



## Char Valley Parish Council's response to the climate and ecological emergency

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- This paper sets out actions that CVPC can take in response to the climate and ecological emergency that it acknowledged in June 2019. These actions are designed to reduce our carbon emissions and our impact on the climate and environment and to help build a stronger, more resilient, thriving local community.
- It was agreed at the CVPC Parish Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and will be presented at the Public Meeting on the Climate and Ecological Emergency in March 2020, shared with BLAP and DAPTC, and submitted in response to Dorset Council's 'Call for Ideas'.
- These proposals will remain under continuous review as conditions change and as we consider priorities and time-scales.

Links to further information appear [like this](#).

### outline proposal –

[We already know](#) the planet is facing a life-threatening climate and ecological emergency. While the Char Valley may be a *relatively* good place to be for the next 20-30 years, it may also be affected in that time by changes to the [Gulf Stream](#), [melting ice caps](#), other [serious climate changes](#), or the [critical loss of pollinator insects](#) (any of which could lead to severe flooding, power outages and food supply problems).

More widely, the UK is being affected – and will inevitably be further affected – by changes elsewhere. Large-scale, [climate-led population upheavals](#) and migration will almost certainly cause significant political, economic and social disruption (think of the problems caused by relatively small-scale migration from the Middle East in the last few years). Climate-related crises (drought, forest fires, flooding, crop failures) elsewhere in the world could have serious knock-on effects. This kind of disruption could – but will not necessarily – occur in the next 2 decades.

Two responses are needed from all of us as individuals/families/communities and from local authorities:

- a) **Mitigate the worst effects of the emergency.** We all need to reduce our impact on climate and the environment in the hope that we can, collectively, avoid the most severe effects of climate change, environmental degradation and species loss.
- b) **Adapt, build resilience and prepare for major change.** We all need to prepare for inevitable social, economic and political change. In building resilient communities to face problems in the future, we can also build thriving communities that work better now.

For a **parish council**, this means that we must do three things:

- 1) Put our own house in order.**
- 2) Lead and support action by the community.**
- 3) Work to bring about change at the next layer up.**

21 detailed proposals for getting started appear on the next two pages. They draw on and combine suggestions made by other [councils](#) and [organisations](#) and our own response to the situation locally.

## 21 detailed proposals –

### a) Mitigate the worst effects of the emergency

CVPC does not own council buildings or other properties, nor does it run local transport or manage large budgets. So there is little we can do as a council to reduce carbon emissions. As a result, our main proposals concern what we can do to support the local community (b) and to encourage change at county (and even national) level (c).

1. **Put our house in order.** Continue to support local planning applications that minimise carbon emissions and other impacts on the environment/climate and actively support local farmers in their efforts to adapt to climate change and develop forms of regenerative agriculture.
  - **PROPOSAL 1:** CVPC should agree and publish a general policy on how it will respond in future to planning applications and other schemes (transport/highways/sewage) – for example, to ensure that new applications do not increase carbon emissions in the parish.
  - **PROPOSAL 2:** CVPC should actively support small and large planning applications for new renewable energy schemes in the area, *provided they meet rigorous low-carbon standards.*
2. **Lead and support action by the community.** Inform, educate and encourage everyone in the parish to reduce their impact on the climate and the environment, with advice on lifestyle choices, etc.
  - **PROPOSAL 3:** CVPC should adapt and run the [Frome Carbon Footprinting Tool](#) (used by Bridport Council and recommended by Dorset Council) to get an idea of our parish’s carbon footprint and to develop and set targets for the parish to reduce its collective carbon emissions.
  - **PROPOSAL 4:** CVPC (with neighbouring parishes) should create a ‘local green guide’ (drawing on the 52 actions model described [here](#)) to include advice for residents on reducing their carbon footprint and a guide to local suppliers and resources. This green guide can serve as an action list and resource for residents. It will need a careful assessment of how to apply current information on food consumption and production, travel, heating, etc. to the particular situation in our parishes.
3. **Work to bring about change at county level.** Working with the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, Bridport Local Area Partnership and as part of an emerging coalition of councillors across Dorset, use our collective influence to achieve changes in Dorset Council’s policy and practice on public transport, energy efficiency, pollution, verges and use of chemical insecticides, etc.
  - **PROPOSAL 5:** Press for changes to ensure that *all* planning applications are amended to minimise carbon emissions and other impacts on the environment/climate,
  - **PROPOSAL 6:** Support DC’s [Low Carbon Dorset](#) and other existing carbon reduction initiatives *and* press DC to audit and report its current carbon footprint and year-by-year reduction targets.\*
  - **PROPOSAL 7:** CVPC should endorse [item 12 of the Friends of the Earth submission to DC on Planning](#). (DC [said in Oct. 2019](#) “*we are discussing... enforcing minimum energy efficiency standards (e.g. heating and insulation) and sustainable development (e.g. solar panels) before granting licencing for building, developing or renting buildings*”). Press DC to *set and actively enforce* (not just discuss) *stringent* (not just minimum) standards on all planning applications.
  - **PROPOSAL 8:** Work to get as many Dorset schools as possible to participate in one of the range of green school projects (which offer support and resources for students and teachers to work together on whole-school projects to reduce the school’s carbon footprint and increase environmental awareness).
  - **PROPOSAL 9:** Press DC to adopt and follow the two Royal Town Planning Institute Guides: [Planning for Climate Change](#) and [Planning for a Smart Energy Future](#).

