JOINT PARISHES CLIMATE ACTION GROUP

Meeting held on Wednesday 14 October 2026 at 7.30pm

Present: Simon Birnstingl (Chair), Vicci Johnson, Geoff Barnard, Mike Croker, Mick Tilley, Simon Alexander.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ann, Frank and Jill.

2. FEEDBACK FROM NALC CLIMATE EMERGENCY NETWORK

The meeting had not been attended.

3. FEEDBACK ON PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING FILM SCREENING BY UBPC AND JPCAG ON 23 SEPTEMBER

The Group received feedback on the People's Emergency Briefing film screenings held on 23 September.

Both screenings had been well attended, and the entry and exit polls had provided useful feedback on attendees' views.

Many of those who attended were already aware of the climate emergency and supportive of taking action. Although the screenings had been worthwhile, reaching people who were not already convinced remained a challenge.

Attendees had been invited to register their interest in a follow-up workshop, which was due to take place at The Steyning Centre on Sunday 25 October. The workshop would give residents the chance to discuss next steps and identify practical actions that could be taken locally.

The discussion would cover what churches, schools, community groups and parish and town councils could do. Participants were encouraged to bring ideas and consider examples of successful initiatives elsewhere.

Members felt it was important that ideas from the workshop were followed up rather than simply recorded. Any proposals relevant to the affiliate councils could be brought back to the Joint Parishes Climate Action Group to discuss how they might be taken forward.

Engaging a wider audience

The Group discussed how to reach people who had not attended the screenings. One suggestion was to involve local primary schools and encourage parents to attend future screenings or related events.

Members also considered showing a shorter version of the briefing, lasting around 20 minutes, at full council meetings. This would give councillors who had missed the original screening a chance to see the film and discuss what local councils could do.

West Sussex County Council climate action work

The Group discussed West Sussex County Council's climate action exercise and its wider work on developing a climate strategy.

Members considered whether the parishes could contribute to this work and potentially act as a pilot community. Working through WSALC was suggested as a way to involve parish councils and strengthen engagement.

4. LAST GREENING STEERING GROUP MINUTES, HELD ON MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

The Group considered the minutes of the Greening Steering Group meeting held on 28 September and discussed the following matters.

Forthcoming events

Members discussed arrangements for Jonathan Porritt's forthcoming talk on 28 October.

The November Green Drinks event would focus on sustainable holidays, with residents invited to share experiences and discuss ways to reduce the environmental impact of travel.

Greening was also considering moving towards charitable status.

Improving public transport services

The Group discussed work to identify ways of improving public transport across the three villages.

Previous discussions with Brighton & Hove Buses had highlighted the difficulty of providing additional services without significant subsidy. Members considered whether it would be better to wait until the new mayoral authority was established, given its expected role in transport planning and funding.

However, there was also support for developing proposals in advance so that the parishes would be ready to approach the authority when opportunities arose.

One option was an electric bus service running on a loop between Steyning, Upper Beeding and Bramber, with a connection to Shoreham. This could improve access to the railway station and other facilities, while giving residents an alternative to travelling by car.

Further work would be needed to establish whether the service was viable, including its likely cost, how it would operate and the level of demand.

It was suggested that Neil Bird of Southern Transit be approached for advice on the possibility of developing such a service.

5. UBPC PROJECT ON TREE PLANTING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FUTURE GRANT FUNDING

The Group discussed UBPC's proposed tree-planting project, which was being developed in preparation for future grant funding opportunities.

The project focused on planting longer-lived trees in urban areas to provide shade and shelter and help the villages adapt to future climate conditions.

Members had walked around Upper Beeding to identify possible planting locations. The aim was to find suitable sites where trees could provide lasting benefits to the local environment.

The Group recognised that planting larger, longer-lived trees would be a long-term investment, with the benefits increasing as the trees matured.

Members discussed carrying out a similar exercise in Steyning to identify suitable locations for additional trees. This could involve walking around the village, recording potential sites and considering where planting would have the greatest benefit.

6. NALC CLIMATE EMERGENCY NETWORK ONLINE MEETING

The Group noted that an online meeting of the NALC Climate Emergency Network was due to take place on Friday 16 October.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Recycling ideas for the Joint Parishes Youth Committee

Members discussed recycling projects that could be put forward to the Joint Parishes Youth Committee for consideration under a Biffa grant opportunity.

Two ideas were suggested:

- **Chewing gum recycling:** Investigate whether a scheme could be set up to collect used chewing gum and send it to a specialist company for recycling.
- **Plastic bottle greenhouse:** Explore the possibility of building a greenhouse from discarded plastic bottles as a practical project to engage young people in recycling and reuse.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 January 2027.