

# Shropshire Climate Action Partnership

Steering Group Meeting 9th June 2021

Attending: Tony Green (TG), Robert Saunders (RS) Chris Deaves (CD) (Chair), Jo Blackman (JB), David Matthews (DM). Richard Grindle (RG), SWT; Adrian Cooper (AC), Shropshire Council; Allan Wilson (AW), Andrew Howe (AH), The Shrewsbury Food Hub, Will Nabih (WN) Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust, Jane Cullen (JC) (South Shropshire Climate Action, SSCA).

## CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Wael Nabih (the Associate Director for Estates and Hospital Site Transformation at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust) was welcomed to the meeting.

## APOLOGIES

Tim Yair, Phil Holden, Mark Fermor, Lorraine Waumsley, Adam Lines, John Ellis-Tipton.

RS commented that there were several missing attendees today, and that this may reflect people returning to regular work schedules, or perhaps a need to review the content of the meeting. A reminder to attend the next meeting will be sent out with the minutes.

DECLARATIONS incl. additional AOB items for listing.

None

## MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

The previous minutes were approved

## 5. GOVERNANCE OF SCAP

CD confirmed that Colin Preston is leading the governance activity; he has looked at the constitution, trustees, and has produced a governance document which is being circulated to the working groups for final comments. He is consulting with the pro bono solicitor arranged by MF. The process is moving forwards nicely without difficulty, and the CIO application is proceeding.

AH and AW pointed out that the CIO needed to be in place should our joint bid for funding from the Climate Action Fund progress to the next stage (Regrettably, later in the meeting AH confirmed that he'd received confirmation that this particular bid hadn't been successful).

The future of Shropshire Climate Action Ltd was raised. CD confirmed that, while we'll continue to use it as a financial vehicle for convenience in the short term, we're postponing any decision on what we do with it. It might be used for trading in the future. We won't move forward on this until we have the CIO in place.

## 6. SCAP UPDATES:

Generation Zero Carbon Shropshire (GZCS) (update provided by Deborah Murphy)

GZCS have now completed a school's pack for the Tech Severn Sustainability Conference this month. This pack includes a) A video assembly featuring all the members of the group talking directly to pupils about climate crisis, sustainability, and possible actions b) A stand-alone lesson plan and PowerPoint resources on the topic of sustainability. After a look at the issues posed by the anthropogenic climate crisis and suggested solutions, students are asked to consider how they will make different daily choices both on an individual level and on a whole school level. Students are encouraged to send responses into GZCS. This pack will be on the conference website for a full year. The pack is aimed at KS3 students across Shropshire as well as Youth Clubs, Guides, Scouts, and other youth groups.

GZCS have also produced a workshop for younger students (KS2) as part of the Shropshire Libraries participation in the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Programme. The workshop is based around a book entitled "A World Full of Plastic" and incorporates related quizzes, puzzles, reading, drawing and challenges. Participants will write down how they will try to reduce their use of plastic. Their drawings and pledges will produce a display in the participating library.

Due to summer jobs, work commitments and holidays, we will not be able to do as many face to face sessions as we would like to. We will give the libraries the resources to run themselves but if anyone lives close to one of the smaller libraries and would like to help, please get in touch with Deborah Murphy. (AW confirmed that Telford and Wrekin are not involved in this activity at the moment)

GZCS have created a pack of resources which will be used for the county's Holidays and Food (HAF) project this summer. (HAF is the project instigated by Marcus Rashford). The pack has a series of challenges based around food including a type of I Spy activity spotting food symbols, vegan and vegetarian foods and tasting challenges etc. The young people will gain points and receive a certificate from GZCS.

The launch competitions have been extended. The deadline is now July 31st, and a new age group 12-15 has been added. Prizes include vouchers from the vegan restaurant in Shrewsbury, Okra, and a free one to one mentoring session with a published poet from the poetry group Poetry on Loan. The winners will also receive a personal poem.

Initial discussions with CREST are in process regarding participation in a STEM challenge around active travel for local schools.

The group would act as a 'panel' that participants can access and challenge as part of their research.

Finally, once the above items are in place, GZCS will start to plan their event for the Shropshire Loves Nature festival. They are also beginning to discuss a few campaign ideas too.

## Energy Working Group – Support for Distributed Network Operators

CD outlined the window of opportunity that exists to work with the DNOs to provide feedback to Ofgem on what they need.

DNOs are currently making investment cases based on factors such as growth in housing stock. Some planning assumptions are based on policies to phase out diesel and petrol cars by 2040, yet the policy has since been accelerated(!). So, on the whole, their

planning assumptions may be conservative. We're trying to get DNOs to put much more flexibility into their spending plans for the future.

#### Membership

DM reported that we'd had 16 new individual pledgers over the last month, with one organisational sign-up. RS asked whether we are tracking numbers over time – perhaps we've got the people in who were interested/excited by the initial plan, and we now need to get to more people. TG pointed out that projects such as Shropshire Loves Nature will spread the word once more. CD commented that on the organisational side, there are some workshops with CAT next week to understand barriers organisations see to making carbon reductions which will help us as we seek to recruit more enterprises. We'll also have an Energy stand at Ludlow Green festival, and a webinar to launch the mapping study.

#### Update on Shropshire Council projects

AC commented that there's a tremendous amount of goodwill following the SSCA conference which made a very positive impact on council members, including Ian Nellings the new cabinet member for climate change.

