

Councillors Climate & Ecological Emergency Support Group

Notes of meeting: 13 February 2024
40th meeting of the support group for Councillors

Please note those attending are doing so in their own right. They are not necessarily 'officially representing' their council. Putting the Council they are from (in brackets) is just for your information and to help your networking. However, a number of those attending are representing and feedback to their councils.

PRESENT:	APOLOGIES:
Cllr Alex Brenton (DC)	Cllr Anne Holland (Bothenhampton and Walditch PC)
Cllr Belinda Bawdon (DC and Lyme Regis TC)	Cllr Carol Byrom (Cheselbourne PC)
Cllr Brian Heatley (DC)	Cllr Clare Sutton (DC)
Cllr Frances Hogwood (Dorchester TC)	Cllr Paul Holland (Corfe Mullen PC)
Cllr Kelvin Clayton (DC and Bridport TC)	Cllr Beryl Ezzard (DC and Wareham TC)
Cllr Ken Huggins (Hazelbury Bryan PC)	Linda Scott-Giles (Clerk Blandford TC)
Cllr Margaret Crossman (Sherborne TC)	
Cllr Susan Green (Sherborne TC)	
COUNCIL COMMUNITY REPS:	GUEST SPEAKER:
Ian Young (Sustainable Thornford)	Cllr Laura Beddow, Dorset Council Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities
Sheila Hawkins (Broadwindsor Working Group)	
Susana Madigan (Broadwindsor Working Group)	
FACILITATORS:	
Julie-Ann Booker (XR, meeting facilitator)	
Caz Dennett (XR, meeting facilitator)	

Caz opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. For the benefit of Councillors joining for the first time she gave some background to the meeting. The support group has been set up at the suggestion from some councillors who attended the "Climate and Ecological Emergency - What's the Urgency?" presentations in late July/early August 2020.

The purpose is for councillors at all levels within Dorset to come together to discuss ongoing concerns / issues / strategy relating to the Climate and Ecological Crisis.

The original climate presentations were delivered by Caz Dennett and Julie-Ann Booker as the advocacy group from the local Extinction Rebellion who offered to organise, administrate and facilitate. The group is for councillors and the agenda is very much set by attendees or those unable to attend but utilize the notes and recordings. The meetings are unofficial, informal, and drop-in. Councillors attend as individuals

Link below to the recording of the meeting:

Video

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/9cNyzW7delpP8ihoPF0MsQ4PqXx46vU4lans4Evm7_3Ch5YHpWkOti-JYdZXt80nccRdvyhcb0oBkrxf.sANxlCeL0gKvf933

Passcode: DZ9UHD1!

Community Engagement and the engagement between Town and Parish Councils and Dorset Council

Led by Cllr Laura Beddow, Dorset Council Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities.

Caz introduced Laura. It will be an informal session with a discussion. She handed over to Laura.

Lovely to be here. I rarely get the time to come along but I do look at the notes and videos. You have a lot of interesting sessions. My cabinet portfolio is the most bizarre and brilliant portfolio. What it includes is so diverse, the cultural sector, arts reach museums, and also bins! Maybe they put all the bits that don't fit elsewhere against this portfolio. I love it. I've also developed a passion for waste strategy. I'm now a trained waste operative, so if my political career goes wrong I can go and work on the bins. It is an incredibly hard job and full respect to them.

Part of the portfolio is responsibility for the Town and Parish sector. It's interesting. Everyone thinks when they get a new job you are going to go in and change the world, then you realise it's not that easy. We do have DAPTC (Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils) who are doing some good work. They are a great organisation to have but it's a tricky topic of engagement full stop because actually how do you engage with a group of people whose only connection is that they live in the same area. They will have lots of different micro-connections, sports or climate emergency in common.

So as a huge authority doing so many different jobs how do you engage so many different people from so many different backgrounds? It's a huge job and I had to start from the perspective that nobody is going to get it right. We've just got to get it as good as we can. A lot of it is being led by the people you are trying to engage with, but if they won't engage with you in the first place how can they lead you in how they want to be engaged with.

So I found myself on this topic quite often going round and round in circles. A lot of it for me is about being authentic and being myself and therefore people can hopefully see that and it's the authenticity that makes people want to engage with you.

