

Parish and town councils – Act on CO<sub>2</sub>

# Ways to tackle climate change



Act on CO<sub>2</sub> is a government led strategy to persuade each and every one of us to reduce our carbon emissions. Act on CO<sub>2</sub> goes beyond just increasing awareness and influencing attitudes to encourage genuine, meaningful behaviour change.

## Foreword



Climate change, the most serious challenge facing the world, can only be tackled effectively if we all take action now. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported in February this year that the evidence for climate change caused by human activity is stronger than ever. It is happening at an even faster pace than previously thought. The debate is over: climate change is a reality. With a fast-closing window of opportunity, a rapid response is essential.

Parish and town councils, the first tier of government, can play a substantial role in our drive to reduce the risks of climate change. The Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Act 2006 gave parish and town councils specific powers in relation to local energy saving measures, which will reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Parish

and town councils can promote and support community initiatives to reduce emissions. Taking action now not only reduces the impact on the environment, but saves the parish and town council money too.

This guide offers advice on how parish and town councils can work with their communities to secure a more sustainable future. It demonstrates how some parish and town councils are already taking a lead in their communities to tackle climate change.

Whatever their size or location, all town and parish councils have the potential to make a real difference. The force for improvement displayed by local councils across the country convinces me that they have a role to play. With expert local knowledge, parish and town councils are often in a better position than other organisations to identify suitable measures at a community level to address climate change.

We must put the issue of climate change high up on our agendas. I have every confidence that parish and town councils will rise to the challenge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Phil Woolas'.

Phil Woolas MP, Minister for the Environment – Defra



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
Key climate facts and the impact in England	5
Box 1: The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act	7
<b>Taking action – by the parish council itself</b>	<b>8</b>
Bright ideas – energy efficient lighting	8
Green community buildings	9
Land, trees and hanging baskets	12
On the move	13
<b>Encouraging local people to take action</b>	<b>16</b>
Get the message across	16
Address climate change in the parish or town	18
Link up to local groups	18
Shop local – think global	20
Fuel poverty	21
Community recycling	22
The need to adapt to climate change	22
A climate challenge for the whole community	23
Celebrate success	24
<b>Working with partners</b>	<b>26</b>
Local authorities	26
Local planning authorities	27
Local energy advice centres	28
Energy providers	29
Schools	30
Climate Change Communications Initiative, and Challenge Fund projects	30
The local pub	31
Transport providers	32
<b>Further help and information</b>	<b>33</b>



# Introduction

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face today. As the level of government closest to local people, England's 9,000 parish and town councils have the opportunity to play a big part in reducing the emissions that cause climate change.

Throughout this guide parish and town councils are referred to as 'town' or 'parish council' or 'local council' (depending on which situation prevails.)

Parish councils can take action in the buildings they use, land they manage and transport they provide. As holders of the local public purse, we appreciate that local councils want solutions that save the council money either immediately or over time. This guide provides advice and ideas on how to make energy efficient savings subject to the resources available. It is not an intention that parish councils raise precepts to cover the costs involved.

As community leaders, parish councils can work with people in their town or village to help them understand climate change: how it impacts on them directly, and how they can make a difference. Parish councils can also join up with others, from the principal authority to the local school. Not all

the measures in this booklet will be possible for smaller councils, but even a few small steps can make a big difference. The aim of this guide is to help and inspire parish and town councils. Appointing an enthusiastic 'parish energy champion' can help make it happen.

Many actions that address climate change have other benefits – not least by reducing outgoings – like energy efficiency measures that reduce fuel poverty, producers' fairs that support the local economy, and public transport provision that gets isolated people out and about. To help parish councils take action, The Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Act 2006 gives councils specific powers to tackle climate change (see box 1).

## Key climate facts and the impact in England

- Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, the main cause of climate change. It is mostly produced by burning fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas. In just 200 years, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 30%, so concentrations are now higher than at any point in the past 800,000 years.

- The ten warmest years on record have all been since 1990. Six of the ten warmest years on record in the UK were between 1995 and 2004.
- During August 2003, the hottest temperature ever recorded in the UK was taken in Brogdale in Kent. It was 38.5°C. Between the 4 and 13 August 2003, over 2,000 people in the UK died as a result of the heat.
- The growing season for plants in central England is now a month longer than it was in 1900.
- Compared with 50 years ago, in England, we now get more rain and snow, but on fewer days – so they fall more heavily.
- The summer floods of 2007 and previous autumn and winter floods in 2000 in the UK were the worst for 270 years in some areas. Flooding on farmland cost the farming industry nearly £500 million.
- Risks of flood and coastal erosion are higher, as the average sea level around the UK is now about 10cm higher than it was in 1900.





## Box 1: The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act

### A new power to act: Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act, 2006

This Act aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address fuel poverty and promote renewable energy and microgeneration (small-scale electricity generation). It sets out specific things that parish and town councils can do.

### Section 3: Having regard to energy measures

The Act also required the Government to produce an energy measures report in August 2007. This report contains information on measures that local authorities in England and Wales, including parish and town councils, can take in order to improve energy efficiency, increase the levels of microgeneration, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address fuel poverty. Local authorities will have to have regard to this report when exercising their functions.

### Section 20: Powers for local energy saving measures

This section sets out specific powers that allow parish and town councils

to encourage local people to save energy. Local councils can promote:

- a) microgeneration<sup>1</sup>
- b) the use of electricity or heat produced by microgeneration
- c) efficient use of energy by people in your area
- d) a reduction in the amount of energy used by local people
- e) local production
  - biomass<sup>2</sup>, or any fuel derived from biomass
  - the electricity or heat generated from biomass or any such fuel

The general power to encourage energy-saving measures includes a power for local councils to provide assistance, information and advice on locally available goods and services. Expenditure on the measures listed in clause 20 is restricted to limits imposed by section 137 of Local Government Act 1972.

### To see a copy of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act visit

[www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/20060019.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/20060019.htm)

<sup>1</sup> The production of heat and/or electricity on a small-scale from a low carbon source. These can include solar, micro-wind, micro-hydro, heat pumps, biomass, micro combined heat and power.

<sup>2</sup> Organic matter which can be burnt as fuel, for example in wood fuel boilers. The carbon dioxide that is released is balanced by that absorbed during growth.

