

Settle Town Council Climate and Biodiversity Policy



**This policy was adopted by Settle Town council on
1st March 2021.**

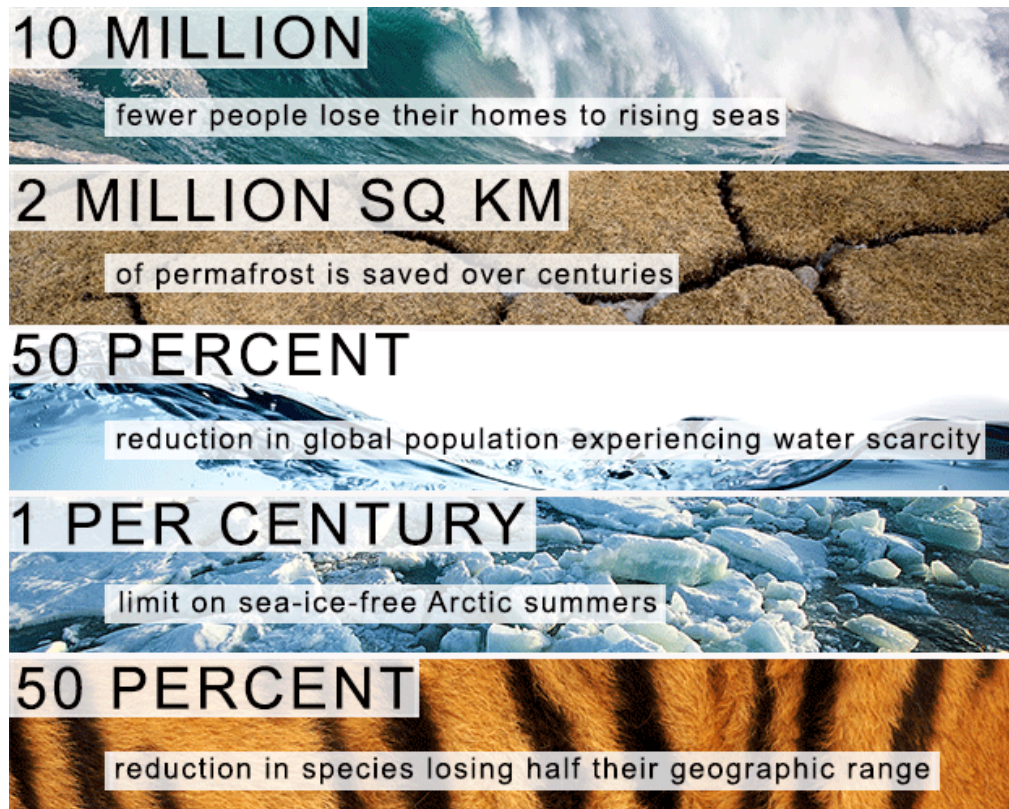
**The policy will be reviewed and is subject to change as it
progresses.**

Background

Settle lies within the two principal authorities of Craven and North Yorkshire and their climate change proposals will be a source of support for Settle Town Council and its plans to become carbon neutral by 2030 and improve biodiversity of owned or managed land.

What is the Climate Emergency?

The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change warns of the need to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. There is now scientific consensus on the fact that carbon emissions are causing global heating and the Committee on Climate Change, among others, warn against the idea of complacency- it is this belief that caused Settle Town Council alongside many other town and parish councils.



Summary of positive impacts of limiting Global Warming to 1.5C.(Source: IPCC)

What difference will climate change make? (Source: 'The Met Office')

- As the world warms, the UK is likely to have hotter, drier summers, and warmer wetter winters.
- Extreme weather events such as heatwaves and heavy downpours could become more frequent and more intense.
- We are already seeing the impacts of climate change, but the level of global warming we reach and when, will depend primarily on the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Warming weather may not seem like such a big deal. But even the smallest incremental changes in climate can have far-reaching effects.
- Temperatures above 30C for two or more days can trigger a public-health warning. In the 1990s, this happened about once every four years for locations in the South. By the 2070s, projections suggest it could be as frequently as four times per year - 16 times more often if we do not reduce our emissions.
- Summer rain is likely to become less frequent but could be heavier. Without regular rainfall, the ground has a harder time absorbing water when it finally does come, leading to a greater risk of flash flooding.
- Floods will likely become a staple of warming winters as well.
- Steady rain, which is currently a feature of winter months, will probably continue, and total rainfall is expected to increase.
- When the ground is already saturated, waterways tend to rise. Bridges and sewers designed for historical rainfall levels may come increasingly under pressure.
- Warming temperatures could also mean cold spells become less frequent. Snowy winters may become a thing of the past.
- Temperatures below freezing during the day and areas with considerable amounts of snow on the ground may be limited to parts of Scotland by the end of the century if emissions continue to rise.

