

Motion proposed by Cllr Chris Williams

For decision - Faversham Town Council to declare an Environmental, Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency including policy and an action plan and sign up to Covenant of Mayors.

Summary:

It is now clear that the world has less than 12 years to switch away from fossil fuels to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Reducing energy use and switching to clean energy will also increase energy security, improve air quality, minimise fuel poverty, safeguard natural flora and fauna, boost the local economy and provide jobs and training. This is all achievable.

It is proposed that Faversham Town Council declares an Environmental, Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency and commits to the council being carbon neutral by 2030. This will help to raise the profile of this vital issue and secure external support and funding. It is also proposed that Faversham Town Council also signs up to the Covenant of Mayors to track our progress and link with towns around the world who are cutting emissions.

The policy and action plan for this declaration would be implemented by the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Task and Finish group.

Taking action in Faversham:

I therefore propose that Faversham Town Council:-

- 1) Supports the Declaration of an Environmental, Climate change and Biodiversity Emergency
- 2) Pledges to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030
- 3) Seeks locations and implements native species tree planting on both Council and private land within Faversham.
- 4) Encouraging hedge planting for increased biodiversity
- 5) Require all developments to achieve:
 - An improvement of biodiversity on each development sites.
 - Significant improvements on building with better insulation and renewable energy sources
- 6) Work with Faversham residents to increase biodiversity in their own gardens and surrounding spaces.
- 7) Signs up to the Covenant of Mayors
- 8) Requests that the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Task and Finish group commit to creating policy and an action plan.
- 9) Actively work with current groups, organisations and individuals already working in Faversham to assist and create a method of networking/support.
- 10) Continue the commitment to the council to be single use plastic free
- 11) Work with renewable energy companies and sustainability groups to maximise uptake in the town.
- 12) Promoting and provide charge points for electric vehicles

- 13) Working with schools, businesses and other organisations to reduce their energy costs and carbon emissions.

The Covenant of Mayors To further support the work of the Council, it is proposed that we join the “Covenant of Mayors”. This is a free network of towns and cities around the globe who have committed to reducing carbon emissions by 40% by 2030. The network enables members to share best practice, ideas and funding. It also entails submitting a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) every two years which enables towns to track progress towards meeting the zero carbon targets.

Overall science/context:

The International Panel on Climate Change(i) published a new report in October which concludes that we have less than 12 years to act to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The report describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise. It told us that limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities.

As well as increasing temperatures and more extreme weather, human activities are also having a massive impact on nature. The worldwide population of mammals, birds, fish and aquatic creatures, amphibians, insects and reptiles have plunged by almost 60 percent, since 1970. Current rates of species extinction are 100- to 1,000-times higher than the ‘standard rate’ of extinction(ii). There are also huge health impacts associated with fossil fuels, for example, air pollution causes 40,000 excess deaths every year in the UK and reduces average life span globally by 2 years(iii).

To reduce the chance of runaway global warming and limit the effects of climate breakdown, it is imperative that, as a species, we reduce our CO₂eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible.(iv) Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm. The good news is there are many social, environmental and economic benefits in doing so.

Unfortunately given the new data from the IPCC, our current plans and actions are now not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C limit before 2050(v,vi). Councils around the world are responding by declaring a ‘climate emergency’ and committing resources to address this crucial issue.(vii) Declaring an emergency will help to raise the profile of the issue and leverage in the extra support we need to achieve the necessary carbon reductions.

- (i) www.ipcc.ch The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. Set up by the UN and World Meteorological Society with 195 countries as members.
- (ii) <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/30/humanity-wiped-out-animals-since-1970-majorreport-finds>
- (iii) <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/20/air-pollution-cuts-global-average-lifespan-bynearly-two-years-study>
- (iv) Fossil CO₂ & GHG emissions of all world countries, 2017:
<http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/overview.php?v=CO2andGHG1970-2016&dst=GHGpc>
- (v) World Resources Institute: <https://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/8-things-you-need-know-about-ipcc-15-creport>
- (vi) The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C:
<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>
- (vii) Including Bristol City Council and Berkeley:
<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/blog/2018/6/13/berkeley-unanimously-declares-climate-emergency>, and the C40 cities:
<https://www.c40.org/other/deadline-2020>