

# Stoke St Gregory FSG Climate Action

## Minutes of Virtual Meeting Monday, March 22nd at 7.00pm

- 1. Present:** Graham Gleed, Charlotte Sundquist, Janice Pearce, Paul Parmenter  
Trevor Williams, Peter House. Laura Jensen, Alex Lawrie, Dave Evans

**Apologies:** Sara Sollis has stepped down from the group.

- 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the meeting held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> were approved.

- 3. The Need for a Strategy?**

Given the level of interest in the topic and having concluded that this is likely to be subject that will be sustained, it was suggested that a strategy statement would help to clarify the purpose and aims of this group. A draft strategy was review by the group and two additions were suggested.

1. That reference should be made to working with local businesses who have an interest in contributing to climate action.
2. That working with new groups created to deal with specific project to support climate action should also be mentioned.

These amendments are incorporated into the strategy document appended to these minutes.

- 4. How to Motivate Change?**

1. Household Contributions. Arising from the minutes of the last meeting AL, CS and LJ have put together a first draft of contributions that can be made by households. This document is also appended to these minutes. It has been split by season to breakdown what would otherwise be a long list. There are items that have already been suggested as additions to this list such as promoting use of the bus and reducing food miles through selective purchasing. SSG is at the high end of the range of household CO2 equivalent emissions, possibly due to its rural isolation (use of personal transport) and the higher proportion of large detached houses.
2. Communication. The idea of a climate trail was encouraged. It was also noted that all communication about climate action should also include a call to participate. The possibility to have a discussion forum specifically dedicated to the subject was suggested by DE. DE also suggested that we should also recognise the need to communicate with those who are not internet enabled. DE will look at ways to facilitate sharing information for the next meeting.
3. The list as proposed needs to be both extended and then prioritised such that people can see all of the possibilities but are given a clear picture of the actions that have the biggest impact, are the most feasible and have the lowest cost impact.
4. Additional ideas should be included and then a prioritisation can be made, before publication.
5. A leaflet drop should be considered. Funds may be available from CAA to support this. The use of the Newsletter network is a possibility for distribution.
6. Discussions have been held with the headmistress, but it is recognised that the current priority is re-establishing routine after the lockdown restrictions. The first introduction is planned around a short video for years 3-6. Followed by a series of short videos with local context. A suitable first video will be chosen for showing at the start of the summer term with the follow-up before the end of term with a view to perhaps provide some sort of follow-on through the summer holiday e.g. spotters sheets. It is the intention to provoke the

interest of the children and to encourage them to have ideas. LJ to contact 'Darren' to ask for his support in making the short videos of local context.

## **5. Survey for Improvement Projects**

Just asking for the community to suggest improvement ideas which can be translated into tangible projects is a challenge. The criteria for any project must be its feasibility, the magnitude of the impact it can potentially make and its cost effectiveness. Suggested questions include: How do people feel about climate change? What sort of support do they require to address climate change? What resources do they have to contribute to a climate friendly project? What part of your life is the most difficult to 'decarbonise'? what aspects of life in SSG could be made more sustainable?

Could this be included with the planned communication alongside the Newsletter? Some introductory context needs to be applied. We should also take account of a view that may come from a perspective of how we can help you, rather than what can you do for us!

## **6. Prioritisation of Projects**

A simple methodology of assigning a numerical value to the aspects of feasibility, impact and cost then summing these will provide a crude mechanism to rank suggestions.

## **7. Website**

Thanks to Nick Sloan for setting up the web site in such a short time. GG reported that the article on Hedges prepared by Paul had been well received by people outside the Parish who had read the article.

CS volunteer to prepare an article around.....'It all starts with soil' as a second article for publication. Ideas for future articles will be welcomed.

It is still intended to compile a bibliography of reading sources

## **8. Group Membership and Structure**

We are an ad hoc group. Do we want to appoint a secretary to relieve the load on the chairman?

Having been set up as a ad hoc advisory group to provide guidance to the PC who are then accountable for policy and implementation, the question has arisen whether this is now the appropriate structure.

JP felt that the FSG was created to establish the topic in the community structure and now that has been achieved, establishing an independent body is the right course of action. The sentiment in the meeting was that the possibility of establishing the FSG\_CA group as an independent body should be discussed, although the benefit of having the PC available as a referent power has some merit.

Care would need to be taken to establish the appropriate relationship to CAA if the SSG group were to stand independently.

