

4. A 'Climate Smart Steyning'

1.1. The Community Plan aims to create a vision for the future of Steyning. As such, it provides a unique opportunity to embed climate change at the heart of this vision, and to define local planning policy in a way that ensures that climate change is properly considered.

1.2. A way of framing this would be to set a goal of making Steyning a 'Climate Smart' community. It is recommended that a paragraph be added to the vision statement with text such as:

"Steyning will take active steps to become a 'climate smart' community, so that it is resilient to the changes and risks caused by climate change, and is taking measures as far as reasonably practicable to reduce it's own environmental footprint."

1.3. What does 'Climate Smart' mean in a Steyning context? Some initial recommendations on how it could be defined are set out below:¹

- All new buildings are constructed to the highest possible environmental standards and improvements to existing buildings are encouraged that minimise their environmental footprint, while preserving our historic built heritage.
- Steyning is moving fast to becoming self-sufficient in electricity through the encouragement of renewable energy generation and storage, both at the domestic level and by installing systems on public and commercial buildings, and farms.
- Patterns of new housing development, coupled with investment in footpaths, cycling infrastructure and traffic management measures, promote walking and cycling and reduce the need for private cars.
- Public transport is substantially improved and Steyning is at the forefront of the move to electric vehicles and other forms of low carbon transport.
- Steyning is more climate resilient because climate risks from droughts, floods and extreme weather are factored into the design of all new buildings, highways and public spaces, and taken into account in decisions affecting local farmland.
- Steyning is active in monitoring and managing biodiversity, and is alert to the possibilities for increasing carbon sequestration through tree planting and land use management, so as to lock up carbon.
- Climate change is factored into the decision making of the Parish Council, local schools, businesses and community groups, so it becomes part of 'business as usual' rather than an afterthought.
- Residents in Steyning are alert to the need to take action on the climate, and are taking steps to reduce their own carbon footprints.

1.4. Some of these aspirations go beyond the boundaries of what is normally covered in neighbourhood plans, or current planning rules, so may not be enforceable in any meaningful way. But a statement of intent along these lines would help frame the Plan and send a signal that Steyning gets the message on climate change and wants to be in the forefront of action to address it.

¹ There are no agreed international definitions for what 'climate smart' means at present. These recommendations are presented to open up a discussion.