

Environment & Emergency Committee

To: Committee Members

Cllrs Pitt (Chairperson), Banks, Bolanz, Dunford, Goodman, Simonis and Smith

Copies: County Councillors – S Ferguson, K Prentice, S Taylor & G Seeff

District Councillors – L Davenport-Ray, S Ferguson, A Jennings, M Pickering, I Taylor, S Taylor & G Welton

Town Councillors (not a member of this committee)

Local Press, Town Council website

Agenda for an **Extraordinary** meeting of the **Environment & Emergency committee** to be held on **Wednesday 12th June 2024 at 6.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded and made available to the public. Your participation in the meeting indicates your consent to being included in these recordings.

Public Participation

There will be a 10-minute session before the meeting to allow any resident to address the committee on any matter appearing on the agenda for this meeting.

Members of the Environment & Emergency committee are hereby summoned to attend this meeting to consider the following business.

C Robson
Town Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

To receive Councillors apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interest

To receive from Councillor's declarations as to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and/or Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests along with the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item.

3. Election of Deputy Chairperson

To receive nominations and elect a deputy chairperson for the Environment & Emergency Committee for the 2024-25 year.

4. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the Environment and Emergency Committee meeting held on 7th 2024 as a true and accurate record. Attachment 1

5. Climate Action Plan

To formally recommend that the Council adopt the content of the Climate Action Plan reviewed at the last two committee meetings.

Attachment 2

6. Date of next meeting

To note that the date of the next Committee meeting will be 7:15pm on 2nd July 2024.

Environment & Emergency Committee

Present: Committee Members
Cllrs Pitt and Slade

In Attendance: Deputy Town Clerk, Environmental Project Officer

Absent: Cllrs Bolanz, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Goodman, Macnab-Grieve, Pitt and Slade

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment & Emergency committee** held on **7th May 2024** at **7.15pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Public Participation

There were no member of the public present. No member of the public wished to address the Council.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Bolanz, Cooper-Marsh, Dunford, Goodman, Macnab-Grieve.

ACTIONS

The Meeting was inquorate and therefore did not take place.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

St Neots Town Council's Climate Action Plan 2024/2025**Introduction**

St Neots Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and, more recently in 2023, an Ecological Emergency. These declarations highlight our commitment to tackling the very real environmental degradation that is happening at both the local and global scale.

Whilst the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation feel far-removed from St Neots, there is already evidence of localised changes:

- More frequent flooding, caused by a combination of more intense localised rainfall and increased development, impacts residents and businesses situated in high-risk areas, as well as those commuting, with the numbers affected expected to increase by almost half again over the next 85 years¹. Whilst those directly impacted feel the effects more greatly, it affects us all due to rising insurance costs, as well as the health risks associated with standing water and overflowing sewers
- We are already experiencing repeated record-breaking high temperatures (both summer and winter) year-on-year². The extreme heat of 2022 caused an estimated 2,985 excess deaths in the UK³, and with an increasing upward trend in temperatures, these heat extremes will occur again. Warmer winters mean that diseases and their vectors (i.e., insects) which would normally be killed off by frost are surviving, increasing the distribution and longevity of disease. In addition to the individual impact, is the impact on our health services (through increased disease) and the financial burden that brings (which ultimately rests with taxpayers). Add in the associated drought (as floodwater rarely remains where it falls for long), and lack of available clean water for us, our crops and livestock, and the plants and animals in our local environment, and the resulting wildfires (whether started by humans or not), and we can see evidence of local changes to our climate all around us
- Air pollution not only contributes to climate change, but also significantly impacts on the health of us and our environment. Increased rates of asthma and chronic lung/heart disease, as well as stifled growth of plants/trees, is evident, particularly around busy roads. Reducing air pollution can positively impact the nation's health and the public purse, as well as protecting our natural environment
- Other pollution, such as littering, pesticide use, and improper disposal of chemicals, causes damage to our environment and our food chain. Chemicals and pesticides leach into the soil and waterways, killing wildlife and being absorbed/ingested by our crops and livestock. Litter can physically harm or kill our wildlife and livestock, whilst also causing blockages to our waterways and essential sewage/drainage systems. This type of environmental degradation is almost entirely avoidable, and yet it continues to blight the St Neots landscape daily
- We are already seeing an increase in invasive species in our environment, which not only harm our wildlife and damage the delicate balance of our ecosystem, but often novel diseases are brought with them. Whilst invasive species are typically brought to the UK through human intervention, the overall warming effect of climate change means these species are more likely to thrive.

