WeCAN

Winchester Climate Action Network

Summary Report from baseline surveys of **parish councils** across Winchester District

May 2021

Winchester Action on Climate Change and
The Centre for Sustainable Energy for
Winchester City Council

Contents

WeCAN 1

Winchester Climate Action Network 1

Next Steps: Invitation 3

1. **Parish profiles** - a carbon footprint for each parish - available mid June 3
2. **Webinars** - June 3
3. **Action planning days** 3

Introduction and context 4

Results of parish council surveys 5

Leadership for the environment in Parish Councils 5

Priority environmental issues 7

What's happening? And what do people want to engage in to address climate change? 9

Barriers and support 10

Other local groups known to be working on climate change and other environmental issues 11

In conclusion 13

Next Steps: Invitation

1. **Parish profiles** - a carbon footprint for each parish - available mid June

2. **Webinars** - June

You are invited to the following Zoom meeting:
'Winchester District Parish Carbon Footprints - Review & Discussion'.
Run by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Winchester Action on Climate Change, these give you a chance to ask questions and discuss what the parish profile footprint results mean for climate action in your area.

Please **register in advance** for **one** of the following options by clicking on the link:

Wednesday June 23rd, 5-6:30pm:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsdeuprjItGt1nodcSKo2hhahyBXTPgyTz

Friday June 25th, 12:30-2pm:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZItcO6hrDIsHtEAlUnKv2tYjPizkPHE1jXv

Wednesday 30th, 12:30-2pm:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtcuqgqz4sEtYebbHwc1pOauFPnJgiU7uL

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

1. **Action planning days**

We will run climate emergency action days in the autumn to support the parish councils and their communities in developing climate action plans.

WeCAN is for communities within Winchester district who are taking action on the climate to develop:

- opportunities to learn from each other
- resources for local groups
- mentoring/guidance on how to engage local people and the community
- information advice and support

For more details, please email *WeCAN@winacc.org.uk*

Introduction and context

Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC) sees new hubs of action on the climate popping up across the Winchester District, so we feel the time is right for introducing Winchester Climate Action Network - WeCAN. 2021 is a crucial year - decisions are being taken nationally and internationally to shape the future. And locally WeCAN will help communities to be involved.

WeCAN started in February 2021 with a virtual meeting for anyone across Winchester District who was, or wanted to be, active on the climate in their community. Almost 60 people shared news about their activities and plans and set out the support they needed.

WeCAN benefits from a project this year with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (a charity based in Bristol), commissioned by Winchester City Council.

This project involves three phases:

1. Baseline surveys of Parish councils and community groups – Spring 2021
2. Parish profiles created by CSE using the Impact footprinting tool; three webinars for introducing and understanding these – Summer 2021
3. Climate action planning days – workshops in the Autumn of 2021

This report is the summary of findings from phase one of the project – gathering what has been discovered through surveys about what is or isn't going on; the priority areas; barriers; and ideas for support that could help more effective action on the climate emergency across Winchester District.

So far 13 community group surveys have been submitted. Due to the breadth of suggestions from the parish councils, further research and contact will be made to engage these community groups and a report produced from a more representative data set.

