



BOX PARISH COUNCIL

Climate Change Action Plan

Release 1

30 September 2021

INTRODUCTION

Wiltshire Council have recently issued a Climate Strategy Discussion Document [REF 1] and posed three questions for interested parties to focus attention on people's response to the climate emergency.

This paper is part of a process of Box Parish Council answering these challenges: not the final answers, but the issues we need to address in order to ensure that Box's cog meshes with Wiltshire's gears and National Government's engine as part of an overall, coherent strategy to address the climate emergency. Beyond the 'Bottom Line, Up Front' (BLUF) answering the three questions we have, for want of any other structure, roughly followed the headings in Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy web page [REF: 2 <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/green-economy-climate-change>].

Policies are highlighted red in this document.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Draft v3	Working Party review	19 August 2021
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	2
DOCUMENT CONTROL	2
BOTTOM, LINE UP FRONT (BLUF)	4
Q1. What do you feel are the 3 priorities for Wiltshire (not just the council) in becoming carbon neutral by 2030?	4
Q2. Does the organisation you represent have carbon neutral targets? If so what are they?	4
Q3. In what way could you support the council’s Climate strategy?	4
WHAT IS BOX COUNCIL DOING?	5
UNDERSTANDING BOX’S EMISSIONS	6
CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL.....	6
TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL	7
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	8
ENERGY GENERATION, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION	8
GREEN AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY.....	9
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, LAND USE, AND FARMING.....	10
ADAPTATION	11
REFERENCES	13
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	13

BOTTOM, LINE UP FRONT (BLUF)

Our answers to Wiltshire Council's challenge questions:

Q1. What do you feel are the 3 priorities for Wiltshire (not just the council) in becoming carbon neutral by 2030?

A) Transport: both private and public, is highly dependent on fossil fuels. We need to encourage better public transport that more people use, through choice; it needs to be low or, ideally, zero emission.

B) Agriculture: essential to Wiltshire's economy, farm machinery should be replaced at the end of their cycle (or, by encouragement, legislation or subsidy, earlier) by low emission or BEV equivalents. Changes in crop and livestock rearing to take account of and ameliorate the effects and contribution to climate change.

C) Built Environment. The encouragement or mandation of the use of, for example, air and ground source heating, solar panels, photo-voltaic roof tiles in new builds and conversions

Q2. Does the organisation you represent have carbon neutral targets? If so what are they?

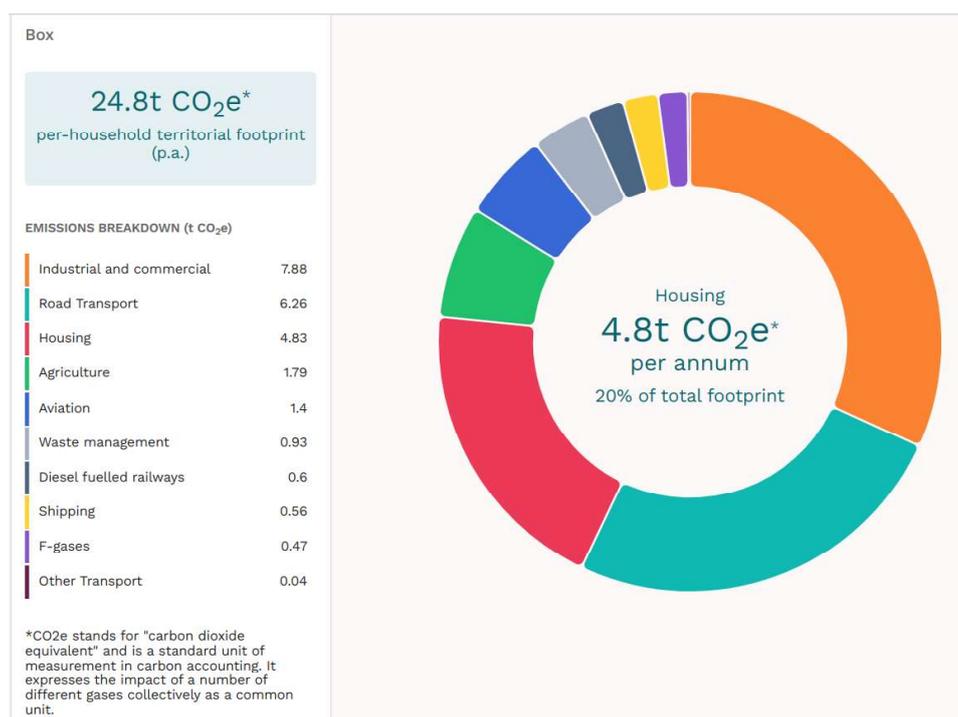
Box Council is adopting as a matter of policy the target of, overall, being carbon neutral / net zero by 2030. We are researching and writing a local Climate Strategy paper, aligned with Wiltshire Council's, which will set out what our key targets and measures will be

Q3. In what way could you support the council's Climate strategy?