# Taking action – by the parish council itself

Parish councils may choose to appoint an enthusiastic member to be a 'parish energy champion'. They can work out which actions on climate change best suit their community, and inspire everyone to get involved. There are various helpful organisations they can get in touch with for advice, and to link up with other parishes, including Every Action Counts, local Climate Challenge Fund projects, Community Action for Energy, and local energy advice centres.

## Bright ideas – energy efficient lighting

Parish or town councils can save energy and money by replacing inefficient bulbs with low energy ones in community buildings. These light bulbs last 12 times longer (up to eight years!) and each can save up to £10 a year on electricity bills. Some villages are aiming to eliminate all incandescent bulbs. Parish and town councils also have powers to provide lighting along roads and footpaths. They can choose lighting with low emissions here too, saving yet more in the longer term.

## Lighting up footpaths in Tatworth and Forton

Tatworth and Forton Parish Council in south Somerset decided that a poorly lit narrow brookside footpath was in need of good lighting. They chose the Rutland 913 Windcharger, which is powered by a solar panel and small wind turbine. The parish council was keen to protect the view of the night sky and wider environment from light pollution, so the light comes on only when needed and is designed to minimise upward light emission. Funding was received from EDF Energy for the project. Not only is the pathway well lit now, but also the lights are a very attractive feature. In recognition, the parish council received a Good Lighting Award.

### For more information

[www.britastro.org/dark-skies/awards.htm](http://www.britastro.org/dark-skies/awards.htm)



## Green community buildings

Parish and town councils own assets all across the country, from village halls to leisure centres. Parish councils may have close links to the village hall committee. If so, this gives a real opportunity to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from these buildings – doing this will also reduce energy

bills. The first step should always be to reduce energy use, for example by switching off lights and turning down thermostats, then to increase the efficiency of heating, lighting, appliances and insulation. These are quick wins that all of us should take before considering more ambitious schemes like renewable energy.

### Greening Gamblesby village hall

In Gamblesby, a small farming community in Cumbria, the village hall closed down because it needed renovation. To give it new life, the village hall committee and local people decided to commit to using renewable energy materials to improve efficiency. Low-energy lighting was fitted and locally-sourced sheep wool insulated the walls and roof. The committee realised that a ground source heat pump (moving heat stored in the earth into the building via pipes buried underground) would provide environmentally-friendly heating, and be cheap to run. This fitted in with plans to renovate the car park and replace the rotting timber floor – and gave them an edge in applying for funding. Costs were kept to a minimum by the community doing much of the work themselves. Energy efficient buildings can look like any other.

#### For more information on Gamblesby village hall

[portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%202022.pdf](https://portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%202022.pdf)



## 1. Insulation, insulation, insulation

The most cost-effective way to save substantial amounts of energy is often insulation. Insulating a loft is simple, and you may be able to install it yourself. Buildings built between the 1920s and 1980s could be a candidate for cavity wall insulation. Loft and wall insulation will make big savings on your annual heating bills.

## 2. Treat your hot water tank... give it a jacket

If your hot water tank jacket is less than 75mm thick, you can save money by fitting another one around it or replacing it completely. An insulating jacket can cut heat loss by up to 75% from your hot water tank. It is available from most DIY shops, only cost a few pounds and should pay for itself in a year and will save you money.

## 3. Look after your kitchen

Fridge-freezers are the most hard-working appliances in our kitchens. To cut costs, don't leave the door open longer than necessary, avoid putting hot food into the fridge, defrost the freezer regularly and check the door seals. Be sure to boil only as much water as needed for tea and coffee.

## 4. Look for the logo

Look out for the Energy Saving Recommended logo when you're buying new electrical appliances. The logo appears on a growing range of



products. Replacing an old, energy inefficient fridge-freezer with a new Energy Saving Recommended one could save you up to £45 every year. If you do not require a freezer, a larger fridge saves more energy and never needs defrosting.

## 5. Make the switch

By shopping around, you can save money on your energy bills. Various electricity companies offer renewable energy options. It is easy to switch and websites exist to compare prices and types of tariff. All electricity companies are required to source a specific and annually increasing percentage of the electricity they supply from renewable sources. The target is 6.7% for 2006/07, rising to 15.4% by 2015/16. Some large companies simply package this obligation as a green tariff. You may wish to find a company making a greater overall renewable contribution.

## 6. Radiant radiators

To save money on your heating bills, keep radiators in buildings clear – blocking them with furniture will reduce efficiency and increase heating bills. Putting reflective foil panels (available at local DIY shops) behind those radiators on outside walls will reduce heat loss and one should pay for itself in a year.

## 7. Boilers... if it isn't broken, it still might need fixing

Boilers usually break down in winter so it's essential they are checked in the summer. If it's over 15 years old, it's probably time to replace it with a high

efficiency condensing boiler, saving around a third on heating bills. Check that hot water thermostats in your buildings are turned down to a comfortable temperature. The Health and Safety Executive recommend that buildings used by children and vulnerable people should heat water for hand washing to a temperature of 41°. So, as well as saving money, this action is also a safety consideration.

### **8. Windows of opportunity**

Doubleglazing cuts heat loss through windows by 50% and saves money on your heating bill. Secondary doubleglazing is cheaper to install than replacement windows and still helps save energy. You can buy DIY kits with either aluminium or plastic frames fitted with draught proofing strips. You can choose hinged or sliding panes, which are easy to open, close and clean.

### **9. Count the carbon**

Use your gas and electricity bills to work out how much carbon dioxide pollution you produce. Every unit or kilowatt hour (kwh) of electricity on your bill produces 430 grammes of carbon dioxide. That's enough to fill 43 party balloons!

For electricity, multiply the total number of units (or kwhs) on your last bill by 430, to get the number of grammes of carbon dioxide produced. (For gas, multiply the number of gas units used – or kwhs – by 190.) Divide the answer by 1,000,000 to get the number of tonnes of carbon dioxide. Every tonne of carbon dioxide

can fill six double decker buses! Set a target to reduce your energy bills.

### **10. My generation... on site energy and heat**

Renewable energy is derived from inexhaustible sources like the sun, wind, water and plant material. Using renewable energy reduces our dependence on burning fossil fuels, helping mitigate climate change. The energy saving depends on choosing the right technology for your particular building. In a suitable location a solar electricity panel can save about eight tonnes of carbon dioxide pollution over its lifetime. That's enough to fill 48 double-decker buses!



