



# BURWELL PARISH COUNCIL CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Burwell Parish Council recognises that the world is in a state of climate emergency and acknowledges that we must act now to reduce our carbon footprint. Around the UK, many County, District and Parish Councils are putting into place climate emergency policies, helping one another, and making a difference globally, but action needs to be taken quickly. East Cambridgeshire District Council is formulating a Climate Change Policy Action Plan, and Burwell Parish Council has been requested to participate in this project.

Many have noticed the disturbing change in recent weather patterns, causing destruction globally in the form of fires and floods, crop failure and displacement. Millions of species are under threat of extinction, and the lives and welfare of our children and grandchildren is severely compromised.

Burwell Parish Council agreed to pass a preliminary provisional climate action plan on 11/02/2020. That document was a bare bones initial outline of action that the council can take, whereas this document goes into our commitment in greater detail. Our aim is to become a carbon neutral parish by 2030.



## **Climate Emergency Mobilisation**

The speed and scale of climate change is such that the level of change required to our energy markets, economy, legislation, and our behaviour, requires leadership and direction, on a local, national, and global level. This is clearly demonstrated by recent Government Legislation proposals on vehicles, and changes in grant initiatives to promote climate change awareness for homes, Local, National & Personal Transport.

Burwell Parish Council can:

- Offer support in petitioning the government to declare and act on the climate emergency.
- Offer support to the local community to engage and take action
- Offer provision of information and advocacy, through public meetings and events, social media, and the Parish Council website. - the building of a strong community identity to promote valuable skills and knowledge sharing.
- Lead by example – Gardiner Memorial Hall Project
- Encourage use of Cycling to work by promoting safe cycling routes to Cambridge, Exning, Soham new railway station.
- Promote safer cycling and walking opportunities within the village locality.

## **2. WHERE IS THE CARBON COMING FROM?**

Carbon emissions come from many sources. To reduce these damaging emissions, we firstly need to identify their source, then limit or eliminate them. How we intend to tackle each of these sources is dealt with in Section 5 below.

- 5.1 Energy Usage and Sources
- 5.2 Transport and Travel
- 5.3 Agriculture and Food
- 5.4 Housing, Infrastructure, Home insulation
- 5.5 Local Business
- 5.6 Waste and Resources
- 5.7 Environment and Land use

### **What are the top ten culprits of greenhouse gases?**

1. Burning fossil fuels to heat our houses and businesses, and fuel our transport accounts for nearly a third of global emissions
2. Transportation – driving, flying etc. accounts for nearly 15% of global climate change pollution

3. Manufacturing and construction
4. Unsustainable food systems
5. Burning other fuels such as wood
6. Industry – mainly cement and aluminium production
7. Destruction of forests and woodland
8. Gas flares
9. Landfills produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas
10. The fashion industry.

### **3. HOW DO WE BECOME CARBON NEUTRAL?**

Firstly, Burwell Parish Council will look to its own carbon footprint, with the help of ECDC, then encourage residents to do the same in their own households. East Cambridgeshire District Council have recently appointed an officer who can advise on how to calculate a household's carbon footprint, and we plan to invite him to address the parish council in the near future.

We need to change, as a community, to a more sustainable lifestyle, utilising power with maximum efficiency and getting it from renewable sources such as wind and solar, reducing the number of petrol and diesel vehicles on the road, encouraging the changeover to electric/hybrid vehicles, reducing waste and plastic consumption, buying food from local sources.

Other parishes (e.g. Reach) have installed renewable energy sources locally, saving tonnes of carbon emissions every year.

The government is offering grants for improved window glazing, home insulation, and heat pumps, and plan to phase out gas boilers from 2025. There is also an initiative to introduce hydrogen into gas to reduce nitrogen oxide and reduce pollutants, as well as initiatives to install home charging points for electric / PHEV vehicles.

Our goal with the Plan is to inform and educate the residents of Burwell, support them in changing their behaviour and lifestyles to reduce carbon emissions, and to help build resilience against the adverse impact of climate change.