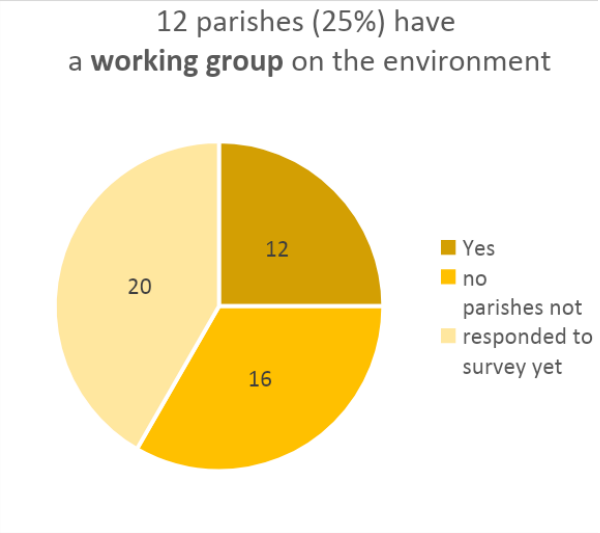
Results of parish council surveys

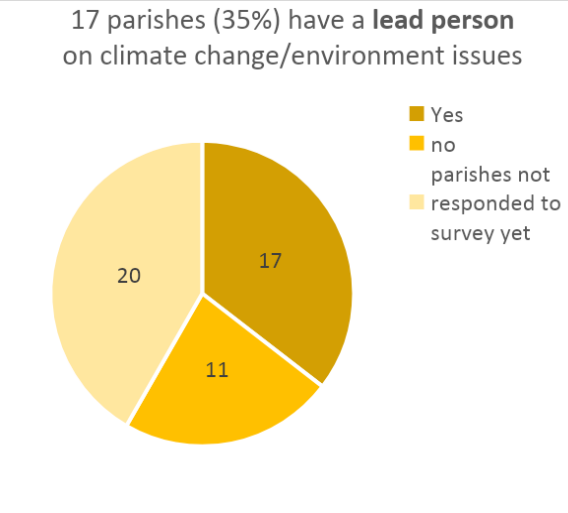
Winchester District has 48 Parishes.
To date nearly 60% of parish councils (28 of the 48 parish councils) have responded to the surveys to give a baseline of where there is already climate emergency-related activity (and where there isn't), and the support that communities need to make changes and respond to the climate emergency.

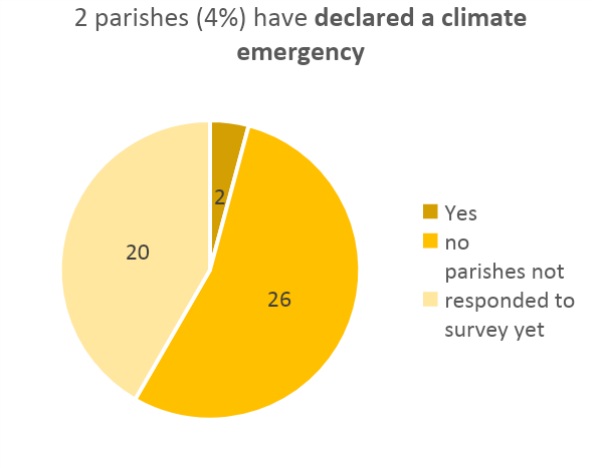
This report describes what we know so far about parishes in Winchester District.

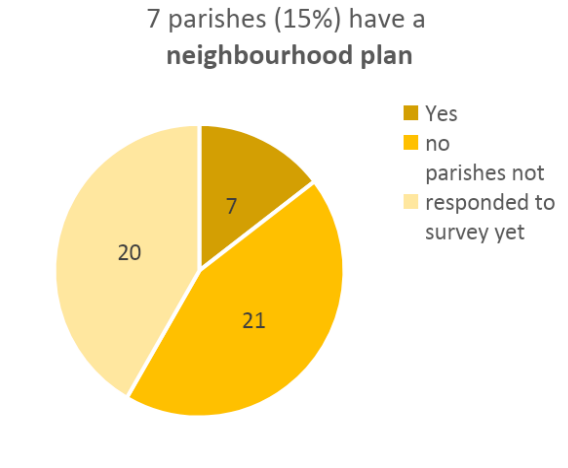
Leadership for the environment in Parish Councils

Of the 28 parish councils who have answered the survey:









The indication is that there is the beginning of a move amongst Winchester district parish councils to ensure environmental leadership features in their organisational