- The increasing development of and pesticide use on our land, whilst necessary for a growing population, is consequently having a devastating impact on our local biodiversity. Fewer species mean poorer soil quality (affecting our crops), poorer air quality, an increase in disease-spreading vectors, a reduction in cross-pollination/seed spreading, and a reduction in important carbon sinks (where vegetation traps harmful excess carbon, reducing the amount in our atmosphere). In addition, our local nature and biodiversity has a positive impact on our wellbeing, so any degradation endangers our population's health.

With the available evidence of both local and global climate change demonstrating environmental, public health, and economic impacts, it is imperative that we do our part to minimise further warming, and ensure St Neots becomes resilient to the damage already done. In addition, the ongoing loss of biodiversity not only impacts the plants and animals around us but has huge cascading effects on the quality of our environment and our own ability to thrive.

St Neots Town Council have therefore committed to working towards Net Zero Carbon emissions* by 2030 and improving biodiversity by committing 30% of St Neots to nature by 2030. We have prepared this Climate Action Plan, which includes the actions necessary for these commitments, as a way to prepare and plan how we will meet our ambitions, and to keep us accountable and on target. Whilst there are direct actions for our Council to implement, there are also actions for our town which we will support and promote, but which we cannot do without our residents. For these indirect actions, we ask that all local people pull together to safeguard St Neots from further environmental degradation, securing the future prosperity of our town, and the people and other life that call this place home.

We will review this plan annually to ensure we are on track to meet our objectives, and to update residents of our progress.

**Net Zero Carbon emissions: “cutting carbon emissions to a small amount of residual emissions that can be absorbed and durably stored by nature and other carbon dioxide removal measures, leaving zero in the atmosphere⁴”. The most significant actions we can take towards this are to stop burning fossil fuels in our buildings and vehicles, and ensure the energy we buy is from clean, renewable sources.*

1. Environment Agency (2011) Great Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c39a4ed915d7d70d1d6c9/Great_Ouse_Catchment_Flood_Management_Plan.pdf
2. Met Office (2024) 2023 was second warmest year on record for UK <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2023/2023-was-second-warmest-year-on-record-for-uk#:~:text=2023's%20provisional%20mean%20temperature%20of,instrumental%20temperature%20series%20from%201659>.
3. UK Health Security Agency (2024) Heat Mortality Monitoring Report: 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-mortality-monitoring-report-2022#:~:text=used%20are%20available,-Observed%20excess%20all%2Dcause%20mortality,number%20in%20any%20given%20year>.
4. United Nations (2023) For a livable climate: Net-zero commitments must be backed by credible action <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>

Key Priorities

The key priorities identified by the Environment and Emergency Committee are:

- 2. To retrofit our buildings to reach Carbon Net Zero (1.2 and 1.3)
- 3. To transition our fleet of vehicles and tools to electric (1.5.1)
- 4. To only use renewable sources of energy (1.2 and 1.3)
- 5. To set initial carbon emission baselines and define how we measure and reduce Scopes 1, 2, and 3 (1.1)
- 6. Explore opportunities for local natural carbon offsetting (3.3.1)
- 7. Commit to increasing biodiversity across St Neots (2.1.4 and 3.3.1)
- 8. Engage with residents and businesses to join us on our Net Zero journey (2.1.2; 2.1.3; and 2.2.1)

