

Agenda Item 7

For information - Update on Climate & Ecological Emergencies work programme.

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Summary

This report updates on work completed since December 2024 to address the Climate & Ecological Emergencies. Our new Climate Action Lead, Matt Mellen (MM), has now been in the role for nearly 6 months. He has repurposed Green and Healthy Frome budget underspend to ramp up capacity on two main areas of work – renewable energy and energy efficiency (retrofit). Plans are developing well for a new chapter of townwide community engagement including an Adaptation Workshop scheduled for May 2025. A presentation will be made at the meeting to cover the key points.

Progress review of currently active parts of the programme to address the Climate and Ecological Emergencies

NB – The Red/Amber/Green rating below enables Cllrs to assess programme progress at a glance. Green means that the area of work has either been completed or is due for completion before year end. Amber means that it might be a little delayed or has been amended. Red means that it is will not be delivered.

Project	Update	Status
Research and understand the impacts of climate and ecological breakdown on Frome, what initiatives have been successful to date and how we can encourage behaviour and system change.	Database of climate solutions and key stakeholders in Frome in development. Partnerships in place with Somerset Wildlife Trust to scope projected changed to Frome for adaptation workstream. New website pages and communications assets about to be published.	
Through community engagement develop a new and ambitious town-wide climate action plan (CAP) and coordinate actions by organisations in the town to implement it. Put in place an evaluation framework.	Meetings with main community groups carried out. A Climate Action WhatsApp group has been set up with 20 active members. Dates confirmed for adaptation workshop and stakeholder meetings. Other event announcements coming soon.	
Support organisations working in climate action in Frome to access grants and other sources of funding. Develop a scheme to provide grant funding for community action building on the new town-wide climate action plan.	New funding bids submitted for – Frome Community Bike Project and home retrofit workstreams. Scoping being carried out to apply for Community Energy Fund grant. Developing feasibility studies for wind turbines for Frome in partnership with FRECo.	
Develop and implement a communications plan that encourages individuals and organisations to make changes.	New communications strategy for renewable energy, along with new webpage text and possible engagement events put forth and awaiting approval/implementation.	
Engage the local community including those already working in this field to imagine how our neighbourhoods might be retrofitted and adapted, and the EPC rating of homes can be improved. Raise the profile of retrofit.	Caroline Wajsblum – Healthy Homes Volunteer Coordinator has taken on 16.5 extra hrs work a week on Retrofit Support; to identify and support local people on their retrofitting journeys. Encourage people to work together. Support local businesses. Encourage more people to retrofit, increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon footprints in Frome.	

	New retrofit engagement plan developed. Strengthening working relationship with CSE and CEE. Improving impact evaluation opportunities.	
Investigate the opportunities to install solar on public and commercial buildings in Frome at scale.	Linnea Hopkins - Healthy Homes Volunteer has taken on a renewable energy work package to explore opportunities for the town. As part of this - roofs in industrial estates mapped and database of businesses (owners / occupiers) in development. New database of renewable energy suppliers and offers completed. Starting work on matchmaking service and business event.	
Frome Green Energy	Multiple meetings and close working relationship with FRECo established. Support provided to them to update their communications and coordinate public meetings. Collaborating on next steps for wind feasibility study.	
Promote and support food resilience initiatives and strategies developed through the Frome Food Network and other organisations.	First meetings been held. We are focusing on other areas right now, but these are in the pipeline.	
Encourage greater take-up of active travel and sustainable transport.	Fed into bids for Nature Towns and GWR Railway zoo.	
Explore potential Re-use Centre. Promote and support circular economy initiatives developed through local community organisations.	Meetings held with – Edventure, CAG Somerset, Fair Frome, Somerset Council and others. Scoping out opportunities and looking for space and funding.	

Climate & Ecological Emergencies work programme delivery update

Over the last 3 months there have been 3 main focusses for this work: engagement, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Engagement

A new partnership has been formed with Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT). Frome will be the next town to go through their [Act to Adapt programme](#). Plans for other Somerset towns can be seen on their website. April 1st we will co-host a preworkshop stakeholder meeting to scope out the workstream. May 13th we will carry out the main adaptation workshop. Following this there will be two rounds of community engagement with SWT as well as various pop-up engagements around town. The Adaptation Plan will then be developed and more community engagement carried out around the draft in the Autumn.

Renewable energy

A new renewable energy work package has begun, led by Linnea Hopkins up to July 2025, aiming to generate more renewable energy primarily through rooftop solar. Interviewed solar installers and identifying opportunities for funding, grants and group buying, along with tools and resources to educate and support the audiences below.

Audiences:

- Local business premises with suitable roofs, such as in commercial parks
- Homeowners wanting to lower energy bills and futureproof their houses
- Community energy investment opportunities; supporting FRECo with comms and engagement.

Energy efficiency

Caroline Wajsblum is developing a new strategy for pushing forward domestic retrofit in Frome to support and encourage local people on their retrofitting journeys; fostering collaboration, supporting local businesses, and increasing energy efficiency to reduce Frome's carbon footprint.

Involving home visits to help households understand retrofit survey recommendations and next steps, identify barriers, signposting to funding and contractor options, tracking progress and success stories. Exploring training Energy Champions in Retrofit advice to scale up project.

Using data collected to connect people on similar journeys, encouraging them to work together; community strengthened through networking opportunities, shared learning, group projects, and cost-saving collaborations such as exploring opportunities for shared solar installations.

Another key focus is identifying and cataloguing local tradespeople, addressing skill gaps, and exploring training if needed.

Resources will be made accessible through website and CEE Fairer Warmth online app. Also developing a programme of events, including workshops, Green Open Homes tours, and retrofitting expos, to inspire action.

The long-term vision includes impact evaluation, sharing successes, and securing funding for continued community decarbonisation activities.