



Alton Climate Action & Network Still active despite the virus August 2020



Website: altonclimatenetwork.org.uk Email: altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com Facebook: [@AltonClimate](https://www.facebook.com/AltonClimate)

There has been a lot of talk about the new normal. Here in ACAN we are working hard to keep our community moving in the right direction to make environmental sustainability *our* new normal.

Find out how our wonderful volunteers have kept going and getting the message out.

In this issue:

Energy Alton and ACAN's response to the Wey Valley Incinerator planning application from Veolia

News from our groups:

- Lobbying
 - Alton Repair Cafe
 - Cycle Alton
 - Energy Alton
 - Permaculture
 - Plastics
 - Alton Community Cupboard
 - Alton Community Share
 - Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature
 - Alton Community Hub
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Joint response to Veolia's planning application for an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF)

for Commercial and Industrial Waste from

Energy Alton and Alton Climate Action and Network

<https://altonclimatenetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/Veolia-ERF-Energy-Alton-and-ACAN-response-August-2020.pdf>



The main thrust of the joint response to this plan is as follows:

Energy Alton supports the incineration of waste in principle as a means of generating renewable energy from waste which cannot be recycled and should no longer be sent to landfill.

However we object to this proposed ERF for 2 significant reasons -

1. It is not needed at all as there is already enough capacity to meet the likely residual waste once we have reached the target 60% recycling rate.
2. It is not in right location being a long distance from the main sources of commercial and industrial waste in Hampshire.

The full report is on the web site - see the link above.

Lobbying

ACAN lobbying group has strong links with Hampshire Climate Action Network (HCAN), led by Chris Holloway, and she coordinated a contribution to the Hampshire County Council (HCC) debate about the climate change strategy. Philippa Brealey spoke on behalf of ACAN making 2 points:

1. The urgency of the climate crisis is not being recognised and a target of 2050 is too late.
2. ACAN and other groups in the county could make a powerful contribution.



Philippa was delighted to note that 4 different councillors referred to her talk in the ensuing debate. Then on 8th August 4 ACAN members attended an online meeting of interested community groups convened by HCC to discuss their Climate Strategy – what they are getting right and what is missing.

What became clear from the presentation was that even with a 2050 target the measures HCC are proposing are not sufficient to get us right down to zero emissions – the remainder, it was suggested, would be mopped up by some carbon sequestration method not yet available!

After the meeting many of the groups met again under the HCAN umbrella to decide how to put pressure on HCC to treat the climate crisis as the emergency it is.

Alton Repair Cafe

After several months during which Alton Repair Café volunteers have only been able to do occasional repairs for people by arrangement, it was wonderful to hold a special open-air session on 8th August under the awning in the Public Gardens alongside the Town Council's summer market.

A team of 5 repairers completed a dozen repairs of textiles, lamps, bikes, antique weighing scales, a time piece and more. We ran out of time, so some repairs will be done at another time by agreement between the repairer and the client. One repairer undertook a ceramic repair on his way home!

In the reception gazebo our wonderful reception team welcomed visitors and ensured that chairs, pens and repair items were disinfected between customers with copious amounts of sanitiser.



The poster features a central gear graphic with the text 'Alton Repair Cafe' in a stylized font. To the left, a vertical column of icons includes a hammer, a dress, trousers, a lamp, a radio, a bicycle, and a wrench. The main text on the poster reads: 'Special Repair Café SATURDAY September 12th 10 am – 1 pm'. Below this, it states 'part of the Local Open-Air Market in ALTON PUBLIC GARDENS'. Further down, it lists services: 'Our volunteers offer free help with repairs to Clothes & textiles Mechanical • Small Electrical • Bikes'. A note mentions 'Reduced service to allow for safe distancing One item each please.' and 'Current anti-Covid rules will be observed'. At the bottom, it says 'Part of the global Repair Cafe movement' with social media icons for Twitter and Facebook, and a red 'FREE!' sticker with 'Donations appreciated'.

Our next special open-air session will be within the community market in the **Public Gardens on Saturday 12th September 10.00 – 1.00 pm**. Spread the word! The team can do small mechanical and electrical repairs, bikes, and clothes and textiles. We will still have a smaller than usual team, but we can always make other arrangements.

Do get in touch if you would like to contribute to the development of the circular economy by joining our friendly repair team. It's good fun and very rewarding. email altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com



A Campaigning Voice for Alton's Cyclists

Cycle Alton was launched in May 2020 partly in response to the Covid-19 crisis, but mainly to give Alton's cycling groups and individuals a campaigning voice for safer cycling and better cycling infrastructure. Focussing on promoting utility cycling as the natural choice for short commuting journeys, trips around town and to and from the villages.

