

A group of people are seated around a long wooden table in a meeting room. They appear to be engaged in a discussion. On the table, there are several white mugs, papers, and a small sign that says "TRANSPORT". The people are dressed in casual to semi-formal attire. The background shows other tables and chairs, suggesting a larger meeting or workshop environment.

Climate Action for Local Councils

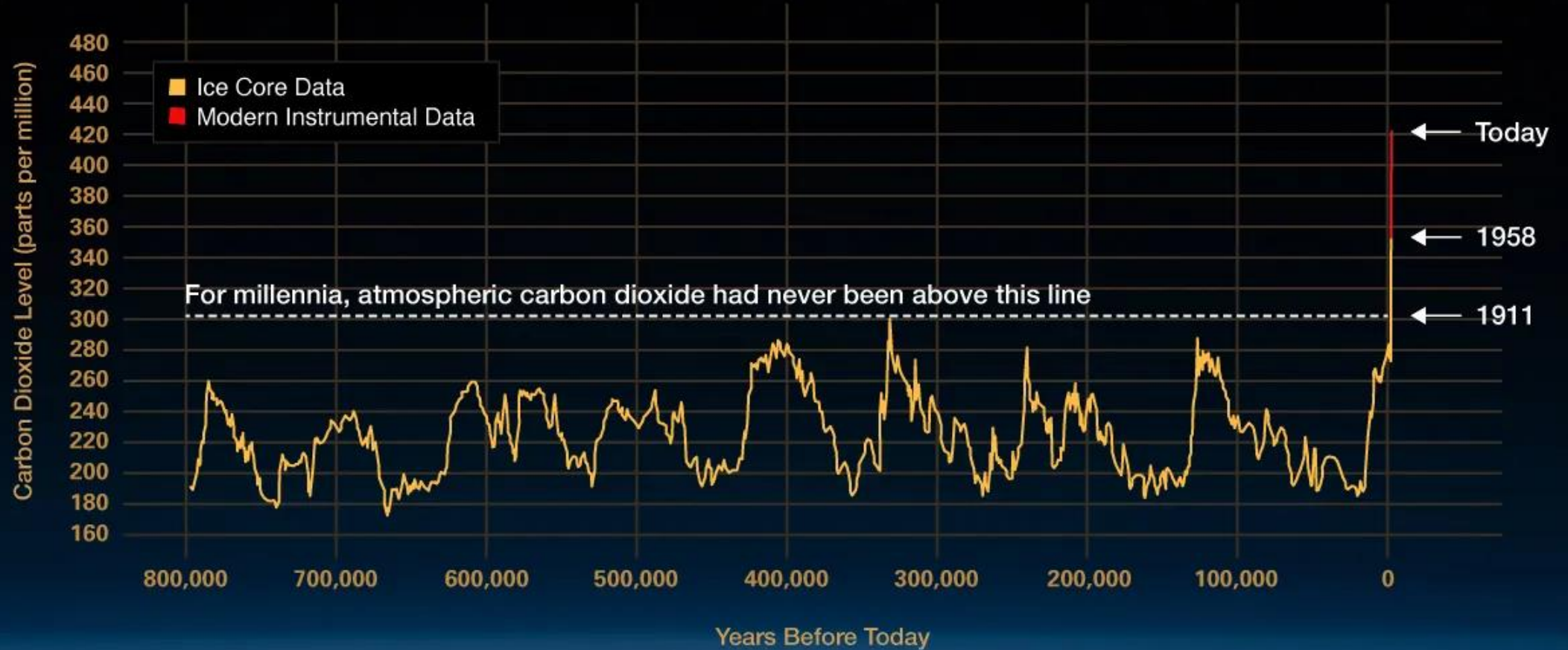
Photo courtesy Holme Valley Parish Council

Climate action means..

- **Mitigation** – reducing the carbon emissions that contribute to global warming.
- **Adaptation** – responses to the climate changes that are already happening.
- **Nature Recovery** – including offsetting the impact from past development.



Photo © Hulme Community Garden



We've had the science for a while, now we're getting the weather...



Photo courtesy Ottery St Mary police

We can consider the environment in everything we do¹

- Manage sites for biodiversity
- Building Management
- Neighbourhood Development Plans
- Council transport
- Council policies
- Purchasing
- Letting contracts

But are we bovered?