We could get Ian Nellings to this group perhaps – he's probably keen to listen and learn at this point – so may not be able to contribute. But he's coming from a military background which hopefully means he'll get things planned and done, we need him to settle into his brief, and it's great that he went to SSCA conference. We need to draw out specific focus areas for him, or key asks. If we can give him some specific focus areas, that would be great.

Initial carbon literacy training is starting for new councillors with a plan to offer formal accredited training later in the year. All of the new members are obliged to attend minimal training on how they fulfil their role, and Adrian has managed to incorporate climate literacy training into this. Climate change impacts everything the Council does. AC was planning to provide an initial induction to 25 people the evening of the meeting.

AC stated that the council really values SCAP and associated community groups. SCAP can do things that the council can't do alone. SCAP provides a breadth and level of engagement the council wouldn't otherwise achieve, so is an integral part of the solution. AC acknowledged that this very much includes SSCA.

The council has lots going on focussing on carbon reduction, renewable energy, carbon capture and storage. The aim is to reduce council's footprint, but also to facilitate others achieving carbon reductions. e.g. the EV charging strategy. The council anticipates growth, but wants to identify geographies for EV demand. It doesn't want to duplicate commercial organisations, but commercial organisations are not doing enough today.

Improvements are planned to council buildings. In terms of Energy generation, the council is supporting a solar farm at an old landfill site in Oswestry, now part of an industrial estate. Trying to work through Scottish Power is proving very difficult. The council is talking to the NHS – an essential power user – where there may also be options for solar generation. SC is also considering passive use of solar for hydrogen generation, e.g. for haulage companies. Cheshire East Council is running a pilot on hydrogen-powered refuse collection vehicles. Shropshire is part of a Midlands consortium seeking funding from the Dept for Transport to run hydrogen fuel generation for on-road and off-road vehicles. The National Farmers Union (NFU) is interested, and the minerals sector is buying into the idea of hydrogen powered vehicles too. AC will be speaking to the minerals sector at a conference shortly. Hydrogen-fuelled buses could be great option for Shropshire too.

WN reported that as the NHS moves to zero carbon it will rely much more on electricity, need upgrades to distribution. The hospital transformation programme wants to get to net-zero carbon in 5 years. CD suggested that the energy mapping project can help with this, and we have ongoing dialogue with Western Power Distribution and Scottish Power. There are huge requirements for distribution.

Lots of things just don't work at the moment in terms of making the case for investment. There are significant structural defects. AW confirmed that there are legislative barriers caused by an inflexible framework. SCAP produced a paper last year for our local MPs outlining the changes needed. There's also latent capacity in the system that the DNOs don't want to use.

RS suggested that there's an ideal site for a solar farm near Princess Royal Hospital owned by Homes England. He has approached Telford and Wrekin council regarding this site. WN asked if RS could share the details.

AC stated that, with respect to heat networks, funding has been confirmed for a detailed technical study in North Shrewsbury to distribute heat from the Energy Recovery Plant. The plant was actually designed to support this. In response to a question about carbon capture, AC confirmed that he is not aware of carbon capture options at the plant. There is more focus on the council estate and looking at the potential for carbon insetting. This may enable significant investment in Shropshire based schemes.

#### Feedback from the South Shropshire Climate Conference run by SSCA

JC reported that the conference was well attended with a variety of excellent speakers. The keynote speaker was Gladys Habu from the Solomon Islands. It was amazing and emotional to hear about climate change directly from her. The SSCA report was received by Philip Dunne, Ian Nellings, Ken Addison (a distinguished Geographer from Oxford University who wrote a foreword to the report), Rachel Foster representing young people. The idea moving forwards it a that South Shropshire becomes a net zero pilot area (net zero zone) This is something that we're just beginning to promote. There were lots of positive responses to the conference, Philip Dunne presented the report in the Commons and to Alok Sharma towards COP 26. We are now starting to look at questions of what kind of organisation we are, how to pitch this. It's clear that we all need to work together, the more we can do that the better.

AC met with Philip Dunne earlier this week concerning a social housing development – the housing associations have worked out that to deliver net zero we'd need to improve 500 properties a year at £9m/annum.

JC pointed out that we need to target all the other local MPs – Philip Dunne has listened and learnt, but we need the others to get on board too. CD commented that it's important not to tell Philip stuff that he already knows, and also to ensure we're asking

for things that are within his gift to deliver.

CD asked if a national federation of local 'zero-carbon' groups could be created. AW confirmed that we already have the national association of local councils and this has a climate change body. TG suggested that the Green Alliance provides a federal approach too. What's clear is that systems and organisations already exist, we need to work with, and feed our messages through, what's already in place. AC stated that Shropshire Council is a founder member of UK 100 – within that is a countryside climate network. It is quite an influential body. Lesley Picton (SC new council leader) has just addressed this body on climate change. JC commented that it is striking just how much there is going on, and how fragmented it all is at every level. This disjointed approach, and silo thinking, this is what needs to be addressed.

AC suggested that the Commonplace platform may be able to help address this through improving networking via online working.

SG MEMBER UPDATES - Information sharing on connections, relevant events and news

Next week we have the Tech 7 conference; the workshops on the Local Plan for Transport (LPT4) are imminent too.

AOB

Date of next Steering Group meeting 14th July, 3.30pm to 5pm.

