

# Blockley Parish Council Draft Climate and Ecological Action Plan, October 2021

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A paper setting out proposed actions for Blockley Parish Council, to address the Climate and Ecological Emergencies following a commitment to take action that was made in February 2021. Adopted by Blockley Parish Council 21/10/21.

## Acknowledgements

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## Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
Contents .....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Background to Climate Emergency .....	2
3. Background to Ecological Emergency.....	2
4. Climate change and ecological decline is a local issue.....	3
5. The role of local councils and their potential levers of influence .....	4
6. BPC’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration of 18/02/21 .....	6
7. Climate Actions.....	7
8. Ecological Actions.....	13

## 1. Introduction

Climate change is affected by everything we do. The Parish Council has committed itself to creating an Action Plan to address the climate and ecological emergency. The Parish Council cannot achieve net Zero alone and collaboration with residents, businesses and neighbouring parish councils is essential. There are some measures we can take in our own activities that will both have some – limited – effect and set an example and allow the Parish Council to take an active role in encouraging and enabling others to act.

This document serves as a first draft of a Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan, intended to be shared with the wider community as part of a consultation process. All feedback on the proposed actions (Sections 7 and 8) is very welcome and an online questionnaire will be available on the evening of 23<sup>rd</sup> September, following a consultation event at the Jubilee Hall. You can contact the clerk on 01386 701 602 for a paper copy of the questionnaire if needed.

Sections 2 and 3 present some background to the Climate and Ecological Emergency respectively and

Section 4 addresses why these emergencies are relevant to our community, beyond any ethical argument about our responsibility to address these issues.

Section 5 details the pledge to act, made by Blockley Parish Council when we declared a Climate Emergency in February 2021 and Section 6 explores the role a parish council can play in addressing climate change and ecological decline. Sections 7 and 8 tabulate proposed actions relating to first the Climate Emergency and then the Ecological Emergency. The tables include a summary of why the actions are important and what might be delivered i.e. what success looks like for each action proposed. Deadlines for completing the actions, or in some cases the first steps towards completing the actions, are also included and the intention is to review the plan annually and adapt and update it as actions are completed or progressed.

The following acronyms are used in the remainder of this document:

- BPC – Blockley Parish Council
- CDC – Cotswold District Council
- GCC – Gloucestershire County Council
- ESGW – Environmental Sustainability Working Group (a Blockley Parish Council working group)

## 2. Background to Climate Emergency

Since November 2018, hundreds of local authorities, parish and town councils have passed declarations of a Climate Emergency, and in July 2019 the UK's target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 was enshrined in law (tightening the previous legally binding commitment to achieve an 80% reduction on 1990 levels by the same date). In the same month, Cotswold District Council (CDC) unanimously declared a Climate Emergency, and in July 2020 declared an Ecological Emergency. Blockley Parish Council (BPC) declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and committed to act, in February 2021. The global Climate Emergency has received unprecedented levels of nationwide media and public attention in recent years, and awareness and a desire for change remains high.

In September 2020 CDC adopted its Climate Emergency Strategy, which acknowledges that to reduce emissions at the level of the district, close cooperation between all layers of government, all economic actors and all citizens is needed. The Parish and Town Council Climate Emergency Action Planning session held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020 was CDC's first step in widening participation in the collective, district-wide objective of reducing emissions.

Both the national target and the Committee on Climate Change models that underpin it, show that a step change in both pace and scale of change is needed. Central to any net-zero trajectory, whether at the national, local or parish scale, is the recognition that more than a third of carbon emissions come from buildings, with a similar proportion from both transport and individual consumption. Personal choices, local policy, infrastructure investment, and their effect on the environment, are once again in the limelight.

All levels of government will need to be involved in supporting the rapid transition to a zero-carbon economy. Town and parish councils have a unique position through which they can stimulate grassroots action, set a leadership example and provide a local, accountable focal point for practical action on the climate emergency.

## 3. Background to Ecological Emergency

Our environment has changed significantly. Three-quarters of the land-based environment and about two

thirds of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions<sup>1</sup>. The effects on wildlife have been global: 60% of the world's wild animals have been lost since 1970 and 83% of wildlife in freshwater rivers and lakes<sup>2</sup>. The rate of biodiversity loss is accelerating.

