

This month I attended the following meetings:

Town Deal briefing

This was largely a question and answer session for councillors.

We were informed of courses organised by Glastonbury Trust with Somerset Skills & Learning providing skills investment and capacity building training; following the first course, 'Managing Your Time and Workload' on 2 Feb, the next course is on 9 March 9.30am - 2.45pm:

<https://redbrickbuilding.co.uk/event/gt-ssl-training-workshop-2022-2/>

Other courses in the coming months are on managing your organisation/people; communications skills; working with volunteers; support & supervision; and public speaking. See sslcourses.co.uk for more info.

For further information on the Town Deal, there is extensive information on the Mendip District Council website:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/8612/Glastonbury-Town-Deal>

Somerset Climate Action Network re Engagement

The take-away from this session was the 7 groups with different political identities and associated values, as shown by Britain Talks Climate for the purposes of engagement on climate change: they were progressive activists, civic pragmatists, disengaged battlers, backbone conservatives, established liberals, disengaged traditionalists, and loyal nationals. Each group requires a different narrative for the subject to feel relevant to them. For those of us who are looking to spread the word, more can be found on this at: <https://climateoutreach.org/reports/engaging-audiences-cop26/> The long and short of it, global disaster talk does not get through, but pragmatic actions do, which should match the values of the political identity of those being addressed.

Carbon Literacy Training - day workshop

The first half of the day was an overview of the climate emergency. We were reminded that more than 50% of the increase in greenhouse gases since pre-industrial times has been produced in the last 25 years. In 1950 the world emitted 6 billion tonnes of CO₂, by 1990 this has almost quadrupled reaching 22 billion tonnes in that year alone. We now emit over 36 billion tonnes each year. The second half of the day covered what is to be done. The Bank of England has set an all time carbon budget to reach 2 degrees rise or less: 1/4 was used by the 1969 moon landing, and 1/2 has since been used, so we have 1/4 left which will be gone within 20 years if we continue business as usual. Roughly speaking, half the challenge is expected to be met by societal and behavioural change (including home insulation, etc) and half by decarbonising energy sources. The cost will be 1% of GDP per year for 30 years for the UK. Reduction in consumption is key: for instance, switching to an electric vehicle saves 0.8 tonnes CO₂ but going carless saves 2.4 tonnes. The carbon calculator recommended here for parishes and communities was impact-tool.org.uk. Carbon Literacy Accreditation, in order to receive certification and the ability to pass on this training, was available, for which I have applied.

Planning Refresher training

Updates on recent changes in planning such as 'Change of Use' categories and a revision of the basics for all councillors.

Meat free diets/ Cooking Classes

I am working with a couple of councillors and our Climate Emergency officer at Mendip District Council to put together some promotional material and perhaps set up some classes to encourage meat-free meals. This is a responsibility of local authorities as recommended post COP26 by the Committee on Climate Change.

Unitary (Local Government Reorganisation) briefing

The future new council now has a website: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk>

Gypsies, Romas & Travellers (GRT) Cultural Awareness training

A settled traveller, one of Somerset County Council's representatives for the GRT community, gave a presentation on traveller cultural values, in particular the Irish gypsy and Roma communities.