



## CLIMATE EMERGENCY

# RESOURCES PACK FOR TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS – WHAT CAN LOCAL COUNCILS DO ?

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## Section 1. Background and purpose

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This document forms part of the Action on Climate in Teignbridge (ACT) Town and Parish Resource Pack.

It suggests how to engage your wider community and where ACT can help with this.

It also sets out some of the Town and Parish Councils' Statutory duties providing suggested actions in relation to the Climate and Ecological emergencies.

**“Declaring a Climate and Environmental emergency means putting your Climate and Ecology at the heart of everything that you do”**

## Section 2. Wider Community Engagement

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As a Town or Parish council you are ideally placed to involve your community. Smaller Parishes who do not have access to the same resources, should consider working with other adjacent councils and collaborate with existing community groups, providing additional resources and skills into the mix

If your area doesn't have an existing community group, why not set one up? ACT can offer ideas and suggestions from other people who have set up Climate groups in their communities

Depending on the type and size of your council, try to involve as many businesses and households as possible. Many Teignbridge Parishes are rural, so don't forget your farming community and businesses, they too have major key roles to play in tackling the two emergencies.

Community/Council engagement is fundamental in declaring a Climate emergency. Your community cohesion will become the backbone to developing an individual, sustainable and workable Action Plan and will enable you to deliver your initiatives and measure and celebrate your achievements.

Not everyone sees the Climate and Ecology as priorities, never mind an emergency that needs drastic action. To reach out beyond those in your community who are already pro-active, you can use other areas of common interest to bring people together. These could be; traffic problems, adverse weather conditions such as flooding, impact of new developments or cycling and walking paths. It could also be the threat of a landfill, or a solar farm. Whatever it is you can use it as a starting point to discuss the wider challenges of Climate and Ecological changes; these will affect all of us in one way or another

ACT can help in a number of ways with community engagement:

- Putting you in contact with other councils nearby or of similar size and type.
- Helping you organise a public meeting, providing speakers and information.
- Organising networking events to share best practice and successes.
- Signposting you to examples of Emergency Declarations and Action Plans.
- Working with you and your local groups on developing Action Plans. Or helping you set up a group focused on the Climate and Ecological emergencies, if you don't already have one.
- Helping with funding sources.



## Section 3. Parish Council's statutory responsibilities

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Town and Parish councils have a variety of powers and duties, all of which impact directly on your community. The following headings are taken from the [statutory remit of local councils](#), you will need to consider what headings and associated actions are most important in your community.

The list here are a mix of short and longer-term suggested actions. It is an evolving list which ACT aims to update as we all learn from each other's best practices. Please also refer to the actions and approaches outlined in the themed working areas provided in this resource pack.

### 3.1 Allotments

- Encourage landowners to contribute towards the community by donating land for Allotments
- Spare allotments? - create a "Community Allotment" Advertise through social media and word of mouth for local gardeners and families to share their knowledge and skills
- Share locally grown produce
- Find spare corners of greenery to encourage wildlife - plants and insects
- Establish tree nurseries for saplings

### 3.2 Burial Grounds, Cemeteries, Churchyards

- Organise a Biodiversity survey to record what is alive and growing in these green spaces. Connect with Head teachers and local primary schools, local Churches and interested community groups
- Involve the community, site educational plaques suggesting wildflower planting schemes instead and introduce the concept of less mowing (reduced precept costs?) amongst a well-cared for and respectful environment

### 3.3 Bus Shelters

- Use to advertise community events and public consultation events

### 3.4 Bye-laws

This covers the power to make bye-laws concerning baths and washhouses (swimming pools), cycle parks, mortuaries and pleasure grounds.

- These could include things like preventing buses idling unnecessarily. But check the limits of your enforcement powers with your Clerk and district council.

### 3.5 Clocks

Public clocks can be provided and must be maintained.

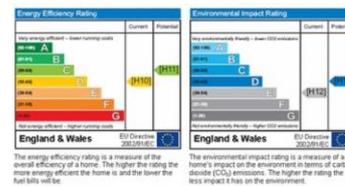
- Public signage to indicate Net Zero Carbon date/targets in line with your plans.

### 3.6 Community Centres, Conference Centres, Halls, Public Buildings

- Measure emissions from these and set targets to reduce. Refer to the approach and suggestions outlined in [Built Environment and Energy](#).
- Assess suitability of any land for improving biodiversity and sequestering Carbon. Refer to [Ecology/Food/Farming/Forestry](#) and section 6.9 of Zero Carbon Plan for Teignbridge.
- Review recycling/cleaning/maintenance policies, procedures, contracts and materials used. Refer to [Ecology/Food/Farming/Forestry](#).



- Get your Display Energy Certificates (**DEC**)/ Energy Performance certificates (**EPC**) done. This is mandatory for some [public buildings](#). An EPC advisor would also suggest ways to improve your ratings.



- Move towards decarbonising your primary energy suppliers. Divest away from fossil fuel suppliers and switch to green renewable and sustainable energy providers.
- Assess the feasibility of retrofitting your public buildings so they use less energy for heating and electricity. Explore all options available as many could be simple, low-cost, measures.
- Identify areas within your communities for suitable low-Carbon installations, solar PV, wind turbines, Hydro and battery storage.
- Define and encourage “Green Rules” for spaces hired/used by the public.
- Update your Town & Parish Council website with information about your achievements, what assessments you have done and what you are doing to reduce your consumption and emissions. Inform your community about the Carbon Budget for your area and how they can calculate their own, see Why is this and Emergency.