There is a wide range of renewable energy technologies available and they can be applied on an individual or wider community based level. Community schemes might be more cost effective and might encourage the investment in energy storage systems that enable the equipment to operate more efficiently and

effectively. These systems can make a real contribution to reducing emissions, but you need expert advice to be sure you make the appropriate choice. Options include:

- **solar photovoltaic panels** convert sunlight to electricity. Sandridge Parish Council invested in photovoltaics to supply energy to their Community Centre (see page 25 for details).
- **solar public lighting** (a public street light with a solar panel attached to collect energy during the day which is stored and released at night to provide light). Solar powered lighting is being increasingly used by parish and town councils to light public areas and bus shelters as well as for the illumination of road signs and other uses. Euxton Parish Council in the north west recently installed a solar lighting column to provide light for a recreational area, making it safer without any increase in their electricity bills.
- **wind turbines** can power a single dwelling, a business, a school or community building, or even a whole community.
- **solar water heating** is currently the most cost-effective, affordable renewable technology for housing.
- **ground source heat pumps** take heat from under the ground using circulating liquid.
- **small-scale hydro-power systems** use the energy of falling water

to turn a turbine that produces electricity.

- **biomass** (organic matter can be burnt as fuel, for example in wood fuel boilers). The carbon dioxide that is released is balanced by that absorbed during growth.

Importantly, investment in renewable energy generation by parish councils, on their own or in partnership with other organisations, can serve as encouragement to others to undertake similar action.

### **Land, trees and hanging baskets**

Parish councils have powers to manage land, including churchyards, road verges, open spaces, common land and ponds. Planting trees and community woodland has a number of social and environmental benefits including helping to store carbon during the lifetime of the tree. It is important to plant appropriate tree species in appropriate locations and to make the most of the wider benefits of woodland creation (such as biodiversity and recreation). Parish councils can appoint volunteer Tree Wardens under the Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme. Tree Wardens gather information about local trees and encourage practical local projects to protect trees and woodlands.

With climate change, extreme weather conditions like droughts and floods will become more common. Land, verges and flower displays can be managed so that they are more resistant to these changes. So think about giving local land a water-wise



## Winning blooming prizes with drought resistant plants

Swanley Town Council wanted a new approach to continue its successes in the South East in Bloom competition. Recently Hextable and Swanley villages took the tough decision that they should limit their flower displays to the centre of the town. Posters encouraging people to 'water wisely' replaced some baskets. Now all displays use water saving gel solutions and drought-resistant plants. New bedding schemes require less water and have a woodchip mulch supplied by a local tree surgeon. In 2006 Swanley (including Hextable) regained its title of Best Large Town in the South East and received a Silver Gilt award, and Swanley village achieved a Silver Gilt award in their category. The council is also looking at ways to capture and reuse water.

### For information from Swanley town council

[www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk/infopage.asp?infoid=340](http://www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk/infopage.asp?infoid=340)



makeover with drought-resistant plants and shrubs – these look good and need less watering. Local garden centres offer water-saving gardening tips.

Parish councils can also use their land to help people in their community understand more about the environment. There's nothing like a garden project to mobilise and energise a group, club or society. Parish councils can also consider starting a community orchard.

## On the move

Road transport is one of the UK's main climate change culprits – it accounts for 25% of all UK carbon dioxide emissions, exceeding emissions caused by industry. One person using one car for a five-mile return trip will result in roughly 1,500 grammes of carbon dioxide, enough to fill 150 party balloons! Over the page are some easy actions that will help make travel safer, cheaper, greener and stress-free.

## **1. On your bike (and on the bus)**

Parish councils have a range of powers that can make it easier for people to choose environmentally friendly travel. This can help people save money as well as the environment. They have powers to provide and maintain cycle parks, bus shelters, roadside seating, and local community bus services. Grants may be available for these facilities. Many parish councils support community transport through grants, information and volunteers. If parish councils run their own community transport schemes, these can be coordinated with commercial services. Parish councils can act as an information point on local transport services. (See also the section on transport providers on page 32).

## **2. Cutting car emissions**

Parish councils have a specific power to promote car-sharing (this is when people share a car for regular journeys, eg to work, parish meetings or children's activity clubs). Not only does this deliver financial and environmental benefits, it retains the convenience of the car. Councils have the power to manage car parks, which can be used to allocate prime parking positions or cheaper fees to car sharers.

## **3. Energy efficient vehicles**

Making sure that your vehicles get a regular service will help cut down pollution and reduce costs. Advanced driving courses teach drivers how to drive more efficiently, which means lower bills and lower maintenance. Energy efficient vehicles can be

standard cars that have a low emissions rating, or innovative low carbon vehicles such as electric vehicles, or hybrid vehicles (using a combination of petrol and electricity).

## **4. Making life easier for pedestrians**

Walking brings health benefits and costs nothing. The savings made from energy efficiency measures in other areas can provide for and maintain footpaths. Town and parish councils can make it much more enjoyable to go walking, even organising traffic-free community events.

'Stride to school' encourages people to walk the last half mile or so to school. It encourages children and their parents to walk (exercise) together and reduces congestion at the school gate. With all those cars pulling in and out, the school gate can be a very dangerous place for young children. Parking a little further away cuts fuel consumption and reduces the build-up of emissions around the school. Drivers may see savings in the region of £100 per year.



## Taking steps from Lowca, Moresby and Parton parish plan

In Cumbria, three former pit villages of Lowca, Moresby and Parton teamed up to create a joint local action plan. They join more than 3,000 communities in England that have benefited from producing a parish plan. This showed that a busy main road urgently needed a footpath. The villages got help with planning and applied for grants. A landowner donated land for a permissive footpath within his field wall. The footpath is now open, making walking a much safer and more pleasant option for pedestrians. Walking is also being encouraged in Moresby, through a leaflet about a circular walk from Whitehaven to the Roman fort. Local tourism was promoted by a Roman Activities Day with the Hadrian's Wall Tourism Partnership.

### For more information on Lowca, Moresby and Parton parish plan

[www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/Parish%20Plans%20Case%20Studies.pdf](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/Parish%20Plans%20Case%20Studies.pdf)



# Encouraging local people to take action

Direct action by parish councils to tackle climate change, by making buildings more energy efficient makes an important difference. Parish councils can also play an important role by promoting action in the wider community. Subject to section 137<sup>3</sup> limits on spending, parish and town councils are well placed to stimulate community action to tackle climate change.