One in seven species in the UK is now at risk of extinction; the effects are felt at national and local scales. Here in Blockley Parish, long-term residents recall wildflowers and wildlife that are no longer commonplace. Declines include much-loved and once-common species such as house sparrows, swifts, starlings, and hedgehogs. Populations of starlings and swifts have declined by 96% between 1994 and 2014 in the West of England region and populations of linnets declined by 80% in the same period<sup>3</sup>. An alarming 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows have been destroyed since the 1930's. According to the Mammal Society, hedgehogs have experienced an estimated decline of approximately 66% since 1995.

Nature has been adversely affected by human activity: industrial agriculture, land conversion, hunting, pollution and pesticides are the primary drivers of wildlife decline - and climate change is beginning to play a significant role too.

The foundation blocks of our ecosystems are at risk. Insects are a vital component of our ecosystem and play an essential role in food production through pollination services. In the UK, populations of butterflies fell by 46% between 1976 and 2017, and 23 bee and flower-visiting wasp species have gone extinct since 1850<sup>4</sup>.

The Environment Agency report "The state of the environment: soil" (2019) details the threats to soil biodiversity. Soil holds three times as much carbon as the atmosphere, it reduces the risk of flooding by absorbing water, it is a wildlife habitat, and it delivers 95% of global food supplies. Unfortunately, it is a limited resource under pressure from climate change, population growth, urban development, waste, pollution, and the demand for more (and cheaper) food.

Soil biodiversity and the many biological processes and soil functions that it supports are also thought to be under threat. Intensive agriculture has caused arable soils to lose about 40 to 60% of their organic carbon; food waste and growing crops for bioenergy are putting additional pressure on soils as well as erosion and compaction. Microplastics are widespread in soil with unknown consequences. This issue needs to be addressed for human health and wellbeing in addition to safeguarding the innate value of the flora and fauna of our ecosystem.

#### 4. Climate change and ecological decline is a local issue

CDC's Climate Emergency Strategy, adopted in September 2020, clearly sets out the imperative for action and the document can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4f62ttj>. It provides an introduction to the climate science, the national and international policy background, and the scale and pace of changes needed.

In addition to our responsibility as individuals, communities, and nations to take action to address the global impacts of climate change, there are local drivers for change. Local impacts of climate change such as intensifying cycles of drought and flooding and changes to biodiversity are already a reality impacting the local community. Young people, farming communities, and vulnerable groups like the elderly or

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/living-planet-report-2018>

<sup>3</sup> Data from <https://bristolnats.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.somersetwildlife.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/FULL%20OAF%20REPORT%20WEB%20BL1.pdf>

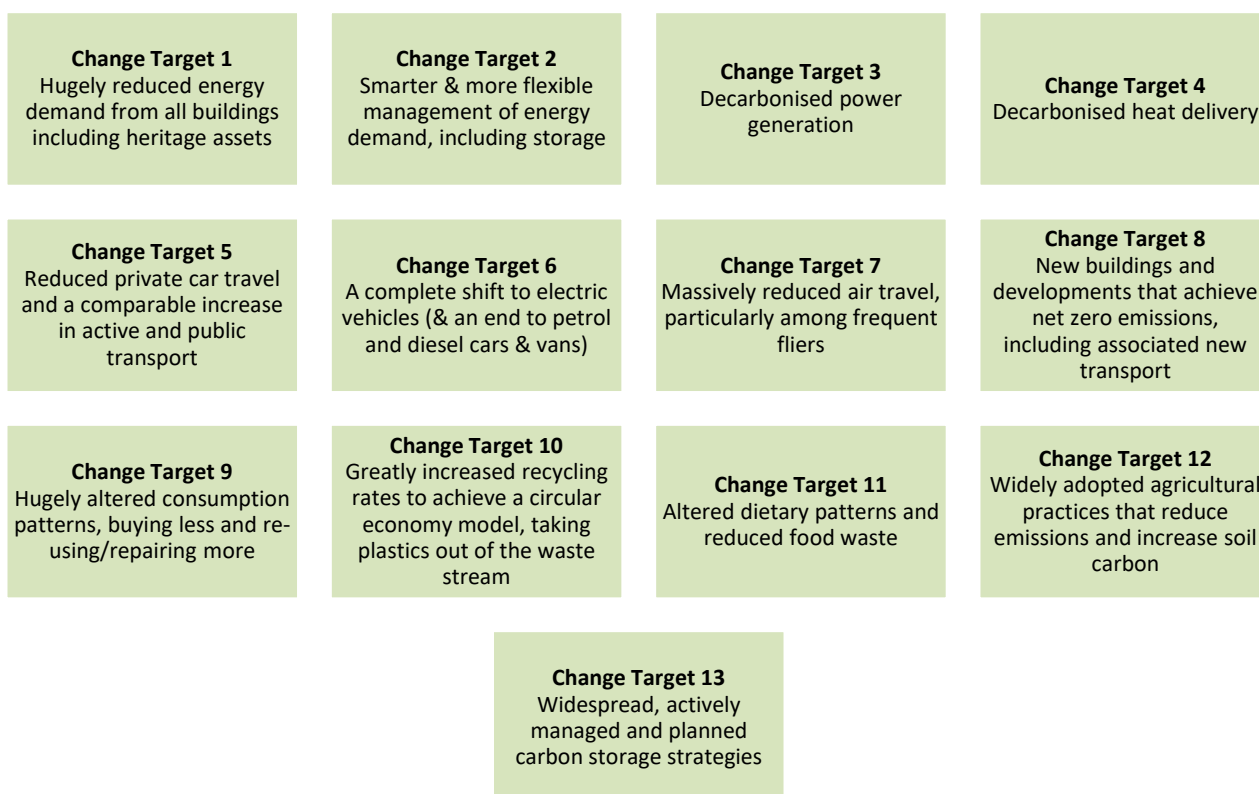
economically disadvantaged, are likely to be disproportionately impacted by local impacts such as flooding or national policy changes as they face, for example, increased insurance premiums, localised decreases in house prices, decreased farming yields, fuel and food poverty, and increased essential travel costs as a result of carbon taxes.