### 3.7 Drainage of ditches and ponds

- Maintain necessary drainage whilst looking after/encouraging biodiversity.
- Record/evidence flooding issues, ask your communities to help by feeding back issues and concerns and then refer to local authorities.
- Ensure that ponds aren't polluted or littered- ask the community for help.

### 3.8 Entertainment and the Arts

- Take any opportunities to reinforce Climate and Ecology focused actions for Climate and Ecology - on posters etc.
- Local film evening screening Climate and Ecology documentaries, Specialist talks, etc.

### 3.9 Footpaths

- Take action to keep footpaths in use and in good order. Encourage community working groups to help.
- Contact [Sustrans](#) for support to encourage safe travel, active travel and cycling.
- Provide interpretive info/educational posters, e.g. [Blue Campaign](#). Where possible encourage good use and understanding of paths, wildlife, farming and the countryside.
- Ban Pesticide use, discuss with contracted sprayers and/or authorities responsible for using these.

### 3.10 General Spending

Town and Parish councils can spend a limited amount of money on anything they deem of benefit to the community that is not covered by the other specific responsibilities described in this list.

- Financially support local initiatives which help achieve your objectives.
- Ask your Clerk for information about Grants and Funding opportunities. ACT can help with signposting.

### 3.11 Gifts

Town and Parish councils may accept gifts.

<https://actionclimateteignbridge.org/>

ACTION on Climate in Teignbridge is a CIC registered in England, number 12278894.  
Its registered office is 71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2H 9JQ.



- Encourage Community members to donate help, money, time and land that will help the you towards becoming carbon neutral and improve the natural environment.

## 3.12 Home working

- Promote Community centres and Public buildings for shared workspaces and Businesses.

## 3.13 Highways

- Only provide focussed, low-energy lighting where essential (be aware of the effect on bats, moths and other nocturnal wildlife).
- Encourage car-sharing by providing a signing-up site with destinations and times.
- Encourage and signpost community transport schemes.
- Provide free car parking for Car share schemes.
- Take opportunities to plant trees (without reducing visibility) and manage verges for wildlife by encouraging reduce verge cutting.

## 3.14 Land

Covering acquisition and sale of land.

- Document community assets and evaluate community land uses.
- Engage with local landowners, invite them to public consultation events. Consider community land to promote walking and cycling opportunities.
- Use Neighbourhood Plans to help implement Climate and Ecological measures that deliver on your objectives.

## 3.15 Legal proceedings

Includes the power to prosecute and defend any legal proceedings in the interests of the community, power to take part in any public enquiry.

## 3.16 Litter

- Provision of litterbins and support for any anti-litter campaigns, beach cleans etc

## 3.17 Planning

Town and Parish councils may be notified of any planning applications for the area.

- Object to any applications that are not carbon neutral
- Demand that all developments provide verifiable and enforceable mitigation for damage to the climate and environment
- Openly support Green/Low Carbon planning projects
- Write/Update Neighbourhood plan - involve the community
- Insist on replacement tree planting and follow up with local Tree warden

## 3.18 Postal and Telecommunication Facilities

- Ensure your local community has good Telecommunication/Broadband access.



## 3.19 Public conveniences

Includes provision and maintenance of public toilets.

- If you have these, consider using rainwater harvesting.

## 3.20 Recreation

Covers provision of recreation grounds, public walkways, pleasure grounds, open spaces, village greens, gymnasiums, playing fields, holiday camps and boating ponds.

- Also provide community orchards.
- Consider the opportunities for tree-planting and reduced mowing in public open spaces.

## 3.21 Rights of Way

Covering footpath and bridleway maintenance.

- See Footpaths above.

## 3.22 Seats (public)

## 3.23 Signs

Includes danger signs, place names, finger boards and bus stops signs, speed signage Sola powered?

## 3.24 Tourism

Covers financial contributions to any local tourist organisations allowed

- Promote green tourism.

## 3.25 Traffic Calming

- Use it to reduce speeds and increase safety. See Transport section for further ideas

## 3.26 War Memorials

- Make them beautiful with wildflowers!

## 3.27 Water Supply

Includes the power to utilise stream, well or spring water and to provide facilities for general use.

- Explore opportunities to install water turbines.
- Promote very careful use of water and suitable water storage and disposal.

## 3.28 General power of competence

This allows a Town or Parish council to do anything a person could do (unless prohibited by other legislation), provided it has passed a resolution adopting that power each year. It is not a responsibility, but it is useful for Council's to know they can spend money, buy land etc in order to deliver on climate change declarations. **This may include:**

### Businesses and Traders

- Encourage local businesses and traders to work with community Zero Waste, Green Initiatives and Plastic Free groups. Recognise achievement, promote and celebrate publicly.



- Refer to [Community Action Groups](#) website for community engagement ideas around reducing waste and developing community engagement.
- Encourage local businesses to assess their operating emissions with a view to reducing them. See [Transport](#) and [Built Environment & Energy](#) sections.
- Encourage Ethical Investment of Council and private funds. Divest from fossil-fuel and environmentally polluting businesses.

## Food resilience

- Support local food producers and local market traders.
- Establish Edible Community Garden spaces.
- Start Bulk Purchase/ Zero Waste buyers' groups
- Start a Community Fridge scheme to help reduce food waste.