1	Buildings and SNTC Business
Introduction: This section of the Climate Action Plan introduces the actions St Neots Town Council will be taking with regards our buildings and business. This includes both the buildings and assets that we own, and the buildings and assets that we use, as well as the services that we provide to the town, and our internal procurement. We will understand our current greenhouse gas emissions in order that we can work to reduce our footprint. We will ask our staff and Councillors to commit to our aspirations of working towards Net Zero by 2030, so that they, too, lessen their impact. We will work alongside our partner agencies and seek support from internal and external professionals on our journey.	
Progress 2024/2025 To be completed at annual revision	

Reference Number	Action	Rationale	Priority	Ease of implementation (1 = easy; 5 = hard)	Costs and payback (where applicable)	Progress
1.1	Getting Started					
1.1.1	Set the Council's emissions baseline and continue to review and report on it annually (including F-gas leakage and emissions)	Necessary for us to establish current greenhouse gas output (includes Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide, and F Gases) to understand where reductions are required	High	2	N/A	In progress – utilising the Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool to develop this
1.1.2	Develop an approach to capturing carbon emissions in reports and business case development	To ensure a robust application of our Net Zero goal from the outset of project development	Medium	2	N/A	Not started
1.1.3	Set a carbon budget (exponential) that, as a minimum, aligns with the UK Governments carbon budgets and future budget cycles	To allow measurement in tonnage, making target for Net Zero more tangible	High	2	N/A	Not started
1.1.4	Develop a communications plan for the CAP (internal and external)	To facilitate understanding and importance of the need for and application of our climate and environmental goals	High	2	N/A	Not started
1.1.5	Understand sources and availability of data for scope 3 reporting	Scope 3 is the most difficult scope to set a baseline for and have influence over. Wider research is required to mitigate these issues	High	2	N/A	Not started

1.2	Our Buildings					
1.2.1	<p>Monitor our energy use and use EPC certificates to inform, analyse, and improve on our own estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved insulation Improved heating efficiency Improved windows Opportunities for adding solar panels and wind turbines Opportunities for changing heating (air/ground source heat pumps; thermostatic valves; infrared heating) Switch to LED light bulbs 	<p>Energy bills and EPC's support with setting a baseline from which to improve our estate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce heat loss Reduce heat waste Reduced heat loss Able to generate our own renewable energy for electricity, reducing reliance on grid Able to generate our own heat, reducing fossil fuel and grid reliance (air/ground source heat pumps); less heat waste Reduced electricity use 	High	4	Will require separate quotes for each project in terms of cost and payback. Ranges from <£500 with short payback, to >£20,000 with 10+ years payback, hence, will require individual assessment	EPC assessments of all our properties completed March-April 2024.
1.2.2	<p>Ensure appropriate waste management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling bins Collection points for soft plastics, light bulbs, batteries, terracycle products 	Reduced waste means reduced greenhouse gas emissions (in landfill) and reduced need for fossil fuels to produce new products	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.2.3	Secure cycle parking with CCTV to promote active travel to our venues	Reduces emissions of visitors and staff; CCTV to reduce risk of bike theft and so build confidence in cycle safety	Medium	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.2.4	Install EV charging point(s) at our buildings	To support transition to electric vehicles for our visitors and staff	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.2.5	Explore opportunities for including additional climate-resilient building structures, including:	As our climate continues to warm, it is preferable to make our buildings more heat tolerable (for the safety of	Medium	3	Will require separate quotes for each project in terms of cost	Not started