Ecosystem Services provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

The DEFRA Biodiversity Strategy (2020) sets out the current situation: the UK’s ecosystems are currently delivering some services well, but others are still in long-term decline. 30% of the services we get from the UK’s ecosystems are in decline and population growth and climate change are likely to increase pressures on ecosystem services in future.

### 5. The role of local councils and their potential levers of influence

There are clear ‘Change Targets’ that we must achieve as a society to reach a zero-carbon economy between 2030 and 2050 (necessary if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate change). BPC need to use our levers of influence to work towards these targets, wherever possible. The change targets are identified as follows:



**Figure 1:** Change targets

The spheres of influence potentially available to Town and Parish Councils are summarised in Figure 2 below. BPC have limited opportunities for action with regards to direct control, and procurement and commissioning but can take action around place-shaping, showcasing, convening and engaging.



**Figure 2:** Spheres of influence available to Town and Parish Councils

## 6. BPC's Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration of 18/02/21

In February 2021, Blockley Parish Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, noting that:

- *The global position on climate change is clear: the world has already reached around 1°C of post-industrial warming; extreme weather events happening now can be attributed with confidence to warming at this scale, and the impacts of climate breakdown are already causing serious damage around the world.*
- *In a business-as-usual world, reaching global warming of 4°C by 2100, significant and systemic impacts will occur, against which the effect of adaptation actions will be limited. The UK faces damaging local impacts related to extreme heat, water shortages, sea level rise, and global impacts such as food price shocks and greatly increased migratory pressures.*
- *The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5°C special report (2018) demonstrates that, with ambitious action, limiting climate change impacts to 1.5°C may still be possible.*
- *All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to act, and to lead change on the ground. The urgency of the situation is such that local governments that recognise this, must not wait for their national governments to change their policies.*
- *Strong policies to cut emissions will have a wide range of associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits that will improve the quality of life for our residents.*
- *It is no longer adequate to think of biodiversity losses as a potential future threat but rather it must now be treated as a real and present issue that needs addressing to avoid mass extinctions and irreversible changes to the provision of ecosystem services.*

### **Council therefore commits to:**

1. *Declare a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency' that requires urgent and comprehensive action.*
2. *Establish and support an Environmental Sustainability Committee*
3. *Produce, in collaboration with the wider community, a Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.*
4. *Embed Climate and Ecological emergency considerations in all work areas and decision-making processes.*

## 7. Climate Actions

Table 1 sets out the actions Blockley Parish Council proposes to take in relation to the Climate Emergency.