## 21 detailed proposals (cont.) –

### b) Adapt, build resilience and prepare for major change

1. **Put our house in order.** Use our communications to make the parish council a focal point for the community.
  - **PROPOSAL 10:** Develop a community (not just a council) website. Encourage residents to use it (with a community facebook page) to share information, resources, ideas and news; to offer help and lifts; to organise bulk purchases, etc. Allocate a section of the site to CVPC. This is a community resource now and an active preparation for more self-sufficiency/resilience in future.
  - **PROPOSAL 11:** Undertake a Climate and Environmental Impact Assessment to identify the range of possible impacts on, and opportunities for, our community and prepare local scenarios like those in [this Arup report](#).\*
2. **Lead and support action by the community.** Help set up and support local farmers and new initiatives to grow food locally, encourage car-sharing, support wildlife, clean up the river, build links between farmers and others, etc.
  - CVPC IS ALREADY working on a community-led project to manage the River Char better.
  - **PROPOSAL 12:** CVPC to support community-led efforts to reduce and, eventually, eliminate the use of chemical pesticides and insecticides in the parish.
  - **PROPOSAL 13:** CVPC to actively support projects where the community/residents seek to buy/repurpose land/field(s) in the parish for use as allotments/orchard/forest garden.
3. **Work to bring about change at county level.** Use our collective town/parish council influence\*\* to press DC to look beyond carbon control measures and put in place policies and practices on food, transport, housing and employment that help to build sustainable, self-reliant local communities, create sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices at landscape level and build a better co-ordinated green transport infrastructure for residents and tourists (in line with its 27 Nov. 2019 [decision](#) to amend its Climate Emergency to be a 'Climate and Ecological Emergency'.)
  - **PROPOSAL 14:** Press DC to join the [Rapid Transition Alliance](#) (a coalition of councils and other organisations working to make rapid, transformative changes to prevent climate breakdown and create the conditions for people to thrive together).
  - **PROPOSAL 15:** Press DC to stop using neonicotinoid pesticides – [responsible](#) for serious decline in the insect population (including bees and other pollinators) AND glyphosate herbicides (like Roundup – [carcinogenic](#) and [dangerous to the insect population](#)). [Currently DC uses both.]
  - **PROPOSAL 16:** Use a Freedom of Information request to require DC to disclose all its loans and investments. Then press DC to 1) implement an ethical banking and investment policy and 2) divest from all companies and funds that extract, process or profit from fossil fuels.
  - **PROPOSAL 17:** Press DC to support and implement – through its own obligations, actions and influence externally – [sustainable](#) economic growth (i.e. an approach that sustains the local economy and ecology, conserves natural heritage, resources and biodiversity and results in minimal carbon footprint). This should include 1) supporting sustainable tourism and 2) implementing an effective and efficient local transport network for residents and tourists alike.
  - **PROPOSAL 18:** Press DC to stop immediately [the process of selling estate properties](#), to retain all its estate properties and to make them the centrepiece of a county-wide demonstration and education project to support biodiversity and environmental regeneration and demonstrate good practice in sustainable and regenerative agriculture.
  - **PROPOSAL 19:** Press DC to initiate a county-wide project to improve management of the county's rivers/streams to reduce pollution, improve water quality, increase biodiversity and limit the impact of flooding.

- **PROPOSAL 20:** Press DC to launch an ECOLOGICAL programme (alongside its [LOW-CARBON programme](#)) to support and extend sustainable and regenerative agriculture, reduce pollution and reliance on chemical pesticides, restore soil quality, grow more food locally, and increase biodiversity.
- **PROPOSAL 21:** Press DC to include responsibility for responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency in every employee's job description.

*\* Many proposals have direct financial implications for DC. Even running an audit, for example, will need new funds or budgets to be reallocated. So these proposals must be carefully negotiated and prioritised.*

*\*\* Using our influence means that we must first adopt these (or similar) proposals, campaign to get them adopted by other Dorset Town and Parish Councils, then campaign to get them accepted by DC. This will mean working with Dorset APTC, using our new website and talking to local newspapers and magazines.*