- No-one has a statutory duty to respond to climate change
- But we have a biodiversity duty² – one that also relates to planning applications
- Floods and heatwaves are things we should cover in our emergency plans
- There are co-benefits from taking action – we can save running costs of parish buildings, new allotments and community fridges improve health and community spirit, and there's more...
- Our residents are increasingly bovered, let's harness their energy in what we do



What is stopping us from getting involved?

What about council powers?

Power of competence plus³

What about funding?

People can find money^{4,5}

What about staff / councillor time?

Work with community / other parishes

What about good practice?

Case studies abound⁶

What is everyone else doing?

Great Collaboration mapping



Let us go forward together....

What any council can do, regardless of size⁷

- Connect with environmental initiatives by your local planning authority
- Also with any voluntary sector networks
- Contact neighbouring parishes - is there action they are taking that you might support in some way (shared wildlife corridors, rights of way?)
- Offer support to local climate action and conservation groups - publicity and meeting space if not actual funding
- Ask searching questions of any planning applications



Photo courtesy Hampshire County Council

Respond to planning applications⁸



Does the proposed design aim to minimize energy requirements?



Does the application justify any use of carbon-intensive materials?



Is the use of reclaimed or recycled materials apparent in the application?



Does the application address standards for energy efficiency?



Are new homes to be fitted with a source of renewable energy?



Are sites allocated for new housing easily accessible by walking / cycling / public transport?

Use the checklist from the published guidance

Does the application avoid loss of local nature sites and green spaces?

Where the application includes a new open space, does it include sufficient new native tree coverage and other plant life?

Does the application support low-carbon vehicles, for example, with electric vehicle charging points easily accessible?

Does the application specify that LED lights are to be used?

Does the application propose building on a flood plain?

Does the application include where appropriate water saving measures such as using water butts, toilet flushers that save water and runoff water in concrete areas?

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - what is it?

- BNG is intended to ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a **MEASURABLY** better state after development
- All qualifying planning permission in England is required to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain.
- Most planning applications affecting more than 25 square metres of habitat, or 5 metres of linear habitat (such as hedgerows) will qualify.



Photo courtesy Climate Action Now



Words of caution...

Some developers have (already) claimed there is no biodiversity on site! (we can backdate descriptions)

- Proposals that private gardens are part of the solution may not be binding on those households
- There is an option to buy “biodiversity units” - which may mean any improvements happen miles away – so get our own local proposals in early, potentially linked to Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- BNG plans are usually only agreed AFTER planning permission has been given, and local councils are not asked to be involved in those discussions

