



ACAN groups update July 2022

What a privilege to be part of this amazing community!

Website: altonclimatenetwork.org.uk Email: altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

Facebook: [@AltonClimate](https://www.facebook.com/AltonClimate) Twitter: [@AltonClimate](https://twitter.com/AltonClimate) Instagram: [alton.can](https://www.instagram.com/alton.can)

We are very proud of our merry band of volunteers who make a difference in so many ways.

Young ACAN in particular have done amazing work this year with their Back on the Rack clothes swap, their survey and most recently their tremendously successful Schools Eco Conference.

We also have a fledgling group starting up to work on reducing the damage caused by our over consumption of clothes. Get in touch if you would like to join them.

In this newsletter:

[Young ACAN](#)

[AVLAN - Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature](#)

[Energy Alton](#)

[ALFI - Alton Local Food Initiative](#)

[Alton Repair Cafe](#) Sat 30th July 10:30am-12:30pm Alton Community Centre, GU34 1HN

[Alton Community Share](#) Sat 13th Aug 10am-12noon at St. Lawrence Parish Centre, GU34 2BW

[Cycle Alton](#)

[Lobbying & Campaigning Group](#)

[Wellbeing](#)

[Action on Plastic & Waste](#)

[Eco-Streets](#)

[Community Cupboard](#)

[GUMBI video](#)

[Volunteer with ACAN](#)

[Donate to ACAN](#)



Young ACAN

has had an amazing year. In April they held their very successful Back on the Rack clothes swap and brought in enough donations to run it again in September.

So do get the word out to any youngsters you know aged 7 to 20 to sort out their wardrobes over the summer holidays. They can bring any good quality clothes they have grown out of or got tired of to The Maltings from 19th September ready to "swap 'til they drop" on Friday 23rd September from 3:30pm to 6pm.

On 4th July their schools Eco-Conference was attended by over 70 pupils from 12 local schools. They offered a choice of 6 workshops aimed at inspiring these young people to become environmental changemakers in their schools. The feedback has been extremely positive and the buzz in the room was electrifying.

Their lottery grant also allowed them to conduct a survey of 350 young people to assess their level of knowledge and feelings about the climate and environmental crises that are going to define their futures. Preliminary findings show that our young people are far more aware and far more concerned than many adults realise. We expect a full report of these findings at the end of July.

[Young ACAN have produced an inspiring 2 page newsletter](#) about all they are doing - do read it, you will feel as proud as we are.



Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature

Alton and Villages Local Action for Nature (AVLAN) is ACAN's nature group which helps wildlife in our local green spaces and gardens through practical action.

This year AVLAN has planted a new wildlife-friendly garden around Orchard House in the town centre (perennials and seeded grass areas), in partnership with Abri Housing Association and Alton College students.

This is in addition to our established gardens at All Saints Church, Butts Green and Rakemakers, Holybourne.

We have recently obtained cultivation licences from Hampshire County Council for road verges on Mill Lane and The Ridgeway, which will in future be mown annually and developed for biodiversity and pollinators. We hope to take control of a third verge soon.

Thank you to the lead volunteers for all these initiatives, and to district councillors for their grants. We would be glad of more volunteers!

- We successfully applied to HCC for the verge on Pertuis Avenue to be recognised as a Verge of Ecological importance for its orchids.
- With support from Glen Skelton at Surrey Wildlife Trust, AVLAN volunteers continue to monitor the invertebrates in the River Wey.
- We supported Ecochurch with their Churches Count on Nature event in Holybourne Churchyard with botanists from Alton Natural History Society.
- Plans for the future include liaising with East Hants District Council on tree planting.



Energy Alton is responding to increasing requests for free home energy surveys by training new champions; Paul, Mike H, Mike W and Ken R. (see the team below). Surveys can include thermal imaging, as demonstrated at a recent workshop in Beech.

Paul Ciniglio (National Energy Foundation) spoke at the annual meeting in May.

The Powering Up group has:

- had a grant approved for a feasibility study for a renewable heat project at Thedden Grange.
- started work on providing PV for Eggars School

- a feasibility study for Solar PV at Coomers under way.

Energy Alton has:

- commented on the 'Copse Close Solar' PV scheme, before their planning application
- and responded to the EHDC consultation on supplementary planning guidance.

EA is a member of the Alton Town Council Climate Emergency Sub-Committee alongside ACAN. And we are supporting Petersfield Climate Action Network (promoting Whole House Retrofit)

We welcome new Directors, Tony Cohen and Mike Ward and Tim Cain joins as Secretary. New volunteers are always welcome and there are several different roles on 'offer' just email me John Hubbard at energyalton@gmail.com or sign up for our regular newsletter.



ALFI has had a good year.

We welcome Diane Homans to the committee. We continue to cultivate our plots and planters around the town and have added 2 new plots this year. In front of the BT building we are growing fruit trees in large pots and other crops in planters.