### **4. WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR**

Burwell Parish Council has:

- Acknowledged that we are in a state of climate emergency and created our Action Plan
- Supported the planting of trees and wildflowers around the village of Burwell

- Initiated a liaison with ECDC and other parishes to share information on tackling climate change
- Agreed a liaison with Burwell Environment Group to pool resources
- Agreed that all BPC facilities should endeavour to become as carbon neutral as possible as / when they are upgraded
- Applied for a decarbonisation grant for the Gardiner Memorial Hall refurbishment Project

## **5. THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

Burwell Parish Council proposes the following actions to reduce the carbon emissions from the sources outlined in section 2:

### ***5.1 Energy Usage and Sources***

The excess use of energy in our homes is a major challenge. Switching to a green energy supplier, and better insulating our homes, would make a significant step towards becoming carbon neutral.

The Parish Council will:

- Encourage residents and local businesses to change their behaviour to use energy most efficiently and adopt smart metering technology at the earliest opportunity
- Endeavour to have all new builds in the parish built to high environmental and energy efficient standards (insulation, draught-proofing, efficient heating/cooling systems)
- Promote the same standards to be applied to existing housing where possible
- Petition Cambs County Council to upgrade to the latest LED streetlight specification at the earliest opportunity
- Explore options for a local renewable energy source
- Petition the government to provide nationwide renewable energy on a much larger scale
- Make local residents aware of government grants / initiatives to phase out natural gas in domestic use, and replace it with clean fuel sources on future builds (e.g.heat pumps)

### ***5.2 Transport and Travel***

Burwell Parish Council recognise the need for improved public transport system, and the provision of safe cycle routes and walkways. To reduce pollution from conventional cars, we also need to promote electric vehicles, look to install communal electric car charging points on parish council properties (taking advantage of government grant initiatives and commercial opportunities), and car sharing by promoting car sharing bubbles.

Burwell Parish Council will:

- Work with the local environment group to promote car share (when it is considered safe and COVID-19 restrictions allow)
- Install Electric Vehicle charging points, and encourage local businesses to do the same, working with District Council for funding
- Engage with the local District Councils to create safe cycle paths and joined up cycle routes enabling residents to safely cycle to work
- Ensure that footpaths and walkways in the parish are safe for pedestrians
- Discourage all forms of dirty hydrocarbon travel, pending clean-energy fuelled appliances coming into service

- Enhance Burwell as a place with beautiful, accessible wild areas, some tiny, some larger, so that villagers can enjoy this area for recreation and exercise



### **5.3 Agriculture and Food**

Current methods of the production and distribution of food in today's world is not sustainable. Products are flown over the globe by aeroplane, over-wrapped in single use plastic, and agricultural practises degrade the land and reduce capacity to store carbon, particularly an issue on Fenland soil. Intensive farming is linked to loss of wildlife, soil, and water pollution, and poor animal welfare. Our parish soil conditions comprise of peat wetlands: peat in its natural state is a carbon sponge, but when disturbed and brought to the surface, emits a massive amount of carbon. Local farmers are working with the Wildlife Trust to try and find a way of cultivating the land without causing this damage.



Burwell Parish Council is committed to

- Promoting locally grown produce and local restaurants to reduce the import of food, and vehicle usage
- Supporting the local farmer's market
- Encouraging eating habits that are better for the environment (more plants, less meat)
- Keeping the allotments thriving to produce food locally
- Working with and helping local farmers to maximise local food production and restore the carbon storage facility of our land.

### **5.4 Housing, Infrastructure, Home Insulation**

Burwell Parish Council will

- ensure buildings are designed and constructed with energy conservation foremost, by working with local district council planning, housing developers, local interest groups and creating a local plan
- ensure new housing areas provide energy efficient affordable housing
- ensure all parish council owned properties aim to have zero carbon footprint by 2030

### **5.5 Local Business**

Local business is essential to minimising the need to travel to work by car. As a council, we will

- Support and promote local business
- Support and welcome provision for young people to work locally after education is complete
- Support the establishment of new local business
- Support the establishment of a local Business Hub with appropriate internet and audio-visual facilities to support small and medium local businesses, small and home office workers and traders

### **5.6 Waste and Resources**

The last century has seen a rise of material possession, and current generations accept it as the norm that we can obtain and discard “stuff”. We need to consider where the “stuff” has come from, what pollution was created in the making and delivery of it, where it goes when it is discarded.

