



West Bergholt Parish Council - The Climate Emergency Working Party and motion to the Council

Statement from the Chair of the Working Party and proposal for the endorsement of a motion

“that this council believes that a Climate Emergency should be declared and that the Parish Council will take action either through its own work or in conjunction with others in the parish to cut carbon emissions, mitigate the effects of global warming and improve natural environments all in the wider interests of future generations”

Last year following December’s Planning Meeting we had the first Climate Emergency Working Party meeting. *Minutes are available.*

As we are aware the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow, ended with a global agreement to accelerate action on climate change this decade.

I am of the view that climate action simply cannot wait - it is the responsibility of every organisation and resident in Essex to do its part to help ensure the County has a bright and green future”. *Extract from Essex Climate Action Commission Interim Report.*

Around 75% of councils have declared a Climate Emergency. Colchester Borough Council voted unanimously to declare a climate emergency back in July 2019 and has since followed this up by developing a Climate Emergency Action Plan in January 2020.

Many Parish, District, Unitary and County Councils including Tollesbury Parish Council, Feering Parish Council, Felsted Parish, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford, Southend, Thurrock, Ipswich, Babergh, East Suffolk, and West Suffolk Council have already declared a climate emergency.

West Bergholt is a forward-thinking quality Parish Council.

The Climate Emergency Working Party (CEWP) has already taken a lead, and at the initial meeting we agreed that the WBPC should also declare a **Climate Emergency**.

The vote is to be based on your own current views on global warming and how we may stimulate or take direct action on carbon reduction. Rather than a long debate, there will be an opportunity for each Cllr to prepare and deliver a short supporting or opposing view on the proposed motion. We all recognise that the climate is changing in varying degrees all of which will be discussed, at future CEWP meetings. The Working Party will be expanded to include representatives from the wider community including prominent village organisations and a workshop will be held when all will be welcome similar to how the Parish Plan and Neighbourhood Plan was inaugurated.

As an organisation we have two roles: firstly, to look at ways in which we can reduce our own carbon footprint and in this respect the Parish Clerk is enthusiastically looking into day-to-day aspects and is already looking at ways to stop the use of plastics. We need to address LED lighting and better insulation to our buildings too. However, the PC has a wider leadership role to help other organisations and individuals to examine ways that each can similarly cut their carbon footprints. The Working Party has drawn up some Terms of Reference and is adopting the outline strategy from the County Council’s Commission <https://www.essex.gov.uk/climate-action> and is plumbed into discussions led by the EALC.

Parish Councillors will of course be aware that there is International and National initiatives that are fundamental to making progress and may wonder what a small PC can do. In this respect it is important to look at outcomes from local initiatives that the PC may be able to bring about. Here we are thinking about ideas that not only play their role in cutting carbon or reducing its effects, but actually improving our natural environments (especially given the huge deterioration in landscapes and wildlife ecologies stemming from recent decades of poor husbandry). And then there is the need to reduce our consumption of energy from fossil fuels given the effects of energy price increases.

Therefore, as Chairman of the working party I am proposing a motion to the Council - I would like to propose that WBPC should declare a **“Climate Emergency”** as worded above so that the Working Party can move forward with credibility, confidence and assurance of future ongoing support.