Climate Change Policy

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Background

1. Meriden Parish Council declared a climate change emergency in January 2020. Along with many other County, District, Town and Parish Councils around the country we are putting in place climate emergency policies, both to reduce our contribution to climate change, and to support the Parish to adapt to the consequences of climate change.
2. This Climate Action Plan, drawn up in Autumn 2023, sets out the climate change challenge facing our Parish, our objectives and targets to meet this challenge, and a clear plan of the main actions we will take to achieve these objectives.

Aims & Objectives

3. Our goal within this Climate Action Plan is to openly and transparently communicate to the residents of Meriden:
   3.1. What actions we as a Parish Council are taking to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2041
   3.2. What actions we will be taking, and supporting residents to take, within the wider community to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the Parish
   3.3. What actions we will be taking to help the Parish adapt to the inevitable adverse effects of climate change
4. The overall aims of our Climate Action Plan are to:
   4.1. Reduce carbon emissions – both as an organisation (the Parish Council) and of the whole Parish, with the support of residents.
   4.2. Protect and enhance nature and biodiversity within the Parish – contribute to national commitments to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030
   4.3. Support the Parish to adapt to climate change – building resilience within our Parish to the inevitable consequences of climate change that we are already seeing, such as extreme heat, drought and flooding, including through long-term resilience-building and shorter-term emergency planning.

Data & Metrics

5. Current Carbon Emissions of the Parish
   5.1. We used the Impact tool developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and the Centre for Energy and the Environment at the University of Exeter to generate a Carbon Footprint Report for the Parish (see Annex A for full report).
      5.1.1. This report provides an estimate, drawing from more than 30 datasets and applying mathematical modelling, of the annual carbon emissions resulting from the different activities undertaken by residents within the Parish boundaries.
      5.1.2. This allows us to identify which activities (such as travel, heating our houses, or consuming goods and services) are making the greatest

contribution to Meriden's greenhouse gas emissions and to climate change, and where we can therefore best take action to reduce our footprint.

5.2. Based on this report, Meriden's estimated total annual greenhouse gas emissions are 27,595 tonnes of CO_2 (equivalent).

5.2.1. On a per household basis, our carbon footprint is slightly higher than the Solihull or Great Britain average (see Figure 1), but it is important to understand that the carbon footprint of different households and businesses will vary hugely across the parish and wider areas.

