



Alton Town council Climate Change Strategy (2024)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published in October 2018 stated that we have just 12 years for “ambitious action from national and subnational authorities, civil society, the private sector, and local communities to deliver “rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, so we can prevent tipping points where we no longer have the ability to avoid extreme weather events.” In July 2019 ATC began to make climate change mitigation a priority with a joint initiative Climate Change Workshop for residents involving councillors, Energy Alton, and Alton Climate Action Network. It was concluded from this workshop that action on climate change can deliver many local benefits, including improved health, increased equity and social cohesion, economic opportunities, and increased resilience and that the will of the people of Alton was behind it, further confirmed by a climate change survey of the views of 200 residents, carried out by Energy Alton. (Appendix)

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY and ACTION PLAN 2024

On 31st October 2019 ATC declared a climate emergency. The current Climate Change committee continue to work on the vision of carbon neutral by 2030. Much work has already been done by the previous climate change committee and ATC officers, and now this document aims to achieve clarity of vision with an Action Plan of three Climate Change aims encompassing nine Climate Change targets/objectives covering the original 8 resolutions.

THREE CLIMATE CHANGE AIMS – ACTION PLAN 2024

AIM 1: To reduce Alton Town Council’s carbon footprint to achieve carbon neutral by 2030.

AIM 2: To create opportunities for residents, schools, and businesses to have a direct and positive impact on their own energy consumption habits by working alongside our climate change community groups.

AIM 3: To influence third parties in the adoption of policies providing sustainable alternatives to traditional construction, infrastructure, and transport models.

NINE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIES

Alton Town Council will:

1. Lead by example and reduce its own carbon footprint, adopting an ethical procurement framework to reduce consumption of resources and impact on the environment towards achieving carbon neutral across its own properties and operations by 2030.
2. Manage green spaces owned by Alton Town Council to improve climate resilience, biodiversity, carbon capture and use the woodland trust’s tree charter as a guide.
3. Support the health and wellbeing of the people of Alton by creating more green spaces for sport and recreation, providing cycle parking and signage, and maintaining footpaths in its owned spaces.
4. Install/encourage public use facilities i.e., water refill, cycle repair, and EV charging stations
5. Embed climate strategy into all aspects of Alton Town Council policy making.
6. Continue to work alongside community groups such as ACAN and Energy Alton to promote and provide opportunities for residents, schools, and businesses to have a direct and positive impact on their own energy consumption and carbon emissions.

7. Encourage stall holders, market/events participants and local businesses to adopt green policies on packaging, takeaway containers, bags etc.
8. Work with the Neighbourhood Plan team promoting sustainable interconnected new development in Alton.
9. Lobby decision makers in the adoption and promotion of policies to provide sustainable alternatives to traditional construction, infrastructure, and transport models.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT POSITION, THE WORK DONE SO FAR AND THE VITAL PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED

AIM 1: To reduce Alton Town Council's carbon footprint to achieve carbon neutral by 2030.

Work was begun in 2019 on decarbonising ATCs properties and operations, increasing tree planting and Hedgerows in public open spaces, installing EV charging at council owned locations, supporting walking, and cycling with practical measures, maps and signage, and providing start up assistance for environmentally sustainable retail/social enterprise initiatives. Town centre bedding planting has largely been replaced with pollutant absorbing perennial planting which also reduces water consumption. Wildflower planting takes place regularly with wildflower and wilderness areas in council owned Windmill Hill, Flood Meadows, Barley Fields, and Northanger Hill. The council has extended its ownership of open spaces, adopting land at Barley Fields, Chawton Park Road, and the Lower Field at Will Hall Farm to preserve for future generations and has adopted the 10 Principles of the Woodland Trust Tree Charter. (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/tree-charter) Also in 2019 Alton Town Council joined the Refill Campaign after recommissioning the 'Miss Bell' Fountain in the Public Gardens as a public drinking water station and aims to increase refill areas around the town.

AIM 2: To create opportunities for residents, schools, and businesses to have a direct and positive impact on their own energy consumption habits by working alongside our climate change community groups.

Alton is fortunate to have several community groups active in climate change and already working alongside the town council and other bodies.

Energy Alton is a volunteer Community Interest Company, offering advice on saving energy and carbon emissions. They offer free public energy surveys and free thermal imaging and were instrumental in installing 10kW photovoltaic system in Alton Library in 2014. They continue to support and promote other sustainability issues such as climate change, energy efficient transport and travel and effective waste management through their energy advice café and energy surveys.

ACAN (Alton Climate Awareness Network) has been active in our town since 2019, increasing awareness of the need to act with urgency across our communities. ACAN are an umbrella group focusing on the areas of Food; Green Spaces; Transport; Energy; Reusing/Recycling/Sharing; Building Standards; Lobbying & Campaigning and Information & Outreach. They have established a successful exchange economy in Alton through the Toy Library, Resurrection Furniture, Men's Shed, Repair Café and Community Cupboard so that Local residents are able to reduce their consumption of goods and increase sharing and repairing.

AVLAN (Alton Local Action for Nature) are a community group improving our local area for wildlife, successfully promoting 'no mow May' and providing wildflower verges in Alton.

Cycle Alton promotes better conditions for local cyclists and works actively with our Local Authorities on the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, and Safe Routes to Schools.

ALFI (Alton Local Food Initiative) Encourages and enables local people to be involved in growing, sourcing, and eating local, seasonal and responsibly produced food.

AIM 3: To influence third parties in the adoption of policies providing sustainable alternatives to traditional construction, infrastructure, and transport models.

Since 2019 we have seen additional cycle lanes added around Anstey Park, and a footpath being constructed to the new Lidl development along Montecchio Way. These are detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan which is being updated in 2023/24.

APPENDIX

Climate change – a survey of Alton resident's views 2019, carried out by Energy Alton

In 2019 Energy Alton conducted a survey of local people's views to help with local action planning and to share with decision makers in local and national government. 17 volunteers undertook a door-to-door survey covering diverse areas of the town. 200 anonymous short surveys were completed by Alton residents.

Key Findings: 92% of those surveyed are convinced that the world's climate is changing; 90% of respondents are worried about climate change; 89% said that they are prepared to change their behaviour to limit climate change. People said they would like more information to help to do more to reduce their carbon emissions and would like to see more help from the government through government legislation.

Many people said they lived relatively low carbon lifestyles or were already taking action to reduce their carbon emissions by reducing energy use in the home, reducing car usage, eating less meat, buying second-hand goods or sharing goods. About half never or rarely fly. Respondents would like the government to improve public transport services, improve active travel infrastructure, reduce single-use plastic, improve recycling services with a uniform, easily understood system, and provide accurate and trustworthy information.

The consensus was that national government should do a lot more.