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living walls (10m+ of greenery on the front of buildings can reduce surface temps by up to 5°C) • Allow openings for cross-ventilation • Louvered shade structures • Lime-based whitewash on roofs • Sedum roofs 	visitors and staff) rather than switch on air conditioning (releases F gases) or fans (consume electricity). Adding greenery to buildings not only helps with cooling, but structures can act as carbon sinks and provide habitats for improved biodiversity			and payback	
1.2.6	<p>Reduce water waste:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water saving blocks in toilets • Grey water capture for watering planters/gardens or for general external cleaning (i.e., washing decking/paving) 	As our climate continues to warm and our population continues to increase, clean water availability will reduce. Reducing waste will reduce pressure on this vital resource	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.3	The Buildings We Use					
1.3.1	<p>Monitor our energy use and use EPC certificates to inform, analyse, and improve on the buildings we utilise, working with HDC (owners) to ensure improvements come to fruition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved insulation • Improved heating efficiency • Improved windows • Opportunities for adding solar panels and wind turbines • Opportunities for changing heating (air/ground source heat pumps; thermostatic valves; infrared heating) • Switch to LED light bulbs 	<p>Energy bills and EPC's support with setting a baseline from which to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings we use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce heat loss • Reduce heat waste • Reduced heat loss • Able to generate our own renewable energy for electricity, reducing reliance on grid • Able to generate our own heat, reducing fossil fuel and grid reliance (air/ground source heat pumps); less heat waste • Reduced electricity use 	High	4	<p>Will require separate quotes for each project in terms of cost and payback. Ranges from <£500 with short payback, to >£20,000 with 10+ year payback, hence, will require individual assessment</p>	Not started – EPC's are responsibility of landlord.
1.3.2	<p>Ensure appropriate waste management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling bins • Collection points for soft plastics, light bulbs, batteries, terracycle products • Appropriate green waste disposal • Appropriate food waste disposal 	<p>Reduced waste means reduced greenhouse gas emissions (in landfill) and reduced need for fossil fuels to produce new products</p>	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.3.3	<p>Secure cycle parking with CCTV to promote active travel to our venues</p>	<p>Reduces emissions of visitors and staff; CCTV to reduce risk of bike theft and so build confidence in cycle safety</p>	Medium	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.3.4	Install EV charging point(s) and influence our partners to do the same	To support transition to electric vehicles for our visitors and staff	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.3.5	Explore opportunities for including additional climate-resilient building structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living walls (10m+ of greenery on the front of buildings can reduce surface temps by up to 5°C) Allow openings for cross-ventilation Louvered shade structures Lime-based whitewash on roofs 	As our climate continues to warm, it is preferable to make our buildings more heat tolerable (for the safety of visitors and staff) rather than switch on air conditioning (releases F gases) or fans (consume electricity)	Medium (High for Priory Centre due to opportunity to include in development plans)	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started - waiting for meeting with Priory Centre developers once initial plans are approved
1.3.6	Reduce water waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water saving blocks in toilets Grey water capture for watering planters/gardens or for general external cleaning (i.e., washing decking/paving) 	As our climate continues to warm and our population continues to increase, clean water availability will reduce. Reducing waste will reduce pressure on this vital resource	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.4	Other Assets					
1.4.1	Ensure current bulbs are replaced with LED bulbs as they fail in our street lighting	Require less energy consumption	Medium	1	TBC	Progress TBC
1.4.2	Consider opportunities for installing EV chargers on street lamp posts	To support transition to electric vehicles for our community	Low	4	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.4.3	Add bee stops to bus stops	Improve biodiversity and safeguard nature by establishing wildlife corridors	Medium	1	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.5	Operations					
1.5.1	<p>Undertake a fleet review to plan a reduction in fossil fuel use in Council vehicles and equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce mileage of commercial vehicles • Reduce weight of commercial vehicles • Use clean energy vehicles/equipment where possible (pedal/e-bikes, EV, hydrogen, e-lawnmowers, etc.) – replace when current vehicles reach end-of-life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current fleet consists of mix-powered vehicles and equipment. Develop a test that informs our decision on how and when to transition from fossil fuel vehicles and equipment to electric. • Reduce the weight and mileage of our vehicles to reduce energy use and thus lower their carbon impact 	High	3	<p>TBC – variable for each vehicle/item</p> <p>Payback TBC – weight and mileage reduction will immediately payback; replacement will not payback financially</p>	<p>In progress. Full fleet review to be undertaken as part of establishing carbon baseline.</p> <p>1x electric van, all electric strimmers, and electric mini lawnmowers in place already</p>
1.5.2	<p>Develop an Environmental Asset Management Plan for our green spaces, parks and cemeteries. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mowing schedules - Either mow or don't mow - avoid cutting long grass in autumn • Using native hedging instead of/ as well as fencing where possible • On-site rainwater harvesting/built-in reservoirs for planters • Drought-resilient planting options • Perennials rather than annuals biennials • End-of-season plant sales (to recycle bedding plants 	<p>To meet our biodiversity and safeguarding nature objectives in the face of the ecological emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long grass will have larvae and pupae in it bedded down for winter which will be destroyed • Native hedging supports biodiversity and nature recovery • Reduces need to transport water from the river over distances • Saves water and Ops time • Saves water and Ops time • Saves Ops time; less plants entering waste so 	High	3	<p>TBC – variable costs</p> <p>Payback – most will payback in terms of reduced Ops workload and reduced mileage for team and water transport</p>	Not started

