

# Climate and Ecological Emergency Forum

20 June 2023

Guildhall, Totnes & Zoom

## *Present:*

TTC Cllr J Hodgson (JH - chair)

Maiken Hutchings – TTC Sustainability Officer (SO - notes)

BP (online) - Totnes Climate Hub

TTC Cllr John Cummings (JC - until 7.30pm)

RO - Totnes Trust

FB - Climate change campaigner

## Recommendations

1. The CEEF recommends that TTC allocate £600 from its Climate Change budget towards Totnes Bike Hub's Tea 'n Tinkering sessions. This would fund 50% of the requested amount. They recommend the Bike Hub apply to the District Cllrs to fund the remaining 50%.

## Actions

1. SO to draft up ToRs for next meeting in July.
2. SO to put together suggested response to DCIoS adaptation consultation based on input from CEEF and wider mailing list.
3. **ALL** – to respond to the DCIoS adaptation consultation by 30<sup>th</sup> June
4. SO to inform the Bike Hub of the group's funding recommendation to TTC and provide information on how to apply for SHDC Cllr funds.
5. SO to liaise with RO on getting something (a little description/report) on the Colebrook Leat project that can go to TTC Planning Committee to say whether they would object to this project.

## 1. Welcome (6.30)

### a. Notice of change from Working Group to Forum

Cllr Hodgson updated on the recent change agreed by Totnes Town Council in May to change the Climate & Ecological Emergency Working Group to the Climate & Ecological Emergency Forum. This functions as an advisory group to the council.

- In practice this will have little impact on the group.
- Removes requirement to be quorate with TTC Cllrs (which has been a struggle in the past). Now just one TTC link Cllr required.
- FB asked whether SHDC or TTC have a requirement to listen to what the group says.

- JH clarified that SHDC are not linked to this group in any way but that she does feed back relevant information to SHDC. She also said that SHDC are setting up an advisory panel.
- TTC will always seek the advice of the Forum on relevant matters. It is always up to TTC Cllrs whether they accept recommendations – this has not changed. Notes from these meetings go to Town Matters Committee and onwards to Full Council if required.
- Group agreed that new Terms of Reference were probably needed.

**ACTION:** SO to draft up ToRs for next meeting in July.

#### **b. Notes & Actions from the last Meeting 28th February 2023.**

- SO gave brief update on Gardening for Wildlife booklet
  - This has been distributed to residents by Totnes Directory. Copies have also been given to the library, the Climate Hub and the Tourist Information Centre. There are still copies left – suggestions for other locations welcome. St John’s Church, St Mary’s Church and Bridgetown Alive have been contacted.
  - JH suggested we encourage people to do something from the booklet and give a little story, perhaps have a nature hero. This could be looked into at future meeting if we have time.

## **2. Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Adaptation Plan consultation**

JC asked whether we could move agenda items around as he had another meeting to attend at 7.30pm. It was agreed to discuss the Adaptation Plan consultation before he had to leave.

It was noted to remember that this is an adaptation plan and not a mitigation plan. The Devon Carbon Plan (released in 2022) is the county’s mitigation plan.

The linked action plan sets out the priority actions for regional collaboration over the next five years.

Various discussions ensued, as below. Further details have been added to after the meeting to more accurately reflect what is contained in the Adaptation Strategy.

Issues to potentially highlight in a consultation response are **highlighted in yellow**.

- Questions around potential lack of diet mentioned in the plan and food security. However:
  - Food security and safety is identified as a severe risk under the Health and Built Environment sector. “Risks to food safety and food security in the DCIoS region. [CIG42]”

- It is also listed as a major risk under cross-cutting sector  
“Risks to regional food availability, safety, and quality from climate change overseas. [CIG56]”

Lack of planning how to deal with severe food shortages, e.g., a food rationing programme.

Diet mentioned in p.94:

- “Encourage and stimulate the purchase of local, environmentally sustainable produce to support a healthier and more resilient food system and reduce food miles”
- Is biodiversity mentioned? Two parallel emergencies and how they interact.

