

Climate and Ecological Working Group. A Report for Environment Committee Meeting.

Background.

Battle Town Council has already demonstrated its concerns regarding the effects of Climate Change and the importance of nature. The basis for this lies in the following policies-;

1. The Statement on the Protection of our Environment
2. The Battle CP Neighbourhood Plan Policy EN1, EN2 and EN3
Plus-;
3. Supporting the Climate and Ecological Bill (November 2021)
4. The numerous wild life projects within BTC's estate (Noted B&B Observer 24.12.2021)

Current situation.

Each of the Battle Town Council committees are taking into account the affect of their decisions to reduce their carbon footprint which will in turn contribute to the slowing of the damage caused by climate change. Further progress is being made to gain increased ecological benefits. The committees also consider any ecological loss in their decision making. The councillors are intending to make an informed decision with the best solution at the time. This approach has its limitations due to a number of factors. Councillors often feel they do not have the necessary expertise on all aspects of this work. This can be a piece meal approach due to the fact that Climate Change affects all the committees.

Possible way forward.

Many Parishes and Districts have found that to give Climate Change and Ecology the attention it requires the formation of a working group. A BTC working group could develop an action plan to focus on this work. The working group may be tasked with establishing a base line for both the Council's internal business and that of the wider community within Battle Civil Parish. The working group will look for areas of improvement. The working group could development and provide a plan for carbon reduction and a means to conserve and enhance nature. Considering only biodiversity would limit the scope to plant and wildlife without including areas such as air and water quality.

Guidance

There is guidance for Local Authorities on what they can do e.g. Ashden's list for Local Authorities, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and learning from other local Authorities e.g. Brightling Parish. Our challenge is to shape those goals for Battle Civil Parish. There are plans and strategies from both Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council.

Recommendations-;

1. A Climate Change and Ecological Working Group be established with representative members from each of the Town Council's Committees.
2. Invite community climate and biodiversity experts to be on the Working Group
3. Prepare Terms of Reference for the Working Group
4. Establish links with neighbouring Parishes to establish areas of common interest and development.
5. Devise the working group's sharing and reporting mechanisms.

Aim of Proposed Working Group-;

The aim of the working group is to develop an action plan which would focus on reducing carbon emissions, improve ecological status. The working group would establish a base line (emissions and ecological) for both the Council and that of the wider community within the Battle Civil Parish.

Cllr Sue Burton
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