## Get the message across

Some people think that climate change is confusing and is a problem for the future, not now. They find it difficult to see how it relates to them personally, or realise that such a big problem really can be affected by individual actions.

As the tier of government closest to local people, local councils can take the message about climate change to the heart of their community. They can hold energy awareness meetings, a quiz or funday. Here are some communication tips to help:

- Be positive! Rather than scaring people, try to inspire them to take action, by helping them understand that what they do is important.
- Blow away the myths about climate change. The scientific evidence is

now so strong that in 2005, the British Royal Society joined 11 national science academies in an unprecedented message calling on world leaders to act.

- Bring it home! People have to understand how climate change relates to them. This means they need to understand what it is, their own role in it, and the impact of climate change on their own life. By linking it to saving money, most people will respond more positively.
- Different people learn in different ways – some people like books or leaflets, but others learn through social interaction or visual methods. Good teachers and trendsetters help get the message across.
- Join forces. You can get help from local environmental groups, local authorities and energy advice centres.
- Positive associations. Associate climate change with people your audience admires, or things they care about, like home improvement or local green spaces. Too much science and statistics can be confusing.

Further advice on how to communicate climate change messages most effectively is available in a free booklet, that includes a short DVD

film on climate change 'A guide to communicating climate change', available from [www.climatechallenge.gov.uk](http://www.climatechallenge.gov.uk)

or in hard copy by emailing [climatechangedvd@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:climatechangedvd@defra.gsi.gov.uk) or phoning 0207 082 3896.

## Daventry village energy days

Village energy days around Daventry in Northamptonshire tell people about energy efficiency measures and grants. Participants get an energy efficient light bulb when completing a Home Energy Check. Local children give a presentation at the events, building on special lessons in their schools. Each event is publicised in advance, through visits to community groups and schools and leaflets sent to each home. So far, at least 20% of villagers regularly attend the energy days, and about half the attendees take up measures via grants and discounts. The events are funded by Daventry District Council, and suppliers and installers of energy give their time free of charge.

### More information on Daventry energy days

[www.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%207.pdf](http://www.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%207.pdf)



## Address climate change in the parish or town

Parish and town plans are an excellent means of promoting action in the community, and can be prepared by parish and town councils with extensive participation from the local population. Climate change mitigation and adaptation can be addressed in parish and town plans. Work with your Rural Community Council (RCC) and the principal local authority. They will be able to provide information on obtaining grants to help cover the cost of producing a parish plan.

## Link up to local groups

Local environmental groups do vital work addressing specific issues, whether protecting local parks and nature reserves or reducing waste. Many community and voluntary groups are looking at ways to tackle climate change locally. There may well be opportunities for the parish councils to work with them, sharing the workload and delivering a consistent joint message.

The Community Action for Energy (CAfE) programme from the Energy Saving Trust helps the community and voluntary sector by giving advice, information and training to facilitate and support community-based

## Lambourn parish planning for climate change

Lambourn's parish plan in Berkshire contains recommendations specifically for the parish council, including to:

- assess their policies and strategies for sustainability
- work with local organisations to develop a sustainability strategy so that Lambourn meets or exceeds national targets, and is recognised for local environmental leadership
- help residents make informed choices by raising awareness of energy efficiency and grants and schemes that can help
- implement further recommendations covering waste, cycling, public transport and lessening the environmental impact of planning decisions.

A Lambourn Valley Sustainability Forum has been built up on the principle that collective community action motivates personal actions. The Forum gives lots of advice, including an extensive website that sets out what climate change means locally. The Forum is also setting up an energy advice centre.

**For more information on Lambourn's parish plan and Sustainability Forum see [www.lambourn.info](http://www.lambourn.info)**

sustainable energy projects. CAfE is also a good resource for parish councils seeking to collaborate with local community initiatives.

Every Action Counts offers lots of free, fun activities, information, ideas and support to help local community groups, clubs and societies take simple actions which make a big difference

on the environment. Why not invite local groups or societies to take part and make every action count? The initiative is already supported by a host of national, voluntary and community organisations. Contact details for CAfE and Every Action Counts are at the end of this guide.

### **St Endellion and the Climate Friendly Parish project**

St Endellion parish is working with the local Cornwall Friends of the Earth group on a Climate Friendly Parish project. Local businesses and the parish council signed up to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 5% annually. A Climate Friendly Parish steering group coordinates activities, and the local school is involved. Students are analysing emissions and looking at ways to reduce them. Residents and businesses are surveyed and encouraged to reduce their climate impact. This is a pilot that may lead to a wider project, joining up different communities' activities to reduce the carbon footprint over the long term. A new Cornwall Community Climate Forum brings St Endellion together with community groups, faith groups and environmental organisations. A climate newsletter, messages in the local press, seminars, visits and debates raise the profile of the St Endellion project and the Forum.

**For more information on the Climate Friendly Parish project see**  
[www.stendellion.com](http://www.stendellion.com)







## Go Zero – towards a zero waste society

Go Zero is a community project based in Chew Magna that raises awareness of the environmental and social impact of our everyday actions. It offers affordable and sustainable solutions to reduce and conserve resources and energy, to contract the carbon footprint. It has focus groups covering transport, energy, recycling and consumption. Go Zero is raising local awareness of the link between energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, has produced a local food guide and is producing a parish energy audit and transport plan.

### For more information on Go Zero

[www.gozero.org.uk](http://www.gozero.org.uk)

## Shop local – think global

One third of a household's impact on climate change is through food, because of the energy used in food production and transport. Buying seasonal and local or regional food not only reduces the environmental impact, it also supports local farmers and helps to make people more aware of the seasons and where their food comes from. Through the provision of allotments, parish councils make a real contribution to local food. (Parish councils have a duty to consider providing allotment gardens if there is a demand, under section 23 of the Small Holdings Allotments Act 1908).

Some parish councils have worked with local farmers to set up farmers'

markets. Others organise trips to farmers' markets.

