

Sprotbrough & Cusworth Parish Council

Title of Report: Responding to Climate Change

Report to: Parish Council

Date: 17th December 2020

Status of the report: PUBLIC

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To consider and approve the proposed declaration of a 'Climate Emergency' by the Parish Council and agree the next steps in developing the Council's response to Climate Change.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Parish Council is recommended to
- a. Acknowledge and accept the findings of the IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C;
 - b. Acknowledge progress made to date by the Parish Council in mitigating and adapting to climate change;
 - c. Declare a 'Climate Emergency' to align with the declaration made by Doncaster Council in September 2019;
 - d. Set up a Climate Change Working Group who will investigate the development of action points and pledges to integrate with the Parish Council Action Plan. This group will make recommendations to the Performance, Review and Staffing Committee and thereafter Full Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 A global temperature rise of 1.5°C is now considered the threshold for dangerous climate change. This was the finding of a recent Special Report by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which highlighted the impact that a rise of 1.5°C would have compared to 2°C, or more.
- 3.2 Human activities are estimated to have already caused a 1°C increase in average global temperatures compared to pre-industrial levels and we are already seeing the consequence of this warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes.
- 3.3. The IPCC's report warns that, whilst at 1.5°C climate impacts will be greater than they are at present and include some devastating consequences, even

half a degree more will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty with some impacts, such as the loss of ecosystems, potentially being irreversible. Furthermore, the report emphasises that current nationally stated mitigation ambitions, as submitted under the Paris Agreement (2016), are not enough to limit warming to 1.5°C and deep, rapid reductions in emissions will need to be made well before 2030, reaching 'net-zero' by 2050.

- 3.4 Since the publication of the IPCC's report, there have also been a wave of school strikes and large-scale public demonstrations, all demanding increased action on climate change. This has been accompanied by a rapid (global) increase in the number of local councils declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing to take action. Around 300 (74%) first and second tier councils have so far made declarations plus 8 combined authorities. In May 2019, the UK Parliament made its own declaration. There have also been over 100 Town and Parish Council's who have made the declaration, none in Doncaster or South Yorkshire.
- 3.5 Declaring a Climate Emergency is an acknowledgement of the scale of the problem and a recognition of the urgency for change. Limiting warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and local authorities, citizens and the private sector. Indeed, it will only be possible if change happens across all sectors of society. In particular, it will require Government to ramp up policies and introduce clear, stable and well-designed policies to cut emissions, backed by the financial mechanisms to deliver them.
- 3.6 On 19th September 2019, Doncaster Council unanimously passed a motion to declare a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and to establish a Local Commission ('The Commission') on behalf of the Team Doncaster local strategic partnership to be able to advise on targets and actions for the borough as a whole, rather than just the council. Findings from the Commission will inform Team Doncaster's new Borough Strategy in 2020, which will grasp the opportunities that the crisis brings to accelerate progress toward a net-zero carbon and more regenerative place, and a commitment to work with partners at all levels to achieve this.
- 3.7 The target set by Doncaster Council is that 'all of its public institutions, businesses and communities, should keep within its carbon budget, deliver an 85% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2040'. This is in line with the Sheffield City Region and neighbouring authorities.
- 3.8 The Commission is considering action across the following themes; each have been indicated as being an area for significant contribution to climate mitigation and adaptation: -
 - Energy production and consumption - renewable energy generation and energy saving
 - Land use and biodiversity – trees, grassland, peatland, green spaces, agriculture

- Food – production and food security
- Waste – recycling, land fill
- Transport – low emissions vehicles, active transport, public transport, freight, aviation
- Business, economy and green technology
- Buildings – domestic, public, commercial, and industrial
- Climate adaptation, including one-catchment and natural solutions to flood management
- COVID 19 pandemic and other emergencies – risk, resilience, recovery and renewal
- Behaviour change and social influence

3.9 In the interim position statement published in July 2020 states that; *‘Doncaster - all of its public institutions, businesses and communities – are encouraged to consider pledges they can deliver to make a positive contribution to climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and the recovery of biodiversity’.*

4. Current and future Parish Council activity

4.1 The Parish Council can have a role to play in helping to achieve emissions reductions, both from its own operations and by acting as a leader and catalyst for community-wide action. There are two main approaches the Parish Council can take:

- Direct control: adopting best practice in our own operations
- Indirect local influence: working with our local partners and residents to deliver community initiatives, awareness raising and behaviour change

4.2 The Parish Council has, where possible been taking action to address, mitigate, and adapt to, climate change for a number of years. For example the Goldsmith Centre has photovoltaic (PV) energy generation installed and has cycle storage, the Parish Council own and manage 5 allotments within the Parish and the planting of 30 trees at Anchorage Park to promote biodiversity.

4.3 We are currently looking at areas on our green spaces that could be planted as wildflower areas and the ponds at Newlands Park have been identified as a flagship scheme for the conservation of great crested newts and work will take place in the new year by Natural England and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to renovate and restore the ponds.

4.4 The development of future actions and pledges could include;

- Installing public electric charging points at the car parks at Anchorage Park and Goldsmith Centre;
- Provide a dedicated source of information on our website for residents and how they can reduce their carbon footprint;
- Pledge for councillors and staff to use public transport, walking and cycling to work and meetings.

- Pledge for councillors and staff to reduce the use of single use plastic.

5. Recommendation

5.1 It is recommended the Parish Council;

- a. Acknowledge and accept the findings of the IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C;
- b. Acknowledge progress made to date by the Parish Council in mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- c. Declare a 'Climate Emergency' to align with the declaration made by Doncaster Council in September 2019 to '**deliver an 85% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2040**'
- d. To set up a Climate Change Working Group who will investigate the development of action points and pledges to integrate with the Parish Council Action Plan to meet the declaration set out in paragraph (c) above. This group will make recommendations to the Performance, Review and Staffing Committee and thereafter Full Council.

Report Author: Emma Garner – Clerk to the Council
Contact Details: sprotcuspc@btconnect.com
Appendices: none
Useful links:

<https://www.teamdoncaster.org.uk/the-commission#:~:text=In%20September%202019%2C%20Doncaster%20declared,alr eady%20being%20felt%20and%20seen.>

<https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/doncaster/>