- At Barleyfields we have planted 13 fruit trees with help from ATC. Our main plots are all doing well.
- The station plot is very productive and crops are put out in the foyer for passers by.
- We have recently been picking soft fruit at the Vicarage plot which goes into a basket on the wall, but never stays there long!
- At the Westbrooke plot the wildlife and herb garden has been colourful and we have just counted over 70 different plant species there.
- At the Jubilee Field our orchard looks as if there should be a good crop of apples and pears.

In early May we were invited to exhibit a small plot at the Gardener's World Spring Fair at Beaulieu, for the first time. Visitors were very appreciative with people interested in trying the idea in their own towns. We gained a silver award.

We are grateful to all our volunteers and supporters and always welcome new ones.
(Website www.Altonlocalfood.org or Facebook [Alton Local Food Initiative](https://www.facebook.com/AltonLocalFoodInitiative))



We help people by repairing their items, we teach and encourage them to have a go themselves, we save a huge amount from going into landfill and we provide a super friendly and happy Café atmosphere that's fun to be part of.

Just as important as all that, we have a wonderful team of repairers and helpers who support each other every step of the way.



The Repair Café is "getting back to normal" after Covid. We now meet in the larger room at the Community Centre, but that means we can't have a regular monthly slot as we would like. So publicity has become rather more important.

Recently we had a visit from Wey Valley Radio which we hope helped to get the word out.

Last time we held an event we had 24 repair items, saving some 84 kgs from landfill. The items included garden shears, a saucepan with a loose handle, a zip put into a bag, a kettle with a faulty switch, a knife sharpener with a faulty switch, a lamp with a loose fitting, a laminator with a control circuit problem, a ceramic vase (shhh don't tell anyone) and jacket sleeves to name but a few.

There is no cost, although donations are welcomed.

IT'S FUN, PRODUCTIVE, SOCIAL AND HELPS THE PLANET!

Next session Sat 30th July

Bring your items for repair along to Alton Community Centre from 10:30am to 12:30pm on:
30th July, 10th September, 22nd October, 10th December

The repair team will be at your service to assist and advise you on repairs to small household items.



Alton Community Share

Next session Sat 13th Aug

Reduce waste & save money at this free library of jigsaws, games, toys and activities

On the 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month
at St Lawrence's Parish Centre
10am to 12 noon

Alton Community Share plan to be open all summer to help hard pressed parents and grandparents find interesting activities to do at home with the children during the school holidays or to take on holiday with them.

Recently we have had the pleasure of 'Sharing the Share' with a couple of ACAN's groups and invite other groups planning events that require indoor space to keep in mind that the Share can offer free space for your event provided you can 'Share with the Share' on the day of your event during our opening times. Email Martin Wiles for more info on martinwiles@hotmail.com.

Remember we are open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month from 10 -12 at the St Lawrence Parish Centre in Alton.

Cycle Alton has continued to work with local authorities towards improving cycle infrastructure so everyone can cycle safely in and around Alton. Further discussions are planned with local councillors to make the town centre more cycle-friendly.

We've planned a network of safe routes to schools, based on EHDC's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, to link housing areas to schools. Senior schools are conducting surveys of their pupils to discover what barriers currently prevent them from cycling to school.



We've submitted responses to HCC consultations, and been present at ATC's markets in the Public Gardens. Attendees at our adult cycle training session in the spring reported increased confidence and cycling skills afterwards.

Our second birthday was celebrated by holding our first face-to-face meeting of our supporters with wine and cake, followed by a lively discussion. Of the many ideas raised we prioritised the schools survey and a mass bike ride through the town, to be held later this year. More could be taken on with more helpers, and we invite anyone interested to contact us at cyclealton@gmail.com.

Cycle Alton now has over 200 supporters, and you can find us on social media and on the ACAN website here: <https://altonclimatenetwork.org.uk/our-groups/cycle-alton/>