Yes, it is mentioned a lot under Natural Environment.

- Pp. 18-20 of Plan, Natural Environment sector, outlines a number of risks to natural habitats. Risks to habitats mentioned 9 times, 4 under Severe Risks, 5 under Major Risks.
- E.g., [CIG01]: Risks to terrestrial species and habitats from changing climatic conditions and extreme events – [CIG12]: Risks to freshwater species and habitats from changing climatic conditions and extreme events
- Natural environment (including agriculture and forestry and fisheries): • To support and actively improve the adaptive capacity of landscapes and habitats.
- P. v (executive summary) mentions action: “To support and actively improve the adaptive capacity of landscapes and habitats.”  
And p 87: “Enhance regional habitat condition and connectivity to increase species resilience and biodiversity (e.g. wildlife corridors, rewilding, river restoration etc.)”
- Is there a mention of different crops needed for new climate?
  - Yes. P. 86: “Choose new crop varieties/ different breeds that are: more heat tolerant, drought resistant, less susceptible to pests and disease, reduce run-off and soil erosion.”
- Appears to be a lack of mention of pandemics?
  - It is mentioned but only once in Appendix 2 “Literature reviewed to inform the risk assessment”
  - Should there be a stronger focus on this, given that climate change is affecting the range and geographical spread of diseases and higher risk of diseases jumping from animals to humans?
  - However, in Appendix 4, under Strategic-level adaptation options, the following are mentioned:

**Cross-cutting (including international dimensions)**

**Table 19. Cross-cutting strategic adaptation options and enablers to address climate hazards across multiple sectors (including international dimensions).**

#	Strategic option and/or enabler	CIG risks addressed
CCA 1	Local Authority and UKHSA Health Protection Teams to raise awareness of new disease and transmission vectors and work with key stakeholders, e.g. Integrated Care Board, and Environment Agency.	61
CCA 3	As temperatures increase bacterial infection occurrence may rise in higher latitudes, alongside the faster bacteria reproduction rates with higher temperatures there is an increased risk of bacteria becoming drug resistant. Raise awareness on the impacts of anti-microbial resistance and prevention measures (e.g. reducing antibiotics use in livestock).	61

DCIoS Climate Impacts Group

93

Climate Adaptation Strategy for Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly

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CCA 2	Define a regional approach (e.g. 'One Health') to prevent the emergence of zoonotic diseases (infectious diseases transmitted from animals to humans).	61
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- Little emphasis on transport?
  - Transport is mentioned numerous times and highlighted as severe and major risk under the Infrastructure sector.
    - p. 22 “Severe risks and significant opportunities: Risks to infrastructure networks (water, energy, transport, digital) from cascading failures (e.g. access to broadband being disrupted due to power outages; and sewage overflow from heavy rainfall events). [CIG20] “
    - Major risk: “Risks to transport from high and low temperatures (incl. ice and snow), high winds, lightning, humidity. [CIG31]”
    - 
    - p. 16 “Flooding and coastal erosion threatens multiple critical infrastructure sites and transport networks across the region. Railway lines are particularly at risk; several lines run along the Devon and Cornish coast and there have been incidences of extended mainline

railway closure in Devon due to the failure of sea defences”

- However, there is perhaps a lack of action directly relating to this.
  - P.88: Action INFA 3, “Develop working group with infrastructure industry associations and providers at regional level to improve interdependencies awareness within the infrastructure sector”
  - Is this enough?
- Lack of emphasis on housing and changes needed to deal with increased flooding, heatwaves and cold snaps
  - Energy and water efficient minimum building standards for new-builds; insulation and retrofitting for existing homes; repair and re-use of existing homes, rather than demolition and new build. Link with transport policy (encourage active transport / 15 minute towns). Dealing with homelessness in heatwaves, floods and cold.
  - The Action Plan (p.107) does contain the following:

“Strategic Direction D - Minimise heat-related illness and death

Action: Provision of funding and guidance for older properties to be retrofitted in line with New Building Regulations Part O to prevent buildings overheating and / or reduce heat loss in winter. “
  - However, there needs to be greater focus on making all houses (both current and future) resilient to flooding, heat and cold. And actions to support this.
- Is energy covered adequately?
  - P. 22 Severe risk:

Risks to infrastructure networks (water, energy, transport, digital) from cascading failures (e.g. access to broadband being disrupted due to power outages; and sewage overflow from heavy rainfall events). [CIG20]
  - Major risk: Risks to energy from high and low temperatures, high winds, lightning, humidity. [CIG29]
  - p. 35 Strategic-level adaptation options

“Emergency Planning - map voluntary and community sector assets and capabilities in their areas. Develop processes for their swift activation, deployment, and coordination. Ensure distributed energy resources, such as

customer-premise microgrids (e.g. solar + storage systems), community microgrids, or mobile battery and generation systems can provide lifepreserving power to community shelters and public health facilities during emergencies.”

- Education/Awareness raising – there should be a direct reference to working with schools and colleges, and not just general public awareness.
- Does it mention specific plans re migration/evacuation due to flooding, etc?  
The document has the following:
  - Action Plan highlights: “Build and develop resilience partnerships. Ensure their command, control and co-ordination arrangements for an emergency which involves the loss of both power and telecoms, and actively involve utilities companies in local planning where required to ensure linkage with regional and national developments.”
  - “Emergency Planning - map voluntary and community sector assets and capabilities in their areas. Develop processes for their swift activation, deployment, and coordination. Ensure distributed energy resources, such as customer-premise microgrids (e.g. solar + storage systems), community microgrids, or mobile battery and generation systems can provide lifepreserving power to community shelters and public health facilities during emergencies.”
  - P. 90: “Policy makers to start gathering evidence of where aspects of community / development / industry / utility etc will need to be relocated due to climate impacts and develop an evidence base that can inform planning activities (e.g. relocation of properties due to insurmountable flood risk).”

This could perhaps be more specific and mention large numbers may be displaced internally within the SW, / forced migration away from the SW / mass migration into the SW from outside.

- Healthcare – how to prepare for effects of heat waves/air pollution/new diseases, etc?
  - Health is mentioned a lot in the document. The Strategic Adaptation Plan mentions the following:  
  
Health and the built environment:
    - To increase community awareness of how climate change can impact physical and mental health.

- To support residences and businesses on private water supplies to adapt to climate change threats, including security of supply and changing water quality.
  - To assist public services to understand climate change impacts on their assets, service delivery and the community’s health.
  - To minimise heat-related illness and death.
  - To ensure the region is ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change.
- Does it mention civil unrest and involving the police in preparations?
    - Yes. Under cross-cutting risks:

Moderate risk: “Risks to the DCIoS region from civil disorder and conflict resulting from climate change (e.g. battle for water resources). [CIG59]”

Actions mentioned p. 94 – see image below

**Strategic Direction C - Information and liaison on effects climate change have on crime rates and **civil** disorder.**

Ref	Action	Timescale	Responsible
<b>C1</b>	Work with partners, including universities, to examine the effects of climate change on crime rates and the potential for <b>civil</b> disorder.	Medium	<b>Devon and Cornwall Police, Universities,</b>
<b>C2</b>	Police Service to liaise with the Met Office to expand weather forecast alert system for high temperatures and potential increase in crime.	Short	<b>Devon and Cornwall Police, Met Office, NHS Boards, Local Authorities (Social Care)</b>

- Does it contain information on how the public will be engaged going forward?
  - There appears to be no mention of how the public will continue to be engaged – it isn’t mentioned in the governance or monitoring/evaluation sections.
  - It does mention “Reports will also be submitted to the Risk Management Group of the DCIoS Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to ensure ongoing cooperation and continuity of approaches.”
  - But this could be strengthened.

**ACTION:** SO to put together suggested response to consultation based on input from CEEF and wider mailing list.

**ACTION:** ALL to send input to SO by Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June

### 3. Community composting

JH gave update. She is now on SHDC Executive and is responsible for composting.