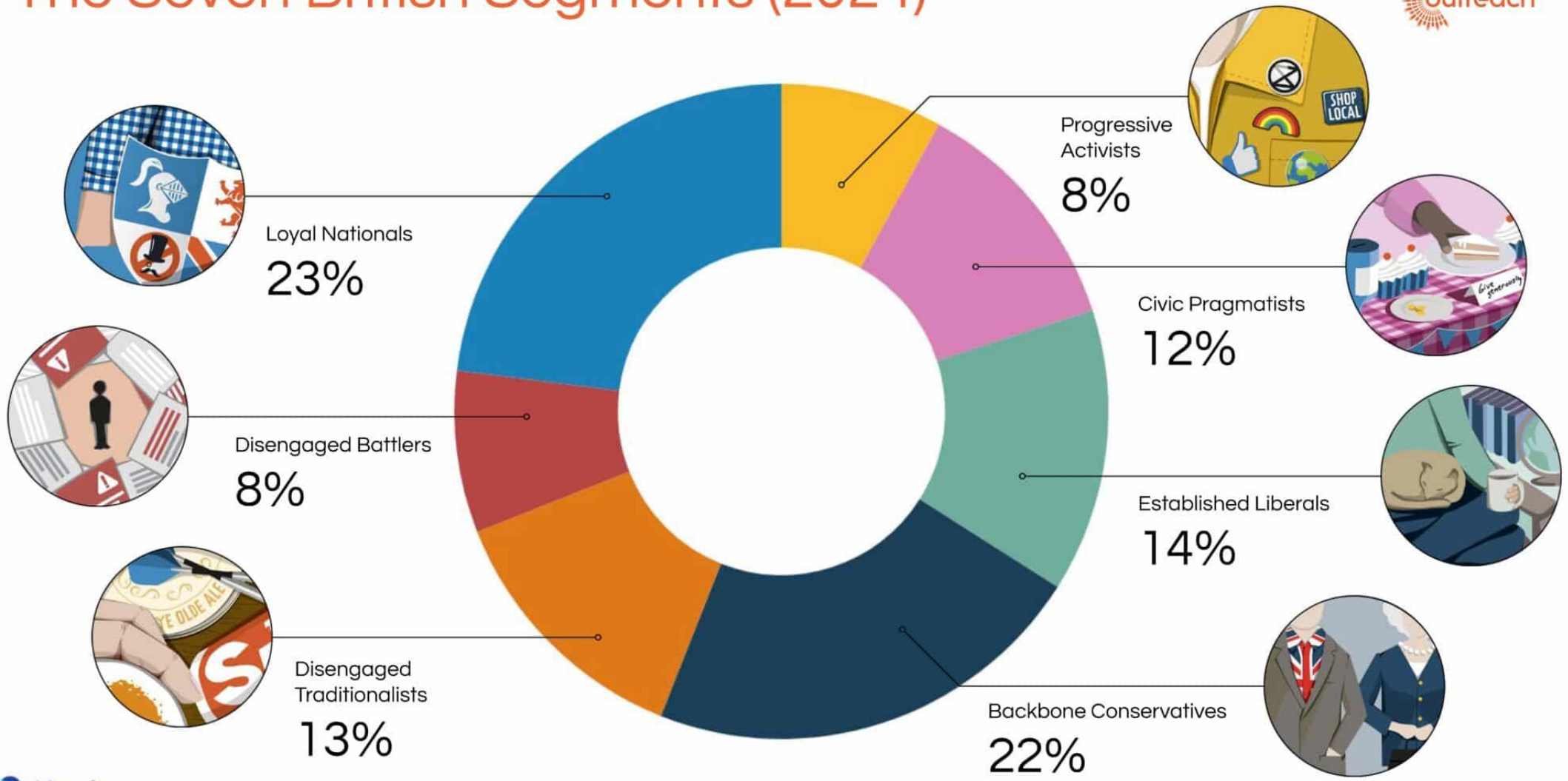
So far so good, but...



...we can't do it all on our own

Photo courtesy Black & Veatch

The Seven British Segments (2024)