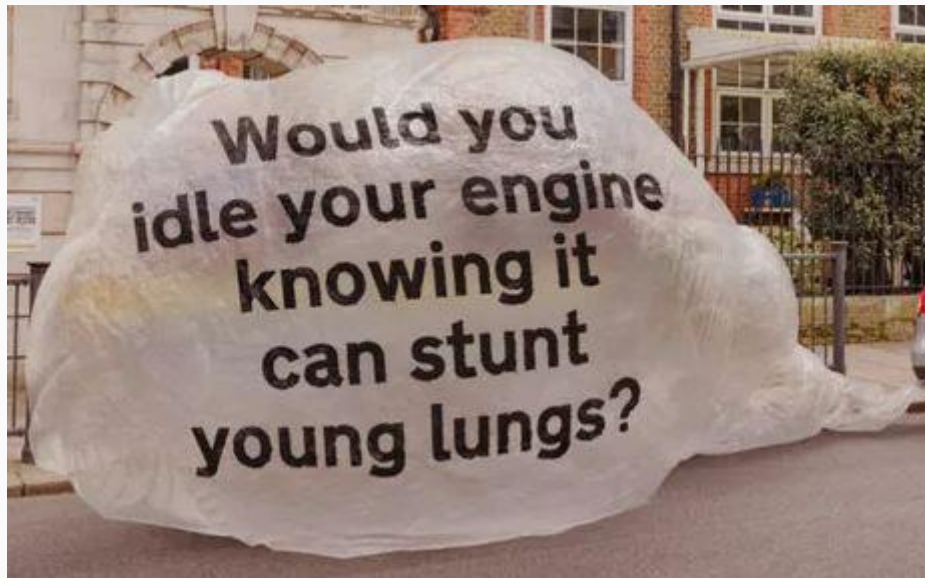
Lobbying & Campaigning Group

Our lobbying has been frustrated this year following the split between East Hants District Council and Havant. The fall out from which means that, despite promises of a Green Team made in November last year, the climate team still consists of one officer for 2 days per week. This means the Climate Strategy drawn up 3 years ago has still not been converted into a plan, and until that happens funding for projects cannot be allocated because the project codes need to be tied to a plan!!

On the plus side we have been communicating with several councillors who share our frustration and have given good advice as far as they can.

In the meantime we have run a short anti-idling campaign and intend to focus on tree planting in the next planting season.

We also have a couple of members working on transport who have responded to the Hampshire County Council consultation on the Local Transport Plan and will be attending the National Traffic Reduction & Climate Conference in Birmingham in September.



Wellbeing

Anxiety is a perfectly rational response to the helplessness many of us feel about the climate and ecological crises we face.

The first thing we all know to do to address this is to take action, but most of those receiving this newsletter are already doing that.



We have now run 3 wellbeing sessions to support members who are feeling the distress that comes with acceptance of our situation.

These sessions are supportive and practical and we occasionally have a counsellor with us.

We have watched short videos and discussed how statistics are sometimes mis-used to make things seem worse than they are and how to spot this.

In our next session we plan to come up with answers to the sorts of questions deniers and delayers pose such as "Why should we do anything when China is responsible for so much more pollution?" or "Technology will save us."

If you are interested in joining us do email altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

Action on Plastic and Waste

Litter picks continue with enthusiasm on Thursdays and we are delighted to report that it is catching on with many different organisations not linked to ACAN. Whether this is why the amount collected is reducing or because the message is getting through and less litter is being dropped we are not sure but hope it is the latter.

Progress on the Recycling Directory has hit a couple of bumps in the road due to changes in what Terracycle can collect and the termination of the Sainsbury's plastic carrier bags collection.

Other options are under consideration so watch this space.

The work on getting Alton accredited as a Plastic Free Town has slowed down due to a lack of volunteer time so if you have any spare time and are interested in approaching local businesses to discuss ways they can reduce the plastic they use then do please get in touch on altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com



Eco-Streets Project

Environmentalism Scott Gudrich is leading our pilot 'Eco-Streets' project, a grass-roots community project in part of Alton's Whitedown ward, finding out where its residents stand on the climate crisis, how much they know and what the problems are for them. It aims to increase people's awareness of climate change and their ability to undertake action to counter it.

With this project we are reaching out to people we don't normally meet and who possibly don't give much thought to climate change and the environmental crisis. We don't want to depress them with the bad news about climate change but to concentrate on presenting positive messages and telling them about some of the good things that have been happening. This, we hope, will encourage everyone to do at least a small bit themselves to start addressing the problem and helping the planet.

By the time this newsletter goes out we will have ACAN volunteers going door to door with a survey to establish what people's starting point is and to encourage them to attend the Butts Green residents party on Saturday 23rd July.

We will then re-survey at the end of the pilot to see what progress people have made on their journey to a greener lifestyle.



Alton Community Cupboard

Open from 11:30am to 1pm from Mon to Sat at 3 Westbrooke Walk.

No referrals are required so anyone can come along.

The Cupboard continues to do a brilliant job of sourcing and passing on food that is nearing its sell by date and would otherwise be thrown out.

They are delighted to count two new volunteers from our Ukrainian refugee population amongst their team.

We wish them well in their attempts to find a new home when the lease on the Westbrooke Walk premises expires at the end of September.



ACAN's wonderful and uplifting association with the GUMBI Education Project in Malawi continues to great effect with the Gumbi Alton Permaculture Paradise Project now producing crops and becoming a satellite training centre for the Permaculture Paradise Institute.



Call to Action

Here in ACAN we have a [range of groups](#) already set up and many more ideas of things we would like to do if we had more volunteers, and you may have ideas of your own you would like to pursue.

It doesn't matter how much or how little time you can spare we have volunteering opportunities to suit.

To get involved do fill in our [volunteers form](#)

Or just email altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com and let us know what you would like to do.

As ACAN has grown so have our costs.

Most grants do not cover running costs, such as insurance, zoom subscription, examination of accounts.
If you can help with one off or regular donations please use the button below for our CAF donate page.
Many thanks.

[Donate to ACAN](#)