

Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group Report to the Parish Council 2022

The group has been meeting regularly during the pandemic and has attempted to increase its profile in the village. Our aims are:

- to raise the awareness of Climate Change and biodiversity loss and that people can do something about this dual crisis which threaten all of us,
 - to actively improve biodiversity in the area by any means possible eg planting hedges and wild bulbs/flowers, verge regeneration
 - to encourage people to at least make small changes in their lives which can have a positive effect and reduce their Carbon Footprint and negative impact on nature by:-
- ✚ -Developing a logo that appears on signs around the village marking Hedge Planting and Wild Flower Planting and is used to identify our articles in the newsletter.
 - ✚ Establishing a small garden at the front of The Pavilion with a Christmas tree that has been decorated during the Xmas period for the last two years with recycled materials, and willow stars were added last December.
 - ✚ -Holding a 'Family Fun Cycle Ride'
 - ✚ -Supporting the Shropshire Love Nature Festival plus the Climate Change Awareness Fair held at Mary Webb School
 - ✚ -Establishing contact with other groups, such as Ashton Hayes village, Marches Meadow Group, Shropshire Climate Action Partnership, South Shropshire Climate Action, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, RSVP, AONB.
 - ✚ -Holding a 'Plant Swap' at the Co-op Fete and subsequently establishing a Plant and Seed Swap at The Pavilion
 - ✚ -Writing regularly in Pontesbury Newsletter
 - ✚ -Holding 'Carbon Conversations' at the Library (Ken Jenks)
 - ✚ -Talks on related topics which have been, so far, held on Zoom and advertised in the newsletter. [How to make a village carbon neutral, Hedgehogs, AONB]

Our 3 initiatives

1. Increasing Biodiversity

- Hedge Planting
- Wild Flower Planting
- Forward planning to support the Restoring Shropshire Roadside Verges project.
- Supporting the establishment of a meadow at the Parish Church cemetery
- Surveying the area for potential Tree Planting

2. Cycling

- Promoting the idea of cycling/walking instead of taking the car
- Talks with Shropshire Council about making a safe cycle route to the schools and throughout the village.
- Making enquiries about the possibility of establishing a cycle route along the Old Railway Line

3. Carbon Footprint

- Looking at and discussing about several models used for the measurement of a personal Carbon Footprint
- Encouraging local people to reduce their carbon footprint by articles in the newsletter.
- Starting the Carbon Conversations at the Library
- articles and tips in the Pontesbury Newsletter

Cycling group report, February 2022

The cycle group has 2 projects:

- 1) making it safer for more children to cycle/ actively travel to school
- 2) A safe active travelway between Pontesbury and Shrewsbury

Our aim to get more people back on their bikes and encourage more children to cycle to school, at the same time making it safer for everyone to move actively in the community. It will provide a more affordable healthy way for people to travel to work or college. It will enhance leisure in the community. This will reduce carbon footprints, improve air quality in the village and improve the health of residents who use these safer routes. It will improve the learning and concentration of the children that actively travel to school.

In 2021 we walked between the end of the established cycle way (between Minsterley & Pontesbury) and the schools, writing a proposal for ways to make this a safe continuation for children to cycle to school. We **invited the highways department and the secondary school to look at our proposal. We arranged meetings** with the new Active Travel Manager.

We established that the council owns a section of the old railway line. We lodged a written suggestion that as the next building project is built (opposite the Horseshoes) it incorporates an active pathway through the estate and onto the old railway line.

We also met with David who manages a team keeping pathways clear. He is willing to help keep routes along the old railway line clear. Part of this was a well supported bike ride for all in September, along the railway line and on to Lulu Reynold's Climate event day at Mary Webb School.

We have also met with Mathew Mead and discussed the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP). Pontesbury has not been listed as one of the 7 main Shropshire towns being focused on, but we have lodged an interest to be included in the LCWIP process with a hope that their aim to create "spokes" into the main towns becomes a real possibility in the future. We have resurrected a feasibility study that was done a few years ago showing the justification for the active route between Pontesbury and Shrewsbury.

This year, we have two significant events in March:

On Wednesday evening 16th March we have a presentation by Professor John Whitelegg about reducing the default 30mph to 20mph in residential streets. The aim of this is to make it safer for everyone that is actively travelling around the village as the risk of death or serious injury is reduced by 30%. County council cabinet members with responsibility for climate change, transport & infrastructure, children, also physical infrastructure have been invited to this virtual meeting. (We do hope that they will attend and be part of the conversation).

On Saturday 19th March we are holding a cycle event in the village inviting Doctor Bike from the Shrewsbury cycle hub in town to attend. This is a chance to get bikes fixed, encourage more people to cycle rather than drive especially on short trips such as going to school or the shops. Radio Shropshire have offered to promote this event.

Both these events are putting Pontesbury on the map in the county and nationwide showing our strong need and desire to help more people get out of cars and move actively in a safe way, cycling or on foot. This all goes in the direction of reducing our carbon footprint, a vital step towards helping the climate crisis.

Di Carrington / Gill Otto