	where still in use)	less emissions from breakdown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops plants entering waste system so less emissions from breakdown 				
1.5.3	Reduction in pesticide use (review all pesticide use, not just Glyphosate)	Pesticides not only kill weeds, but the chemicals leach into the soil and water supply, harming wildlife	High	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress – use has been reduced but needs further review
1.5.4	Place hedgehog warning stickers on strimmers	To remind Ops staff of risk to wildlife	Medium	1	TBC Payback N/A	01/03/2024 Not started
1.5.5	Use of polywood and recycled materials in repairs and maintenance (i.e., in public benches)	To reduce reliance on new fossil fuel products	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.6	Procurement and Services We Use					
1.6.1	Printing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce printing to essential only Shift to online agenda's for all Council meetings (where possible – members should not be excluded from participating due to this shift, so hard copy format will still be available for those who need it) Shift to e-storage and e-signing of documents Purchase recycled paper for printing and use this for any printing that will not be for public viewing 	We use 105 reams of paper per year, which is 52,500 sheets of paper. This is approximately 5 trees a year. The majority of this printing is for hard-copy agendas. A shift away from printing will reduce our environmental impact and costs.	High	1	Costs – overall costs should reduce (less paper and printer ink required). Recycled paper costs more than non-recycled paper but this should be negated if less is used. Additional costs incurred if Councillors require devices/ equipment	Not started

1.6.2	Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review eco credentials of services i.e., energy suppliers, banks, contractors, goods suppliers, etc. Contractors have a 'zero to landfill' policy 	Will support our aims to reduce our Scope 3 emissions	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress – energy supplier is confirmed as fully renewable
1.6.3	Products and furniture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy local, fair-trade, recycled, repairable and sustainable products/furniture where possible Environmentally friendly toilet roll, paper towels, soap, cleaning products, etc. Sustainable disposal of equipment and products that we use Sourcing of sustainable bedding plants 	Will support our aims to reduce our Scope 3 emissions	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.6.4	Encourage staff to use Ecosia search engine	Ecosia plant trees using the ad revenue from searches. N.B., not to be used as a means of carbon offsetting.	Medium	1	N/A	Not started
1.7	Staff and Councillors					
1.7.1	Assess carbon impact of staff office commute and encourage a shift to sustainable commuting such as active travel, use of public transport, and lift sharing	To reduce our Scope 3 emissions, and to lead by example	Medium	2	N/A	Not started

1.7.2	Investigate the purchase of e-bikes for staff use to travel between sites. E-cargo-bikes can also be considered for transporting equipment etc.	To reduce use of private/individual vehicles when travelling between sites	Medium	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.7.3	All staff and Councillors to complete training on climate change, environmental impact, carbon literacy (or similar)	To increase understanding of climate change and environmental issues and the importance of changing our behaviours	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.8	Events, Markets, and Priory Centre Café (PCC)					
1.8.1	Waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce waste at events and make events and the PCC plastic-and-polystyrene free, encouraging traders to also limit their use of single-use plastic • Ensure recycling bins are available at all events • Ensure litter picking is always completed after events/markets 	Reduce environmental impact of all our events, by reducing need for new fossil fuel products, and preventing harm to our environment from improper disposal of waste	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

