Communities taking action on the climate

Report of an initial meeting

23 February 2021

Winchester Action on Climate Change and Winchester City Council

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Part 1: Creating a community network on the climate

1. Introduction and context

Nearly 60 community leaders of climate action across the Winchester District gathered on zoom on 23 February 2021 to:

- learn about the City Council's Carbon Neutrality Action Plan target of a net zero carbon district by 2030, and give their views about actions that will have the most impact to reduce the overall emissions in the District
- share ideas and experiences about local climate projects to enable them to learn from each other and build a sense of community.

The event was targeted at anyone active in their community on climate change: residents, parish / town councillors, people from faith communities or social clubs of all types.

Winchester City Council commissioned WinACC (Winchester Action on Climate Change) to organise the event. It was hoped that it would be the first step in a programme of actions to engage people in communities in Winchester District to support the achievement of a carbon neutral Winchester District by 2030 by:

1. taking action in their community to cut their own emissions - choosing, resourcing and implementing practical projects that reduce energy use or generate renewable energy
2. supporting Winchester City Council in developing and implementing its Carbon Neutrality Action Plan.

2. Conclusions and the way forward

Groups from parish councils, business networks, community centres, eco-churches and green groups are already active on environmental issues in a variety of ways.

Action on the environment is not always action on the climate. Some places report greater public appetite for nature/conservation (including litter-picking) than climate. The most common type of activity is about nature: looking after verges, planting wildflowers, rewilding, increasing biodiversity, plant and seed swaps and planting trees. Of these, only tree-planting directly addresses the climate emergency.

Nevertheless, although climate was new to the agenda for some, there was support for action on it.

Participants' ideas to progress the climate agenda in communities in Winchester district.

i. Opportunities to learn from each other

> *"We just need to work effectively together don't we!"*

Most indicated they would appreciate this kind of event again as a forum to:

- be connected
- enable learning from each other, to avoid reinventing or starting from scratch
- share ideas/advice and stories
- review what has worked well in other parishes
- connect communities to the Council

> *"It's great to have the opportunity to talk directly to WCC and also great that they are openly inviting the conversation … I'm hopeful that the feedback the council received could feed into an action plan"*

Other suggestions were:

- monthly newsletter
- Facebook group
- shared mailing list

ii. Resources for local groups

Many asked for resources such as:

- a list of actions that parish councils and local groups can take
- sample projects that would have an impact on climate change to choose from depending on circumstances and people
- a directory of practical resources eg local power companies to use for heating / electricity in parish buildings
- a directory for Winchester like that on New Leaf Alresford's website
- speakers e.g. WinACC to talk to local meetings about practical actions and emissions
- a one-stop shop for information on schemes etc.

An exciting project for the year ahead - The Centre for Sustainable Energy – a charity based in Bristol – is working with WinACC on a project to engage and inspire parish councils and communities across the Winchester area to respond to the climate emergency.

As part of the project CSE will produce a carbon footprint report for each parish, giving an overview of where the parish's carbon emissions come from, supported by a few webinars to discuss the detail and implications of these reports. Building on this, CSE and WinACC plan to run climate emergency action days in the summer and autumn to support the parish councils and their communities in developing climate action plans. We will kick off the project by sending baseline surveys to parish councils and community climate groups to understand where there is already climate emergency-related engagement and activity (and where there isn't), and what support communities need to make changes and respond to the climate emergency.

CSE and WinACC bring a wealth of community engagement and communications experience and resources to support those already active to engage the broader community, and to engage those parishes and communities who have to date been less engaged with the climate emergency agenda. Launching into the first step sending out surveys in the next few weeks, the project will run until March 2022.

iii. Mentoring/guidance on how to engage people and the community.

> *"Engagement is a problem – it's difficult to engage people for more than 15 minutes."*

- how to set up a local group, and how to support it when motivation dwindles
- running events
- facilitating micro groups
- behaviour change

iv. Information /advice and support

> *"Parish councils must have a role in educating people."*

Groups asked for digestible, simple and shareable information about the more complicated things that people could do. Specifically:

Cutting energy used in the home

- how to save energy used in the home and community buildings
- how the Local Plan can require developers to meet low carbon standards
- how to share data about retrofitting
- grants

More renewable energy

- advice on solar panels/heat pumps on churches
- more information about solar farms

3. What the City Council could do to help us all bring about lasting change

This section doesn't repeat suggestions covered in the section above.