Importance of Biodiversity

We are part of Nature, not separate from it. We rely on Nature to provide us with food, water and shelter; regulate our climate and disease; maintain nutrient cycles and oxygen production; and provide us with spiritual fulfilment and opportunities for recreation and recuperation, which can enhance our health and well-being. We also use the planet as a sink for our waste products, such as carbon dioxide, plastics and other forms of waste, including pollution.

Nature is therefore an asset, just as produced capital (roads, buildings and factories) and human capital (health, knowledge and skills) are assets. Like education and health, however, Nature is more than an economic good: many value its very existence and recognise its intrinsic worth too.

Biodiversity enables Nature to be productive, resilient and adaptable. Just as diversity within a portfolio of financial assets reduces risk and uncertainty, so diversity within a portfolio of natural assets increases Nature's resilience to shocks, reducing the risks to Nature's services. Reduce biodiversity, and Nature and humanity suffer. (The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review, February 2021).

Introduction

Settle Town Council's response to the 'Climate Emergency' was initiated in October 2019 when representatives met with Settle Action on Climate Change to consider several initiatives to facilitate the reduction of carbon emissions and commit to becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.

Settle Town Council is:

1. Committed to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030, to include scope 1,2 and 3 emissions.¹ An audit and action plan for achieving this aim to be in place by the end of 2021.
2. Committed to encourage grant applications (if available) to enable carbon-reduction schemes in Settle. The primary criterion for applications to the fund² should be CO2 savings per pound spent.
3. Committed to include sustainability implications of recommendations in officer reports alongside legal and financial implications. These will include the impact of recommendations on CO2 emissions and biodiversity as well as any other relevant factors.
4. Committed to seek ways to facilitate and encourage our community in reducing direct and indirect CO2 emissions and to become resilient to changes caused by the changing climate.
5. Committed to call upon National Govt, Craven District Council and North Yorkshire County Council to provide powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.
6. Committed to work with governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods new plan aims for at least 68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the end of the decade, compared to 1990

¹ **Scope 1 – All Direct Emissions**

From the activities of an organisation or under their control. This includes fuel combustion on site, from owned vehicles and fugitive emissions.

Examples include fleet vehicles, gas emissions from boilers and air-conditioning refrigerant leaks.

Scope 2 – Indirect Emissions

From electricity purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions will be created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.

Includes electricity from energy supplier to power computers, heating, and cooling.

Scope 3 – All Other Indirect Emissions

From activities of the organisation but occur from sources that they do not own or control. This is usually the largest share of the carbon footprint, especially for office-based companies, covering emissions associated with business travel, procurement, waste, and water.

Examples include plane travel, shipping of goods and waste disposal.

² There is not a formal Climate Change Budget. However, innovations can be funded from existing budgets.
Item 4 Council Meeting 15th June 2020



levels. Committed to work with our partners across Settle community to deliver this goal through relevant strategies and plans.

7. Prepare a report within 6 months with the actions Settle Town Council will take to address Climate Change and sustainable biodiversity.
 - Seeking to influence the policies of other organisations to encourage them to reduce their emissions and improve sustainability and biodiversity. Acknowledging that 'business as usual' is not an option in the face of the climate emergency. Therefore, to meet our obligations we may need to strategically reassess and adjust the scope of our current activities.

Immediate actions Settle Town Council can take.

Settle Town Council acknowledges the urgent need for global society to reduce carbon emissions. We recognise the part we must play and commit to taking an active role in achieving this by:

- Pro-actively reducing our CO2 emissions as an organisation.
- Seeking to encourage and enable our community to decrease their emissions and improve their resilience to climate change and sustainable biodiversity.
- Include sustainability, carbon reduction and ethical sourcing within all Town Council decisions, including awarding of contracts, grants and determining funding allocation in future.
- Initiate our Neighbourhood Development Plan to include our strategy for climate and biodiversity actions at its core.
- Include consideration of carbon emissions and mitigation strategies, sustainability of development and design and green infrastructure needs in all the Council's recommendations to planning authority consultations.
- Demand that maximum building energy performance standards possible in all new development proposals (e.g. develop a standard paragraph for all development consultation responses- currently Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 equivalent)
- Recommend that zero carbon standards are adopted in future development via the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Ensure the maintenance of footpaths and public areas balance the needs of biodiversity management.

Actions to be taken in the first year following adoption of the policy.

- Work with Craven District Council and North Yorkshire County Council to measure and manage the carbon footprint of the town and Town Council.
- Identify, support, or develop local clean energy projects.
- Aim to stop using weedkillers and other chemicals in green spaces, roadsides, and pathways. Explore natural methods of weed suppression or allow weeds to thrive and enjoy them- many are beautiful and important sources of food for wildlife.
- Encourage allotment holders to use natural methods of pest control on their plots.
- Make public areas such as open spaces & play areas more natural, needing less maintenance.
- Act on behalf of the Settle Town community to lobby for change at local, national, and international level to reduce carbon emissions and promote projects to allow this to be done.