

Climate Change Forum

Minutes of Meeting 29 April 2025

1. The Chair welcomed Forum members and noted apologies.
- 1.1. Attendees list is provided in the Annex below.
- 1.2. The Chair informed the group that the Climate Change Officer will soon be leaving the council and thanked her for her hard work and impact in the role.

2. Actions from previous meeting.

Person responsible	Action	Status / outcome
CS	Research seasonal eating, packaging and climate commitments by supermarkets and write to Sainsbury's / local supermarket to ask for support for reduced packaging and encouraging seasonal and local eating	drafted
CS	Put updated Terms of Reference on CCF webpage	complete
CS	Plastics/ microplastics as an agenda item for the next meeting	Complete
FL / CS	FL to reach out to the church to enquire about space and CS to support with contact and information about Energy Advisor support from Community Energy South	complete
CS	Circulate link to the EV charge-point page.	complete
CS	Gardens to help tackle local flooding - develop a CCF leaflet and supporting online materials	ongoing

- 2.1. The letter to major supermarkets to ask for support for reduced packaging and encouraging seasonal and local eating has been drafted and was circulated to the group for comments before the meeting. It was agreed that increasing the availability of loose fruit and veg to tackle plastic packaging and food waste, as customers can buy what the amount needed, would be added to the letter. Although the letter has been tailored to Sainsbury's in the first instance, it was agreed that a similar letter would be sent to all the major supermarkets operating in the borough. The Chair was enthusiastic about promoting the letter as a positive step to encouraging action in support of local fresh produce and reducing waste.

Action: CS to add loose veg and plastic packaging to the draft and issue to the Chair for signing. CS to work with TMBC comms to promote the letter.

2.2. Other actions from previous meeting were noted as complete or in progress.

3. Chalk to Coast presentation

- 3.1. Guy Nevill (GN) introduced the Chalk to Coast project which aims to create a county-wide nature recovery corridor for wildlife to reverse biodiversity loss, improve climate resilience, and support nature-friendly farming. The project is led by farmers and land managers, rather than conservation groups, so has the potential to engage and work with farm clusters, ensuring the corridors created are effective in scale to support county-wide improvements in biodiversity and climate resilience. Towns are growing and increases in housing are planned so it is crucial for land owners to work collaboratively on preserving and enhancing wildlife corridors.
- 3.2. The website for the project launched last week and includes information about the project and an interactive map www.chalktocoast.co.uk. At this early stage, the focus will be on engaging farm clusters in the initial area in the north of Kent, with the aim to work increasingly with other partners, including communities and local government, as there is buy-in from farmers and land managers. Working with nature partnerships in identifying specific projects in particular areas to improve connectivity and resilience will also be important. Key partners like Natural England and KCC through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and implementation have already been engaged.
- 3.3. The Chair welcomed this important and positive project, and the idea that everyone can get involved. Window boxes and gardens can help sustain a wildlife corridor through built up areas, and could be promoted through the use of small stakes to show that they are part of Chalk to Coast.
- 3.4. GN agreed that people are disconnected from food, seasons and biodiversity and that the scale of the project offers huge potential for many co-benefits that will increase the more people and businesses are brought into it. Taking a bioregional approach to understanding how people know and respond to a place on a landscape scale is offering new insights to the physical and mental well-being benefits of nature restoration. There is also potential for the project to help delivery of ambitious Local Nature Recovery Strategy targets and help local government improve corridors and where to focus nature recovery.
- 3.5. JB also welcomed this fantastic project and the importance of leading the project by farmers and land-owners. JB asked how Parish Councils could get involved. GN noted that Parishes, and other local government, would be important partners as the project got going, likely next year. However, the immediate first step was to secure buy-in from the farm clusters and ensure that there was a substantial amount of land participating in the project to form

the corridor. The project also needed to secure funding to create a project team that would be able to drive it forwards.

- 3.6. SB also welcomed the project and will invite GN to present on Chalk to Coast and how Parishes could get involved to a future Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) meeting in 2026.
- 3.7. Finally, GN noted that you can keep up to date with the project by following on LinkedIn and Instagram, and that you can sign up for a newsletter via the website.

4. Taking action on plastics

- 4.1. Due to time constraints, Cllr Crisp gave a quick introduction to the topic. There is a huge amount of plastic waste that gets into the environment every year and there is increasing evidence of the harmful impact of plastics and 'forever chemicals' within the human body as well as in animals. As individuals, we can try to influence the production of plastic through our choices and changing our behaviour. Cllr Crisp has signed up to Plastic Free July <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/> and there is a great quiz and a lot of resources on their website. Throughout July, Cllr Crisp can update on his progress and the challenges of going plastic-free. Finally, Cllr Crisp noted that there was a lot that the CCF can do as a group and with communities. For example, CCF could campaign for a free water refill point in Tonbridge around the sportsground, and we could work with Parishes planning on summer events, school or village fairs to include a 'single-use plastic-free picnic' or to make the whole event single-use plastic free.
- 4.2. Fran Long (FL) raised the point that TMBC has to commit to reducing plastic as well. She raised the challenge of accessing water refills at the leisure sites in Tonbridge, although these are now run by tmactive rather than the council.

Action: CS to reach out to tmactive to encourage action on plastics and free water refills at all their leisure sites.

- 4.3. The Chair welcomed the discussion and agreed with the importance of reducing plastics and making as little plastic as possible. This item will be carried forward to the next meeting as a substantial item, including actions that the CCF can take forwards.

Action: CS to follow up with TMBC comms to promote Cllr Crisp's experience of Plastic Free July and further ideas for promotion.

5. Roundtable updates from representatives

5.1. Due to time constraints there were no updates at this meeting.

6. Future agenda items & next meeting.

6.1. Plastics will be discussed in more depth at the next meeting, including specific actions for the CCF to take forwards.

Action all: Send agenda items for July to Gill Fox.

7. AOB

7.1. None.

8. The meeting closed.

Annex: Attendees to 29 April 2025 meeting

Attendees

Cllr Robin Betts (Chair)
Cllr Steve Crisp (Cllr Crisp)
Cllr Anita Oakley (Cllr Oakley)
Cllr Kim Tanner (Cllr Tanner)
Gill Fox (GF)
Carrie Spencer (CS)
Dr Tom Shelley (TS)
Jennifer Bate (JB)
Fran Long (FL)
Sarah Barker (SB)
Guy Nevill (GN)
Helen Longley (Faith sector)

Apologies

Cllr Frani Hoskins (FH)
Cllr Mike Taylor (MT)
Cllr Paul Hickmott
Derek Whitehead (Medway Valley Countryside Partnership)
Chris Lydon (Education representative)
Mario Caccamo (East Malling Research)
Tudor Price (Kent Chamber of Commerce)