

CLIMATE ACTION: BOVEY & HEATHFIELD CLIMATE ACTION CREATIVITY



"We are at a unique stage in our history. Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that. Surely we all have a responsibility to care for our Blue Planet. The future of humanity and indeed, all life on earth, now depends on us."
(David Attenborough)

On Saturday February 10th 2024 Climate Action Bovey and Heathfield (CABH) held an open meeting, at the Phoenix Hall in Bovey, with the aim of generating ideas and local action in response to the coming impact of the changing climate on our local community.

The meeting was organised on the principles of Open Space Technology (created by Harrison Owen) to allow for maximum participation and creativity. There was no agenda and all the ideas and actions generated arose from discussion and contributions from people who attended.

Susie Honnor (Co- chair of CABH) opened the meeting and described the theme of the meeting; 'Is there anything you would like to do locally to address the challenge of climate change' and she asked the group to 'please feel free to bring up anything connected to our theme - half formed ideas are often the best and you never know what'll happen when you get talking....be prepared to be surprised!'

Forty people from Bovey Tracey and the surrounding area attended the meeting, including members of the climate action group.

It was a very busy event with a lot of discussion and debate and a wide range of ideas emerged around a number of themes

The first theme was **Sustainable Bovey Tracey** which included looking at developing a vision for the town; linking together voluntary groups and others working on climate issues and addressing the needs of future generations.

A second theme was **transport** and suggestions included lobbying for electric buses and electric car charge points; campaigning to reopen the Newton Abbot to Heathfield railway and integrated public transport (bus/train) services.

Reducing energy in houses and other buildings was a further theme and ideas included improving access to information/advice on reducing energy and energy costs; promoting solar and the expansion of CABH Community Energy Savers Outreach Work.

Communication and links between climate/nature groups was a recurring theme and ideas included organising open meetings; liaison with like-minded groups e.g. Devon Wildlife Trust and Friends of the Earth; involvement with local schools; a directory of organisations and voluntary groups and a Climate Café.

Reducing Litter and Waste and increasing recycling, generated suggestions for litter picking on a more regular basis, battery recycling; a Library of 'stuff' and specific recycling bins e.g. for Tetra Packs and small electricals. It was also suggested that there should be groups paying attention to the interests of different age groups.

Influencing Politics was a further theme discussed and suggestions for action included; lobbying Councillors/ Planning Authorities to require new houses to be lower carbon; Community Climate Change Wardens; a Climate Vote in Bovey; supporting the Green New Deal and checking political party manifestos on climate action.

Another theme was about **Reducing Demand on the planet's resources** and issues raised included thinking about how do you persuade people to make changes to their lifestyle; less travel; shopping locally and eating less meat.

The final theme looked at **Community and Locally Produced Energy** and suggestions were made for a longer term plan for local solar, wind and hydro and more community electric car charging points.

The detailed list of all the ideas is available from cabh@boveytracey.gov.uk

Climate Action Bovey and Heathfield are now looking at how we can take some or all of the ideas forward. In particular we are looking for people who can make some of these ideas happen either by just getting on and doing it and letting us know or by joining our Climate Action Group and leading a project.

The Climate Action group has looked at all of the ideas and prioritised the actions we think we can do. Our first actions are going to focus on communications and will include setting up an effective website, accessible to all and to include a resource directory. In addition we will be putting on regular public information meetings and will make sure we have a presence at local events. We will continue to support existing projects such as the Repair Café and the Community Fridge, we will expand and develop the Community Energy Savers Outreach Project and our town councillors will continue to push climate issues within the council.

If you can help us ... get in touch and let us know if there is stuff you would like to do or to join the group, our email address is cabh@boveytracey.gov.uk