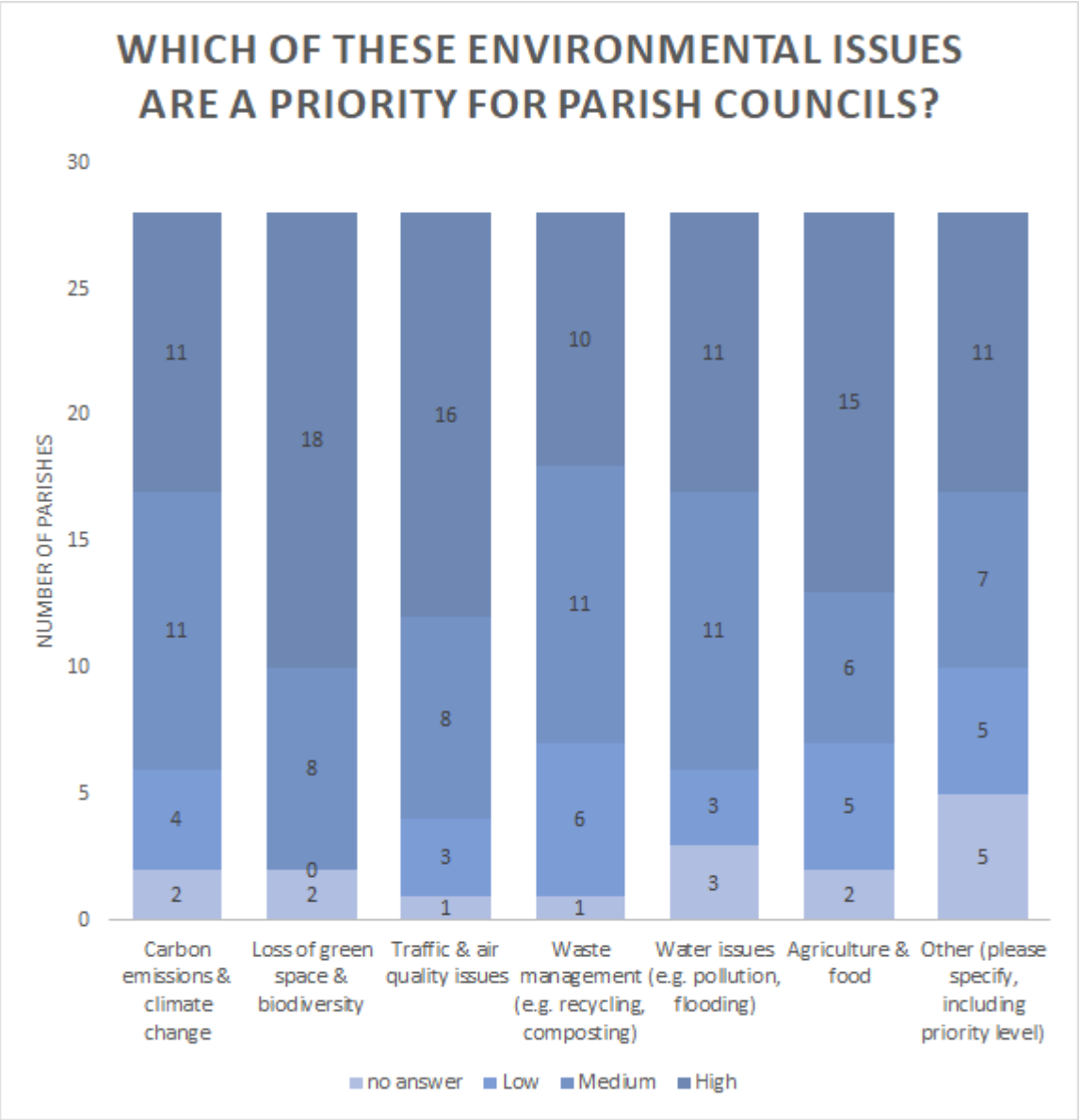
structure. The most common means to achieve that is to appoint a lead person, then a working group. Although Winchester City Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 only two parish councils have done this. Neighbourhood plans can be a potentially useful tool to ensure that action on the climate is included in the shaping of a local area, and a small number of parish councils are using this tool.



Six parish councils have no climate change leadership elements. Twelve have one element in place, eight have two elements and two parish councils have three elements in place. No parishes have all four elements.