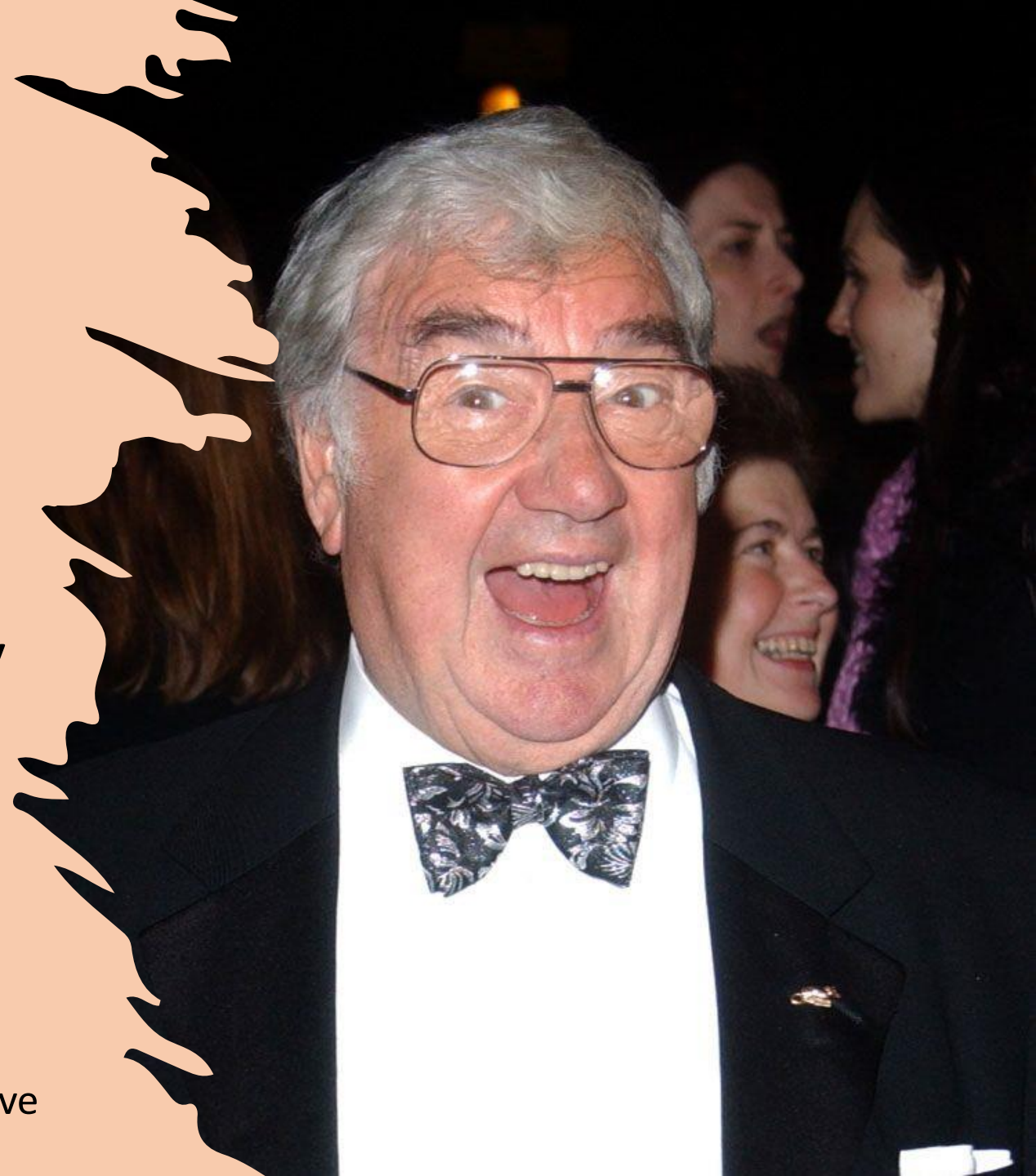
* Percentages based on 12 month average

Image courtesy Climate Outreach⁹

It's the way we tell 'em!

But communication only works if we get a reply..

Photo of Frank Carson courtesy Ian West/PA Archive



Engage our community¹⁰



Photo courtesy Bristol Natural History Consortium

- Stands at the annual parish meeting
- Speak to the doubters about co-benefits¹¹
- Community / walking workshops
- Household survey (generates a mailing list)
- Bioblitz¹² for a biodiversity audit¹³
- Neighbourhood planning events
- Open house events from residents who have made low carbon changes
- Council and community working group¹⁴ or committee¹⁵ (see sample terms of reference)

