

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Climate Change Policy

Policy Number 80		
Issue No.	Date completed	Details of amendments
1	27.07.2021	Draft prepared for Climate Change Working Group
2	06.12.2021	Policy adopted by Full Council

1.0. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy details the background and manner in which Uckfield Town Council is managing its contribution to climate change.

2.0. Background

- 2.1 Uckfield Town Council resolved to support a motion put forward in August 2019, which sought to support the Climate Emergency declared by Wealden District Council.

Details of the Full Council meeting are listed below:

“TO CONSIDER A MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PAUL SPARKS

Councillor P. Sparks informed members that scientific evidence was now fairly clear in suggesting that we were experiencing global warming. Last month was the warmest month in some years, and something had to be done to slow the speed of warming. Some may argue that we have left it too late.

Wealden District Council had recently passed a motion to become carbon neutral by 2050 and they felt that parish and town councils could play a key role. In the motion it mentioned electric vehicles but he understood that it may not be possible for this to happen at this time. A comment had also been put forward on social media to suggest the planting of more trees in the town. Councillor P. Sparks suggested that a working party be set up within the Town Council to address these issues.

The Town Clerk confirmed that it would not be possible to look at electric vehicles at present, as the infrastructure would need to be in place such as electric charging points, to enable the grounds staff to move freely around the town. The Town Clerk also noted that working parties were not always effective and low interest led to office staff delivering the majority of the work. She therefore advised that this should be re-considered.

A lengthy debate took place whilst all members put their views forward. In summary the comments included:

- *the need to find out what Wealden DC planned to do, before we commenced work;*
- *often members felt that there were double standards – i.e. Wealden DC signing up to a Climate Emergency but enabling a large number of trees to be felled as part of a development in Crowborough;*
- *electric vehicles were expensive, so for now when purchasing new vehicles we should make sure they were the most efficient and do a bit more research when purchasing items;*
- *some felt ‘emergency’ was too strong a phrase, some felt that it was an understatement;*
- *questioned whether Wealden District Council had considered placing solar panels on their new builds and were they going to help parishes with funding towards the campaign?*

- reference was made to the previous campaign Agenda 21 – act global, think local – the importance of leading from the grass roots
- if a working group was set up – to keep things small, realistic and achievable, and most importantly take account of what people can afford in this area;
- a suggestion was made that the tree planting could be linked to the 75th Anniversary of VE day in 2020 to plant a tree for every soldier from Uckfield;
- by supporting the motion more pressure could be placed on Wealden DC;
- need to consider resources local to Uckfield. There were three water mills along the River Uck (two in Uckfield, one in Isfield), these could be refurbished to generate power.

Further to the debate, an amendment was proposed to the existing motion to include the proposal to set up a working party.

The new motion with amendment read “Uckfield Town Council will support the Climate Emergency declared by Wealden District Council and will examine measures to reduce emissions including replacing motorised vehicles with electric powered ones wherever possible, through the setting up of a working party.”

FC.42.08.19 With eleven votes out of 15 in favour of the amended motion, and two members abstaining, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the motion “to support the Climate Emergency declared by Wealden District Council and examine measures to reduce emissions including replacing motorised vehicles with electric powered ones wherever possible, through the setting up of a working party.”

3.0 Working towards becoming “plastic-free”

3.1 Since this time, Uckfield Town Council has helped Uckfield work towards becoming “plastic free” with the installation of a water cooler at the Civic Centre to encourage people to utilise their own water bottles rather than purchasing plastic bottles one-off. This led the Town Council to register with the national “refill scheme” and is listed as one of many organisations now in the town:

<https://www.refill.org.uk/>

3.2 The Town Council has also been working hard to reduce the use of single-use plastic within the Civic Centre and Luxfords Restaurant with changes in refuse collections, changes in refuse bags used within the Civic Centre, and changes in the restaurant to products used every day (event beakers, straws, sauces, etc) supporting the town’s plastic free working group with their initial campaigns.

3.3 In May 2019, Uckfield Town Council also stated its support for the local town campaign and more specifically the ‘Surfers Against Sewage’ objectives.

“TO CONFIRM SUPPORT TOWARDS THE TOWN’S PLASTIC FREE CAMPAIGN AND SPECIFICALLY THE SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE OBJECTIVES FOR A PLASTIC FREE COMMUNITY

Members were provided with an update on the work of Brighter Uckfield, voluntary support within the town and Town Council staff to start up a Plastic Free campaign in Uckfield.

Members were advised that in the region of 20 volunteers had come forward to support the campaign following information sessions at the end of March 2019, and the group were keen to deliver the Surfers against Sewage Plastic Free Community Toolkit and set up a Refill campaign in Uckfield. In order to support these initiatives, the Town Council was asked to confirm its commitment to the project.