Box Council will seek to lead the debate in the local area and champion Wiltshire Council's overall strategy, applying pressure in planning, finance decisions to take into account the effects on the climate emergency. We will seek to be involved in Wiltshire's emerging strategy as a responsible and contributing stakeholder.

WHAT IS BOX COUNCIL DOING?

Climate change is affected by everything we do. Box Parish Council is seeking to become net-zero by 2030, in line with the current Wiltshire Council guidance. This will not be easy to calculate and quantify but establishing the principle is the first step. Box PC cannot achieve this alone. Collaboration with residents, businesses and neighbouring parish councils is essential, but there are some measures we can take immediately in our own activities that will both have some limited effect and set an example allowing Box PC to take an active role in encouraging and enabling others to act. A climate impact tool [REF 5] gives the following indicative proportions and per-household CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) tonnage for Box [REF 6].



With immediate effect we will:

- Recognise that there is also a broader ecological emergency, inextricably related to the climate emergency, of biodiversity and habitat loss, and identify Nature Recovery as a key principle of climate change action. [REF 7]
- Identify one person/group whose responsibility is to ask the question “what is the impact on climate change and biodiversity” of all decisions and actions we take.
- Support and collaborate with any independent climate action group in the Parish.

UNDERSTANDING BOX'S EMISSIONS

We will, with immediate effect, conduct a Green energy audit in order to 'baseline' the current Box PC energy consumption.

Within 12 months, undertake measures to reduce harm from and raise awareness of Box's emissions.

CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL

We will assess the impact of PC activities, and look for and implement ways to reduce harmful effects, including carbon emissions:

- Energy used in the Pavilion
- Energy used in the Cemetery buildings.
- Energy used on maintaining the Box Recreation area – playing fields-heating, lighting, materials used, etc.
- Maintenance of the Box Recreation - mowing, tree work, etc.
- Change Pavilion lighting to LED.
- Ensure our electricity supply is from renewables.
- Review Pavilion heating systems – look at a long-term plan.
- Energy expended by the council office on heating, light, printing etc.
- Develop a procurement strategy that places a high score on bids providing a positive Climate change response.

Policy: The 'Climate Policy' is to stand paramount above all other policies (with the exception of Health & Safety), and all other policies and motions of the Council must comply with it.

Policy: Box PC will take all practicable measures to aid nature recovery and reduce energy use and carbon emissions in its own activities, including travel to meetings, lighting and heating of council offices and facilities such as pavilions, and maintenance of buildings and land for which the Council is responsible.

Policy: Box PC will develop a procurement strategy that recognises and rewards Climate Change responses from potential bidders.

RECOMMENDATION: Box PC will ensure that all appropriate Parish assets are supported by an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) that describes the energy-efficiency of each council property. The EPC document will include estimated energy costs and a summary of the building's energy performance-related features. The Box PC EPC document set will also include recommendations on measures that would make the building more energy-efficient, along with estimated costs for implementing the changes and any potential savings.

TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

Box Parish has a number of main roads through it, principally the A4 Bath to Corsham and Chippenham; A365 Bath to Melksham and Devizes; and B3109 Corsham to Bradford on Avon roads. The London Main Line railway also passes through but there have been no stations in the parish since Box Station and Box Halt were closed in the 1960s. There is also a small grass aerodrome or airstrip with low levels of single and twin propellor craft taking off and landing on the flat lands near the B3109.

All three roads are used by private and goods traffic 'passing through' as well as for local private, goods and farm vehicles. Due to the interdependency of the North Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire and BANES road networks, the volume of traffic is heavily influenced by rush hours, past, current (and future) road works in Bath, such as the A36 and clean air zone (CAZ), and Junctions 18 (Bath) and 17 (Chippenham) of the M4.

The London Main Line railway was to be electrified but work for this stopped somewhere between Chippenham and Corsham a few years ago. The diesel '125' intercity locomotives and rolling stock have been phased out and by and large replaced by more modern and less polluting hybrid electric/diesel units. It is not known if or when electrification of the line to Bristol will restart. There is an active campaign group in nearby Corsham, working with Wiltshire Council, to re-open Corsham Station on the Main Line.