Similarly, encouraging local shops and service providers not only reduces journey miles needed to access distant services, but helps support the local economy. Walking to the shop provides health benefits and helps build more cohesive communities. People get to see their neighbours out and about. There are a variety of personal (or two wheeled) shopping trolleys available to help carry shopping home.

In addition, local people can help boost local employment by using local suppliers to provide energy efficiency measures such as loft insulation and improved heating systems.

## Danby parish plan support to local producers

The residents of Danby village in North Yorkshire put in a huge amount of effort to create a local action plan that covered social, economic and environmental issues. Their parish plan identified over a hundred separate businesses within the parish and showed a high level of support and demand for local products and services. With this mandate, the Danby Parish Producers group was formed. The group continues to meet regularly. So far it has held two producers' fairs – attended by over 2,000 visitors – and produced a brochure promoting local businesses, from free range organic eggs and honey, to website design, dressmaking, painters and craftsmen. Several businesses have reported new custom as a result.

**For more information on Danby Parish Producers see**  
[www.danbyware.co.uk](http://www.danbyware.co.uk)



## Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is the term used to describe the situation where a household cannot afford to keep warm. It is caused by a combination of low incomes and poor energy efficiency in homes. The old, children, and those who are disabled are especially vulnerable to the effects of living in cold homes. 'Warm Front'

is the government's main grant-funded programme for tackling fuel poverty. Parish councils can work with partners to address climate change and fuel poverty by, for example, encouraging energy efficiency and insulation and helping the most vulnerable residents to access the 'Warm Front' programme. (See further information page 36).

## Waterrow community oil deliveries

In the tiny hamlet of Waterrow in Somerset each of the scattered households used to order its oil independently, so oil tankers made separate trips for each delivery. This issue was raised through the local action planning process of a parish plan. As a result, the village established a joint ordering process, so just one tanker comes in for everyone. An oil delivery 'hotline' is up and running so local residents who need oil simply call in their orders by the 15th of each month. This has led to a win-win situation with cheaper delivery for local residents and less traffic on the Waterrow roads.

### **For more information on Waterrow's parish plan**

[www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/Parish%20Plans%20Case%20Studies.pdf](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/Parish%20Plans%20Case%20Studies.pdf)

## Community recycling

Reuse of materials reduces the need to incinerate or land-fill items. Each bottle recycled saves enough energy to power a 100-watt bulb for nearly one hour. Recycling can also be a useful source of funding for parish and town councils: Birstal Parish Council in Leicestershire retains all income generated from a bottle bank, located by the local supermarket, to spend on local amenities.

Local swaps encourage people to bring items they no longer need or use to a community building. No money changes hands and leftovers are donated to local charities. By publicising the event, more people participate and fewer items end up in landfill. Not only are local swaps great fun and help the environment, they help local people save money.

## The need to adapt to climate change

While the focus of this guide has been on climate change mitigation

(reducing the carbon emissions which cause climate change), it is also important to be aware of the need to adapt to climate change. Regardless of how successful we are at cutting carbon emissions, a substantial amount of climate change is inevitable over the next 40 years as a result of emissions which are already in the atmosphere. Summers in much of England are likely to be much drier and hotter, with implications for human and animal health and for agriculture. Some parish and town councils may be at greater risk from flooding and coastal erosion. Councils should take issues like growing flood risk and water scarcity in summer into account when considering planning applications. The protection of those members of the community particularly vulnerable to heat stress caused by high temperatures in the summer, particularly the elderly, could also be an issue which some councils might be able to help tackle. On a less serious note, councils may have to consider planting drought resistant plants in flower beds.



## A climate challenge for the whole community

If a whole community is particularly determined to tackle climate change together it could take up the challenge of going 'carbon neutral'. This involves measuring all emissions and reducing them as much as

possible and then offsetting any remaining emissions. The government is producing a Code of Best Practice for carbon offsetting, which includes purchasing Certified Emissions Reductions. Alternatively, communities can become 'carbon friendly' (committing to specific targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions).

### Going carbon neutral in Ashton Hayes (Climate Challenge Project)

Ashton Hayes in Cheshire wants to be the first carbon neutral village in England. To do this the village measured their carbon emissions and identified a number of steps they could take to reduce them – such as energy-saving devices, loft insulation and ecodriving. The local pub aims to be the first carbon neutral pub. Information is available on green energy suppliers, mini wind turbines, solar panels, and energy crops. The village is establishing new woodland as carbon sinks<sup>4</sup>. Local businesses are involved, and have donated over £10,000 towards the project. The whole village has bought in to the idea – people want their children to know that they did their bit to mitigate climate change. Ashton Hayes received £26,500 from Defra specifically to raise awareness, and will produce a carbon neutral toolkit for small communities that want to follow in their footsteps. Over 400 people attended the launch event of the Ashton Hayes Going Carbon Neutral project in January 2006, representing over 75% of the adult population.

**For more information from Ashton Hayes** [www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk](http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk)



<sup>4</sup> The concept of carbon sinks is based on the natural ability of trees, other plants and the soil to soak up carbon dioxide and temporarily store the carbon in wood, roots, leaves and the soil.

## Bishop's Castle to Active Decarbonisation (BC2AD)

BC2AD is a community climate change strategy covering 2,500 people in scattered rural settlements in Shropshire. Right from the start a range of community groups were involved – from Bishop's Castle Town Council, the local environmental 'Wasteless Society' group, and the not-for-profit Marches Energy Agency. Bishop's Castle's carbon dioxide emissions were higher than average, because it is off the gas grid, and dependent on cars in its rural location. This carbon footprint was calculated, broken down into emissions from premises (public and private), waste, transport and food miles. Supported by the Energy Saving Trust, Bishop's Castle has started implementing a strategy to cut emissions by 85% by 2050. There is a new Energy Services Club, a drive to be the first incandescent bulb free community, and a fuel tank selling 100% biodiesel at the local filling station.

### For more information on BC2AD

[www.mea.org.uk/who/lowcc/bc2ad](http://www.mea.org.uk/who/lowcc/bc2ad) and

[www.shropshire.gov.uk/energy.nsf/open/0BA13BC6AA59C72D8025707500476A06](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/energy.nsf/open/0BA13BC6AA59C72D8025707500476A06)

## Celebrate success

Whatever action communities take to address climate change, they should celebrate it. This rewards commitment and encourages more people to get involved. A major step, like opening a renovated village hall, can be marked by a launch party. Smaller actions by individual householders can also be mapped and celebrated. Local media are always on the lookout for feel-good community-based stories, so make sure they are aware of events, such as milestones reached (like £1,000 of energy saved, or 100 households involved), successes with grants or the availability of new services. Remember to include a local case study and a photograph.