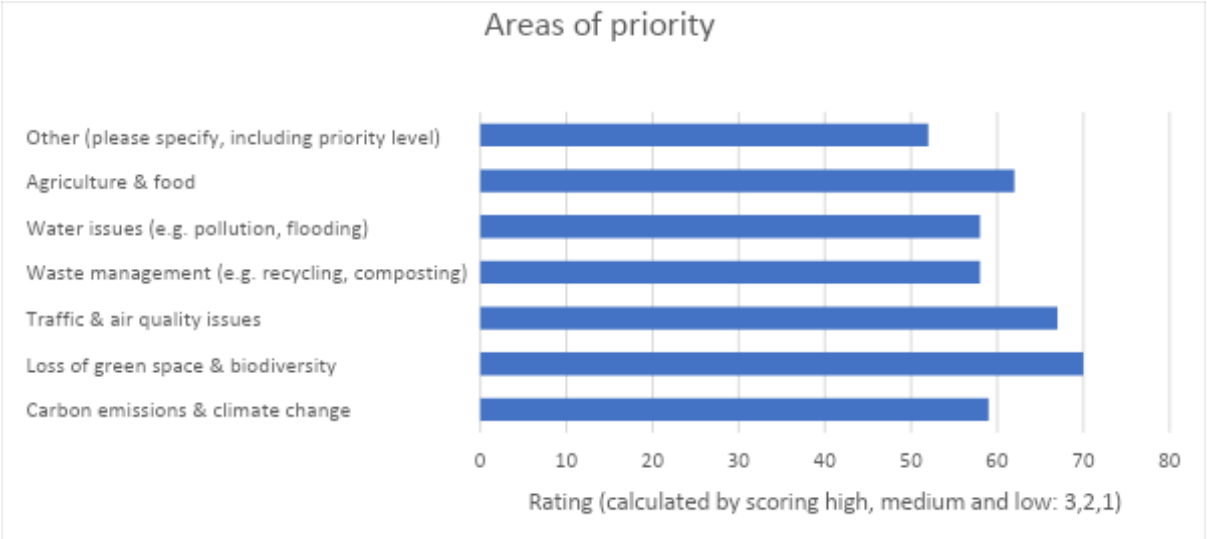
Priority environmental issues

Parish councils were asked to rate as low, medium or high, their priorities out of six given environmental issues (or suggest others). The following chart shows the answers of 28 parishes.



The highest priorities are biodiversity and loss of green space, followed by traffic and air quality, then agriculture and food. Waste management was most commonly identified as a low priority.

It is interesting to notice when these priorities are scored and given a rating (see chart below) that all issues have a rating of between 58 and the top rating of 70. All issues are of concern, with loss of biodiversity and green space taking the lead over traffic and air quality issues.



Other priorities given as alternatives to those listed in the survey question

Building Development and its effect on the parish

Working with South Downs National Park on pollinators programme/trial

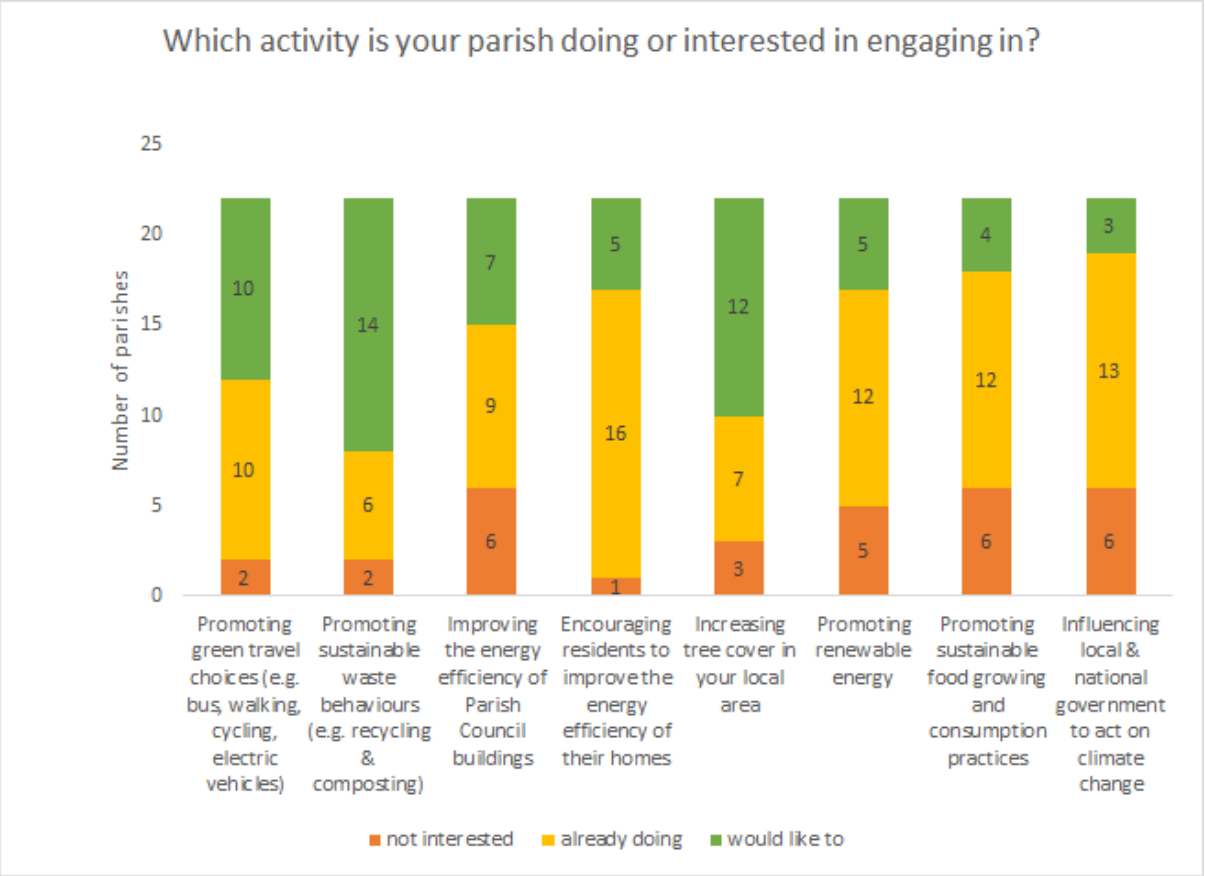
Walking and cycling issues - medium priority

