

## Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils

### Conference 2022 - Climate Change – Practical Local Actions – October 25th

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, Cllr Catherine Bunting attended the annual Bucks & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils Conference. This year's conference focused on Climate Change and was held at the Gateway in Aylesbury. It was well attended by Parish and Town Cllrs from across the county, and clerks too. There was a "street" set out in the foyer with a good selection of stalls including the worlds' first Xmas lights made from 100% recycled bottles, ethical investments companies, playground equipment suppliers, and professional services companies that can support with how to communicate the climate emergency to local communities.

The talks were very informative. Mike Deegan a well-respected Sustainability consultant spoke about the challenges that are faced in getting councils to take the right action in terms of the climate and ecological emergency. 1 in 5 local authorities have no climate change action plan and 139 LA's have not committed to a clear net zero date. The independent Council Scorecard on the [Climate Emergency UK website](#) enables you to view Buckinghamshire Council's score against the national picture. Buckinghamshire are in the bottom quartile, although, across the board, there are only a very small minority who have an effective plan in place to take their locality to [net zero by 2030](#), the latest date as stated through the IPCC report. Meeting a 2030 date would enable avoidance of the worst impacts of climate change and the passing of irreversible tipping points across the globe.

Mike spoke about the great work being done in Buckinghamshire as a county in terms of raising awareness of the Climate Emergency and promoting behaviour change. He spoke well of organisations such as Bucks Climate Action Alliance, Sustainable Amersham, Climate Action Wendover and Zero Carbon Haddenham who help to support the green agenda across the county.

We also heard from Neil Homer who is a well respected Neighbourhood Planning Consultant who has worked again with many of our neighbours to help them to develop Neighbourhood Plans and to ensure that they protect biodiversity, and are future proof in terms of the resilience that our communities will increasingly require in terms of extreme weather events, droughts and flooding.

We heard from ethical investment companies about the importance of moving funds away from fossil fuel companies as well as considering all impacts from the investments that we hold, and working towards a more equitable society in all things that we do, and through all areas of our supply chain.

In the afternoon there were some great workshops including:

- ensuring site proposals that embrace green and blue infrastructure,
- green roofing,
- designing, planning and building green roads, and
- grant funding for climate change and mitigation strategies.

Ideas that will be discussed for their viability in rural Parishes from the event are:

1. Should we declare a climate emergency, being clear to our community that we understand the task ahead of us. Making this declaration enables us to build resilience around that.
2. Green Bus Stops. These are highly recommended as a talking point locally. It encourages biodiversity, and creates a unique habitat used increasingly by red list species. It gets people thinking about their own roof, and what is possible. This can be delivered for £85-£100 psm roof.
3. Tree planting. Can we look at verges where we could plant trees? Think about increasing our street tree canopy? Should we set ourselves a canopy target?