Overall

- Don't imply that action needs to be by individuals: understand in terms of the wider government policy and legislative framework.
- Lobby the central government to move faster and to spend more money. This includes subsidies for public transport.
- Can WCC publicly support the CEE Bill - through the CEE Bill Alliance?

- Signpost to local groups from WCC website.
- Help make people aware of their individual impact.
- Incentives, for example some sort of progressive Council Tax discount for homes that are better insulated/use less energy or a surcharge, for those that can afford it, for worse performing homes.

> *"I think the most important kind of thing we can do and take back to our groups is those which affect systemic change, like supporting the CEE Bill, which could change the context in which we're doing all this action."*

Cutting energy used in travel

- Some groups saw transport as a real problem. WCC should work with HCC on big changes to transport and movement. Without good bus connections people need to rely on cars. They felt that there's no useful public transport system from villages or outlying towns into Winchester: some had one bus per day, others had routes that meandered around the villages vastly increasing the time it took to arrive in Winchester compared to a car journey. The only time people used the P&R was for hospital appointments as there is a stop directly outside.
- Working with HCC on the Winchester Movement Strategy
- Put pressure on HCC for public transport
- Make it easier for people to travel to and around Winchester city when they get there by amending bus routes so that (for example) people from villages don't need to change buses to reach the new leisure centre
- Review where the P&R stops are
- Bus routes are not direct enough into Winchester.
- Encourage HCC to upgrade school buses to electric or low emission vehicles
- Low traffic zones
- Support in completing cycle routes.
- Better cycle lanes
- Easier and more electric charging points
- Car hubs for rental/ hire etc in population centres
- A good system for "the last mile" at both ends of the journey.
- One participant reminded us that some people are unable to walk very far at all or ride a bike. They don't have any alternative but to make short journeys by car.

> *"I used public transport (pre lockdown), but I even struggle with that. If I go into town on the bus, within minutes of getting off the bus I am already struggling due to lack of seating in town as I need to rest frequently."*

Cutting energy used in the home

- District heating in rural areas needs to be investigated.

- Comparing consumption in similar types of housing or from one parish to another Pilio Energy Saving Service (piliogroup.com) is one useful tool for this.
- Planning:
    - All planning should be seen through the lens of climate change – green planning.
    - More stringent planning (both Local Plan framework, and to enforce planning conditions)
    - Review the planning rules on listed buildings, there's no point keeping a building if the world around it is collapsing
    - Need planning rules to help stop properties continually being extended which then puts price beyond reach of local people - use Article 4 relating to HMOs, policies in new Local Plan.
    - adaptation... How does this feature in the local plan? E.g. flooding/fires?

More renewable energy

- Support for solar panel installations.
- Community energy – gain money back from solar farms. Local energy and local grid.

Low carbon food

- Groups wanted action on consumption especially of imports, particularly food. The priority is promoting a reliable source of local sustainable food, educating the public about food, diets etc.
- Allotments should be protected from development and included in any new developments
- Waste food collection
- Community orchards
- Farmers – how can we work with farmers; effective communication with farmers
- WCC could lead by example by serving such quality food at meetings and encouraging businesses to do so too.
- WCC to lead by example with their procurement
- Encourage businesses to make seasonal food regularly available to buy locally, at reasonable price. (Despite high rents in the city centre, possible lack of suitable soil and available land!). Need this to support greater plant-based diets and avoiding imports.
- We want to buy food grown locally too. Winchester doesn’t have many local producers (like Alresford has butcher/baker/green grocer) - could rental rates be reduced for local business so they can be included on the High Street? WCC could talk to the BID
- Promote living wage for food producers.
- Education about food, accessible food, farm economics etc

Investments

- Send a strong message: financially divest

Stuff

- Mount a simple campaign for the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) to initiate behaviour change
- Zero waste week

Part 2: Resources

4. The types of actions that would make the biggest impact on getting to zero carbon

Chris Holloway, Chair, WinACC, outlined examples of actions for leaders and groups

What to focus on?