## **9. Additional Comments**

The value of social media was raised by JP. LJ volunteered to post social media as she already fulfils this role with CAA. GG thanked LJ

## **10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

## **Appendix 1 A suggested Strategy**

### **Preamble**

The increasing concern around the impacts of climate change have achieved greater significance as every new piece of evidence clearly shows an immediate relevance to everybody's daily existence.

Local authorities (town, district, and parish councils) have been rapidly declaring local climate emergencies which opens access to methodologies and funding not otherwise available.

Stoke St Gregory is a small parish with a correspondingly small budget that is managed through a volunteer organisation of nine parish councillors and a part time clerk. As such there is no resource base that can be applied to a major initiative such as 'climate emergency'. With this in mind, but recognising that doing nothing was not an option The December PC meeting approved a motion to set up a Forward Strategy Group' to explore how best to proceed. Its charter is attached.

Having met twice it is clear that there is considerable enthusiasm for this project, however the role of the FSG needs to be positioned such that it can continue to act as an advisory group to the PC (or possibly not), while trying to act in synergy with existing groups such as Climate Action Athelney and Reimagining the Levels.

### **Purpose**

To engage and inform the community of Stoke St Gregory around the actions that can be taken to mitigate against the climate emergency at a local and individual level. To engage with the community to gather ideas, implement improvements and share success, while providing input to the Parish Council such that decisions taken in council give appropriate recognition to the impacts of the climate emergency.

### **How will we do this?**

- Through regular structured formal meetings open to the public, which minute items discussed, suggestions for improvement and responsibilities for agreed actions.
- To conduct surveys and draw conclusions from replies to inform action.
- Through social media and informal engagement to raise the profile of the topic.
- To inform and educate at all levels in the community, but in particular to work in synergy with the primary school to complement their curriculum.
- Establish a dynamic working list of suggestions for improvement that is accessible to all.
- To promote the local ecology as a positive contributor to offsetting the effects of climate change.
- To estimate the cost to benefit ratio of suggestion such that the community can be informed around the impact of their actions.
- To work with local businesses who are interested to support the aims of this group.
- To publicise and celebrate success.
- To inform the Parish Council of opportunities for improvement that will require community funds to implement. To develop a clear and concise justification to support any proposal.
- To engage with new initiatives and organisations that are contributing to climate action.

- To integrate climate action into all aspects of community life (HOTV, the allotments, the Village Hall)

### **Why are we doing this?**

Doing nothing is not an acceptable option. It is the responsibility of this group to make a positive local contribution to minimising the impact of climate change by providing a focus on those things that we can manage as community in order to make a difference.

### **The FSG Charter**

The Stoke St Gregory Future Strategy Group (Climate Action) has been commissioned by the PC as a non-executive advisory body, tasked with the responsibility of researching and co-ordinating ideas which can contribute to the future welfare of the village. This activity will take its lead from the Parish Council and will work within a framework of the immediate challenges facing the village in trying to reduce the carbon footprint within the Parish as described in the Carbon Footprint tool. It is the task of this team to inform the Parish Council of possible opportunities so that they may be formally considered and approved as appropriate. Networking with other local parishes who are facing similar challenges will be an important factor in gathering ideas, understanding best practice and collaborating on common projects. Public consultation on issues of key interest will be initiated from the Parish Council.

The Group will be composed of a limited number of contributors (normally not more than six), both, PC members and local residents who wish to participate in this discussion. Expert help may be co-opted from time to time as needed.

## **Appendix 2. Household Contributions (First Tentative Draft)**

### **Some Background: Figures from the Committee on Climate Change**

40% of UK emissions come from households. The average UK home's carbon footprint has reduced by 4.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> since 1990, to about 8 tonnes. A further reduction of 3.6 tonnes by 2030 will help keep us on track to the 80% UK-wide reduction in emissions by 2050 which is required to tackle dangerous climate change [or 4 tonnes for carbon neutrality].

However, there is wide variation; the lowest income households have emissions of 4-5 tonnes pa, the highest 15 or more. SSG's estimated 21.6 tonnes puts us among some of the highest carbon emitters in the world – most likely a consequence of the use of heating oil, the preponderance of large houses, high use of personal transport and higher income lifestyles.

### **Media: How do we communicate, leaflets, posters, social media, website**

Group actions by season – this allows a small number of actions to be on people's minds at any given time, renewed over the course of a year. So, we produce four sets of materials, each of which are circulated / promoted every three months. Clearly many actions could be done at any time of year; so, the allocation below is a little arbitrary.

Create a 'climate trail' around SSG, with posters along a circular route introducing the actions one by one.

Meta-action: every publication should include a call to contribute to, or participate in, a local climate action group such as ours, in addition to the specific action point.

