

Hurst Green Climate Emergency - Supporting Paper

The government has a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, referred to as net zero. As part of this promise, the government has a target to cut emissions by 78% by 2035, compared with 1990 levels. As the science suggests that we have only a few years before the damage to the climate of our planet is irreversible, it is clear to me, that we should aspire to being carbon neutral by sooner than this, indeed Rother District Council declared a Climate Emergency on 16th September 2019 and has pledged to become zero carbon by 2030.

I am not a climate scientist, nor an expert on climate change, however it would seem that the science is indisputable, as is the need for us all to take action now. This motion has been delayed due to meeting agenda availability for far too long. Now is the time we must take action for our community and I urge the Council to lead, and in doing so, become not just the first parish council in the district to declare a climate emergency, but to embed these actions and change into the Council's operating DNA.

*Parish Cllr. Andrew Brown
June 2022*

Hurst Green Parish Council notes:

1. The scientific consensus is that humans have already caused irreversible change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that human activities are to have already caused 0.8-1.2°Celsius of global warming above pre-industrial levels.
2. To reduce the chance of runaway global warming and limit the effects of climate breakdown, it is imperative that CO₂ (carbon equivalent) emissions are less than 2 tonnes per person per year as soon as possible. Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption.
3. Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new normal.
4. Current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050.(i)
5. The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause, compared to a 1.5°C. However, limiting global warming to 1.5° C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities.(ii)
6. Around 300 local Councils around the UK, and also around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.(iii)

Proposed Motion:

"That Hurst Green Parish Council will:

1. Declare a 'climate emergency'.
2. Call on Rother District Council to provide Parish Councils with advice, resources and adequate staff expertise to enable the assessment of our emissions and the co-creation of a carbon neutral action plan for Hurst Green Parish Council.
3. Pledge to make the activities of Hurst Green Parish Council carbon neutral by January 2023.

4. Using the resources and land owned by the Council, pledge to create an environmental benefit by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, making Hurst Green Parish Council climate positive by 2025.
5. Call on Rother District Council to reaffirm their commitment to being carbon neutral by 2030.
6. Agree to work with local people and groups and with local authority organisations such as neighbouring town and parish Councils to determine and implement relevant leading practices.
7. Agree to report to residents on the actions the Council has taken to address this emergency by December 2022, and to:
- 8) Instruct the Clerk to place this issue on Parish Council agendas at least twice a year."

References:

- I. World Resources Institute:
<https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/8-things-you-need-know-about-ipcc-15-c-report>
- II. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °s Celsius: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>
- III. <https://www.climateemergency.uk/blog/list-of-councils/>