Public transport - high Pedestrian facilities (especially pavements) - high Unsuitable development / planning especially Flowerdown - high

These answers indicate the value of local knowledge of issues concerning a community.

What's happening? And what do people want to engage in to address climate change?

22 parish councils indicated activities they are already engaged in or would like to develop out of eight options provided in the survey.



The dominant kind of activity currently is to encourage residents to improve the efficiency of their homes, followed by influencing the national government to act on climate change, promoting renewable energy and sustainable food.

The most popular areas to develop activity are promoting sustainable waste behaviour, increasing tree cover, and then promoting green travel.

These responses demonstrate an appetite for engagement across the range of issues. The high priority areas may be good points of engagement to start with. But WeCAN is an initiative to encourage climate action in response to the climate emergency, so entry points of engagement can be built on and developed.

Barriers and support

Parish councils identified barriers to acting on climate change and factors which would help them to take action. These fell into six categories as listed below.

1. Effects of the pandemic	"Covid pandemic - finance, meeting possibilities are limiting, people's capacity"
	"We would like to join the Greening Campaign but due to Covid-19 restrictions we cannot currently do any public engagement"
	"Slow monthly meetings online and lack of face-to-face meetings to action ideas."
2. Lack of agency	"We are restricted by the Powers we have in our local area"
	"We do what we can to promote green issues, recycling and litter picking".
	"Financial council initiatives to support people making climate influenced decisions. Joined up coherent bus service to encourage less car use. Finding cycle routes"
3.Want ideas and guidance	"Would like ideas"
	The items in the "not interested" column might move up a notch if we had more information about the "how to" aspect.
	"Not knowing where to start"
	"Little or no guidance from WCC or others on action which parish councils can take"
	"There is plenty of advice on action that individuals can take, but the PC needs some kind of template to follow."
	"Material in a digestible format about benefits of alternative heating systems, suppliers of systems. Comparative literature on costs to the planet of different cars."
	"Some education on the issue"
4.More people involved would help.	"No, but the village as a whole is not yet involved."
	"Unsure yet as only just starting to take action at Parish Council level. Possibly inertia - first announcement for volunteers in parish magazine drew no response"
	"The number of people in the area who are ready to engage".
	"Councillor vacancies"
	"A full complement of councillors"
5.Time	"Just volunteers and time. No Plan will help move this forward"
	"Lack of time to research, promote and do some of this work".
6.A plan	"Completing our village strategy"
	"Guidance or a workable plan"
	"Completion of higher priority items" [without explanation of what these are]

Hopefully, pandemic related constraints will prove to be temporary. The long-term impacts of such a disrupted year, in terms of social patterns, remain to be seen.

