

## Declaration of a Climate Emergency

### **1. Declaration Background**

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1°C from preindustrial levels. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350-ppm deemed to be safe level for humanity. Action is needed.

In order to mitigate catastrophic climate breakdown it is imperative that we as a species, act to reduce our CO<sub>2</sub>eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than two tonnes. Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation and infrastructure to make low carbon living easier and the new norm.

Carbon brief analysis has shown that those born today will need to have lifetime carbon budgets almost 90% lower than someone born in 1950. [www.carbonbrief.org](http://www.carbonbrief.org)

Carbon emissions results from both the production and consumption of energy and fast, deep cuts in global emissions from energy, transport and food are needed: the world is on track to overshoot the Paris agreement 1.5°C limit before 2015.

The intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) special report on global warming published in October 2018 describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to 1.5°C rise and reported that we have 12 years to limit climate catastrophe. Limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and subnational authorities, civil society, a private sectors, indigenous peoples and communities. [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)

Local authorities have an important role in delivering carbon emission reductions, particularly in transport but also in other areas such as buildings as well as highlighting the wealth of medical benefits to public health. It is therefore easy to see that addressing climate change addresses all areas of public concern; from infrastructure, transport to health.

Councils around the world are responding by declaring a “Climate Emergency” and committing resources to address this emergency. Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council have also declared such an emergency and are putting in place action plans to support their declaration. Furthermore, it is the subject of the 2020 annual joint conference between SMBC and all Parish and Town councils in the borough.

2019 saw a significant increase in coverage of these issues and the urgency of the action required. From David Attenborough’s committee on climate change to significant protests by the extinction rebellion movement and a visit to the UK from the inspiration activist Greta Thunberg.

There is simply no more time to waste, and this declaration sets out how Meriden should respond.

## 2. The Proposal

- a. That Meriden Parish Council declares a Climate Emergency.
- b. In keeping with other councils nationally that have taken this step we suggest that our declaration would be more than a statement and incorporate plans to develop local actions. It is so important that all councils commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.
- c. In Declaring this climate emergency – Meriden Parish Council agrees to:
  - i. Commit to an accelerated reduction of our carbon emissions with the aspiration to become a carbon neutral community by 2050 at the latest in accordance with CCC recommendations. [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk)
  - ii. To work with local partners to produce a carbon reduction plan and an action plan covering all relevant council strategies within the next two years.
  - iii. Create a task force to establish a green agenda in Meriden.
  - iv. To work with our local community to enable them to take all possible measures to match or better our efforts, and to support our community at both an individual and business level to demonstrate, inspire and share best practice – within the Parish and further afield.
  - v. To work towards our community buildings only using 100% renewable energy and lowest carbon where not possible.
  - vi. To focus on local key issues, including public and community transport, recycling, management of our own open spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity, and other areas where we have a positive role to play.
  - vii. To strongly encourage SMBC, and departments within it, to act in accordance with wider international agreements relating to climate as an absolute minimum. For example – planning conditions for all new developments in Solihull, both residential and commercial, should be as close to zero carbon or passive house standards and include renewable provision.
  - viii. To help provide the necessary resources to deliver on this carbon reduction commitment, and to monitor and report annually on our progress.

### 3.0 Possible actions – What We Will Do

A way of working to achieve our targets is perhaps simplest to organise our actions into three categories:

- ❖ Actions that will be best achieved by the Parish Council;
- ❖ Actions that can be championed by local community with special interest groups;
- ❖ Actions that could be implemented by us all as individual households.

Alongside this there are recognised areas where we can immediately start to make reductions these are listed in 4.0 with some considerations for specific actions. It should be noted that these opportunities will inevitably involve how the UK and other countries develop a reduced carbon future.

## 4.0 Considerations for Meriden Parish Council

### 4.1 Transport

- 4.1.1 Support the development of car sharing
- 4.1.2 Put in place EV charging
- 4.1.3 Help in the uptake of energy efficient vehicles generally
- 4.1.4 Press for the use of electric and carbon efficient buses.

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#### **4.2 Buildings**

- 4.2.1 Lobby for minimum energy efficiency standards in private rented sector
- 4.2.2 Push for higher standards on the current national standards for newbuild ideally all new homes and commercial properties should be zero carbon or even better.
- 4.2.3 Help property owners and especially households with limited income with energy efficiency and understanding the measures.
- 4.2.4 Retrofit Parish Council owned properties to any energy performance certificate C or higher.
- 4.2.5 Work in partnership with SMBC to enforce building standards – enforce planning/building conditions to ensure all new builds are meeting the targets they were granted permission for.

#### **4.3 Waste**

- 4.3.1 Help individuals to feel empowered to improve their own practice. Again through information sharing or by actual practical intervention, the latter could be setting up or encouraging the reduction of the use of plastic. The PC to stop using single use plastic wherever practicable.
- 4.3.2 We will be an influence where possible that there is the zero waste to landfill – ensure biodegradable waste, such as food waste and paper/cardboard is recycled or composted and diverted to be used to generate via gas or power.

#### **4.4 Energy**

- 4.4.1 Ensure Parish Council funds are not invested in fossil fuel or negative carbon companies. Encourage and inform individuals to take the same stance.
- 4.4.2 Commit to oppose fracking of the fossil fuel extraction process – both on Parish Council land and more widely.
- 4.4.3 Reduce energy use in Parish Council buildings and add renewable energy.
- 4.4.4 Explore areas suitable for individual or collective renewable energy.
- 4.4.5 Encouraged to use the green energy tariffs generally and certainly only use for our own consumption in community buildings.

#### **4.5 Green infrastructure**

- 4.5.1 Sign up to the Tree Charter.
- 4.5.2 Increase tree cover.
- 4.5.3 Create a task force to establish a green agenda in Meriden.
- 4.5.4 Work with the farming community and businesses as they have a significant role to play in carbon reduction. The NFU and work of others are very helpful on this to support our farming community.

#### **5.0 Closing Statement**

All the above are suggestions and there are many others too many to list. These can be taken forward with the Parish Council and hopefully the task force that we can set up quite quickly.

There are lots of websites and organisations offering ideas about ways we can save energy as individuals, and these ideas generally result in saving money and make your lives and homes healthier, convenient and comfortable. Many actions are simple and cost free to initiate; such as switching off plug-in appliances when not in use or switching to a green energy supplier.

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Over the coming months the Parish Council Facebook page and website will include regular updates about actions we can implement in our day-to-day lives so that we can find support from friends in the local community as we all start to make changes.

**Signed and agreed by Meriden Parish Council**

**Chair**

**Date**