



“Next steps”

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

For the Ludlow Constituency to reach Net Zero by 2030

Land & Biodiversity

Transport

Energy & Buildings

Communities & Education



Executive Summary

We are living beyond our planet’s resources, not only in South Shropshire, but also in many developed countries. In the last 50 years some national populations have become accustomed to unprecedented levels of convenience, comfort and consumption. At the same time significant numbers of animals, birds, insect and some plant species fall. In South Shropshire common species such as hedgehogs and curlews are so severely reduced in number they are in danger of going extinct; year on year the bee population fails to thrive. The Covid pandemic has demonstrated quite how keenly humans depend for their mental and physical well being on their relationship with nature.

Goods, including food, are moved across continents by land, air and sea and so are the cause of greenhouse gas emissions. Waste emissions from the fossil fuels used to power our vehicles and homes have been accumulating in the atmosphere, causing global warming since the Industrial Revolution which itself began in Ironbridge, in our own county of Shropshire. These impacts have accelerated all over the world in the last 50 to 60 years. In this period, industrial practices have been applied to agriculture and in developed countries we buy rather than make or grow what we need. It is a characteristic of humans, perhaps, to not always distinguish between “need” and “want.”

As there is often a complex chain of events as well as distance in time and space between the origin of the goods or our food, the true cost of our consumption often remains hidden from the purchaser.

Now that technology enables us to communicate directly across time and distance many people can see and so understand consequences with their own

eyes. Changes are needed as Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion and School Strikes all over the world have demanded. Many community groups throughout Shropshire, and beyond, have been working on these very issues over a long period, unrewarded by significant political development either locally or nationally. This Report has been written to show the many ways we can - if we choose - create a better future. The limited geographical focus on the Ludlow constituency was chosen to scrutinise the How rather than the Why. Our proposals are intended to be transferable. We believe this Report is an important contribution to the international debate about tackling climate change which most often focuses on urban settings.

This Report has been conceived, researched and written by a large number of volunteers, often with expertise and curiosity in other fields as well as their own specialisms. The task of finding ways to achieve Net Zero Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2030 developed without pre-conceived outcomes and without self-interest.

Many hours have been given to this Report to ensure that it is evidence-based with practical and transferable ideas.

May 2021

Executive Summary (continued)

Our Key Findings:

- We are living beyond the resources of our planet and must change our ways – fast.
- Every action of every individual and each community affects everyone else. We do not always immediately see those effects. To help us we need direction, intention and funding from national policies designed to meet the climate emergency for the good of all.
- We are living at a time of great opportunity: in our choices we can improve life, creating an inclusive and fair society for all, sharing resources equally and respecting differences – or turn our backs on our children’s and their children’s future.
- All the solutions for our current problems exist but there is presently a lack of will to put them into action.
- We recognise training is needed to close the skills gap in creating new, ‘green’ employment.
- In telling the truth about the Climate Emergency, we acknowledge that the future is uncertain, difficult and dangerous, but also full of opportunity and hope.
- Cathedrals were built for future generations. Forests were planted by people who would never see the trees mature. This Report is our cathedral and our forest.

Land & Biodiversity recommendations:

- Work with local stakeholders to generate and deliver local solutions.
- Ensure that farmers are rewarded for the quality of the food they produce and for delivering public benefits.
- Enable policy to support a low carbon and high biodiversity trajectory.
- Link those areas of habitat that are in favourable condition and restore those, including peatlands, to create a Nature Recovery Network.
- Naturalise existing watercourses, create more diverse riverine habitats and employ natural approaches to flood alleviation. Ensure raw sewage and other effluents are no longer discharged into waterways.
- Manage soils to improve soil health and fertility.

Energy & Buildings recommendations:

- The move to Net Zero Carbon will require a very substantial improvement in the supply of energy generated by fossil-free energy sources.
- Housing needs to be supplied with carbon free heating systems supported by insulation and smart management and storage systems.
- Co-ordination between local authorities, householders, businesses and community welfare agencies is an essential component in all developments towards the Net Zero target.

Transport recommendations:

- Transport is responsible for 37% of the area’s direct carbon emissions.
- Transport is a largely private matter in South Shropshire as public transport is extremely limited. This creates significant difficulty for many while maximising pollution and danger.
- An efficient public transport system could transform our roads to make them safe for active travel (cycling and walking).
- A Net Zero carbon transport future gives all income groups and those with disabilities and health problems greater choice in accessing hospitals, schools, colleges and shops.

Communities & Education recommendations:

- We are stronger when we cooperate and work together.
- Community Action takes different forms, and there are a large number of different starting places; getting going is the key as much else follows on. There is support available from South Shropshire Climate Action.
- The Climate Emergency should be underpinning every decision made by individuals, communities, councils, businesses and governments.

Finally, bear in mind:

- This Report only covers four main themes; there are many more essential topics, Waste and Consumption being one such major issue (discussed in detail by Zero Carbon Shropshire).
- The longer we delay, the harder it will become to take effective action to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030. We note that on 20th April 2021, the government announced a target of a 78% reduction by 2035 (compared to 1990 levels). Both dates require huge changes in local and national life.
- Clear requirements must also be laid down in law for such steps to have any chance of success. It is important for individuals and groups to lobby government and specific departments so that clear, regular and consistent messages are raised with central Government, especially in this year of the international climate conference in Glasgow, COP 26, which is a unique opportunity and pressure point.
- Continuous and consistent lobbying of industry, corporations, land managers and business is also vital. Try to share answers.
- Individuals and groups need to take time to keep up to date with scientific and social developments. Individuals and groups inform and inspire each other.



“Optimism is not the result of achieving a task we have set for ourselves. That is celebration. Optimism is the necessary input to meeting a challenge”

Christina Figueres