We will assess the impact of PC activities, and look for and implement ways to reduce harmful effects, including carbon emissions:

- Travel by users of the Pavilion, sports fields etc.
- Travel by Clerk and Councillors on Parish business – including to attend meetings
- Engage with Wiltshire Council in order to develop a partnership with potential vehicle charging providers that will lead to the installation of a number of vehicle charging systems suitable to the needs of BEV (Battery Electric Vehicles) users at strategic points throughout the parish for example on the



Recreation Ground Car Park,



suitably modified lampposts and



kerbside charging posts

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- Reduced use of fossil fuel vehicles – by increasing walking and cycling, switching to Zero Emissions Vehicles (e.g. Battery Electric, Hydrogen [REF 3]), less travel for work, etc.

Box Council will monitor and contribute to Corsham Railway Station Town Team's campaign [REF 4] to re-open the station for local and/or inter-city rail traffic.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

As a consultee on planning applications, Box Council will require plans to reduce energy use/ increase energy generation; enhance biodiversity (including linking wildlife corridors) and benefit flora and fauna, wherever appropriate. (cf. NPPF Ch 14; Climate Change Act; Environment Act).

To better manage its own estate, Box PC will develop procurement and finance strategies that places a high score on bids providing a positive Climate change response.

Specific planning policies will be developed in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. These should note the emerging government policy and pending UK legislation, that all new home construction will include electric vehicle (EV) charging installations. New office buildings are part of the plan, too: they will need to provide charging infrastructure per every 5 parking spaces.

Policy: As consultee on planning applications, Box PC will make Climate Change Mitigation and Nature Recovery primary considerations in all its responses.

ENERGY GENERATION, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

Specific planning policies will be developed in the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Box PC will seek more potential for energy generation on Box PC buildings and land.

The role of Box PC in helping to achieve the goal of net-zero for the Parish as a whole will involve engaging with residents, businesses and other entities. The aims will include:

- Reduced energy use in housing – especially heating, by insulation and conversion from gas/oil.
- Reduced use of fossil fuel vehicles – by increasing walking and cycling, switching to Zero Emissions Vehicles (e.g. Battery Electric, Hydrogen [REF X]), less travel for work, etc.
- Increased local energy generation, from PV panels on roofs to larger scale solar/wind projects.

Box, Rudloe and Corsham have various, extensive freestone mine workings, privately and publicly owned, that range from actively quarried, to dormant, disused and even under active or passive management by MOD Corsham. This is a highly speculative thought, but the technologies exist and are improving that might allow this resource to be used for a joint venture or community ground source energy generation opportunity

Policy: The Council will seek to increase renewable energy generation on its buildings and land, and where reasonable support such projects by other organisations in the Parish.

The Pavilion Solar Panel Requirement has been set and we have three proposals which are in the assessment phase and are being evaluated against a comprehensive compliance matrix that includes a climate statement.

The results of the evaluation will be circulated as soon as the process has been completed and we will be seeking endorsement of the preferred proposal at the next Playing Fields and Pavilion management committee meeting currently scheduled for 4 Oct 2021.

As a subsequent activity, we have developed two additional projects which are currently outside of the scope of the Box PC Solar PV project.

The two additional Single Statement of User Needs are:

- Instal Solar Heating system in order to reduce the carbon footprint of the Box PC Pavilion.
- Instal Solar Photovoltaic Cell (PV) system in order to reduce the carbon footprint of the Box PC Tractor Shed.

GREEN AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Positive (“offsetting”) measures:

- Allotments and local food production – consider how to increase climate/biodiversity-positive effects.

- Parish grants scheme: Ask applicants to say how their request would affect climate change/biodiversity; seek “off-setting” projects.
- Set up new grants scheme to address climate change innovations.
- Consider appointing a climate change assistant to the Clerk. This may be a young person’s job opportunity, perhaps for students from The Corsham School.

Policy: The Council will take all practicable measures to increase carbon “off-setting” actions in the Parish, including tree-planting, composting, and other carbon-sequestration. It will support such efforts by other organisations within the Parish, for example by making grants to relevant projects.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, LAND USE, AND FARMING

Tree strategy:

- Assess loss of trees by Ash die-back in the Parish - climate and ecological impact of loss and plan to mitigate
- Plant more trees; seek advice from the Cotswold Conservation Board on where to plant (and not plant) trees to ensure most benefit to wildlife.
- Establish time scale for target planting.
- Ensure verge and field cutting is in line with best practice for environmental benefit.
- Renewable energy generation

TREES - The Council will avoid felling trees unless it is necessary. Subject to a safety assessment and, if appropriate to the specific site, large woody debris will be left in situ for the creation of wildlife habitats. Where possible, the trunks will be left standing, or lying on the ground in habitat piles. Tree stumps will also be left in situ where it is safe to do so as they provide a valuable wildlife habitat whilst they rot down.