1.8.2	<p>Food and trade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use local food and suppliers for events and PCC, and prioritise local markets traders (within 30 miles of St Neots) • Ensure vegan and vegetarian food options are available at all events and at PCC. Reduce availability of the foods that have the biggest negative impact on the environment (beef, lamb, and pork) • Hold events for The Great Big Green Week to engage the community and local businesses with greener-living. As part of this, host an eco fair which sells only vegan food and sustainable products 	Reduce environmental impact from our trader's vehicle emissions and from the meat industry	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress
1.8.3	<p>Environmentally harmful practices - fireworks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore replacing firework displays with environmentally friendly displays such as video projection mapping 	Reduce environmental impact of pollutants and harm to wildlife	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.8.4	<p>Environmentally harmful practices - other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban balloons at events • Invest in reusable banners • Invest in deposit cups for events 	Reduce environmental impact of pollutants and harm to wildlife (balloons); reduce need for new fossil fuel production	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress

1.8.5	Hold public showings of climate films/documentaries with Q&A sessions. Support production of a local environmental play	To support community access to climate change and environmental information	Low	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.8.6	Hold cycling and walking events	To encourage active travel	Low	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
1.9	Committees					
1.9.1	<p>Develop an environmental-proofing strategy for all policy decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider environmental implications of all Council projects and decisions at the proposal stage Ask grant applicants to consider the environmental impact of their proposals and ensure this is considered when reviewing the application Request that all development, be it housing, commercial, or infrastructure, is designed and delivered in a way that contributes to nature's recovery, not its decline Encourage development to be located in areas which are less important for nature and which also delivers an overall improvement in the natural world (a 'net biodiversity gain') 	To safeguard the future of St Neots' biodiversity and ensure an easy transition away from fossil fuels is possible for our residents	High	4	N/A	Not started

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage new developments have walking and cycling links and bike storage options • Request that new houses include bee bricks and swift houses. New developments to include ponds, wildlife corridors and native hedgerows at the design stage • Ground source and air source heat pumps and solar panels highlighted as being encouraged for all new homes • Establish a Council Community Grant Scheme which funds only green initiatives 					
1.10	Networking and Wider Engagement					
1.10.1	Link in with Environmental/Climate Teams at CPCA, CCC, and HDC	To share knowledge and resources	High	1	N/A	In progress
1.10.2	Join Global Covenant of Mayors	To share knowledge and resources	Low	1	N/A	Not started
1.10.3	Source wider funding opportunities	To access additional funding to support our efforts for a more sustainable St Neots	Medium	2	N/A	In progress
1.10.4	Work with twin town (Faches Thumesnil)	To share knowledge and resources	Low	3	N/A	Not started

1.10.5	Support wider promotional campaigns (i.e., the Great Big Green Week)	Share the work of other organisations with our community, enabling access to wider information, whilst demonstrating our commitment to tackling environmental issues	Medium	1	N/A	In progress
1.10.6	Partnership working with local developers	To safeguard the future of St Neots' sustainability and biodiversity and ensure an easy transition away from fossil fuels is possible for our residents	High	3	N/A	Not started

2	St Neots Town
	<p>Introduction: This section of the Climate Action Plan sets out how St Neots Town Council will support our residents and businesses to work towards our shared aspirations towards Net Zero by 2030. Here, we will introduce the actions we will be taking to ensure the St Neots community have access to opportunities to reduce their own environmental impact, whilst simultaneously benefitting their long-term health and finances. We will ask our residents and business owners to join us in celebrating the positive impacts of committing to a healthier and more sustainable St Neots for us all.</p>
	<p>Progress 2024/2025: To be completed at annual revision</p>