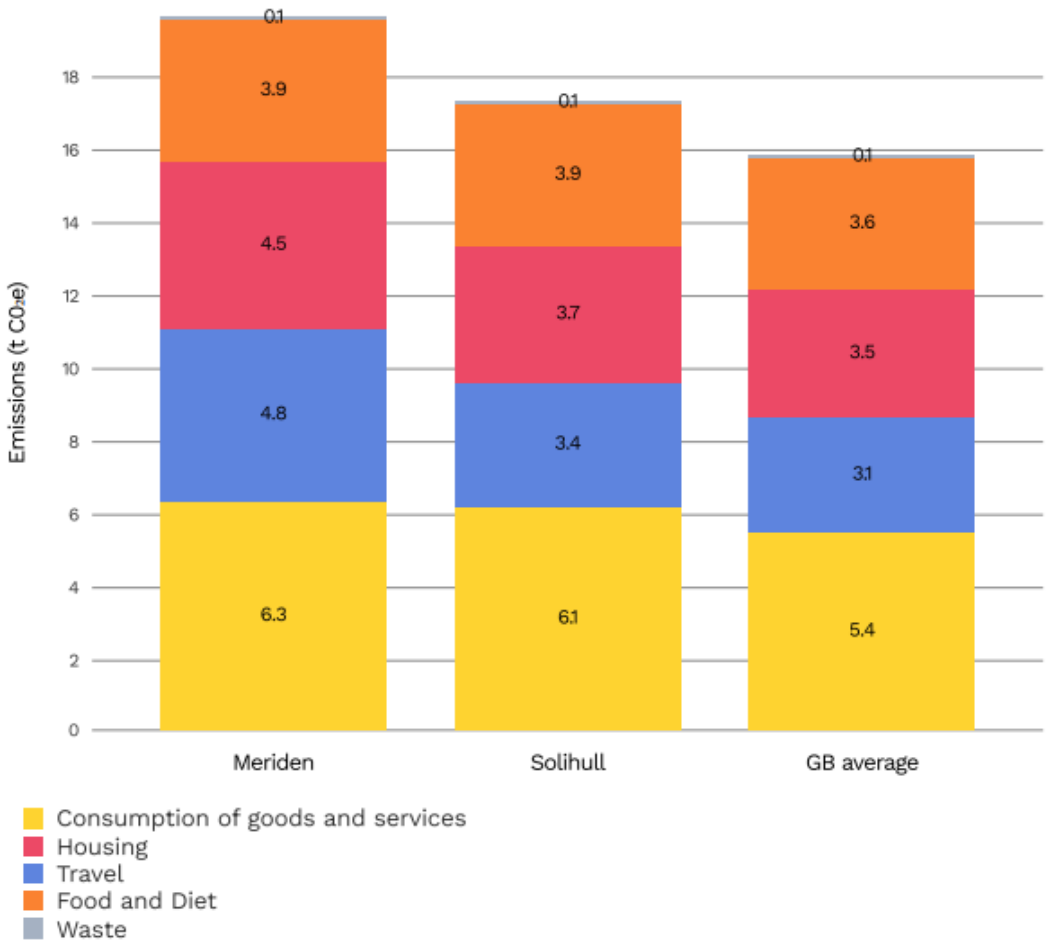


FIGURE 1 - AVERAGE CARBON FOOTPRINTS OF MERIDEN, SOLIHULL AND GREAT BRITAIN HOUSEHOLDS.

5.3. As shown in Table 1, the report identified that the activities within Meriden that make the most significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions are (in order): consumption of goods and services, housing (including heating), travel and food and diet, with waste contributing less than 1% of our carbon emissions.

	Total emissions (t CO_2e)	Per-household emissions (t CO_2e)	%
Total emissions	**27,595**	**20**	**100**
Consumption of goods and services	8,845	6.3	32
Travel	6,720	4.8	24
Housing	6,407	4.5	23
Food and diet	5,533	3.9	20
Waste	89	0.1	< 1

TABLE 1- TOTAL AND PER HOUSEHOLD GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FOR MERIDEN PARISH

5.4. We have therefore structured our plan such as to prioritise addressing our carbon footprint in this order.

6. How will we monitor our progress and what does success look like?
   6.1. We will review and update this Climate Action Plan to ensure it is fit for purpose annually, at which time we will conduct an evaluation of measures taken, and will provide a report on the progress of our actions.
   6.2. Directly monitoring the Parish's carbon footprint changing over time (for instance using the Impact tool) may not be possible or accurate, given the time lag in the data inputs to the tool. However, we will work with energy suppliers and independent environmental auditors to obtain a regular assessment of the Parish's carbon footprint, and would consider our plan to be working successfully if these assessments can show a decrease in the total and per household carbon emissions by 2026.

What We Have Achieved So Far

7. Meriden Parish Council has:
   - Acknowledged that we are in a state of climate emergency.
   - Created our Action Plan dated January 2024.
   - Launched our climate change plan at Picnic in the Park by purchasing alternative sustainable household items that residents took away to try out.
   - Created a pledge board for residents to pledge an act to assist in combatting climate change.
   - Agreed that all Parish Council core operations should endeavour to become as carbon neutral as possible by quick wins, simple changes and setting long term goals.
   - Drastically reduced printing for all committee meetings and stopped purchasing one time use plastic water bottles for meetings. The purchase of iPads has enabled us to reduce the amount of paper we use at each committee meetings without reducing efficiency.
   - Begun including energy-saving and other environmental information and guidance in our communications with residents.