

## Climate Change Forum

### Minutes of Meeting 27 January 2025

1. The Chair welcomed Forum members and noted apologies.

1.1. Attendees list is provided in the Annex below.

## 2. Actions from previous meeting.

Person responsible	Action	Status / outcome
CS	Gardens to help tackle local flooding - look into grey water harvesting options	ongoing
CS	Gardens to help tackle local flooding - develop a CCF leaflet and supporting online materials	ongoing
RB / SB	Ring around to ensure good attendance for next PPP	complete
CS	JB to send through examples of the banners and materials. CCF to support and share to help other groups to start.	Materials shared.  Further use with other groups ongoing.
CS / RB	Keep under review possibility of a second thermal imaging camera	Ongoing
CS / RB	Write to Sainsburys/ local supermarkets to ask for endorsement of reduced packaging, plastic, and seasonal eating	Not started (carried forward)

2.1. Actions from previous meeting were discussed as either ongoing or to be picked up this quarter.

2.2. The Chair noted that the Christmas rush was not a good time to engage with supermarkets, but the action on seasonal produce will be progressed. TS echoed the importance of seasonal foods and lowering carbon 'food miles'. GN noted that there is already action by supermarkets, working with the NFU, on supporting local farmers and produce, and lowering emissions.

**Action: CS to research seasonal eating, packaging and climate commitments by supermarkets, and develop a targeted approach in discussion with the Chair.**

## 3. Updated Terms of Reference

3.1. CS noted that an updated Terms of Reference for the group was circulated with the agenda. Updates reflect administrative changes at the council and reflect how the group has been operating in practice.

- 3.2. The Chair requested an addition of who will Chair meetings in case of the Chair's absence. SB requested a date and version control, and that the Chair of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) be added to the membership.

**Action: CS to update Terms of Reference and publish on CCF webpage.**

#### **4. Roundtable updates from representatives**

- 4.1. TS raised the issue of microplastics causing harm to the environment and health. Cllr Tanner added that for some products, such as some kitchen rolls, consumers may not be aware of the plastic content. TS added also teabags. GN suggested investigation of microplastics research available through WRAP.

**Action: Plastics/ microplastics as an agenda item for the next meeting.**

- 4.2. SB updated on West Malling Parish which is using the thermal imaging camera this month and will write up and share a report in due course. This could be used to promote the camera and share lessons learned with other Parishes for the next winter season, including through a summer/ autumn Parish Partnership Panel (PPP) meeting.
- 4.3. SB added that some energy suppliers have thermal imaging camera loan schemes for their customers. CS said that Octopus Energy ran this scheme which, like the TMBC scheme, is fully booked for this year and taking registrations for 2025/26. <https://octopus.energy/blog/flir-thermal-cameras/>
- 4.4. JB updated the group on the successful application to the Community Energy Fund. The monies will not be released until spring, via the Greater South East Net Zero Hub. JB is also attending a community energy conference 28 Jan. JB is happy to have a call with others seeking to learn about community energy, and has spoken with West Malling. The Chair thanked JB for her community energy presentation at PPP, and her huge help to other Parishes.
- 4.5. SB mentioned that KALC are pursuing emissions from idling and has been in touch with the air quality team at TMBC. Key sites of idling emissions were rail crossings and drop off points at supermarkets and schools. There was a good discussion of actions to support anti-idling at schools, with many schools already taking action such as having 'turn off your engine' signs and banners at drop-off time. Some schools also had PTA members at drop-off areas holding signs. CCF would support further / ongoing action as needed.
- 4.6. JB added that the Climate Action Shipbourne and Plaxtol (CASP) group are now at the farmers market each Thursday, so could have leaflets and information on the stall, including on air quality. Cllr Crisp offered to come along with his e-bike to showcase an alternative to car travel.

**Action: JB / SC arrange a date to bring the e-bike to the CASP stall.**

- 4.7. GF reminded the group that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Grant scheme was now open for applications. Voluntary and Community groups in the borough can apply for grants of up to £2,500. Parishes are not eligible but can promote to local groups. The scheme is open for applications until 2 March.

**Action: CS to circulate the link to apply: [50th Anniversary Community Grants](#)**

## **5. Home energy advice and retrofit**

### Energy Advisor Champions

- 5.1. CS updated the group on discussions with Community Energy South (CES), who have funding from UK Power Networks to provide advice from trained energy advisors for residents throughout the Southeast. Under the UK Power Networks funded project 'Leaving No One Behind' mission is to reach communities who are being left behind by the low-carbon transition, and make sure that they have all the information and tools they need to keep their bills down, stay warm and safe, and lower their carbon emissions. CES have been funded to deliver this goal through energy roadshows that bring one-to-one energy advice and group talks on everything from saving money on energy bills to installing solar panels and heat-pumps to communities who aren't currently being served by Community Energy Champions.
- 5.2. CES can set up a Village Energy Café event, a Town Hall drop in, attend existing events or arrange evening talks on energy topics. The funding includes promotional materials but it always helps to work with partners who can support and promote these events.
- 5.3. TMBC is currently working with CES on holding two energy advice sessions in the borough while there is funding towards the end of March, and are in discussion with West Malling. The Repair Cafes also offer a potential opportunity for energy advisors to reach people already attending an event. FL is involved in the Tonbridge Repair Café and mentioned that there are other groups there for Living Well on a Saturday. However, space is very tight and it would be helpful to confirm if there is any room for the energy advisors.