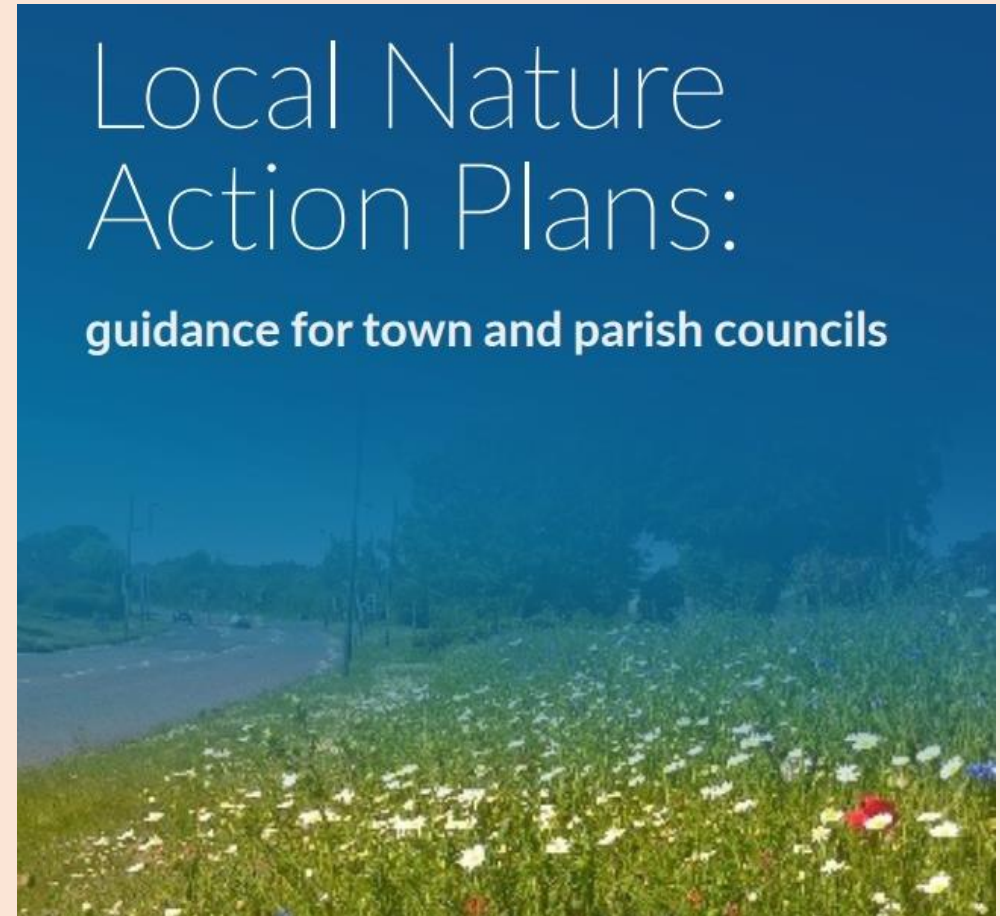
Carbon calculators

- The Impact¹⁶ tool covers the council area, giving figures based on national statistics
- The results can give us an idea of priorities for action – energy production, travel & transport etc.
- Other calculators can give more accurate local figures, to become the basis for net zero targets:
 - World Wildlife Fund Footprint Calculator¹⁷ for households
 - Giki Zero¹⁸ for more detail
 - Go Climate Positive¹⁹ for businesses
 - Farm Carbon Toolkit²⁰ for farms



Action planning²¹

- Keep it simple.
- Don't take on too much yourselves - use the work which is already going on in your community.
- Start with where you are, you can build on your plan later.
- It needs only to be an umbrella to gather under, and as an aide memoire of what was promised and why.
- Write your action plan with your community so that everyone can understand and relate to it.
- Be adaptable, but keep long-term continuity



Storytelling can change the world

- Not everyone has the gift of the gab!
- Nor is everyone a wordsmith
- Are we the one to lead on communication?
- Is there someone else we know who can do it better?
- Perhaps where is the team leader who can bring the skills into a team?
- It's a joint effort, after all



Taffy Thomas

BELBIN TEAM ROLES

Coordinators



align the team

Shapers



push things forward

Monitor-evaluators



track what's working

Resource investigators



find what's out there

Team workers



spread positive team vibes

Completer-finishers



think things through

Implementers



turn ideas into reality

Specialists



use invaluable knowledge

Plants



dream up new solutions

BiteSize Learning

“The types of behaviour in which people engage are infinite. But the range of useful behaviours, which make an effective contribution to team performance, is finite”

“It’s a cracker!”

Leading the way



- Allotments²²
- Carbon literacy training²³
- Community pantries/fridges
- Declaring an emergency
- Promoting active travel
- Thermal imaging camera – funded for loan
- Tree planting²⁴
- No mow (May)

Further guidance can be found at

nalc



- Centre for Sustainable Energy, e.g. around [neighbourhood planning](#)
- NALC [climate change page](#)
- NALC [climate emergency network](#)
- SLCC [climate action page](#)
- SLCC advisor andrew.maliphant@slcc.co.uk
- [The Great Collaboration](#)

SLCC
For Local Council Professionals

COMING SOON

An even greater collaboration



FIND OUT MORE



www.greatcollaboration.uk

A newly-formed organisation the Place-Based Initiative Ltd has begun the process of updating the Great Collaboration website to include more good climate action practice for town and parish councils and their communities.