HEDGES - Hedges are an attractive feature on our sites and provide an important habitat for a wide range of species, offering food, shelter, protection from predators, wintering and nesting sites, and act as transit corridors. It is recognised that trimming hedges too severely can have a detrimental impact on their wildlife value. Where there is no negative impact on health and safety (e.g. visibility for motorists), the Council aims to have taller, bushier hedges. However, the Council will ensure that hedge growth does not impair the safety of highway users nor impede their access. Unless for urgent health and safety reasons, hedge cutting will not be conducted between April and August.

VERGES – For rural highway verge mowing: This year we have modified our approach to mowing our rural roads, in recognition that these verges can provide a significant environmental benefit. Historically we carried out one single cut of the entire rural network through May and June. This year, very much in line with Wiltshire Council grass cutting policy (<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/grass->

[cutting-policy](#)) and mowing policy Briefing Note No. 21-11, we started cutting visibility splays on junctions and some bends, along with some of the particularly narrow lanes in the middle of May. The remaining verges will be left uncut until September. Leaving these areas much later to cut will enable wildflowers to set seed and spread more widely in the verge.

For urban areas we are considering Wiltshire Council's policy (<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways/grass-cutting>) and joining its wildflower trial for selected non-playing areas of the Recreation Ground. While not appropriate for cricket and football areas there is certainly opportunity in other areas, such as the bank and behind below the allotments.

The Climate Strategy acknowledges and welcomes the unstinting efforts of the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens team who will be planting approximately 2,000 Broadleaf trees and 4,000 hedge transplants in Box Parish over the period Nov 2021 - Feb 2022. This activity will be included in the Communications Plan as it aligns perfectly with the broader Government messages and the Wiltshire Council climate change statements.

Policy: Reduce or eliminate use of plastic in Box PC activities and events including the use of plastic tree protectors for saplings.

Engaging with the wider community:

The role of Box PC in helping to achieve the goal of net-zero for the Parish as a whole – will involve engaging with residents, businesses and other entities. The aims will include:

- Increased local food production and reliance on local producers.
- Reduced energy use by businesses, including agriculture.
- Increased environmentally positive farming and land management.
- Increased awareness of the role individual residents can have in enhancing biodiversity and nature recovery: e.g. helping hedgehog initiatives.

ADAPTATION

These aims will need to be made into action plans – probably by Box PC in consultation with residents, businesses, farmers, etc. The role of Box PC is likely to be one of enabling and encouraging, bringing people together and facilitating change, rather than direct action. We may be able to promote and encourage community projects – such as community energy schemes, car-sharing, and so on. This part of the plan is not yet an action plan and will be developed for future versions.

- Parish Council Policies should prioritise environmental considerations.
e.g. When finalising the Parish Council Procurement Policy, the project should be designed to be climate and environmentally resilient for their expected lifetime, rather than the procured contract period. This design life

will vary from asset to asset. An appropriate timeline over which to consider climate adaptation measures for Box PC procurement may be 5 years or more for equipment, less for consumables and longer for some infrastructure or service delivery projects. A matrix will be in place for this purpose.

- The Climate Strategy Working Party will encourage parishioners to take an active part in our progress towards the Carbon Neutral goal.

This will include:

providing information to aid behaviour change, and details of organisations and incentives that may help this process such as Green Homes Grants, Warm and Safe Wiltshire

promoting individual choices such as to reduce food waste, reduce meat and dairy consumption, wash laundry at lower temperatures, reduce tumble drier usage, buy local, turn heating down, car share, reduce use of harmful pesticides, set aside 'wild' areas of garden.

- The Climate Strategy Working Party will collaborate with Wiltshire Climate Alliance, Transcoco, the Area Board and other relevant local groups in order to consolidate and maximise our efforts. The PC should take advantage of available grants and incentives to assist in the realisation of schemes and purchases.

REFERENCES

REF 1: Wiltshire-Climate-Strategy-Discussion-Document-Summary-May 2021.
<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/6553/Climate-Strategy-Discussion-Document-Summary-May-2021/pdf/Wiltshire-Climate-Strategy-Discussion-Document-Summary-May2021.pdf?m=637559903494830000>

REF 2: Wiltshire Green Economy website
<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/green-economy-climate-change>

REF 3: Office for Zero Emission Vehicles
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-zero-emission-vehicles>

REF 4 Corsham Railway Station Town Team
<http://corshamrailwaystation.org/>

REF 5: Community Carbon Calculator
<https://impact-tool.org.uk/>

REF 6: Community Carbon Calculator for Box
<https://impact-tool.org.uk/footprint/footprint?parishId=E04012682&footprintType=territorial&scale=per-household>

REF 7. Nature Recovery Network
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Three photographs, of a PodPoint Charger in a Sainsbury's car park; lamppost charging; and street scene of Source London charging posts, are all Copyright Elliot Corner, for whose permission to use freely we are most grateful