### **Risks: Division, unaccountability, licencing, rebound**

Individualistic messaging places unreasonable pressure on people with limited means. It also introduces a problem of accountability by letting the powerful off the hook and transferring responsibility on to people with little actual control. Some actions may be exclusive because they are only available to the better-off, making people on lower incomes feel disempowered and disregarded. Guilt, despair, and anxiety are all unhelpful emotions, so the messaging needs to stress opportunity, positive futures and mutual aid.

'Licencing effects' are when completing one small action seems to justify neglect of other, more significant aspects of lifestyle (e.g. 'I recycle my rubbish, so why shouldn't I vote for lower fuel taxes?'); and rebound effects are when reduced climate impact delivers financial benefits that are then used in ways that have different – possibly greater – climate impacts (e.g. reduced heating bills fund a flight to the Seychelles).

### **Impact: Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>**

For each action I have calculated the likely carbon saving per person that takes it up. These are very, very approximate and could actually range from 10% to 1000% of the figure given. Also, I have made no assessment of how likely each idea is to be adopted by people hearing about it (other than, for example, noting that 30% of people don't have a car and so can't take part in any car-related action).

Spring Actions					
Topic	Individual	Collective	Risks	CO2 reduction per person	Cost
Vote for the climate in local elections	Challenge candidates in your ward / division	Organise a 'climate hustings'		2.3t	very low £
Plan a 'no fly' holiday	Look again at your own holiday plans	Share ideas and links with friends; be an 'Eco Travel Agent'	Licence, exclusive, guilt	0.2-0.5t	high £ cost
Composting food waste to store carbon	Compost your own waste	Share a local compost heap	Licence	0.035t	very low £ saving
Share a positive eco post on social media			Guilt	1.7t	very low £
Turn off idling car engines at intersections, traffic lights and when parked	Put a reminder in your own car	Inform others of the opportunity	Licence, exclusive, rebound	0.15t	save £
Conserve water in your home	Reduce cistern capacity; A+ dishwasher and washing machine; rinse washing up	Share laundry with a neighbour		0.018t	save low £
Dry clothes outdoors until autumn		Share laundry with a neighbour	Exclusive, rebound	0.016t	save £

<b>Summer Actions</b>					
Topic	Individual	Collective	Risks	CO2 reduction per person	Cost
Check the climate risks to your pension fund	Letter writing	Group petition		0.4t	save variable £
Sell a car, buy a bike	Use bikes, hire cars, public transport	Car share, lift share	Rebound	0.7t	save £
Refill old packaging			Licence, exclusive	0.015t	very low £
Check the air pressure in your tyres		Share pressure gauge	Exclusive	0.11t	save £
Invest in community renewables	Eg visit Ethex.co.uk	Promote share offer, start a co-operative	Exclusive, licence, rebound	0.96t	save £
Replace gas/oil heating with heat pumps		Shared heating, learn to survey	Very exclusive, licence	1.75	save low £
Use Freecycle and auction websites	Clear out your loft	Reselling clubs, mutual aid	Rebound	0.06t; save £	save £



<b>Autumn Actions</b>					
Topic	Individual	Collective	Risks	CO2 reduction per person	Cost
Buy grass fed / organic milk	Eg from our local farm	Buying club, CSA	Exclusive, licence	0.004t	
Add a car free day to every week			Exclusive, licence	0.23t	
Talk about climate change more		Works best in groups		1.7t	
Decarbonise your workplace	Recycle and manage space heating, for example	Unions, workplace teams		0.087t	
Switch to a green energy tariff	Ethicalconsumer.org is a good source of advice		Slightly exclusive	0.5t	low £
Pick an area of your life (clothes, travel, processed foods...) and spend a month 'making do'		Could be a social event	Rebound	0.005t	save £

<b>Winter Actions</b>					
Topic	Individual	Collective	Risks	CO2 reduction per person.	Cost
Prepare to grow your own food	Allotment or garden	Shared allotment, help a neighbour with an overgrown garden		0.08t;	save low £
Plant ten trees, or save one mature tree		Needs a lot of land!	Licence	0.32t	
Work shorter hours		Job share; union	Exclusive	0.19t	high £
Plan and combine journeys	Efficient use of your own car	Lift sharing and lobby for bus services		0.1t	save low £
Reduce food waste by half with planning and preservation	In your own household	Share preserves, country markets	Rebound	0.08t; save £	save £
Turn off lights as you leave a room, and use a single lamp rather than full illumination		Bulk buy LED bulbs	Licence	0.036t	save low £
Make Christmas cards into gift tags			Licence	Close to 0	