## Cut the Carbon celebrations in Sandridge

Sandridge Parish Council and St Albans District Council held a launch party for their renewable energy scheme at Jersey Farm Community Centre. The newly installed photovoltaic panels are expected to save at least 3.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. This is a joint project: the community centre belongs to the parish council and both councils raised funding. Advice was available during the launch, and over 100 people attended a conference by St Albans District Council. Sandridge Parish Council also announced that it aims to become carbon neutral, by reducing the consumption of energy from fossil fuels and planting over 10,000 trees. The parish council webpage encourages individuals to 'Cut the Carbon'. It lists ways that local people can make a difference in their homes. Householders then tell the parish council about their action, which is marked with a green star on a 'green map', showing how it all adds up.

### **For more information on Cut the Carbon in Sandridge**

[www.eastspace.net/sandridge/home.asp](http://www.eastspace.net/sandridge/home.asp)



# Working with partners

## Local authorities

Many local authorities are taking action to tackle climate change. They cannot do this alone, but are working with partners, including local community groups. Parish and town councils have a particular opportunity to help, taking messages on climate change and energy efficiency to local people. Parish and town councils can encourage principal local authorities to address climate change as a strategic priority, including through their Sustainable Community Strategy. This can help each area contribute to the UK national target (reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20% below 1990 levels by 2010).

*Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the Local Government White Paper (2006), gives local government new opportunities to drive local action on climate change – and emphasises the need for community views to be heard. The way that local authorities manage their buildings, waste, housing, transport and services can make a big difference. Over 160 local authorities have signed the Nottingham Declaration (or written a local version, such as the Staffordshire Declaration), pledging to tackle climate change in their area and work with others to reduce carbon dioxide emissions across the country.

## Peterborough Rural Energy Efficiency project

Peterborough City Council set aside £100,000 of their Home Repair Assistance grant for rural communities. The project was launched by parish councils, alongside school governors and churches. Five villages were selected to take part (all had a high proportion of elderly residents and/or young families with low incomes). All homes that filled in a Home Energy Check received advice on low cost energy efficiency measures. Eligible households received free loft and cavity wall insulation, hot water tank jackets, condensing boilers or new central heating. It was difficult to persuade some eligible households to get involved, but promotion of the scheme through parish councils and community groups helped make it a success.

## More information on this case study

[portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%2014.pdf](http://portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%2014.pdf)

## Local planning authorities

Local planning authorities can tackle climate change through their decisions on new developments and by promoting adaptation in existing communities. Some local authorities have adopted 'Merton Rule' targets for renewable energy, which require all development over a certain size, whether newbuild or conversion, to incorporate renewable energy production equipment to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements.

Local Development Documents are subject to Sustainability Appraisals, which can include objectives to reduce carbon dioxide emissions associated with spatial planning. Statements of Community Involvement set out a range of ways for local people to get involved with planning. Planning Policy Statements explain how planning policies can address climate change<sup>5</sup>.

Parish or town councils have a part to play in planning processes through their statutory role as consultees. They have the ability to

feed in climate-friendly issues at a very early stage of planning applications – as with anything, knowledge is the key. By commenting early, their suggestions may influence the proposed development without adding to the costs. They can consider promoting the following:

- The highest standards of environmental rating for new and existing developments (eg EcoHomes 'excellent', which includes climate impacts).
- Land use patterns that reduce the need for car travel, by ensuring schools, shops and workplaces are accessible by foot, bus and bicycle.
- Sustainable energy generation and supply.
- Domestic tourism facilities that reduce the demand for overseas travel.
- Design and location of buildings and infrastructure that are resilient to effects of climate change, such as flooding and water scarcity.

<sup>5</sup> Planning Policy Statement 1 on delivering sustainable development is clear that local planning authorities should ensure that development plans address the causes and potential impacts of climate change. A supplement to PPS 1, specifically on planning and climate change, is being developed during 2007, giving more detail on how spatial planning contributes to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

PPS 22 on renewable energy requires Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources. The environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy projects are material considerations for planning permission. It sets out policies for renewables in designated areas, and states that local planning authorities may include policies requiring a percentage of on-site renewable energy in new developments (along the lines of the Merton Rule).

## Climate planning by Crowborough Town Council

Crowborough Town Council's five year plan includes a commitment to energy efficient planning – encouraging water capture, solar heating panels and wind energy. Whenever the planning and development committee is consulted by Wealden District Council (the planning authority) it tries to include clauses on water and renewable energy. For example, they initially recommended refusal of a planning application (to demolish two houses and provide 14 residential units in two buildings), one reason being the lack of energy conservation measures. As a result, the developer made changes and submitted a new application, with commitments to insulation and to recovery and reuse of water and building materials. Crowborough Town Council and the planning authority supported the new application.

**For information on Crowborough Town Council see**

[www.crowborough.info](http://www.crowborough.info)

## Local energy advice centres

There are a variety of energy advice centres and agencies. Often these are independent, not-for-profit agencies with strong links to local authorities, energy suppliers and national bodies like the Energy Saving Trust. They exist

to provide impartial advice, support, and in many cases can help to source potential grant funding. Speakers from local energy advice centres or energy teams may be available to talk to parish councils and their communities.

## North Leigh – energy efficient village labelling

Energy labels are normally applied to appliances, but the small village of North Leigh aims to be the first village labelled 'energy efficient'. The parish council and villagers worked on a feasibility study with Thames Valley Energy Centre and industry professionals. They aimed for a scientific approach that can be used in other villages. The next step is to monitor the village's energy use to establish the basis for an energy efficient labelling scheme covering the whole village. When villagers participate they receive advice on taking low cost or no cost steps to reduce energy use and save money.

**For more information on North Leigh village see**

[www.tvec.org.uk/case\\_studies.asp](http://www.tvec.org.uk/case_studies.asp)

## Energy providers

Gas and electricity suppliers have a duty to fulfil the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), which sets targets for suppliers to work with householders across the UK to improve their domestic energy efficiency. This can provide parish and town councils with an opportunity to be involved in partnerships with suppliers, to encourage domestic customers to save energy by installing insulation, energy efficient boilers, appliances and light bulbs at reduced costs.



