

## Pontesbury Parish Council

Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group is almost a year old. It was formed in response to the climate and biodiversity crisis that we are facing, and the Parish Councils declaration of the desire to reach net zero carbon by 2030.

We had our first meeting at the Mary Webb School just before the first lockdown in March 2020 when 10 people attended.

In July 2020 the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) held a zoom workshop linked to Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

When it became obvious that lockdown and social distancing were going to be part of our lives for a sustained period we began to meet on Zoom, beginning in August 2020. We discussed what exactly reaching net zero carbon means in reality for the community and to find ways forward towards this goal.

The South Shropshire Climate Change Conference in September 2020 gave us a lot of food for thought on issues to be addressed and possible actions in the future, including “quick wins” and the importance of continuing to engage the public.

At Christmas we joined in with the library's Christmas tree trail, Bob and June Tune providing us with our own real tree which is planted outside the library building, with other members of the group decorating it using recycled materials.

Since then our numbers have been slowly growing, and we now have working groups for different areas where we feel some action is needed. We have started with groups looking at transport, carbon footprints and biodiversity.

## Working groups

**Transport:** “A sub group of the climate crisis group met via zoom for their inaugural meeting on 10th February. This small but keen positive group is aiming to make some safe cycle pathways for children to cycle to school. At the moment the routes to school are not safe, with several areas of concern. We will then follow this initial project by improving cycle pathways to link up local villages and Shrewsbury. The group is exploring all options and are keen to promote cycling for health, fun & to reduce carbon emissions by getting more people using bikes, thus contributing significantly to making Pontesbury carbon zero by 2030. Many people are scared of cycling because of the heavy traffic on the roads. This results in more cars and a vicious cycle that we need to reverse. Cycling is an activity growing in popularity. We have some very exciting ideas at our fingertips, this includes a connection to a countywide scheme. If we can make the routes safer we will be able to open up some amazing opportunities to our younger generation. Now is the best to be moving forward with this fantastic opportunity. ” Di Carrington

The **biodiversity** group is planting native bulbs, plants and seeds along the Hall Bank footpath to make the area more attractive, to advertise the group, and inform people of the importance of improving our environment for nature /biodiversity. A £100 donation was received from a member of the public to buy these bulbs and seeds, for which we are very grateful.

We will also be planting a native hedge outside the nursery, plants supplied by Shropshire Council. We are also hoping to plant out the small bed outside the library with plants for pollinators.

We hope to plant trees in the parish also but it has proved very difficult to discover who to ask permission of regarding small green spaces around Pontesbury. Two members of the group have mapped suitable spaces and I have forwarded this map to Ian Pugh at Shropshire Council. I have had no reply as yet.

The **carbon** group is starting a carbon footprinting scheme in the parish, to invite groups and individuals to find out their own footprint, and give ideas of how to lessen it. These could be big ideas, like insulating house

walls and roof space, or small, like eating less meat and walking or cycling for short distances rather than using the car, or turning the thermostat down a degree.

Results will be collected and monitored over time.

This is a project supported by Shropshire Climate Action Partnership.

### **Zoom talks.**

SWT talk on helping hedgehogs in our neighbourhood. This will be followed up in May with a community scheme.

Roy Alexander from Ashton Hayes village in Cheshire telling us of their village's journey towards zero carbon and how they have achieved progress.

In April we will be hosting Phil Holden from the AONB.

Liz Knowles

February 2021