

Chipping Norton Town Council

Chipping Norton Declaration of Climate and Ecology Emergency

Chipping Norton Town Council recognises:

1. That climate change is a key emerging issue affecting the wellbeing and health of residents of Chipping Norton, employment and the continued prosperity of the town. The climate change already underway will have major local impacts for which a responsible council must be prepared.
2. That many residents, especially the younger generation, expect and increasingly are demanding that Chipping Norton Town Council takes a proactive stance. That having a clear and progressive position on these issues is important to address the concerns and needs of residents.
3. That beyond this, adopting a strong clear and visible policy can greatly enhance the profile of Chipping Norton as an attractive and forward-looking place to live, work and invest.
4. That national climate policy has a target of achieving net-carbon neutrality by 2050 and that all levels of government and institutions will be required to play their part in achieving or exceeding this goal. Local authorities should not wait for national government to lead. Given that major changes are inevitable, there are advantages and opportunities for Chipping Norton if it can place itself at the forefront of change and pro-actively adopt necessary policy. Conversely there are major costs in holding back until such changes are enforced by central government.
5. That Bold action to mitigate changes in climate and ecosystems can deliver economic benefits such as jobs, budget savings and market opportunities, as well as improved personal, social and environmental wellbeing.
6. That climate change is a global crisis and the consequences of global temperatures rising above 1.5°C are severe. Preventing this must take top priority. All governments, national and local, have a duty to stop this from happening, and limit negative impacts of climate and ecosystem changes.
7. This is an opportunity for the council, businesses, institutions and residents of Chipping Norton to come together around a shared purpose and enjoy a renewed sense of pride in their community.

This Town Council therefore acknowledges a climate and ecology emergency, and pledges to:

1. Work together within the Council and with local businesses, landowners, community organisations and residents to make a beneficial impact on the environment and biodiversity in the local area.
2. Appoint a council working group to establish and monitor an action plan. This plan will

- reduce negative environmental impact of work carried out by the Town Council;
 - aim for carbon neutrality before 2030
 - anticipate and prepare for predicted climate impacts
 - protect the health of vulnerable residents
 - prepare for extreme weather events
 - advise and seek advice for planning decisions
 - Adapt to future challenges.
3. Review existing work practices and contractors and set guidelines for the choice of future contractors based on a principle of carbon neutrality.
 4. When working with local organisations and making grants and awards, to consider environmental impact, setting clear and ambitious carbon and ecosystem goals.
 5. Consider how to incorporate climate and ecosystem change and resilience in our Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Agendas in order to create an infrastructure within the Town Council which prioritises ecologically responsible action.
 6. Lobby to ensure that all planning decisions are consistent with an ecological action plan. For example, that building planning and land development decisions are fully consistent with national conservation policy, the protection of SSSI's and enhancing habitat for native species; and that planning permission is not granted to development on land that may be affected by future climate impacts (such as flooding) or may increase run off.
 7. Make local decisions regarding transport, including decisions regarding new roads, availability of parking and public transport include a recognition to the wider climate impacts. When making such decisions Chipping Norton Town Council will always choose policies that will encourage public transport and cycling and reduce the levels of vehicle use and congestion.
 8. Work constructively with district, and county councils to provide an adequate framework of policy, regulations and resources to make this possible, particularly, with regard to planning and infrastructure.
 9. Publicly report twice a year on actions undertaken to address this emergency and planned actions for the next period.
 10. Engage with the whole community, to acknowledge the expertise and commitment of others, to work alongside, encourage as appropriate. Make recommendations regarding strategy and action. This engagement will include investment in outreach and information for all residents, business and institutions, including public exhibitions and public consultation on the challenges and opportunities of the climate crisis seeking to build a strong and shared sense of community purpose.

The Town Council will keep this declaration under review and revise and strengthen commitments as necessary.