## Cornwall Home Health project

This project is run by the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (bringing together public, private and community sectors). It encourages energy efficiency measures for warmer, drier, healthier homes, and tells people how to reduce carbon emissions. The project focuses on the most deprived areas of Cornwall. However, in target areas, all households are eligible, regardless of income. A community outreach officer built links with existing, trusted community networks, including town and parish councils. These networks receive training on giving advice and identifying households that might require energy saving measures. The scheme is promoted through fun days, local press releases and community newsletters. It has resulted in 537 loft insulations, 152 cavity wall insulations, 156 hot water tank jackets and annual savings of 1,027 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

### **More information on Cornwall Home Health project**

[portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%2018.pdf](http://portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%2018.pdf)



## Schools

Schools are great organisations to work with for many reasons. Special events and lessons about climate change, such as school plays and energy-saving weeks, can be combined with energy efficiency measures within the school.

A community building such as a school may be suitable for a visible project to reduce emissions, like onsite generation of electricity. Not only do the pupils learn about energy, the climate, and the ways to make a difference, but they can also share this knowledge with their parents.

### Nidderdale school turbine

Nidderdale High School and Community College includes a business education centre, pool and sports centre. They installed a new wind turbine which saves about 21 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. Grants covered the cost of £95,000 and each year the school saves £2,000–£3,000 on electricity bills. As well as meeting part of the school's energy needs, it is an educational resource for the pupils and the wider community. The school's rural, elevated position (in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

means that average wind speed on the site is 6.5 metres per second. Local planning permission was raised with no objections, partly because of the small size of the wind turbine (13m high), and partly because of goodwill towards the school as the heart of the community. Local people stayed informed through the school newsletter and local paper.

### Further information on Nidderdale school

[portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%202023.pdf](https://portal.est.org.uk/uploads/documents/cafe/cafe%20case%20study%202023.pdf)



## Climate Change Communications Initiative, and Challenge Fund projects

Defra's Climate Change Communications Initiative (CCCI), focuses on changing attitudes, so that climate change is seen as a 'here and

now, front of mind' issue, and relevant to the UK. It encourages individuals to feel empowered and positive about their role in tackling climate change through a variety of measures such as energy efficiency. Local, community and regional engagement is one of its cornerstone principles.



Between 2005/6 and 2007/8 Defra will spend £12 million on CCCI, with 83 regional projects being supported under the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF). Each project is led by a local trusted intermediary (eg the Women's Institute, non-governmental organisation or local charity) in partnership with local action groups, regional government or local authorities. They communicate in a variety of ways at a local level, including seminars, games, online, and theatre, addressing a wide range of audiences including farmers, older people and young people.

All funds have been allocated from the CCF but parish councils may be able to work with CCF projects in their area, for example, by helping to distribute communication materials produced by the projects or participating in events.

In addition, in 2006 a competition chose nine youth champions, who

are now working regionally, and in some instances nationally, to highlight the need to tackle climate change. These young people act as figureheads for the initiative, drawing in additional publicity, working with schools and local government, and adding value to the CCF projects. They gained significant national and regional media attention. To see what they have been up to visit [www.climatechallenge.gov.uk](http://www.climatechallenge.gov.uk). To find out how to work with your local champion please email [ccf@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ccf@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

### The local pub

Many pubs are the hubs of village life. They are particularly suited to fun, social events with a climate change theme. Pubs can host 'green energy clinics' to inform customers about reducing emissions. These events may appeal to a different audience to conventional climate change events and reinforce the message.

### Climate Change – So What? The pub quiz! (Climate Challenge Fund project)

Community Energy Plus is developing a series of fun, informative, and irreverent but challenging pub quizzes across Cornwall. This actively takes the message out to the audience in an engaging way. A follow-up discussion on the evening (with at least one expert) encourages people to get more information. The quiz nights will be reinforced by a series of events, including a 'Question Time' type Great Cornwall Climate Change Debate. The project also visits rural communities that don't have a pub and use village halls, schools, pre-dinner entertainment and Rotary events. The quiz attracts a new and wider audience that would not normally attend such talks.

### For more information on So What? The pub quiz!

[www.climatechallenge.gov.uk](http://www.climatechallenge.gov.uk)

## Transport providers

Public transport is often a top priority for rural areas – and is also a more environmentally friendly option than using cars. These can include dial-a-ride schemes, park and ride, school buses, taxi voucher schemes, free buses provided by supermarkets and community transport services. Information on local transport services such as community and voluntary transport and concessionary fares availability can be hard to find in

one place. Parish and town councils can present the community's needs for public transport directly to commercial transport operators or Transport Authority Officers. Their detailed knowledge of life in their communities, and evidence provided by a parish plan or transport needs assessment, could be shared with transport providers or inform the Local Transport Plan. Parish councils along the same transport route may well be interested in pooling resources and lobbying power.

## Ten parishes' community minibus

Chipstable, Raddington and Waterrow parish plans demonstrate the importance of community transport. As a result, the Wiveliscombe Area Partnership (a not-for-profit company) took over two minibuses from the Taunton Deane Borough Council, enabling minibuses to continue as the 'Wivey Link'. The aim of the Wivey Link is to service ten parishes surrounding Wiveliscombe. The minibuses have disabled access and are used, for example, to get older



people to doctors, hospitals and shops. Residents book through a central office, run almost entirely by volunteers. There is huge local support for the scheme: for example, a community duck race raised money for the Wivey Link.

**For more information on the Wivey Link see** [www.wiveliscombe.com/the\\_wivey\\_link](http://www.wiveliscombe.com/the_wivey_link)

# Further help and information

## **Action for Communities in Rural England, ACRE**

ACRE aims to promote a healthy, vibrant and sustainable rural community sector. It also acts as the national umbrella organisation for 38 Rural Community Councils (RCCs) throughout England, and has published a guide on green village halls (there is a charge for the publication). RCCs provide advice and guidance on parish planning.

**[www.acre.org.uk](http://www.acre.org.uk)**

## **BREEAM EcoHomes rating**

BRE's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) assesses the environmental performance of both new and existing buildings in terms of water, energy, waste and materials.