- Follaton is still the main location being explored. Conversations with SHDC prior to elections were positive.
- JH will be meeting with someone as part of Sustainable South Hams initiative to look at community composting across the district.
- Feedback during recent SSH meeting was that those areas wanting community compost scheme feel that there isn't enough support from SHDC on it
- It was noted that organic landholders/farmers can go to the community composting site for waste

BP asked whether it would be possible to link up with recycling centre in Totnes? Could that be diverted to the community composting centre?

- JH said that once it goes through gates at centre, it is owned by Suez. But that we would likely be able to put up signs near the centre directing people to the community composting site.

JH will feed back to group on further developments at next meeting.

### 4. FB's diet leaflets

FB gave update on his leaflet. Highlighted that the Government was being taken to court by campaigners due to lack of taking Dimpleby Food Strategy recommendations into account

- Suggestion from group that it could benefit from focusing more on health impacts of reduced meat consumption
  - FB said that there is debate around the health aspects of meat and so he had intentionally left it out

FB wishes to have the endorsement to two commitments:

- 1) that the three councils (TTC, SHDC and DCC) commit to adhere to the climate change committee advised meat and dairy reductions
- 2) they provide information to consumers to support this shift

**NB:** After the meeting, FB highlighted another avenue to engage Cllrs on this matter. This is ongoing and proposed next steps being discussed. Update to follow in July CEEF meeting.



## 5. Funding discussions

At this point, the meeting was running late so it was decided to just consider one of the funding discussion topics with the rest to be considered at the next meeting.

Totnes Bike Hub – Tea ‘n Tinkering

- SO read out a description sent in by the Bike Hub on their sessions

Tea and Tinkering is a weekly bike maintenance workshop. Aimed at people who may be feeling socially isolated or disconnected from their community, our workshops provide meaningful activity. Volunteers can work on their own bikes or on donated bikes, learn a new skill or hone an existing one. The donated bikes will either be stripped of its parts which can be re used again, or some bikes can be fully refurbished and sold on/donated to those in need. Participants can even work on a donated bike and keep it themselves, if they felt they couldn't afford it.

We've run a pilot project since March 2023. It's clear that people are finding the sessions helpful and therapeutic. A quote from a participant in his 60s who has come to 4 sessions who lives with depression and anxiety: 'Really enjoyed today again , bikes , cake and coffee. What's not to like?' We always have a 30 min break to sit and drink tea and talk, not always about bikes!

We receive referrals from the NHS Social Prescribers and Totnes Caring. Links have been made with Lifeworks college in Dartington (where one 20 year old participant comes every week with his support worker) and Bridgetown Alive as a way to connect with Bridgetown residents.

*We'd need about £1200 to maintain the sessions over the summer months until autumn.*

- JH suggested that TTC offer 50% of the requested funding (i.e. £600) and that the local SHDC Cllrs contribute the rest from their funds.
  - This was agreed by the group

**RECOMMENDATION:** For TTC to allocate £600 from its Climate Change budget towards Totnes Bike Hub's Tea ‘n Tinkering sessions.

**ACTION:** SO to inform the Bike Hub of the group's recommendation to TTC and provide information on how to apply for SHDC Cllr funds.

## 6. To note: Colebrook Leat Survey

RO gave update on the survey into improving the Colebrook Leat area by Morrisons.

- Doesn't think the report is very good
- Disagrees with suggestion to keep railings; people just throw stuff over them

- Planting certain trees will start to close it again which defeats the point of the project. Totnes Trust want to open it up – along the lines of the image circulated by RO.



The land isn't owned by TTC (owned by Morrisons) but RO/Totnes Trust would like the Council's voice of support.

**ACTION** – SO to liaise with RO on getting something (a little description/report) that can go to TTC Planning Committee to say whether they would object to this project.

## 5) AOB

It was noted that South West Water are currently offering free water saving resources.

[www.southwestwater.co.uk/services/save-water/#/](http://www.southwestwater.co.uk/services/save-water/#/)

- Fill in survey to receive free water resources, such as a water butt, toilet cistern volume reducers, tap heads, etc.

Next meeting will be 18th July.

**End of meeting: 20:10**