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
C1	Ensure that the Climate Emergency is embedded in all work areas and decision-making processes.	To ensure that BPC decisions and actions do not have a negative impact on the climate and that opportunities to reduce carbon emissions within the Parish are exploited wherever possible.	Climate change considerations are incorporated into BPC policies.  Environmental sustainability features as a regular agenda item at monthly BPC meetings.  Annual review of ESWG activities and the Climate and Ecological Action Plan, once adopted.	Ongoing but any additions to existing policies to be incorporated at the Annual Meeting, May 2022. Climate and Ecological Action Plan to be adopted by Nov 2022.
C2	Review of Council procurement and practices.	There may be simple ways to reduce BPC's carbon footprint by introducing small changes to the way we work. The use of file sharing has already been identified as an opportunity which will also improve the efficiency of BPC work. This is currently being implemented (September 2021).	Identify where 'business as usual' could be conducted in a way that reduces carbon emissions. This could include switching bank accounts, supporting councillors to make the most of file-sharing etc.	Review of any practices that could be adjusted to be completed by May 2022 and agreed changes implemented by Nov 2022.
C3	Take an active role in tackling the Climate Emergency in the Parish, working with, influencing and inspiring partners across the Parish to work towards net zero <sup>5</sup> .	BPC can use its local knowledge and trusted voice to support partners working to tackle climate change and help normalise the need to strive for net zero or zero emissions <sup>6</sup> .	Support/promote CDC and other partner initiatives.  Connect with other parish councils to support the creation and implementation of climate and ecological action plans.	Ongoing as opportunities arise.
C4	Respond to consultations, and support/promote Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council policies that address the Ecological Emergency and nature recovery (e.g. updating the Cotswold Design Guide).	Using our role as a consultee, BPC can seek strong policies that address the Climate Emergency.	Consistently responding to CDC/GCC consultations and other feedback requests with climate change considerations incorporated in responses.  Consistently signposting parishioners to CDC/GCC consultations relevant to climate change.	Ongoing as opportunities arise.

<sup>5</sup> Net zero refers to a state in which the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere. The term net zero is important because – for CO2 at least – this is the state at which global warming stops.

<sup>6</sup> No greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to an actor's activities across all scopes. Under this definition, no offsets or balancing of residual emissions with removals are used.

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
C5	Use our role as a consultee to the local planning authority to seek strong policies in the Local Plan requiring the highest possible standards of energy efficiency for new housing and other buildings. Sites allocated for new housing should also be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport (and avoid loss of local nature sites and green spaces).	It's essential that new housing and buildings are energy efficient to meet existing carbon targets. Consideration at the design and planning stages will also protect residents from the need for expensive retrofits in the future.	Respond to consultations expressing support for strong policies in the Local Plan, requiring the highest possible standards of energy efficiency for new housing and other buildings.	Ongoing as opportunities arise
C6	Use our communication channels e.g. noticeboards, website and social media to support and promote initiatives led by national and regional organisations (including Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council) that address the Climate Emergency and signpost parishioners to resources that support a transition to net zero or zero carbon lifestyles (e.g. accredited businesses, local organic options, organisations with expertise e.g. Energy Savings Trust etc.).	BPC lacks resources to offer one to one support to parishioners wishing to explore and implement lifestyle changes but could use our trusted ESG voice to share national and regional opportunities and signpost to other sources of information; helping to normalise behaviour change and to support parishioners.	<p>Creation of an ESG page on BPC website that signposts relevant opportunities and campaigns.</p> <p>Creation of an ESG mailing list to share news and information monthly.</p> <p>Signposting relevant initiatives to parishioners via the BPC social media channels and noticeboards.</p>	<p>Signposting ongoing.</p> <p>Creation of a web page and mailing list to be completed by April 2022.</p>



Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
C7	Signpost residents to resources supporting low-carbon, energy-saving retrofit of existing houses.	Reducing the energy consumption of the existing housing stock is central to the achievement of emissions reduction, but it will be difficult and will cost money. BPC can promote schemes and reliable sources of information to support residents. E.g. support to access the government schemes.	<p>Creation of an ESWG page on BPC website that signposts relevant retrofit opportunities and support.</p> <p>Creation of an ESWG mailing list to share news and information monthly.</p> <p>Signposting relevant initiatives to parishioners via the BPC social media channels and noticeboards.</p>	<p>Signposting ongoing.</p> <p>Creation of a web page and mailing list to be completed by April 2022.</p>
C8	Seek and exploit funding opportunities to implement measures to address the Climate Emergency, including through developer contributions, particularly where co-benefits have been identified.	Increasingly, grants and funding opportunities are available to address the climate emergency and BPC could access funding streams (either directly or partnering with other groups and organisations) when suitable projects are identified.	Identification of one or more suitable projects and initiation of a funding application(s) to support them.	Potential project list completed by May 2022 with funding applications in process by September 2022.
C9	Creation of EV charging points for residents and visitors.	The move to electric vehicles is an essential part of decarbonising road transport, alongside the equally important change to active travel (cycling and walking). Many parishioners do not have access to off-street parking suitable for installing an EV charge point. This necessitates the provision of on-street charging if these residents are not to be disadvantaged in the move to electric vehicles. Whilst decisions about direct investment in on-street charging infrastructure are the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council (the highways authority), there is a role for parish and town councils (as well as CDC) in identifying areas of greatest need for on-street EV charging, as well as identifying locations where parish council or community land and buildings may be suitable for EV charging. One possibility for BPC could be St George's Hall car park.	<p>At least 2 EV charging points located in the Parish. Possibly St Georges Hall car park.</p> <p>On street vehicle charging, where possible.</p> <p>Sharing examples of successful resident EV charge point share schemes.</p>	<p>Seek support from the Energy Savings Trust on St Georges' Hall proposal by December 2021.</p> <p>Discuss plans for on-street charging points with GCC January 2022.</p> <p>Research EV charge point sharing schemes by December 2021.</p> <p>Installation of 2 or more EV charging points in the Parish by May 2022.</p>

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
C10	Promote tree/woodland/hedgerow planting and re-wilding in the right places and with the right species to maximise wildlife value, carbon sequestration and other benefits, in line with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership strategy <sup>7</sup> .	In addition to the ecological benefits of planting trees (in the right places), the trees sequester carbon and can, in some instances, mitigate climate change impacts e.g. flooding.	Identify and publicise initiatives and grants to aid purchase of suitable trees/hedgerows.  ESWG and volunteers to provide practical support with tree/hedgerow planting.  Support and publicise events organised by community groups that wish to plant trees or promote the planting of trees.	Research current opportunities for free or low-cost trees and share via BPC communication channels by May 2022.  ESWG to organise at least one community group planting by November 2022.
C11	Facilitate bulk switching of electricity supply to 100% 'true renewable' tariffs.	Local Authorities have successfully run bulk switching campaigns in the past, in various locations. The aim has generally been to save residents money by overcoming market inertia and moving residents to the cheapest available tariff that nonetheless has good customer service. Bulk switching campaigns have generally been aimed at 'fuel poor' households and have not focused on the 'green credentials' of suppliers, and have not tried to demystify the complex, significant differences between electricity supply offers which are all labelled as 'green' or '100% renewable'. There is an opportunity for BPC, to collaborate with interested parish and town councils and other organisations concerned to take practical action on the climate, to objectively identify electricity supply tariffs that make a meaningful difference to the speed of investment in renewable generation, and to promote the uptake of those supply offers across the parish.	Bulk switching partners and opportunities identified and offered/trialled with BPC residents.	Bulk switch trialled by November 2022.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/our-strategy>

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
C12	Support groups seeking to establish Community Energy projects.	Community energy businesses have been formed in many parts of the country and have successfully raised capital from both local residents (often in the form of 'community shares') as well as commercial sources, to invest in new renewable energy generation, from solar PV on school roofs to large ground-mounted solar farms to wind and hydro power. Community energy businesses are typically a form of co-operative which are not-for-profit distribution and democratically governed. Investments have paid interest to community investors and often provided valuable sums to local social causes. There is a role for BPC, in supporting community renewable generation by actively seeking opportunities on land and buildings, for the installation of new renewable energy technologies and promoting any scheme that becomes established.	Facilitate the identification of one or more potential community energy projects and explore feasibility.	Identify one or more potential community energy projects or partners by November 2022.
C13	Support the creation of car clubs or lift sharing schemes.	By convening local businesses and car-sharing schemes, such as the social enterprise Liftshare, it's possible to help local people reduce the carbon pollution from car use, save money and foster new friendships. Lift-sharing may often be a solution for people when public transport, cycling or walking to work isn't. Car-sharing schemes for non-commuting journeys should also be promoted and this could be promoted for Blockley School children who do not live within walking distance of school, helping alleviate traffic and parking issues associated with the start and finish of the school day.	Facilitate a trial car-sharing group or scheme.	Assess interest and identify opportunities or example schemes by May 2022 and trial a scheme by Nov 2022.
C14	Encourage and enable cycling/walking	In addition to tackling carbon emissions from travel, active travel provides health and wellbeing benefits for parishioners.	Working with GCC and partners to improve cycling/walking routes between parish and neighbouring towns and villages.  Promoting and signposting schemes to support purchase of bikes or electric bikes.	Review of opportunities to improve cycling routes completed by Nov 2022.  Review of existing schemes complete Dec 2021 and information added to ESWG website pages by April 2022.

