ORTON WATERVILLE PARISH COUNCIL

The Climate Change Challenge

Greenhouse gas emissions in the Combined Authority region are high. In the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) area, emissions are approximately 25% higher per person than the UK average. At this level of emissions, we have only about 6 years remaining before we will have exhausted all of our 'allowed' share of emissions to 2050, if we are to play an equal part in delivering the UK's critical Net Zero target.

The region is at high risk from the changing climate. Many of the risks to the UK from climate change are particularly acute in this region: flooding, high summer temperatures, water shortages, and damage to the natural carbon stores in the deep peat of the Fens. Heat wave summers like 2018 will be the norm by 2050 even if we are on a global path to Net Zero. If we are heading to a temperature rise closer to 3°C, by 2100 winter rainfall could be 50% higher and summer 60% lower by the end of the century. We would regularly see summer temperatures reaching 40°C. Sea level rise would reach 1m or more. These impacts will affect homes, public buildings, businesses, towns and cities, and farming in the Fens. We need both to reduce our emissions to minimise the impacts and also to prepare for them.

Urgent action is needed – well before the six years is up. We need action both to get us on track to reducing emissions in line with UK targets and to prepare for the impacts of climate change, which will be significant even if we are on track globally for the Paris Agreement ambition of keeping close to 1.5°C and well below 2°C of warming by the end of the century. If we cannot deliver this ambition, the impacts of climate change become much more severe.

Addressing climate change can deliver multiple benefits beyond reducing the effects of climate change: more and better green space, a thriving natural world, better insulated and better ventilated homes, cleaner air, high quality job opportunities in a growing green economy, better public transport, improved health and well-being. Peterborough City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. The City council explains what it is doing, and how it is encouraging Peterborough to tackle climate change here.

Water Use

It takes a lot of energy to get fresh, clean drinkable water to homes, and to deal with all the waste water afterwards. You can help reduce that energy use by being aware how you use water. For example, if you leave a tap running when you brush your teeth that wastes over six litres per minute. Having a water meter installed if you do not already have one, will help you understand your water usage, enabling you to save money on your bills by cutting water use.

About 20% of a typical gas heated home's heating bill is from heating the water for showers, baths and the hot water tap. Using less means you will still be saving money on your energy bill, even if you don't have a water meter.

Saving water isn't just about saving energy. We live in one of the most water stressed areas of the country, and this is getting more severe with climate change. In order to make sure there is enough water for people, nature, growing crops and for businesses in our region, we all need to use it as sparingly as possible, especially in the summer. Anglian Water, which supplies much of the water across the area, has a page of tips here *Save water (anglianwater.co.uk).* More suggestions to cut your water use can be found on the Waterwise.org website here: *Save Water – Waterwise*

Energy Use

Peterborough City Council has advice pages on energy efficiency. if you are suffering from ill health or receiving certain benefits then Peterborough City Council has arranged free home assessments that will help you and funding and even put in some simple energy saving measures when they visit: *Local Energy Advice Partnership - Peterborough City Council*

Many homes have Energy Performance Certificates that assess how energy efficient your home is and can suggest potential improvements. You can search for your certificate here. Find an energy certificate (www.gov.uk)

If you don't have an EPC for your home, you could have an assessment done, and get advice on improving the insulation in your home to reduce your energy costs and carbon emissions. If possible, don't wait until your current boiler fails before you think about how you would replace it. You can search for an energy assessor here. Find an energy assessor (www.gov.uk)

You can find some great advice on energy saving measures from the Energy Saving Trust here: *Measures to help reduce home heat loss - Energy Saving Trust*.

Where bigger changes are needed the government is currently supporting home energy improvements with grants of up to £5000. If you are a homeowner or landlord, you can apply for vouchers worth up to two thirds of the cost of upgrading the energy efficiency of your home under the Green Home Grants scheme. Households on low income will be eligible for up to 100% funding, up to a maximum of £10,000. The scheme currently ends in March 2022. You can check if the scheme is suitable for you here: Green Homes Grant (www.gov.uk)

Gardens

Greenspaces, whether local parks, gardens, nature reserves or wild areas, can provide an important role in cooling, as well as filtering air. They also provide porous surfaces where water can soak away and help avoid flooding, including surface water flooding in our towns and cities, as we face wetter winters and more frequent short periods of very intense rainfall.

If you are lucky enough to have a garden think about making it 'climate friendly'. Trees can provide a shading and cooling effect, and capture carbon as they grow. Drought resistant planting reduces the need for watering, and water butts save rainwater for when you need it, also reducing your water usage. Introducing a more natural approach has a bonus for

wildlife too. Don't forget the climate impact of using fresh drinking water on gardens - a hose pipe left running can use up to 1000 litres of water an hour.

Peat is a great natural store of carbon when it is kept in good condition. However, when it is cut for horticultural use, significant emissions result. Avoid buying peat for your garden or for repotting plants, there are peat-free alternatives available which are much better for climate change and the environment. Advice on gardens can be found here: RHS Gardening in a Changing Climate (www.rhs.org.uk)

Travel

How we travel around is another major factor in climate change emissions. The transport sector is the biggest source of local emissions in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Replace your shorter journeys with walking or cycling where you can. The majority of all journeys are less than 5 miles, yet most of trips over 1 mile are by car or van. It is more difficult to avoid using cars in rural areas, but there are still opportunities such as car-sharing when public transport options are not available. More information on climate-friendly ways to travel in your area can be found here: Travelchoice About Us.

When using cars, think about the way you drive: switch off the engine when you park up; make sure the tyres are correctly pumped as this can improve the car's fuel mileage by up to 3%; take off roof racks unless you are using them; don't leave heavy things in the boot and drive around with them when you don't need to; and try to drive smoothly.

Government has signalled the date for the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel engine cars, so if you are a car user it is worth considering an electric vehicle as your next car. Government currently subsidises the cost of buying a new electric vehicle by up to £3000 (through a discount arranged with dealerships). Electric vehicle owners can also apply for up to £350 towards the cost of installing a charge point at home, see here: Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme: guidance for customers. (www.gov.uk).

What you Buy

Food and household waste are also important things to think about. Food production and transport is very carbon intensive, especially meat and dairy - perhaps you could have a meat free day every week. Even if you aren't ready to think about eating less meat, reducing food waste has a big impact on emissions, and saves money. Remember to put any food or organic waste out for a special collection or on your compost heap, if this goes to landfill it decomposes and emits methane, and methane, like carbon dioxide, is a gas which causes climate change.