FC24.05.19 Members *RESOLVED* to:

- (i) to note the report;*
- (ii) to note the objectives of the Surfers against Sewage Plastic Free Community Toolkit and confirm Uckfield Town Council’s commitment to supporting the journey to make Uckfield a Plastic Free Community, and;*
- (iii) in line with the Surfers against Sewage Plastic Free Toolkit, to continue to lead by example by removing single-use plastic items from the Town Council’s premises and support local campaigns and events.”*

4.0 Climate Change Working Group

4.1 The Climate Change Working Group first met on 25 September 2019.

They were particularly keen to look at two areas initially:

- (i) how Uckfield Town Council can adapt and improve its carbon neutral workings;
- (ii) for Uckfield Town Council to be an influencer and role model and develop ideas to be a focus for the town to encourage local residents and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, and develop and improve their carbon neutral practices.

4.2 This would involve arranging Climate Change EXPOs to promote green technology and initiatives to local residents and businesses. It also encouraged councillors to start reviewing how we could better manage land for nature. This included considering river walks and extensions of the Hempstead Meadows Local Nature Reserve along with the possibility of creating a community garden elsewhere in the town.

5.0 Managing land for nature

5.1 Uckfield Town Council’s Tree Policy was updated in November 2019 to introduce a ‘Tree for Tree scheme,’ whereby if a tree had to be removed due to being dead, dying or decaying, a new tree would be sought and planted in a suitable location, whether it be in the vicinity of the same location, or a more appropriate location across the town, on Uckfield town Council Land.

5.2 In 2020/21, 277 trees were planted on Town Council land. Plans are underway for further planting in the winter of 2021/22.

6.0 Measuring our carbon footprint

- 6.1 Uckfield Town Council commissioned specialists to undertake a carbon footprint audit carried out for the period January 2020 – December 2020. This survey involved reviewing utility and vehicle information, such as Gas and electricity supplies, Biomass, supply & waste water, town refuse, town streetlighting and company vehicles.
- 6.2 The survey was carried out across the following buildings –
- Civic Centre;
 - Foresters Hall;
 - Victoria Pavilion;
 - West Park Pavilion;
- 6.3 The survey took into consideration fuel consumption from the following vehicles and equipment:
- Tractor;
 - Ford Transit;
 - Ford Ranger;
 - Vauxhall Movano;
 - Grounds power tools (chain saws/Brushcutters etc);
- 6.4 The Town Council's footprint total was 90.2 tonnes of carbon. This was carried out during nine months of a pandemic where the majority of staff were at home and buildings were closed for some of this time. This survey did not take into account other Town Council owned buildings which are leased out such as – Signal Box, Osborn Hall, Ridgewood Village Hall, Snatts Road Chapels. It did also not have consideration for staff commuting distances to work, and their mode of travel.

7.0 Our priorities

- 7.1 This report provides a good baseline upon which to make progress, and Uckfield Town Council should use the results of the carbon audit upon which to set out a clear action plan, and make progress towards our overall aim:

<p>“For Uckfield Town Council to work towards a target of net zero by 2050, in line with the UK Government”</p>

- 7.2 Focus will be given to the following areas, in line with recommendations by the Centre for Sustainable Energy:
- (i) Managing issues within Uckfield Town Council's direct control (land/property);
 - (ii) Managing issues within procurement (consideration given to service provision and contractor arrangements);
 - (iii) Managing land for nature and minimising waste;
 - (iv) Place shaping – educating and engaging the community;
- 7.3 The action plan overleaf will assist the Town Council in reducing emissions and assisting the town's biodiversity:

8.0 Action Plan

8.1

Area of focus	Actions
Direct control	Ensure annual savings are put aside to work towards specific action plans for the Town council's buildings which seek to reduce individual building carbon footprints i.e. solar panels, replacing boilers at end of life with heat source pumps, replacement of existing lighting to LED lighting etc Est £8,500pa
	Change utility suppliers to 100% green energy
	Replace vehicles at end of life with hybrid or electric where available
Procurement	Continue rolling replacement of old street lights with new LED
	When reviewing tenders consider organisations' commitments to climate change and sustainability
Minimising waste	Reduce use of paper within office administration with a move to digitalised bookings and purchase order/invoicing procedures
Managing land for nature	Continue tree for a tree scheme and continue planting trees
	Replace fences with hedges around the town as and when required/applicable
Place-shaping	Organisation of a Climate Change EXPO 2022 for residents and local businesses to learn about green technologies and initiatives
	Develop the Green Partnership with key stakeholders for Uckfield

- 8.2 This policy recommends for Uckfield Town Council to carry out the carbon footprint survey every three to five years to monitor progress and include items omitted from the 2021 survey, as outlined in para. 3.2.