They already have over 80 supporters, interest from local councillors, Damian Hinds, MP for East Hampshire, and representatives from the five cycling groups in Alton: Cycling UK, Alton Cycling Club, U3A Social Cycling, Hearty Riders and the White Hart Vueltas.

They have proposed three options for reducing through-traffic in the Town Centre to buses only and are

currently collating responses. All options would reduce noise and pollution and would include more cycle parking, planters and seating. The 30 min free parking spaces would be moved to Alton car parks to replace those in the Town Centre. In light of feedback already received they will be recommending the retention of some blue badge spaces.

To see these options and receive newsletters and updates, email: cyclealton@gmail.com or go to Twitter @cyclealton or Facebook.

Below: **Canvassing responses to the Town Centre Proposals at the Summer Fair 8 August 2020**



Energy Alton meeting on community-owned renewable power

Join Energy Alton on Zoom on **Wednesday 16th September at 7.30 pm** to discuss setting up a community-owned renewable power scheme for Alton and its villages, including suitable technologies. We'll have two outstanding speakers:

Mike Smyth, Chair of Energy4All and Wey Valley Solar Schools Energy Co-operative.



And Martin Heath, who has been described as a "veteran" of renewable energy.

He is a founder member of Hampshire Renewable Energy Co-op and currently helps run Basingstoke Energy Co-op which designs and installs renewable energy systems.

Please email energyalton@gmail.com to receive the Zoom link for the meeting and be in at the start of an exciting journey.

ACAN's Permaculture Group

30 people joined a live link with the Permaculture Paradise Institute in Malawi to hear Luwayo Biswick talk about how permaculture techniques have been transforming lives in Malawi. It was inspiring to hear how working with nature, multicropping and the rediscovery of old skills and knowledge has proved, as Luwayo put it:

“Africa is rich, we have all it takes to end hunger, poverty, malnutrition and many other problems using local resources.”

ACAN's adopted charity is the GUMBI Education Fund which is sending 4 young people from the Gumbi villages to the institute for 6 months to learn these techniques.

Since the online talk £1250 has been raised towards the £5000 necessary to support them during their training.

The Gumbi students are pictured below at the start of their course.



And if they can do it so can we!

The permaculture discussion group is continuing with its plans for a demonstration plot. Hopefully work will begin in late Autumn. Anyone interested should email altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

Plastic Waste Group

A new group in ACAN, in cooperation with Binsted EcoNetwork, is about Plastic Waste.

A well attended Zoom meeting took place on 6 August and the first activities will involve litter patrols in the countryside and the compilation of a green directory. More details on this fledgling group to come in the autumn.



Alton Community Cupboard

The Community Cupboard is now supporting an average of 92 families in Alton and the surrounding area. Our wonderful volunteers are working hard to collect donations from the local shops and deliver food boxes six days a week. We are now also receiving donations from local allotments and windfalls. A true community project, for the community, by the community.

We are now operating from the Community Centre but may be moving again soon, as we continue our hunt for donated premises, to provide this service to the public for free.



We will soon be changing our operation from delivering to collections, asking those who are able, to come and collect their boxes on a pre-booked basis. For those who are housebound, the volunteers at Alton Mutual Aid will help us with deliveries. The local shops continue to support us, allowing us to collect lots of bread, fruit, veg, flowers and even sweets and drinks so we are able to donate a nice variety.

Alton Community Share: *By the community for the community*

The share continues to have a steady number of visitors each week with hearty enthusiasm for the concept from all that visit. The band of regulars is growing and the environmental message appears to be getting out to a broad audience alongside the other benefits to the community. All-in-all a positive result.

However, issues loom above the doughty crew because with no money, no venue and no storage, life after the end of August looks challenging for the current version of the library of things. So if you know of any suitable venues they could use, from September onwards, please get in touch.

In the meantime please continue your support and come visit Wed – Sat. 10-12 Alton Community Centre.



Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature (AVLAN)

This year's cohort of NCS (National Citizen Service) young people have chosen ACAN as their charity and not only are they doing some fund raising for us they are also going to be doing plant sampling to help with AVLAN's campaign to stop HCC cutting green verges. They will be sampling a regularly mown verge and a verge that is not mown so often to provide statistical evidence to back up AVLAN's case. It should also be a lot of fun.



ACAN Community Hub



In light of the ongoing need to socially distance and with an expected second wave of Covid-19, the ACAN committee is very sorry to announce a further deferment of the opening of our hub at least until January 2021, with a review in the autumn (October/November).

The Committee felt that it was the only decision to make in the current circumstances but is still very much looking forward to the day when we can open our doors for discussion groups, film screenings and all sorts of activities to help us address the challenges of the changing climate as a community.