**Action: FL to reach out to the church to enquire about space. CS to support with contact and information about CES.**

**Action: CS to support promotion of Energy Advisor events that go forward.**

- 5.4. In discussion Cllr Oakley noted that homes that have a smart meter can request to go onto a cheap overnight electricity tariff from participating energy suppliers. This is a big advantage if you have appliances that can set with a delayed or timed start, such as washing machines or dishwashers, as these can be run overnight, saving money at no cost to the consumer.
- 5.5. GN mentioned the success of community action groups that have drawn on the experience of leading places like Bristol and Lewes. These groups have been

successful in creating momentum on climate action, and could make use of expertise in branding and comms to reach people and groups that are not already convinced about tackling climate change.

- 5.6. TS reported that he has suggested that the Institute of Physics environment group could investigate retrofitting old buildings as a substantial project for modelling and addressing the complex management of damp, thermal bridging, heat loss, and so on.

How Clarion are taking forward retrofit work

- 5.7. Cllr Tanner reported to the group on the work that Clarion has been undertaking since 2020, starting under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, through which TMBC was granted £4.49million, an amount that was then match-funded by Clarion. Under this scheme in 2021-22 Clarion retrofitted 80 homes that were rated ECP D or E, with the goal of bringing them up to EPC B, tackling fuel poverty and improving health of tenants, while lowering carbon emissions. The retrofit works supported about 65 jobs in the area, installing a wide breadth of measures including external wall and cavity wall insulation; 400mm loft insulation; upgraded or new combi boilers; mechanical vent heat recovery; new doors; double or triple glazing; low energy lighting; and solar panels. Although there was disruption to tenants during the work, the result has been highly beneficial with energy costs being reduced by up to 75%.
- 5.8. These works cost around £30k per property, with costs of equivalent work now much higher. For the next tranche in Snodland, Clarion adapted the approach to spread funding further through less extensive retrofit, with works now complete. Next steps are dependent on new funding schemes from the Government.
- 5.9. FL raised that she was a recipient of Clarion funding about 15 years ago, which included external wall insulation that later resulted in a damp problem. There was a KCC and Medway funded retrofit information session, where the speaker from the University of Greenwich recommended taking off the insulation. However, advice from experts can be conflicting and not practical in many instances. Instead, FL has managed the damp through simple measures, like drying clothes outside and shutting the bathroom door during showers, and use of a dehumidifier.
- 5.10. The Chair noted that insulation was good, but that it was essential to take account of moisture, and manage damp through small actions. Clarion methods have moved forward with the rest of the industry more recently, including providing advice on condensation and moisture on their website. CS noted that for retrofit there is now a rule of thumb of 'no insulation without ventilation'.
- 5.11. There was a positive discussion about cheap, effective moisture management that people can do at home, including dehumidifiers. Cllr Oakley supported using dehumidifiers where clothes are drying. This is particularly important if a

heated airer is being used. Dehumidifiers with 'laundry' settings for drying clothes are typically cheaper to run than tumble driers.

- 5.12. GN mentioned heat recovery extractor fans in bathrooms as a DIY solution for retaining heat while still getting the moisture out.
- 5.13. GN also raised overheating as another issue that can arise in tightly insulated and retrofitted homes. There is a website <https://www.heatwavetoolkit.com/> that lists a lot of low-cost, low-effort and quick to do actions to help keep homes cool during heat waves.

## **6. Future agenda items & next meeting.**

- 6.1. Chalk to Coast project presentation – GN.
- 6.2. Plastics/ microplastics – RB.

**Action: CS will canvass for dates as Easter falls at the end of April, when the next meeting is due.**

## **7. AOB**

- 7.1. CS shared the news that TMBC are finalists in the Accessing and Managing Finance category of the APSE Energy Awards, in partnership with DESNZ. Winners will be announced at the Big Energy Summit in February. This recognition highlights the council's commitment to reaching carbon neutral by 2030 through the Climate Change Strategy and prudent use of finance to decarbonise leisure facilities that are the largest source of its emissions.
- 7.2. CS briefly mentioned KCC's funding for electric vehicle charge-points. Residents who need a charge-point in their area are encouraged to notify KCC via Let's talk Kent. The site also has a lot of information and FAQs. Note that charge-points will be located given demand in an area and infrastructure feasibility, rather than outside specific houses.

**Action: CS to circulate link to the EV charge-point page. [On-street electric vehicle charging | Let's talk Kent](#)**

- 8. The meeting closed.

## **Annex: Attendees to 27 January 2025 meeting**

### Attendees

Cllr Robin Betts (Chair)  
Cllr Steve Crisp (Cllr Crisp)  
Cllr Anita Oakley (Cllr Oakley)  
Cllr Kim Tanner (Cllr Tanner)  
Cllr Paul Hickmott  
Gill Fox (GF)  
Carrie Spencer (CS)  
Dr Tom Shelley (TS)  
Anthony Bales (AB)  
Jennifer Bate (JB)  
Fran Long (FL)  
Sarah Barker (SB)  
Guy Nevill (GN)

### Apologies

Cllr Frani Hoskins (FH)  
Cllr Mike Taylor (MT)  
Helen Longley (Faith sector)  
Derek Whitehead (Medway Valley Countryside Partnership)  
Chris Lydon (Education representative)  
Mario Caccamo (East Malling Research)  
Tudor Price (Kent Chamber of Commerce)  
Sophie Worsfold (SW)