Recently I was talking to my political group and it's quite funny really, one of them said they were taking their photo for their coming election leaflet and someone suggested they should put a suit on. They are a farmer so a suit to them is a boiler suit. So there was a discussion on whether you should look 'smart' when you are asking people to vote for you, because you want to honour the job you are wanting to do, but people know you as a farmer, so should you wear a boiler suit. You want to be authentic but want to do justice to your role. For me this debate is fascinating. So we should start from the position that we're never going to get it right, but blimey we should try.

I've got 9 parish councils in my big rural ward, if we get three people at a parish council meeting we put the flags out. One had a meeting this week and they quite fancy having a 20mph speed limit like another one of the parishes, but you need to have a speed watch group to get the data and they can't get 12 people to come forward to do it.

There is lots of 'traffic' on their Facebook saying they want a speed limit. But they don't want to put their hands up to help. Is this because they don't know what's involved? Have we not been transparent enough on what is actually involved? Is it because everything costs so much these days that everyone is frantically working two jobs with no time for anything else? Are people struggling to look after children and have no time? Or are people on information overload?

I produce briefing notes for the parish councils, we all get a comms briefing daily from Dorset Council, but the number of my colleagues who say to me, Laura, what's this about, why don't I know about it? When I point out they have been sent briefings on it they say, but I just get so much! How do you reach people to get key things across without bombarding them when they just switch off?

So that's where I am. I will have this conversation with any group that invites me. I feel strongly about it. When I talk to groups I always take something helpful away with me every time. Because this is the climate group I just want to say DEFRA figures for recycling say that we are the best in the country! Great! Well, we are the best Unitary.

Caz: Thanks Laura. We did have wonderful talk from Marten Gregory in the recycling team a few months ago. **Laura:** We have got some great reforms coming up on Tetra packs, probably won't now be until after the election.

Other items

Caz: We have a meeting next month and Antony Littlechild will be here to give an update on the DC Action Plan. Hopefully Cllr Bryan will be able to attend as well, but waiting to hear. Then because of the coming elections we won't meet in April and to give the new council's time to draw breath we also thought to take a break in May. We'll be in touch.

Upcoming meeting dates, times and access:

The meeting will always use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89183366184>
Please enter PASSCODE: **294882**

Thurs 14 March 7.30pm - Update on C&EE Action Plan, Anthony Littlechild, Sustainability Team, Dorset Council (+ Cllr Ray Bryan TBC)

April - NO MEETING IN APRIL AS RUN UP TO THE MAY 2ND LOCAL ELECTIONS

May - NO MEETING TO GIVE NEW COUNCILS TIME TO SETTLE IN

Reminder to send in any ideas for future topics. Ideas to date are:

- Adaptation and resilience in the DC strategy (suggested at March 2023 meeting)
- Discussion on how small groups can get funding (from May meeting)
- Update from 20's Plenty campaign (from June meeting)
- Solar farms / Big Solar Co-Operative and National Grid, micro grids. (From June meeting).
- Dorset Wildlife Trust to give a presentation on their work
- Active transport with a speaker (suggested from Nov meeting)
- Low Carbon Dorset, work and outcomes
- Things that younger people are doing, like Damers School and their Harmony programme (suggested Sept meeting)
- People's Assembly style meeting on a topic and try to get some diverse thoughts and opinions (idea from Sept meeting)
- Local Transport and the work Dorset Council are doing on a new visionary plan (suggested Sept meeting)

ANY OTHER TOPICS WELCOME, PLEASE LET CAZ OR JULIE-ANN KNOW

POST MEETING UPDATE ON MOTION FOR THE OCEAN CAMPAIGN WE HEARD ABOUT IN JANUARY.

Link below is to an article in Swanage News. Town Councillors on their Environment and Green Spaces committee (28 Feb) voted to adopt a Motion for the Ocean. It will now go to a Full Council Meeting for approval.

https://www.swanage.news/swanage-councillors-set-to-pass-motion-for-the-ocean/?fbclid=IwAR2XAOCgIsI9F1dUeXpaUVgyZdkt1tDY6ZHM-iBQLsKO_yiUyYamVoey6G4