



Martlesham Parish Council Climate Emergency Declaration

What next?

By Dave Green/Paul Whitby (co-chairs Martlesham Climate Action)

Along with many other Parish Councils, Martlesham has declared a 'climate emergency'. What does this mean and what can/should we be doing about it? Here are some first thoughts and steps on creating a community response to the climate emergency.

Climate Change

This refers to the overwhelming body of scientific evidence gathered over several decades that the world's climate is changing due to increasing average global temperatures caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide (and other green house gases) in the atmosphere predominately as a direct result of burning fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal). Oil, gas and coal have been locked away in the Earth for millennia, but since the industrial revolution, humans have been extracting them and using them to power our modern economies. Indeed, fossil fuels have delivered substantial improvements in food, health and general wealth for much of an increasing world population. However, it is increasingly obvious that this has come at a terrible cost to the Earth's environment (animals, plants, soil, pollution, water, air etc). Even worse, the Earth's climate is changing as a direct consequence of humans burning fossil fuels threatening our very civilization we have built on the back of those fossil fuels. Climate change is impacting lives across the globe now. Now is the time for action for the sake of our children, our grandchildren and ourselves.

What can I do?

It all seems insurmountable, but the biggest threat to humanity is that we ignore the threat and individually do nothing hoping someone else will fix it. To quote Sir David Attenborough "what happens next is up to all of us". It will be a hard slog to change our comfortable fossil fuel based ways of life but a combination of Governments' policies nudging us into the right behaviors and grassroots initiatives can give us hope.

So what can we do as individuals and as a parish?

We have set up 'Martlesham Climate Action', a Martlesham Parish Council 'Climate Emergency Working Group' to act as a catalyst to help promote, support and extend existing initiatives and drive new ones with a focus on reducing carbon footprints and protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

Here are some ideas some of which are already being undertaken by our Parish and other communities:

- Run a community 'carbon reduction forum'. Teach and share with each other about how our lives cause carbon dioxide emissions (transport, food, heating, fashion etc) and share ideas on how we can reduce carbon emissions that we cause (e.g. switching our electricity tariff to 100% renewable, installation of more insulation, installation of solar panels and heat pumps, try and re-use and fix than chuck and replace, consume less, source more locally, consider dietary changes, travel less by plane and car etc....)
- Give nature a helping hand (protect and enhance biodiversity) through tree planting (e.g. the new Bright's Orchard), 're-wilding' gardens and verges (e.g. Martlesham Heath Householder Ltd wild flower verge initiative), protecting our woods (Portal Woods group), protecting our SSSI (Martlesham Conservation Group). Consider putting this under the 'WildEast' banner targeting 20% of land including gardens to be 're-wilded'.
- Run a Martlesham Repair café.
- Embrace the 'Plastic Action Champion' initiative from East Suffolk Council by appointing champions in the parish (links to litter picking activities around the parish).
- Lobby local and national politicians for better public transport and cycle lanes.
- Pledge not to use peat in compost, reduce/stop flying, use the bus for that shopping trip rather than jump in the car.

If you are interested in getting involved in one or more of these areas (e.g sharing your experiences of reducing your carbon emissions, becoming a 'Plastic Action Champion', help create a 'Wild East Martlesham' building on current conservation projects), please contact us at: martleshamclimateaction@btinternet.com.

Our meetings are monthly on Zoom. We are also planning to arrange a special Martlesham Climate Summit next year when we are allowed to meet up again.