As a council, we will work with the local environmental group to:

- Educate our parishioners through public awareness campaigns and local media
- Promote upcycling and recycling
- Promote the swapping and sharing of items rather than sending them to landfill
- Petition for reduced packaging in local businesses
- Install water refill stations (as per the Recreation Ground installation) to minimise the use of plastic bottles - over 7 billion water bottles are used in a year in the UK alone
- Work with local community and business to set up re-use and recycling facilities within the parish
- Encourage repair cafes and recycling hubs
- Urge government and local council to enforce a higher level of resource recovery



### **5.7 Environment and Land Use**

Our local community are already working on improving the natural environment with tree planting campaigns and wild flowering. Burwell has a keen team of volunteers who manage the natural areas of Spring Close, the Community Orchard, and Pauline’s Swamp.

The Parish is committed to offering support and encouragement to these campaigns and driving further community work on improving our local land use and environment, such as a Community Garden. To improve the local environment we will:-

- Encourage the planting of trees in appropriate pre-defined and approved places
- Support restoration of disturbed wetlands and peat

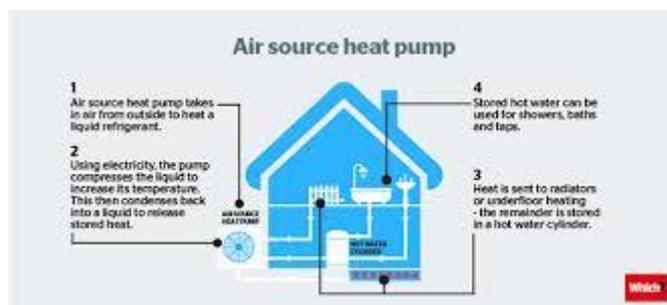
- Continue to promote the creation and management of more green spaces, wildlife gardens, and community gardens

These actions will continue to encourage biodiversity of our flora and fauna, which in turn will protect our pollinators, which in turn will ensure a better local food supply.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

### 6.1 WHAT WE AIM TO DO SHORT TERM

- Establish the Parish Council carbon footprint (properties, grass cutting, mileage etc.)
- Encourage parishioners to identify their own carbon footprints
- Look for suitable land for tree planting, and maintain existing mature trees that are sited away from housing
- Install EV charging stations
- Set up a survey to gain local opinion, and to raise awareness
- Encourage buying local produce – maybe a more frequent farmer’s market
- Establishing wildflower verges
- Work with the community and local environmental group
- Liaise with the gardening and allotment group
- Lead by example, with the refurbishment of the Gardiner Memorial Hall having the environment, key in its design, by incorporating climate change technology / insulation etc.



### 6.2 WHAT WE AIM TO DO MEDIUM TERM

- Support the building of ‘green’ homes in Burwell
- Support a community car sharing scheme
- Explore possibilities for locally owned solar and wind turbine such as the project in Reach
- Reduce paper consumption
- Encourage further tree planting and wildflower conservation areas
- Work with Cambridge County Council to establish proper joined up cycle routes from Burwell to Cambridge and Newmarket, and to the new railway station to be built at Soham.
- Support better bus routes and more frequent services
- Ensure any Parish facilities have climate change technology at the heart of any proposals



### **6.3 WHAT WE AIM TO DO LONG TERM (BY 2030)**

**To reach our aim of becoming carbon neutral, we will need to ensure:**

- That our homes and businesses are made dramatically more energy efficient, with carbon-free heating sources, by promoting knowledge of Government Incentive schemes for insulation, boiler replacement with heat pumps, replacement double glazing etc.
- 100% clean electricity and local renewable energy generation within the parish of Burwell
- Much less reliance on fossil fuel driven transport, with more transport sharing and an improved public transport infrastructure.
- That we encourage adoption of electric vehicles by providing charging points on Council properties, in line with District Council Grant Funding opportunities.
- Healthier lifestyles based on locally grown food, more walking and cycling, and a sustainable local farming economy
- Further planting of woodland at Pauline's Swamp boundaries, Spring Close and other defined areas, and the promotion of restoration of wetland areas to save disturbance of the peat, in conjunction with the National Trust / Wicken Fen.

