and/ or social media.

3.9. KT noted comms on climate change and actions needed to be made available to and supported within TMBC and across all Members, too.

Action CS: follow up with TMBC comms to discuss (i) consistent message or information each month and (ii) potential new routes to disseminating information.

3.10. TS provided updates on the activities he has undertaken with other groups. TS has persuaded the Plant Engineers international body to move to online rather than face-to-face meeting, reducing emissions from travel. TS also noted that discussion on tidal power on the Medway have begun with a professor from the University of Oxford.

3.11. FL updated on volunteering to plant trees in Tonbridge is now focussed in the Tonbridge Farm area and has been postponed because of the frozen ground. RB noted that the winter is tree planting season but that dates need to work around the weather conditions in that period.

Recycling, rainwater harvesting and mature trees

3.12. RB moved to the next points from the survey on recycling and rainwater harvesting. CS noted that rainwater harvesting was something that the CCF could support by applying for grants for water butts, and working with local partners such as schools and parishes to identify where they were needed. JB added that Parishes could be asked or supported in surveying the land they own in identifying where trees could be planted, where planters could be added to public community spaces.

3.13. SC raised the idea of leafleting and/or community engagement in particular areas where there is a lack of trees, paved over or astro turf gardens, and so on. This could help homeowners understand the impact of excess water on their neighbours of paving over areas without providing

suitable drainage, and of removing trees. As this approach is very labour intensive, it was suggested that a pilot area could be identified in the first instance. AO also raise the possibility that the CCF could make a statement against the use of artificial lawns in gardens.

3.14. AO suggested that CCF get in touch with Clarion to see if they're able to encourage gardening and green space with their residents. This could include gardening competitions or allowing 'guerilla gardening'. KT in support. General agreement, and support of small token gifts, including water butts to support with the gardens and water conservation. GF noted that Kent Wildlife Trust used to run gardening for wildlife competitions and might be interested in judging local competitions. FL noted that the Barden Residents Association runs an annual window box competition to support pollinators. FL also suggested that TMBC could show its support by promoting the winners.

3.15. RB in support and suggested that Parishes might be interested as well. JB noted that Eco Schools might be interested, and there was potential to follow up with KCC and the Youth Forum representative. SC mentioned the BBC Radio 2 Save the Bees initiative that was engaged school children with competitions, too. RB noted that competitions could also reward 'most improvement' to encourage transformation of areas where there is little existing gardening or greenery.

Action KT: contact Clarion to ask about running resident's Best Garden competitions, with water butts as prizes.

4. Agenda items and date for next meeting.

4.1. Items for next meeting: Domestic Retrofit, and possible update on work on the emerging Local Plan. JB noted it was important to look at other Local Plans to ensure climate considerations inform appropriate standards. SC noted that coordination was important across local boroughs and districts to ensure consistently high standards. RB suggested that a Members group across KCC, districts and boroughs could help draw on climate change ideas from all, and seek benefits from grouping together and common approaches.

5. Action CS: check with Planning team whether the April date would be timely for a Local Plan update.

5.1. JB suggested that experts could be invited to present on CCF to help inform how to progress with renewables, retrofit, tackle insulation in older homes etc. JB also suggested that it would be helpful to have a presentation from KCC to introduce the new team and how CCF can work with them.

Action CS: invite KCC to give an update on the team and work with CCF.

5.2. Next meeting mid April. A range of dates to be circulated.

6. AOB.

6.1. RB proposed that Clarion could update CCF on its work to upgrade homes, provide grants to tenants etc. KT noted Clarion's current Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme for around 450 Clarion homes in the T&M area.

Action CS: to circulate list of grants, information and training sessions.

7. The meeting ended with a summary of actions agreed.

Annex: Attendees to 16 January 2024 meeting

Attendees

Cllr Robin Betts
Cllr Kim Tanner (KT)
Cllr Steve Crisp (SC)
Cllr Anita Oakley (AO)
Gill Fox (Chair)
Carrie Spencer (CS)
Dr Tom Shelley (TS)
Fran Long (FL)
Jennifer Bates (JB)
Katie Traylen (KTr)

Apologies

Cllr Mike Taylor
Rev David Green (Faith Sector)
Derek Whitehead (Medway Valley Countryside Partnership)
Chris Lydon (Education representative)
Mario Caccamo (East Malling Research)
Tudor Price (Kent Chamber of Commerce)
Guy Nevill (Local Landowners)
Anthony Bales (AB)
Sophie Worsfold (SW)