It is striking that several parishes in different ways are expressing a desire for help, guidance or more information. This exposes a gap. WeCAN should be able to provide

useful resources, learning and relationships. It also provides a call for leadership. Several comments about developing a plan indicate some parish councils are beginning to put strategies in place. The WeCAN project process this year can help with that – see 'next steps' section of this report on page 3. One of the key elements of the planning workshops to be held in the autumn will be to explore the question of who has power to affect what change, to help plan for effective action.

Looking to the future

One question asked parishes if they would like to take action on the climate in the future. Only five PCs said they would, and one said they would not. This question elicited almost the least number of responses. However, 56% of parish councils want to hear more about WeCAN and 73% of parish councils described themselves as active now or in the future. This inconsistency might reflect ambiguous survey design rather than a true reflection of ambition amongst parish councils.

Other local groups known to be working on climate change and other environmental issues

Of the 28 parish councils who answered this, 60% named other local groups:

Other groups listed	Parish Council
	Badger Farm
WinACC, we also work with town organisations such as Gardening Club and BW In Bloom and the Allotments Committee	Bishop's Waltham
	Boarhunt
Bramdean and Hinton Ampner WI	Bramdean and Hinton Ampner
	Cheriton
	Colden Common
Residents' associations	Compton and Shawford
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group	Denmead
	Droxford
No other Groups, but Parish Council are coordinating various residents.	Durley
Greening campaign, Horticultural Society, St Peter and St Pauls (Eco Church), Local farmers and farmer groups, Village Primary School (esp transport and planting)	Hambledon
	Hursley
Wilding verges group, Waste recycling group	Itchen Valley
Active Conservation Volunteers group - working with biodiversity issues. Parish church is keen to engage with climate change issues. Lara's recycling network - a couple of hundred members working hard to live more sustainably.	Kings Worthy
Millennium Hall Trustees have been looking at solar panels (I am told) Otherwise it's interested individuals more than groups, although they may also be members of groups such as HIWWT.	Littleton & Harestock

The Greening Campaign, WinACC	Micheldever
New Leaf Community Group	New Alresford
The sustainability team as described above. The wildflower group who are interested in supporting biodiversity. Volunteers that support the Yew Tree Hill Butterfly conservation area, which we are lucky to have in our neighbourhood.	Oliver's Battery
Otterbourne Conservation Group	Otterbourne
	Owslebury PC
	Soberton
South Wonston Safe Cycling Campaign Group, linked to the Winchester Cycle Group. Also have just linked into Worthy Down Camp who are pursuing Climate Change Developments.	South Wonston
	Southwick & Widley
WinACC, Greening Campaign	Sparsholt
Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, Winacc, New Alresford Town Council.	Tichborne
St Mary's church	Twyford
Upham Parish Council and the Green Group	Upham
	Wonston

In conclusion

- 22 parish councils (78% of those who participated in this survey) are already taking action or would like to take action in future on climate change.
- Only two parish councils said they were inactive and did not wish to be active in future.
- There is a strong positive appetite for acting on the climate and this was across all eight categories of action (see chart on p9)
- A small number of parish councils appear less active because they are still working out how to proceed. This may also be why some parishes have not yet responded to the survey.
- There is a plea for support and guidance. This suggests the WeCAN project is timely and useful as it aims to resource parish councils and community groups with parish data and expertise in how to use that to create appropriate action plans. It also sends a clear message to the City Council as well as WinACC for leadership.
- Many parish councils identify other groups working on climate change in their communities. One aim of WeCAN is to facilitate further collaboration to lead to more effective action.
- Some inconsistency and ambiguity in the answers to the surveys highlight the importance of ensuring that WeCAN maintains an emphasis on relationship and local knowledge

What next?

1. **Parish profiles** - a carbon footprint for each parish - will be available mid June
2. **Webinars** - June

   Please remember to **register in advance** for **one** of the webinars by clicking on the links on page 3
3. **Action planning days -** autumn 2021

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