We will need to work together as a community – residents, businesses, farmers, and organisations.

## **7. EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLANNING**

Burwell Parish Council will work with help of relevant authorities to put in place Planning for Emergencies such as severe flooding and other climate-driven risks to Burwell.

Like many other areas of the UK and East Anglia, Burwell is threatened by extreme weather events. As storms intensify, the village will be at risk of flooding from both excessive sudden rainfall and sea level rise. Mitigation plans:

- For rainfall that exceeds storm-drain capacity, we need to plan with County and District councils. Burwell PC could suggest and support a scheme such as was in place some years ago, for residents to receive some financial help to buy water butts. All new housing should include planned rainwater harvesting. This will take water out of the drain system and also save it for food growing in drought seasons. Consultation with the local sewage works may help to show where the dangers lie locally.
- For sea-level rise: all the above measures will help to minimise and delay this.
- In case of sudden storm surges alongside rising sea levels, the Parish Council will need to flag up warning to our residents and local and national infrastructure to County planners working with other counties on sea defences, and, using realistic scientific forecasts for

timing, plan evacuation centres for Burwell residents who need to move to higher ground. Some planning for evacuees from other parts of the area may need to be started soon also.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Burwell Parish Council is committed to reducing all of the above through education and providing the required infrastructure. The Burwell Community need to mobilise in response to the climate emergency, and it is our responsibility and primary objective to offer leadership and lead by example.

## 9. ABOUT US

### *About Burwell Civil Parish*

Parish Population: 6438 (2018 consensus)

Households: 3525 - TBC

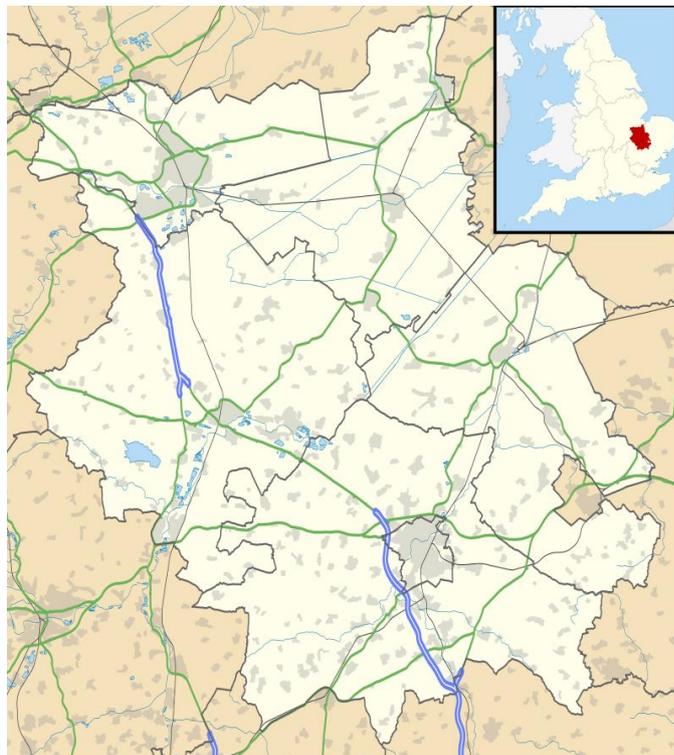
Land Area: 24.7 km<sup>2</sup>

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Burwell Parish Council would like to thank Holme Valley Parish Council for lending us their own Climate Action pledge to use as a template, and Richard Kay from ECDC for his continued support and enthusiasm. We would also like to thank Greta, and the local people of Burwell who have started an avalanche with their own efforts to combat what seems an insurmountable threat to our future, and which has inspired this document.