To help us with that, we are running open weekly sessions on Zoom to:

- Host short expert presentations
- Gather suggestions and additions for climate action good practice
- Allow people to become more involved in the project

To join the sessions at midday on Wednesdays, please register via this link:

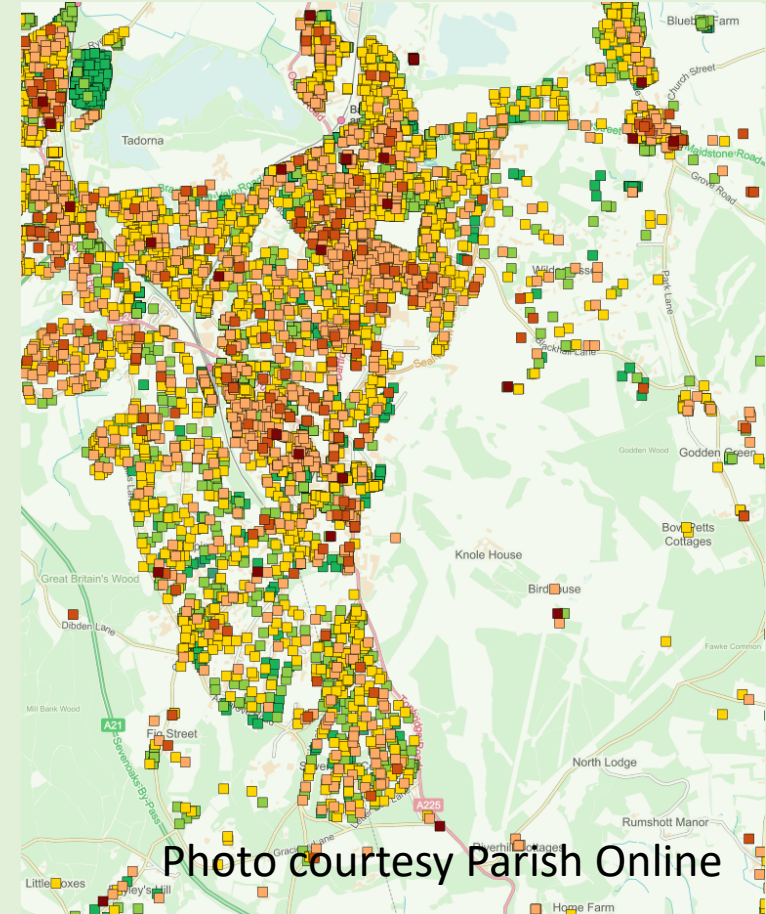
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcpcu2urjMvGdJH09t0GQ72fBJSFr9zzIDj>

Find us on Facebook also

We want to work with you

The Great Collaboration will be very pleased to hear from anyone who wishes to become more involved in this project in any number of ways, such as:

- helping to develop new guidance and adding good practice to the website.
- using digital mapping to show activity and opportunities around the country
- agreeing to be a point of contact for a particular type of action or expertise – whether climate or environmental action, nature recovery or supporting biodiversity
- supporting Great Collaboration communications, including networking within counties.



You can contact us via office@greatcollaboration.uk



Summary steps

- Look around your area
- Connect with local people
- Gather local evidence
- Make a declaration
- Start with simple projects
- Be critical about planning
- Work in partnership

Footnotes

1. [Environmental Planning Guidance](#)
2. [Model Biodiversity Policy](#)
3. [Local Councils' Powers & Opportunities Around Climate Change](#)
4. [Climate Action Funders](#)
5. [Government grants](#)
6. [Carbon Copy initiatives](#)
7. [Climate Action for Smaller Councils](#)
8. [Commenting on Local Planning Applications](#)
9. [Britain Talks Climate](#)
10. [Top Tips for Community Engagement](#)
11. [Community Climate Projects](#)
12. [Run Your Own Bioblitz](#)
13. [Association of Local Environmental Records Centres](#)
14. Sample [Climate Change Working Group](#)
15. Sample [Climate and Ecology Sub-Committee](#)
16. [Impact Community Carbon Calculator](#) for your area
17. [World Wildlife Fund Footprint Calculator](#) for households
18. [Giki Zero](#) for more detail
19. [Go Climate Positive](#) for businesses
20. [Farm Carbon Toolkit](#) for farms
21. [Local Nature Action Plans](#)
22. [Creating New Allotments](#)
23. [The Carbon Literacy Project](#)
24. [How to Plant a Tree](#)



Let us go forward together...