The biggest sources of household emissions in Winchester District that show in the national statistics from are transport and heating the home. So, these are obvious places to start.

Transport has almost doubled its energy use since 1970. Road vehicles emit more than 90% of the UK's transport-based CO2, and personal cars are by far the biggest slice.

It's also good to shift from fossil fuel to renewably produced electricity. At present, about 15% of household energy is electricity; the rest is gas, petrol, etc. But as we change to electric vehicles and electric heat pumps, we will use a lot more electricity.

There are other major sources of greenhouse gas that don't appear in stats:

- food - eat less meat and dairy, cut waste of food);
- imported investments - take your savings and your pension out of oil wells.
- imports - stop buying stuff

How to take action?

Cutting energy used in travel

- Check your schools have an up-to-date Safer Route to School / school travel plan which encourages people to walk or cycle to school.
- Support infrastructure changes – reply to consultations e.g. Local Transport Plan 4.
- Encourage lift-sharing / car-sharing.
- If you can't manage without a car, switch to a small car, and to an electric car (size is more important than you might think).

> *The National Audit Office reported a couple of days after the event that carbon emissions from passenger cars across Britain have fallen by just 1% since 2011, despite a steep rise in the sale of electric and hybrid vehicles because of the popularity of sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and an increase in road traffic.*

Cutting energy used in the home

Heating UK homes currently accounts for 17% of all carbon emissions – we need to transform the UK's entire housing stock

- Energy use comparisons – WinACC parish maps using BEIS data; can do locally.
- Open House - sharing what people have done, open day/open house events, find someone with a heat pump and ask them to have an open day.
- Get an energy inspection report on village buildings - check you are controlling the heating (grants available).

More renewable energy

- Take-up campaign for the Solar Together scheme.
- Install heat pump.
- Switch to renewable energy provider – individually, and in community buildings e.g. halls, churches.
- Get a local renewable energy scheme – solar on church, village hall; ground source heat pump.

Low carbon food

- Serve plant-based food at all parish council events.
- Community allotment
- Landshare scheme – people with large gardens they can't manage share with other local people who use them for vegetables
- Incredible edible - let local people grow food on unused bits of parish land

Investments

- Publicise that the parish council has checked and taken its savings out of fossil fuel.
- Invite a speaker to tell people how to take their savings out of fossil fuels.
- Join Hampshire Pension Divest.

Stop buying stuff

- Buy less and reduce waste.
- Encourage use of Freecycle.
- Local swap shop.

Who to involve?

People do what they think everyone else is doing - especially people they look up to. So, make it the "done thing" to be active on the climate:

- **Publicise** the parish's commitment to action on climate change.
- **Get the trend-setters and VIPs involved**: a meeting hosted by the parish council/ vicar/ local business / MP / Councillor, in the big house.

Engage the people with the most money - they have the largest footprint: larger homes to heat, larger cars, flights to New York for Christmas shopping.