Reference Number	Action	Rationale	Priority	Ease of implementation (1 = easy; 5 = hard)	Costs and payback (where applicable)	Progress
2.1	Residents and Community					
2.1.1	Update Neighbourhood Plan to include climate and biodiversity initiatives	To safeguard the future of St Neots' nature and ability to thrive in a rapidly changing climate	High	3	N/A	Not started
2.1.2	Host/support local sustainability initiatives, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair cafes • Toy and tool libraries • Clothes swishes • Climate action group(s) • 'Green Heroes' meetings and prizes for biggest contributor to net zero/environmental improvement • Carbon 'weight-watchers' group / low-carbon programme • Green opportunities for young people • Competitions for initiatives, such as prizes for most improved street (in terms of retrofitting) and a postcode lottery for initiatives • Litter picking groups • Hedgehog streets • Community fridge • Community composting • Expansion of allotments • E-bike hire initiative (link 	Improve sustainability for St Neots residents for environmental and cost reasons; engage community with sustainability initiatives to support their transition to lower fossil fuel dependence; support community to improve biodiversity and food availability	Medium	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress

	with library and GP surgeries?) • Water stations					
2.1.3	Building community resilience: • Host public meetings with Q&A's • Promote retrofitting schemes and funding options • Support open days for eco homes • Carry out thermal imaging of homes to support understanding of importance of retrofitting • Educate on intricate links between climate change, health, wellbeing, and finances • Develop green corridors to keep pedestrians and cyclists out of direct sun • Water fountains for evaporative cooling • Flood prevention group and support	Support residents to understand the climate emergency and to feel empowered to make changes which will improve their resilience to climate change	High	3	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
2.1.4	Ensuring everyone living in St Neots has doorstep access to nature (within 10 minutes of home)	To improve the biodiversity of St Neots, and the health and wellbeing of our residents	Medium	1	N/A (payback will be to town, residents and NHS)	Not started
2.1.5	Communicate regular updates on SNTC environmental progress plus useful links and advice	To ensure residents are kept abreast of developments and can hold us accountable; to support residents to make	Medium	2	N/A	In progress

		environmentally sound decisions				
2.2	Business					
2.2.1	Engage with local businesses to explore ways in which they can reduce their own and their customer's carbon footprint	To contribute to a Net Zero St Neots	Low	4	N/A	Not started
2.2.2	To support creation of a freight transport depot outside of town (Neighbourhood Delivery Hub)	To reduce emissions within the town centre, improving the health of local residents	Low	5	N/A	Not started
2.2.3	Company-sponsored patches of sidewalk - remove grass and plant up with low-maintenance shrubs	To improve biodiversity whilst improving morale of staff at local businesses, fostering sense of community, and reducing burden on Ops Team who can then focus on other areas of improving St Neots	Low	3	N/A	Not started
2.2.4	Encourage blister pack collection points	Encourage recycling locally	Medium	4	N/A	Not started
2.2.5	Monitor and challenge number of fast food outlets (at planning stage)	Reduce impact of a carbon-heavy industry	Low	4	N/A	Not started
2.2.6	Local farm engagement - open farm event for a low carbon farm example	To encourage our local farmers to engage with our ambitions to make St Neots net zero and improve biodiversity and food security	Low	3	N/A	Not started
2.3	Transport					
2.3.1	Active travel: • Promote pedestrian priority over vehicles in	To reduce pollution within the town centre and contribute to efforts to	Medium	3	N/A	Not started

	<p>the town centre to encourage use of the bypass (once A428 works complete)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise activities to raise profile of cycling in St Neots • Secure bike parking in town • Support and promote e-cargo bike delivery scheme • Promote and organize active travel challenge with local schools • Promote paths and walking routes 	reduce St Neots' carbon footprint. Tackle, in conjunction with other organisations, the barriers to active travel.				
2.3.2	EV chargers on lampposts	To encourage transition away from fossil fuels by making EV charging more accessible	Low	4	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
2.4	Renewable Energy					
2.4.1	Support community hydro-power, wind power, and solar schemes	To reduce local reliance on fossil fuels and ensure energy security through local sustainable generation	Medium	2	N/A	In progress

