



Climate Emergency - facing it together Reporting back on our Open meeting

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What an amazing evening!
Full of energy, ambition and a host of wonderful ideas.
EHDC has money in its climate and environment pot so lets pick our best actions and see if we can access those funds.

So many good ideas
from a truly
inspirational evening

Over 70 people gathered at Alton Assembly Rooms on 20 June to discuss how to seize this “now or never” opportunity to create a liveable future for our young people.

Now it's time for action –if you are not involved already, or can do more, please get in touch either by emailing altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com or by filling in our [Volunteer Interests Form](#) online and let us know what you would like to do.



The scene was set by 3 speakers:

Lillie Ewins, leader of Young ACAN, pulled no punches telling us that adults are failing young people and how it feels to face a future dominated by climate collapse.

Jenny Griffiths, ACAN's Chair, reminded us of the stark findings of the recent UN IPCC reports and concluded with quotes from David Attenborough and Greta Thunberg about the importance of taking action locally.

Scott Gudrich, leader of ACAN's Eco-Streets project, rounded off the speeches talking about our plans to facilitate street level community action on climate.

East Hants District Councillor Graham Hill made sure we knew that EHDC has £300,000 in their climate and environment pot, and encouraged us to apply for funding for our chosen actions.

After that it was our turn to gather in groups to identify 1 significant achievement of ACAN's from the past 3 years and then to come up with 4 priority ideas for action going forward.

Significant Achievements (most groups struggled to limit themselves to just one!):

- Energy Alton's home energy surveys and their [Clean Heat Guide](#)
- The Community Cupboard, which is now independent of ACAN and applying for charity status in its own right.
- ACAN is known, not just in Alton, and has helped other groups to get started in the area.
- ACAN has an impressive portfolio of active groups from cycling to litter picking.

Priority Ideas for Action:

Energy featured strongly with a focus on the cost-of-living crisis

- Energy advice pop-up shop where people can drop in for impartial advice on how to cut their energy use
- Distribute Energy Alton's Clean Heat Guide to all households in Alton
- Set up a program for insulating housing stock
- Lobby for publicly owned buildings to be raised to exemplar standards for insulation and energy efficiency
- Promote / lobby for national and local government support for insulation, solar panels on East and West facing roofs and wind generators
- Lobby for more controls on new housing developments to make new homes carbon neutral

Priority Ideas for Action:



Communication was seen as key to engaging our community

- Set up regular social get togethers for volunteers and new recruits
- Have a team of ACAN guides to do eco walks around the town highlighting good and bad eco features e.g. solar panels on library, spaces for tree planting, target new estates
- Promote more use of the Repair Café, Community Share, Freecycle etc. to reduce consumerism
- Recruit 20s – 30s age group
 - Laser alternative to bonfire night
 - Make taking climate action attractive and fun
- Engage with young families particularly on new estates
- Engage with local businesses
 - Create an “ACAN stamp of approval” for eco accredited businesses. To be renewed every year.
- Adopt “[Talk Triggers](#)” techniques to get people talking about what they are doing
- Bus stop posters on eco themes e.g. [Pete Seeger on recycling](#)
- Extend Young ACAN to include primary school age group
- Take Action campaign – stressing personal and civic responsibility as well as benefits
- Encourage use of carbon footprint calculators to assess best areas to cut down our personal emissions
- Review and revamp of ACAN branding, website and social media presence – grant to pay specialist?
- Contact Duke of Edinburgh award scheme asking for young people to volunteer on
 - Tree planting
 - Measuring air quality

Transport

- Bike swap for children's bikes – requires storage, maybe a container held on council land. Parents pick up a refurbished bike on long term loan and bring it back when the child has outgrown it.
- Try again to get the High Street pedestrianised – make Alton a green, clean, destination town not a “convenience town”. Promote benefits of clean air and a safe, fume free High Street.
- Find and promote a car share app

- Electric minibus to circulate around the estates and into the town centre, daily and at weekends. Could EHDC pay for the bus and driver?
- Free public transport for children
- Set up a “Shop Local” scheme with benefits such as vouchers
- Encourage everyone to respond to [HCC transport consultations e.g. LTP4](#) (deadline 26th June)
- Promote land-based travel as an alternative to flights

Food

- Promote growing own food
- Garden sharing – for people with no garden to cultivate gardens for people who have no time or are unable to cultivate their own.
- Communal composting
- Promote buying local, in season food and reducing waste by planning ahead and making the most of leftovers.

Plastics and recycling

- Target supermarkets – challenging the need for so much plastic packaging (also why no lids on the freezer cabinets?)
- Campaign to change buying habits and raise awareness of alternatives
- Supermarket unwrap
- Set up bottle / container return scheme

Lobbying

- Demand regular updates on progress towards eco targets from ATC, EHDC and HCC to be displayed on a public noticeboard e.g. opposite Iceland.
- Display Alton’s zero carbon plan alongside updates
- Demand onshore windfarm e.g. Four Marks – Telegraph Hill

Greening

- More trees – planting parties as done by the WI
- How do we speed up the planting of the promised 120,000 trees from EHDC.

Paid administrative help for ACAN

- Keep applying for grants until we succeed

SO!

With all these amazing ideas all that remains now is to ask you what you are interested in working on.

Energy, Communication, Transport and Food were the most popular themes of the evening with lobbying, plastics and recycling close behind.

Please do get in touch either by emailing altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com or by filling in our [Volunteer Interests Form](#) online and let us know your interests. We can't wait to welcome you to the team to have fun and really make a difference.

ACAN's vision is for all households in the town to be "climate aware" and taking action to reduce their CO2 emissions. (just email us for our flyer to put in your window)

“Hope doesn't come from words. Hope only comes from actions.”

— Greta Thunberg



Alton Community Share

Sat 25th June

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

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



Next session Sat 30th July

Bring your items for repair along to Alton Community Centre
from 10:30am to 12:30pm on:

10th Sep, 22nd Oct, 10th Dec

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

Volunteer with ACAN

We all know we need to act now to protect our environment and community.

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 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.

Many thanks.

[Donate to ACAN](#)