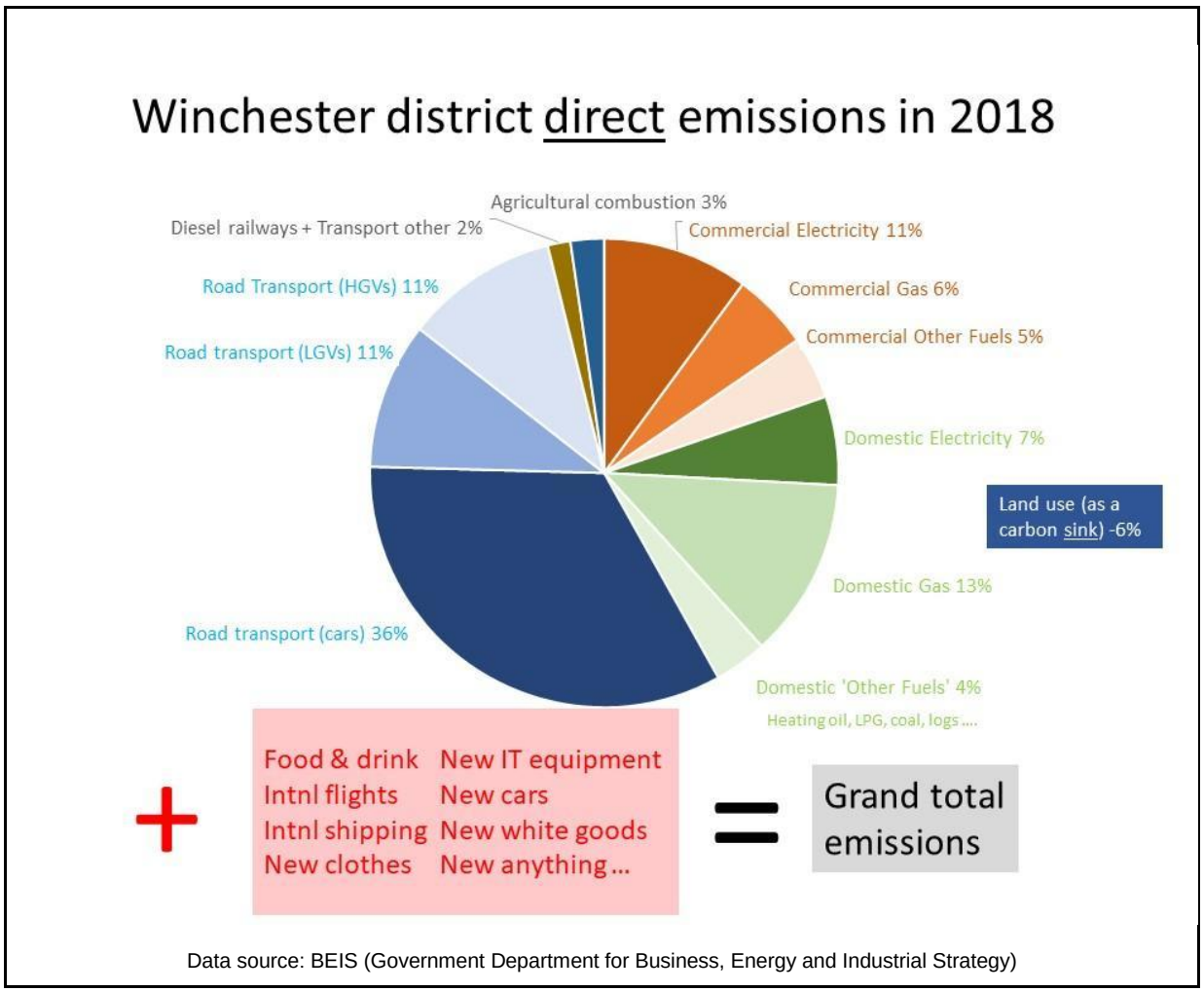
5. What groups are already doing in their local community

People were in breakout groups for this discussion so not every initiative has been captured. These are those that were recorded:

Alresford	New Leaf Alresford. They have a core of 8-10 really active people. Main communication is Facebook - 450 members - a mix of all sorts of people. Their website is a hub of info for residents, information for businesses, campaigning. They've done work on road verges, tree planting campaigns. Road verges campaign with several other groups. Tree planting (one of their members is a tree officer for WCC and HCC), Litter picks. St John's Alresford Eco church finds it difficult persuading people to walk short distances rather than drive.
Badger Farm	Wildflower group to increase biodiversity. Tackle issue of HMOs. Could go for a green switch campaign.
Cheriton	Villagers improving riverine habitat and flood prevention. They want to know more about energy issues.
Colden Common	Using Pilio Energy Saving Service piliogroup.com to track energy use of community buildings.
Crawley	Holding on to bus route Wildflowers, composting.
Fulflood	St Paul's Church being refurbished to be green.
Highcliffe	Highcliffe Forum – neighbourhood group Planting bluebells. Swift boxes, hedgehog survey. Regular litter picks Clean Air Day involving local school in a no idling campaign for cars. Involvement with the community plan; new leisure centre on doorstep so conversations with WCC and developers.
Oliver's battery.	Promote more wildlife, display how gardens are making more friendly, veg growing. Aim to increase public transport.
Twyford	ACT (Action on Carbon in Twyford) includes parish councillors and residents. Planted 1000 hedging plants round local recreation ground. Connecting with other things happening in the village e.g. turning resident-owned meadow into woodland (not initiated by ACT) planting 130 native shrubs and trees to replace dying ash trees. Campaign to sponsor a sapling (£1 each) sold out in only a few days where each tree was sponsored for £1 and all went very quickly; Neighbourhood plan process Prepared submission for parish council to send to Cllr Rob Humby re HCC Transport Plan. Planning Green Fair at Church on 17 July – aimed at kick starting a movement in the village and recruiting interested people. This will have lots of different organisations covering different topics and providing information. Possible village green switch.
Upham	Upham – Green Group using the Greening Campaign. Supported by parish council; church isn't really involved. Publicise group through newsletter. Include tips and recommendations. Big tree planting initiative - had 140 trees donated.
Whiteley	There is Whiteley Town Council, but also North Whiteley, where 3500 homes are being

	built. 10 years of trying to work with the consortium of developers to ensure green homes: challenging developers to build energy-efficient homes and work with communities more. Have been asking for electric vehicle charging points, to conserve trees, solar panels. Need to change developers' mind set. Trying to develop bus routes. New area, so hard to get them to use it. Everything geared to cars. Children growing wildflower Photographic competition.
?	Footpath group keeps footpaths clear of plants and litter to make them more attractive and encourage more walking
?	tetrapak recycling facilities

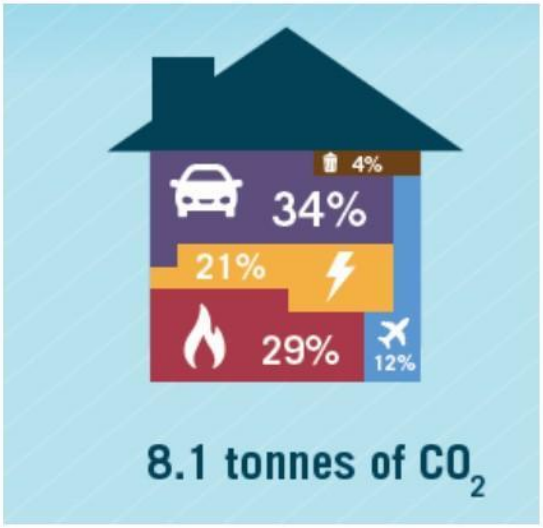
6. Sources of emissions in Winchester District



Data source: BEIS (Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)

40% of UK direct emissions come from households*





Without transport	
Heating	54%
Electricity	39%
Waste	7%

*Committee on Climate Change, 2016

WINCHESTER DISTRICT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN 2018

WinACC

Increase in Energy Consumption

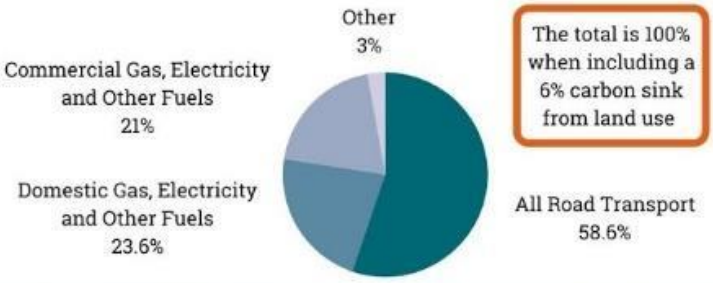
Since 2013 the district's overall energy consumption rose by almost 2%. The biggest increase came from vans and lorries and the biggest decrease was from commercial electricity

Emissions were 819,000 tonnes CO_2 in 2018

28.8%
Decrease in emissions between 2005 and 2018

16.3%
Decrease in emissions between 2005 and 2018 when impact of clean energy removed