3	Local Environment					
	Introduction: This section of the Climate Action Plan sets out how St Neots Town Council will make space for our local nature, giving priority to improving and protecting biodiversity. Here, we will introduce the actions we will be taking to ensure nature is encouraged to thrive, both for the benefit of our residents and town, and for the benefit of the plants, animals, and fungi that call St Neots home. We will work with partner agencies and seek advice and support from internal and external professionals to get this right. We will also ask the St Neots community to champion and celebrate the wildlife that lives all around them.					
	Progress 2024/2025 To be completed at annual revision					
	Actions	Rationale	Priority	Ease of implementation 1 = easy; 5 = hard)	Costs and payback (where applicable)	Progress
3.1	Protection of SNTC Land for Biodiversity and Nature Restoration					
3.1.1	30% of St Neots for nature by 2030 (UK has committed 30% of land for nature by 2030)	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues	High	3	TBC Payback N/A	In progress
3.1.2	Protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the amount of public green space we own so we can protect it • Promote legal protection of our parks 	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues	Medium	4	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

3.2	Fauna (Animals)					
3.2.1	Increase/safeguard biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bug corridors • Wildlife corridors and eco bridges • Swift and bee boxes on buildings • Install bird & bat boxes • Bug hotels, deadwood trees, and log piles • Hedgehog houses • Bee stops on bus stop roofs 	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
3.2.2	Community Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community wildlife mapping project - involve residents and schools to complete surveys to establish a biodiversity baseline for the town and its spaces • Signage and interpretation boards to provide information about biodiversity • Engagement with children and young people about biodiversity 	Set baselines for our current biodiversity; engage our community to do their bit to improve our biodiversity and environment; to facilitate understanding of our work and commitment to tackling the ecological emergency	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
3.3	Flora (Plant Life) and Fungi					
3.3.1	Increase/safeguard biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and targets for native tree planting • Native hedgerows instead of fences • Perennials rather than 	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues; also supports our ambition to be Net Zero by providing local, meaningful, carbon offsetting through carbon	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	In progress

	annuals or biennials in displays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant bulbs and native grasses • Drought-resilient planting options • Rooftop gardens • Street trees and trees in grey spaces • Explore further locations for rewilding • Sponge gardens / rain gardens / bioswales 	sequestration				
3.3.2	Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built-in water reservoirs for plant pots etc. to reduce need for watering • Pesticide amnesty for town • Leave blackberry bushes uncut until fruiting has finished • Leave deadwood in-situ 	To combat the ecological emergency which in turn mitigates against climate change-induced issues; reduce pollution from pesticide runoff	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started
3.3.3	Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with children and young people about biodiversity • Tree guardian scheme • Increased allotments • Community orchards and gardens • Composting in parks etc. • Facilitate conversations with local farmers to discuss restorative and rewilding agriculture among St Neots' farming community; also trying to discourage use of 	Engage our local community to care about our environment and to understand the importance of improving biodiversity; providing residents with the life skills to support resilience against food shortages	High	2	TBC Payback N/A	Not started

	pesticides and monoculture					
3.4	Networking and Wider Engagement					
3.4.1	Link in with Environmental/Climate Teams at CPCA, CCC, and HDC	To share knowledge and resources	High	1	N/A	In progress
3.4.2	Source wider funding opportunities	To access additional funding to support our efforts for a more biodiverse St Neots	Medium	2	N/A	In progress
3.4.3	Develop volunteering opportunities – (i.e., ARU link-up)	To share knowledge and gain access to potential volunteers/interns	Low	3	N/A	Not started

Prioritisation Matrix for Proposed Actions