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
C15	Work with GCC, CDC and other partners to improve public transport for the Parish.	Transport is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK and the emissions are rising. While technical measures are necessary, they are not sufficient to address the problem alone and climate scientists warn we must make substantial changes to our behaviour, including driving less. BPC has limited control over public transport but could explore initiatives like an electric bus with app-based ordering, to remove the need for private car ownership. This could work in partnership with Moreton Town Council or others and has the potential to support other BPC goals too: improving public transport in the Parish would reduce isolation, improve access to services and open employment opportunities for parishioners who don't drive cars, for example.	Complete a feasibility study and develop/provide input into a public transport action plan.	Complete feasibility study by Nov 2022.
C16	Raise awareness of individual and collective carbon footprints.	There is a disconnect between a general interest in doing "more" to address climate change and understanding our individual impacts and what we need to do to reduce them to meet targets. Much work has already been done to create tools to help raise awareness and motivate behaviour change and BPC could readily signpost residents to them and share our collective impact.	Utilise existing tools to estimate the carbon footprint of the Parish.  Signpost tools to estimate household carbon footprints.	Incorporate signposting into ESWG web page by April 2022 and publish collective impact by May 2022.
C17	Support national and regional organisations' work with farmers and other rural land managers to support the move towards lower carbon emission farming and other actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change (while at the same time increasing natural capital and providing additional ecosystems services benefits).	BPC lacks resources to support farmers and landowners directly but could proactively develop relationships with farmers and landowners and support/share examples of best practice or success stories.	Share opportunities for parishioners to support farming/land management practices that increase natural capital and provide additional ecosystems services benefits within the Parish.  ESWG to convene events to share knowledge and/or showcase local examples of best practice or success stories.	ESWG event by November 2022

## 8. Ecological Actions

Table 2 sets out the actions Blockley Parish Council proposes to take in relation to the Ecological Emergency.

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
E1	Ensure that Ecological Emergency and nature recovery considerations are embedded in all work areas and decision-making processes.	To ensure that BPC decisions and actions do not have a negative impact on biodiversity and that opportunities to benefit habitats and species within the parish are exploited wherever possible.	Environmental sustainability is incorporated into BPC policies.  Environmental sustainability features as a regular agenda item at monthly BPC meetings.  Annual review of ESWG activities and the Climate and Ecological Action Plan.	Ongoing but any additions to existing policies to be incorporated at the Annual Meeting, May 2022.
E2	Put ecological issues at the heart of the Council's actions for the climate emergency and ensure that opportunities to gain mutual benefits for both the climate and the Ecological Emergencies are maximised.	To ensure any BPC actions to reduce carbon emissions or support parishioners' reduction of carbon emissions do not have a negative impact on biodiversity and that opportunities to gain mutual benefits (climate and ecological) are maximised wherever possible.	Adoption of Climate <b>and Ecological</b> Emergency Action Plan in addition to measures of success listed for E1.	Adoption of Climate and Ecological Action Plan in 2021.
E3	Take an active role on Ecological Emergency and nature recovery in the Parish, working with, influencing and inspiring partners across the Parish to help deliver nature recovery. This includes collaborating with the partner organisations within the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, such as the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the Cotswolds Conservation Board, the Woodland Trust, the National Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records.	To ensure BPC draws on the available expertise and support of established organisations and optimises any BPC efforts by working collaboratively with other partners taking action in the district and county.	Meeting with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust representatives in the Parish.  Identification of opportunities for partnership working.	Review GLNP plans and partnership activities by November 2021.  Identification of partnership opportunities ahead of budget meetings (early) 2022.