Sources of CO2 Emissions in 2018



The total is 100% when including a 6% carbon sink from land use

Carbon Sinks in 2018

- In 2018, land use, land use change, and forestry removed 49.1 thousand tonnes CO2 from the atmosphere
- But crop soil and settlement soil are still net sources of CO2
- Better management of soils and increasing forest cover can increase CO2 removed from the atmosphere





Change is Needed Now

- At current trends Winchester will not reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030
- Drastic cuts are needed in all emission areas, especially road traffic and domestic gas
- Despite Winchester district's large potential for renewable energy, only 12% of energy consumed in 2016 was renewable

Data from: Whitmarsh, R. B.; Winchester Action on Climate Change; Greenhouse gas emissions in Winchester District: Part X Estimates and trends (2005 - 2018), August 2020

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7. Who has influence over what

It can be difficult to work out who controls what. For example:

- Why does one Council collect your rubbish and a different Council run the tip ("Household Waste Recycling Facility")?
- Who has the power to insist that new housing has solar panels?

It can also be difficult to see where you can have an influence.

A handy table that shows who can make the changes we need - UK Government, City Council or local communities can be downloaded from: https://www.winacc.org.uk/who-has-influence-over-what

8. The City Council highest priorities to cut the carbon footprint of the district

Harriett Rickets, Sustainability Officer, WCC, gave this presentation for Winchester City Council:

Winchester City Council declared a climate emergency in summer 2019. We set two dates to reach next zero carbon - 2024 to become a carbon neutral council and 2030 to become a carbon neutral district.

The City Council has direct control of about half a per cent of the emissions from Winchester District. Whereas more than 99% of the emissions are controlled by other people: for example: the public, householders, businesses, other public bodies such as schools. So a later, but challenging, target of 2030 was set for reducing these emissions.

Although we don't have direct control over the 99% of the emissions, the City Council has significant ability to influence the behaviour of others and is keen to continue to work with the public, local parishes and community groups to provide support in reducing these emissions.

The Council's top priorities are Housing, Transport and Energy. Examples of these include:

Cutting energy used in the home

The City Council is undertaking research with the University of Southampton on Energy Performance Certificates. This data will be broken down by parishes. WCC is committed to improving the energy efficiency of our council housing over the next 10 years.

The emerging Local Plan will have an emphasis on low carbon infrastructure, it is open for consultation until the 21st April 2021.

Cutting energy used in travel

The City Council continues to influence and work with Hampshire County Council, which is the transport authority for Winchester District, to promote sustainable and active transport.

The Winchester Movement Strategy addresses the current and future challenges facing Winchester, aiming to reduce traffic levels and provide a wide range of schemes to increase park and ride provision, improving public transport and removing barriers to walking and cycling. The aim is to improve air quality above the national requirements.

Within the Council, we are looking to ensure that for future contracts the park and ride buses and waste vehicles are electric, but we need to work out where the funding will come from. We need to continue to lobby HCC and the government in this, with your help.

More renewable energy

The City Council can identify places in Winchester District which are suitable for different forms of renewable energy through working with local communities, so that we can replace energy from fossil fuels with energy we make ourselves - encouraging communities and businesses to increase energy efficiency in their buildings, consider alternative energy sources to fossil fuels and promote renewable energy. We are joining Solar Together which offers homeowners and small business (SMEs) the opportunity to purchase high quality solar panels at a competitive price.

Working with the community

However, the council alone cannot achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. We need you - the public, community groups and local parishes - to make Winchester a carbon neutral district by 2030. Small individual changes can ensure that significant changes are made.

We would like to support you in the changes that you are making.

This is less likely to be in the way of funding, though we have small grants (greener futures crowdfunding - https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/greener-future-fund); and we can support bids for funding by organisations like WinACC to raise money to help people to make their homes more energy efficient, and work with Wessex Green Hub to encourage sustainable businesses within Winchester District.

It is more likely to support you through creating environmentally friendly policies and services, and driving a campaign of behaviour change to encourage everyone to do their bit.

