

BURITON PARISH COUNCIL'S CLIMATE & NATURE CHARTER

[FIRST DRAFT VERSION: 26 July 2021]

In 2020/21 Buriton Parish Council commenced a number of initiatives to improve the local environment for wildlife, to promote greater awareness and understanding of nature more widely (including biodiversity loss) and to address climate change.

The Parish Council itself is a relatively low contributor to greenhouse gases, but it wants to ensure its own activities appropriately consider the environment and to encourage activities being taken by others within the parish, and by the council's partners, to move towards carbon neutrality and improve biodiversity and climate change resilience.

This document sets out actions which the Council can take to improve the environmental performance of its own activities as well as how it can use its limited powers and its influence.

In recent years the Parish Council has:

- Commissioned an energy audit of the village hall in 2018 (Rated B [and above benchmarks for similar buildings] but with some recommendations for medium and long term improvements)
- Upgraded the boiler and heating control systems in January 2019
- Changed energy suppliers in 2021 with improved low-carbon credentials
- Established the Buriton Chalk Pits as a Local Nature Reserve with a significant Lottery Fund award to 2015
- Planted a series of trees on the Council-owned recreation ground including a new copse of Field Maples in 2020
- Changed the mowing regime contract for the recreation ground in 2021 to leave swathes of longer grass at the margins for the benefit of pollinators and other wildlife
- Volunteered (and been selected), in 2020, to be one of six Pilot Parishes in Hampshire to explore low cost actions to improve the local environment for pollinating species and increase awareness about pollinators and wider biodiversity issues
- Successfully pressed to retain the bus service in 2018 amongst cuts being made across the district by the County Council
- Established a safe walking and cycling route to/from Petersfield with the closure of Bolinge Hill Lane to through traffic in 2013
- Provided cycle parking facilities at the village hall and recreation ground in 2020
- Sought a new safe walking / cycling route along Greenway Lane as part of the proposed development for ten new houses in 2021
- Updated the Village Design Statement in 2017 with guidance on: the protection of open spaces and green corridors; the use of sustainable construction and re-used materials; retaining mature trees, shrubs and hedges; planting indigenous species; providing nesting and roosting opportunities for birds, bats and other wildlife; encouraging renewable energy features, energy efficiency measures and other environmentally sustainable solutions

- Ensured the inclusion in the South Downs Local Plan, 2019, of formal protection for six areas of Local Green Space designation
- Commented on all planning applications in the parish with reference to (amongst other things) energy efficiency, biodiversity net gain and ecosystem services benefits
- Pressed for exemplary standards in the proposals for ten new houses on Greenway Lane in 2021 including: Passive House provision; solar pv panels; air source heat pumps; biodiversity net gain; nesting and roosting opportunities for birds, bats and bees; and indigenous planting to assist pollinators throughout the year.

In the future the Parish Council will:

- Continue to improve the energy-efficiency of the village hall by replacing faulty double-glazing and doors, exploring solar panels and better insulation, considering provision of EV charge points and how/when to replace the current gas boiler as well as ensuring that energy is not wasted through unnecessary heating and lighting
- Use green energy sources and environmentally friendly products
- Continue to protect important open spaces which can act as carbon sinks, to manage our land to help nature and to implement an appropriate tree planting programme
- Check that our contractors observe good environmental practices
- Use our role as a consultee to the local planning authority (the South Downs National Park) to press for strong Local Plan policies and for appropriate decisions on individual planning applications: including high standards of energy efficiency for all new buildings; biodiversity net gain and ecosystem services benefits; avoiding the loss of local nature sites and important green spaces; and siting any new housing so as to be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. We should always ask the question “what impact could this decision have on climate change and nature?” when evaluating applications
- Continue to encourage facilities for walking and cycling and to retain (and if possible enhance) public transport provision
- Use our liaison opportunities with local organisations (eg. HCC, EHDC, SDNPA, local schools and others) to influence their policies and actions and to identify opportunities for community-led environmental action, working closely with PeCAN as/when possible
- Encourage the formation of a local climate action group to develop community solutions and to help others with advice about actions to reduce their carbon footprints and/or support nature.

The Parish Council hopes that this charter will help to guide its work – and encourage residents and local organisations to consider their actions – so that we can all live more lightly on the planet and leave the environment in a better state for those who follow us.