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
E4	Respond to consultations, and support/promote Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council policies that address the Ecological Emergency and nature recovery (e.g. Green Infrastructure Strategy, ecological recovery strategies and updating the Cotswold Design Guide).	Using our role as a consultee, BPC can seek strong policies that support ecological conservation and recovery.	Consistently responding to CDC/GCC consultations and other feedback requests with ecological considerations incorporated in responses.  Consistently signposting parishioners to CDC/GCC consultations relevant to ecological and biodiversity issues.	Ongoing as opportunities arise.
E5	Use our communication channels e.g. noticeboards, website and social media to support and promote initiatives led by national and regional organisations (including Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council) that address the Ecological Emergency and nature recovery and signpost parishioners to resources that support an ecologically friendly lifestyle (e.g. accredited businesses, local organic or plastic free options, organisations that provide in depth information on how to rewild a garden etc.).	BPC lacks resources to offer one to one support to parishioners wishing to explore and implement lifestyle changes but could use our trusted ESWG voice to share national and regional opportunities and signpost to other sources of information; helping to normalise behaviour change and to support parishioners.	Creation of an ESWG page on BPC website that signposts relevant opportunities and campaigns.  Creation of an ESWG mailing list to share news and information monthly.  Signposting relevant initiatives to parishioners via the BPC social media channels and noticeboards.	Signposting ongoing.  Creation of a web page and mailing list to be completed by April 2022.
E6	Use our role as a consultee to the local planning authority to seek policies and decisions that avoid loss of local nature sites and green spaces, ensure the presence of legally protected and priority species and habitats are considered within individual applications (where appropriate) and request appropriate conditions to ensure biodiversity net gains are delivered in accordance with planning policy and any legal requirements of the forthcoming Environment Bill.	Using our local knowledge, BPC can help developments of all sizes achieve biodiversity net gain and normalise a high regard for biodiversity.	Routinely review planning applications with consideration to ecological issues.  Share best practice examples, where possible.	Review cost/capacity of training councillors to review planning applications and costs for the alternative of outsourcing to a professional ecologist, ahead of budget meetings (early) 2022.
E7	Seek and exploit funding opportunities to implement measures to address the Ecological Emergency, including through developer contributions, particularly where co-benefits have been identified.	Increasingly, grants and funding opportunities are available to address the ecological emergency and BPC could access funding streams (either directly or partnering with other groups and organisations) when suitable projects are identified.	Identification of one or more suitable projects and initiation of a funding application(s) to support them.	Potential project list completed ahead of budget meetings (early) 2022 with funding applications in process by May 2022.

<sup>8</sup> As defined within Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
E8	Promote tree/woodland/hedgerow planting and re-wilding in the right places and with the right species to maximise wildlife value, carbon sequestration and other benefits, in line with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership strategy. <sup>9</sup>	Tree/hedgerow planting has the potential to support wildlife and deliver carbon benefits while generating co-benefits such as reducing flood risk and improving wellbeing for parishioners.	Planting of new trees or hedgerows in one or more areas of the parish.  ESWG to run one or more events to promote tree and hedgerow planting within the parish.	Event to be run by May 2022.  Planting of new trees or hedgerows by winter 2022/23
E9	Support national and regional organisations' work with farmers and other rural land managers to support the move towards lower carbon emission farming and other actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change while at the same time increasing natural capital and providing additional ecosystems services benefits.	BPC lacks resources to support farmers and landowners directly but could proactively develop relationships with farmers and landowners and support/share examples of best practice or success stories.	Share opportunities for parishioners to support farming/land management practices that increase natural capital and provide additional ecosystems services benefits within the Parish.  ESWG to convene events to share knowledge and/or showcase local examples of best practice or success stories.	ESWG event by November 2022
E10	Ensure that Council-owned land is managed in a biodiversity-friendly manner and that opportunities are taken to create new wildlife habitat.	While BPC does not own or manage much land, we can act as a role model for best practice when it comes to ecological considerations. Mowing regimes and the installation of bat boxes are examples of small changes that can have significant impacts on species.	Agree and implement an eco-friendly mowing regime for BPC managed land.  Installation of bat boxes on council owned land.	Mowing regime agreed ahead of maintenance contract renewal (spring 2022).  Bat box numbers and locations agreed April 2022
E11	Work with GCC to reduce frequency of roadside verge mowing in the Parish and manage them for wildflower growth (while maintaining safety at junctions etc.).	BPC do not have direct control over the Parish roadside verges but reducing the frequency of cutting can give wildflowers an opportunity to bloom and support pollinator populations. Several parishioners have expressed their support for leaving roadside verges in 2021 and there are potential money savings for GCC (and therefore parish taxpayers).	An agreement with GCC that they will mow verges less often than cut and collect arisings towards the end of the growing season.	Agreement in place by Spring 2022.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gloucestershirenature.org.uk/our-strategy>

Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
E12	Support other partners to establish an ambitious biodiversity net gain system for Gloucestershire.	Ecological decline has been dramatic in our parish and throughout the country. Ambitious biodiversity net-gain targets are needed to protect what remains and restore. BPC can use local knowledge and a trusted voice to support partners.	BPC advocating an ambitious biodiversity net gain system during consultation processes.  BPC sharing local knowledge and engaging the local community to support activities such as wildlife data collection/recording, for example.	Ongoing as opportunities arise.
E13	Review how BPC can help our natural environment become a key part of the tourism offer of the parish.	Co-benefits of ecological restoration and conservation such as revenue and employment from the tourism industry can help fund and or incentivise ecological management.	Biodiversity and our natural environment are reasons to visit the Parish.	Review opportunities by Nov 2022.
E14	Review how BPC can support the wellbeing of parishioners by enhancing connections to wildlife and biodiversity.	A connection to wildlife has been shown to create a sense of wellbeing and simple measures like maintenance of footpaths, installation of seating and information sharing can all help build a connection and shared sense of custody of our natural environment.	Links to biodiversity incorporated into in wellbeing activities/strategy for parishioners.  Additional seating and information/signposting provided if opportunities are identified.	Complete a review of footpaths (partnering with the Parish Warden) and benches by May 2022.  Research ways to share biodiversity information with parishioners, e.g. QR codes on way markers or information boards in selected locations, by November 2022.
E15	Proactively curate species records, map them to share data with parishioners and share them with Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records and parishioners.	Collating information will help focus management efforts in the most suitable areas of the Parish and inform BPC feedback on planning applications. The information can also be used to raise awareness of local biodiversity and engagement in activities to conserve or restore it.	Creation of a web-based system to capture wildlife records from the Parish  Mapped records available on the BPC website.	Web pages live by June 2022.
E16	Through the ESWG, create and/or lead a wider community group to deliver some of the Climate and Ecological Action Plan tasks and other environmental and sustainability actions in the Parish.	A wider community group can deliver activity outside the remit of the Parish Council, build a sense of community ownership and bring together supporters with a range of time and skills to contribute to the objectives of the ESWG.	Public attendance at ESWG meetings, wider community involvement in delivering against the Climate and Ecological Action Plan. Volunteer(s) secured to support the administration of the group. Host events e.g. bat walks, tree grafting workshops to engage a wider audience.	Ten ESWG meetings or events (to include members of the public) to be held before end of November 2022.



Action number	Action	Why is this important?	What does success look like?	Time frame to complete first step(s)
E17	Lead a project to provide roosting opportunities for bats.	There is a need to provide alternative roosting opportunities in the face of diminishing suitable roosting habitat in the natural environment. Ash trees provide a significant resource for roosting bat populations but are currently being lost at an increasing rate due to the impacts of Ash die back.	100 suitable bat boxes installed on trees throughout the Parish.	Funding opportunities identified by May 2022. Locations agreed by November 2022. Bat boxes installed by Spring 2023.
E18	Manage a litter-picking group and organise regular community litter-picking events.	Litter is unsightly and potentially harmful to people, pets, livestock and wildlife. Regular public participation litter picks, can act as a springboard to wider environmental action.	A group of volunteers regularly picking litter and twice-yearly community litter picks.	Group initiated but improved communications and management to be implemented by Dec 2021. Spring litter pick to tie in with the Keep Britain Tidy campaign each year plus additional annual autumn event.
E19	Stop using weedkillers including glyphosate, and other pesticides in the management of Parish Council land and encourage other land managers to do likewise.	Pesticides are having a devastating impact on invertebrate populations, including essential pollinators. There is growing evidence of a negative impact on human health from the use of herbicides like glyphosate.	Alternative methods of managing weeds employed.	Manual weeding incorporated into work breakdown of BPC staff and Contractors by May 2022.

In adopting this plan, Blockley Parish Council make a commitment to

- deliver the tabled actions in the timeframe proposed;
- evaluate the work of the ESWG and the impact of these actions wherever possible; and
- communicate how the plan is being delivered to parishioners and keep them updated on progress, through both digital and non-digital methods.