We look forward to learning what you think it is most important, and helpful for us to do.

9. Links

Ideas and resources for local action

- Ideas **of climate actions from workshops of parish councils** in Winchester district. https://www.winacc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/parishtown_council_climate_change_ideas-2020_11_28.pdf
- **WinACC resources for Community Groups** https://www.winacc.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigns-2/working-with-community-groups/
- **Games, quizzes, things to do on a stall, equipment for events** https://www.winacc.org.uk/free-resources-for-climate-change-groups-and-events/
- **Hampshire County Council report on climate change behavioural insights** - https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Appendix%203%20Behavioural%20Insights%20Report%20Cabinet%20July%202020%20%281%29.pdf

Data on climate change and emissions locally

- **WinACC report on greenhouse gas emissions for the whole district**: https://www.winacc.org.uk/resources/stap-reports/winchester-carbon-emissions-maps/
- **Maps of Winchester district** showing carbon emissions per person.

Transport

- Short briefings and links to current **transport campaigns and consultations** https://www.winacc.org.uk/campaigning-for-sustainable-transport/

Energy in the home

- **Solar Together** (bulk purchase scheme from HCC) https://solartogether.co.uk/hampshire/landing
- **General advice** https://environmentcentre.com/
- **WCC consultation on the new Local Plan** https://www.winacc.org.uk/winchester-district-local-plan/
- **Energy Saving Trust** https://energysavingtrust.org.uk

Renewables

- WinACC pages about **solar farms** – in principle, plus information on any locally contentious applications https://www.winacc.org.uk/what-we-do/campaigns-2/solar-farms/

Investment

- **Hampshire Pension Fund Divestment -** Form and petition to get HCC to divest the pension fund from fossil fuels https://www.dirtymoneyhants.info/?fbclid=IwAR0nq8DqSHKqEi-luK8tysS1rDRVIUlkBq58bx9SMu96ooGegksGXBKpI94

Local climate group links

- **Extinction Rebellion Winchester** - https://xrwinchester.org.uk/join-us.html
- **Campaign of support to Climate Ecology and Environment (CEE) Bill** https://www.winchceebill.info/
- **Greening Campaign** http://www.greening-campaign.org/

10. The event programme and participants

7.30	**Welcome and aims**
7.35	**Getting to know each other exercise**
7.40	**What we know about causes of emissions in Winchester District** Presentation by Bob Whitmarsh, WinACC
7.45	**What are people already doing in their own area?** In mixed groups of six
8.10	**Actions that would make the biggest impact on getting to zero carbon** Presentation by Chris Holloway, Chair of WinACC
8.15	**The City Council highest priorities to cut the carbon footprint of the district** In fours – followed by feedback, then a quick survey to identify top priorities
8.20	**What the City Council could do to help us all bring about lasting change?** In geographical groups of six
8.30	**How people want to take forward ideas into their own area** In the same groups
8.50	**Summing up and next steps**
9.00	End

Organisations and places at the event

ACT (Action on Carbon in Twyford)
Badger Farm Community Centre
Badger Farm Parish Council
Barton Stacey Parish Council
Bishops Waltham
Bishop's Waltham Parish Council
Braishfield Parish Council
Cheriton
Cheriton Parish Council
Christ Church, Winchester
Colden Common Parish Council
Community First
Crawley Parish Council
Dever News
Durley Parish Council
Hambledon Greening Campaign
Hambledon Parish Council
Hampshire Cultural Trust
Highcliffe Community Action
Hursley Climate Change Working Group (HCCWG)
Hursley Parish Council
Itchen Valley
Itchen Valley Parish Council
Littleton and Harestock Parish Council
New Leaf Alresford
Newlands Parish Council
South Wonston Parish Council
Sparsholt Parish Council
St Michael Ward Winchester City Council
St Paul's Green Group
Tichborne Parish Council
Twyford Parish Council
Upham Parish Council
Whiteley Town Council
WinACC
Winchester BID
Winchester FoE
Winchester Green Week
Winchester XR
Wonston Parish Council

This includes people who sent apologies for the event and asked to be kept in the loop.