**[www.ecohomes.org](http://www.ecohomes.org)**

## **Climate Challenge**

This website contains valuable information about what the challenge is and the difference everyone can make. It includes climate change facts, case studies, a downloadable film and information on the Climate Change Champions.

You can work out your carbon footprint by using the Government's Act on CO<sub>2</sub> calculator at

**[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

For further information on which actions have the greatest impact on your CO<sub>2</sub> 'profile'

**[www.climatechallenge.gov.uk](http://www.climatechallenge.gov.uk)**

## **Community Action for Energy**

The Energy Saving Trust has top tips for energy saving, at work, at home and in the car. It also runs Community Action for Energy (CAfE), which supports local community-based energy projects. Membership is free and by joining parish councils can keep up to date with news, funding opportunities and training sessions.

**Tel. 08701 261 444**

**[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housingbuildings/](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housingbuildings/)**

## **Defra's Community Building website**

This is a Defra one-stop information website for community halls.

**[www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/halls](http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/halls)**

## **Defra's Parish planning website**

This Defra website contains information about parish planning and other local action planning processes.

**[www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/parish-planning.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/parish-planning.htm)**

## **Directgov: Environment and greener living**

A wide range of practical ideas to help you make everything a bit greener, from green food labels to your local recycling service.

**[www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm)**

## **EcoTeams**

EcoTeams bring together a small group of households. They share ideas and support each other in making step changes over a few months that reduce their environmental impact. The National Federation of Women's Institutes is recruiting up to 160 members as EcoTeams facilitators, changing attitudes among friends, family and community. Global Action Plan can tell you more about how to start an EcoTeam (there is a charge for the materials).

**Tel. 01252 848 707**

**[www.globalactionplan.org.uk](http://www.globalactionplan.org.uk)**

## **Energy Efficiency Advice Centre**

Your local advice centre can provide free, local and independent advice on saving energy.

**Tel. 0800 512 012**

**[www.nef.org.uk/index.asp](http://www.nef.org.uk/index.asp)**

## **Every Action Counts**

Every Action Counts is an initiative supported by Defra and delivered through a consortium of voluntary and community sector organisations. For advice, materials and games to help community groups take simple and effective actions to protect and improve the environment.

**Tel. 0845 241 0957**

**[www.everyactioncounts.org.uk](http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk)**

## **FARMA – the national Farmers' Retail & Markets Association**

This is a cooperative of farmers and those selling directly from farms. FARMA also inspects and certifies farm retail and farmers' markets and provides information. The website can help you find a local farmers' market or get involved in one.

**Tel. 0845 45 88 420**

**[www.farmersmarkets.net](http://www.farmersmarkets.net)**

## **Freecycle.com**

Encourages the reuse of household items, ranging from furniture, baby and children's clothes, computers and even cars. It costs absolutely nothing and at the same time reduces the impact on landfills. To find out where your nearest group is please visit

**[www.freecycle.com](http://www.freecycle.com)**

## **I&DeA**

The Improvement and Development Agency highlights case studies from councils that use energy efficiency, mitigation and adaptation action plans to tackle the effects of climate change.

**[www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)**

## **Low Carbon Buildings Programme**

For information about grants for solar panels, mini wind turbines and other green energy equipment for buildings.

**Tel. 0800 915 0990**

**[www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk](http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk)**

## Low Carbon Innovation Exchange

This free to join network provides members with the opportunities to learn from one another and share their own experience, best practice and innovation in the drive to tackle climate change.

[www.carbon-innovation.com](http://www.carbon-innovation.com)

## National Energy Action

This is a national charity that campaigns for warm homes, particularly for low income households. It also aims to bring the benefits of energy efficiency to community buildings, and has published a guide on 'Energy Efficiency in Community Buildings' on its website.

[www.nea.org.uk](http://www.nea.org.uk)

## Soil Association food and farming: Local Food

The Local Food team facilitates, informs and builds capacity in the local food sector and seeks to assist in making local organic food available to all.

Tel. 0117 914 2424

[www.localfoodworks.org](http://www.localfoodworks.org)

## The Biomass Energy Centre

For information on biomass, including systems suitable for community buildings and grant support available, with an emphasis on wood fuel and heat production.

[www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk](http://www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk)

## The Environment Agency

This has tips for water saving at home, at work and in gardens.

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

## The Merton Rule

This is a planning policy, pioneered by the London Borough of Merton, which requires the on-site generation of renewable energy in new major developments.

[www.themertonrule.org](http://www.themertonrule.org)

## The Nottingham Declaration

By signing The Nottingham Declaration on climate change local authorities show their commitment. They pledge to actively tackle climate change in their area and work with others to reduce emissions country-wide. A Nottingham Declaration Action Pack provides detailed guidance to develop an Action Plan, explaining how local authorities can reduce emissions and adapt to climate change.

[www.est.org.uk/housing/buildings/localauthorities/NottinghamDeclaration](http://www.est.org.uk/housing/buildings/localauthorities/NottinghamDeclaration)

## The Tree Council

The Tree Council founded the Tree Warden Scheme, a national initiative to enable people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods.

Tel. 020 7407 9992

[www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

## **The UK Climate Impacts Programme**

For information on the impact of climate change in the UK and in your area.

**[www.ukcip.org.uk](http://www.ukcip.org.uk)**

## **Transport and Rural Communities**

To find out more about local and regional support, funding and concessionary fares

**[www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/](http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/)**

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) plays an important part in the delivery of transport in rural areas, for more details

**[www.communitytransport.com](http://www.communitytransport.com)**

## **Warm Front**

Warm Front is the government's main grant-funded programme for tackling fuel poverty.

**Tel. 0800 316 2805 (for the scheme manager, Eaga Partnership Ltd)**

**[www.warmfront.co.uk](http://www.warmfront.co.uk)**

Please note: All website addresses listed in this publication are correct as of 3rd September 2007.

## **Acknowledgement**

This guide was developed from an idea by Annie Cooper and its production is also due in large part to the work of colleagues in Defra's Rural Policy Division and the Climate and Energy Directorate. We are very grateful to the many town and parish councils who were happy for us to share their experiences and innovations with others.

For further copies of this guide please contact Defra Publications on 08459 556000.



Printed on material that contains a minimum of 100% recycled fibre for uncoated paper and 75% recycled fibre for coated paper.

