

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Planning & Environment Committee

Climate Change Champion

1. Introduction:

1.1 The Parish Council has had a request from Mr Roger Ogle to consider creating a Climate Change Champion role within the Parish Council. The aim would be to provide liaison with various 'green' volunteer groups and promote climate change considerations within the planning and decision making of the Parish Council.

1.2 Friends of the Earth have identified a number of ways Parish Council's can support Climate Change

- *Be a force for good*

Encourage the formation of Climate Action group bringing together positive community solutions and joint working locally.

- *Actively support small and large planning applications for new renewable energy in the area*

- *Promote practical action by local people*

- *Bring together groups of people for bulk purchases*

The costs of installing solar PV, or other renewable technologies such as heat pumps, should be much lower if done in bulk, street by street, or area by area. A town or parish council can bring together local homeowners and businesses to develop such a scheme – it's a widely used model in the Netherlands and places such as Suffolk and Frome in the UK. Bulk purchases of energy audits or energy insulation is also possible. Transition Streets is an example of this approach.

- *Save energy*

Ensure any council buildings are as energy efficient as possible and any street lighting uses well-directed LED lighting. Getting an energy audit is the first step. Loans for projects in England that have a payback of less than five years are available through Salix funding.⁶ Projects with longer term paybacks should still be carried out.

- *Reduce pesticide use and other harmful activities*

It is possible to reduce activities that harm wildlife, for example. Glastonbury Town Council has stopped using glyphosate weed killer and instead uses a hot foam system.

- *Manage land for nature.*

Parish, town and community councils can have responsibility for allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, commons and open spaces, and village greens. All of these can be managed to enhance nature, particularly through changing mowing regimes. Friends of the Earth and Buglife have produced a guide to developing an action plan for helping pollinators such as bees. Buglife's B-lines project aims to support the development of a network of wildlife friendly corridors. Friends of the Earth is piloting a crowd-funded postcode gardener project to help people green the streets where they live.

- *Increase tree cover*
Friends of the Earth is campaigning for the UK to double tree cover. The Forestry Commission and others have suggested that even urban areas should aim for at least 20% tree cover.
- *Use green transport*
Employees and councillors should be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport or car-share. The council should provide bikes or electric bikes for staff as they carry out any work-related trips. It should also provide zero-interest loans for buying bikes. Where a car or van is needed it should consider electric.
- *Minimise waste going to landfill or incineration*
In operations, ensure all waste is recycled or composted, but also consider setting-up community recycling facilities for hard-to-recycle items when the local authority hasn't done so. Bisley Parish Council has set up a community composting scheme. The best approach for waste minimisation is reuse (eg reusable cups) or avoiding unnecessary purchases.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Changing to greener alternatives may require a commitment to additional resources. For example, alternatives to pesticides may be more expensive in relation to extra applications being required or extra staff resources being required.e.g. strimming

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the report and considers the nomination of a Climate Change Champion
- 3.2 That the Committee considers and agrees other commitments to support climate change.

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager