



Alton Climate Action & Network Newsletter – Nov 2019



On Saturday 9th November we held our 2nd Open meeting attended by at least 50 stalwart souls who braved the pouring rain. This time we started with short talks from the leaders of existing groups telling us what they have been up to in the last 6 months then we broke up into discussion groups to consider next steps. Once again there was a lot of lively debate and the ideas and outcomes are listed below.

Another major focus just now is, of course, the election. We cannot miss this opportunity to talk to voters about the climate crisis. So please, if you do nothing else between now and 12th December try to attend one of the hustings listed below.

Contact: altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

Facebook: @AltonClimate

Twitter: @AltonClimate

Join us for a Climate and Ecological Crisis focused election hustings.

CLIMATE QUESTION TIME

Hear how your election candidates, and their parties, plan to tackle the climate and ecological crisis.

SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER
16:00 - 18:00
ROSE ROOM, FESTIVAL HALL, PETERSFIELD

All standing candidates have been invited.

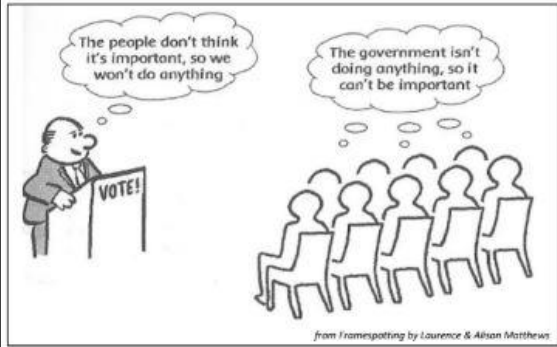


ACAN has joined forces with XR Petersfield, Plastic Free Petersfield and South East Climate Alliance (SECA) to sponsor a "Climate Question Time" style hustings.

Please don't miss this opportunity to quiz our local candidates (apart from Ian Makin our UKIP candidate who is not able to attend) on the policies they intend to implement to tackle the climate and environmental crisis we face.

Then on Wednesday 4th December the Alton Society are hosting a general hustings at 7pm at Alton Community Centre GU34 1HN

An opportunity to bring the crisis to the attention of some voters not yet aware of how critical it is.



"The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected. It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity." [Statement endorsed by 11,000 scientists from 153 nations, November 2019]

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Dates for your diary

Sun 1 st Dec	ACAN stall at the Yuletide Festival 10am – 4pm, Assembly Rooms, GU34 1BA
Sun 1 st Dec	Petersfield Climate Hustings 4pm – 6pm, Festival Hall, GU31 4EA
Wed 4 th Dec	Alton Society Hustings 7pm at Alton Community Centre GU34 1HN
Thu 12 th Dec	Election Day – DON'T FORGET TO VOTE
Sat 14 th Dec	Alton Repair Café 10am - 1pm at Alton Community Centre GU34 1HN
Wed 15 th Jan	Energy Alton Public Meeting 7:30pm Alton Community Centre Richard Folland talking about Finance, Investment and Climate Change

Updates from the groups following the 2nd open meeting

AVLAN - Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature

The group was delighted to welcome new people with lots of enthusiasm and ideas. they talked about:

Reach

- AVLAN could get more visibility and be more effective if they linked up with other organisations such as the RSPB, the Wildlife Trust, the People's Trust for Endangered Species and Pesticide

Action Network UK pan-uk.org

- These societies are likely to be able to provide ideas and resources for more actions locally.

Greening Projects

- The group are keen to get started on some sites locally such as the newly created walkway along the source of the Wey on the Basingstoke Road.
- Some other sites suggested were on Bolle Road and the junction of Chauntsingers Road and St Lawrence Road.
- Other ideas of sites to work on were requested.



Bioblitz

- The idea of holding Bioblitzes was raised. A bioblitz is a rapid survey of wildlife in a particular site and is often used to involve school children, and to get an idea of what species of plants and animals can be found in very accessible sites. The group would like to measure the biodiversity of sites to be worked on before and after, to show the effectiveness of greening projects.
- This is a very visible and positive way to engage the local community especially schools and scouts/guides etc. thus spreading interest in and ownership of these projects.

AVLAN believes that doing good needs to start at home, so we are keen to help people improve their own gardens for wildlife. We have set up a Facebook group where people can learn more about how to do this, as well as see examples of what AVLAN members have done in their own gardens and find useful posts about the environment and our other projects. Search: AVLAN - Alton & Villages Local Action For Nature in your Facebook search. We would love you to post about any wildlife gardening you have done, large or small.

And don't forget that AVLAN can also offer the services of a "Hedgehog Highwayman" free of charge who'll help you make your garden more hedgehog friendly. A hedgehog needs about 30 acres of territory to find enough food to live on and modern towns are infested with fences and walls that keep all wildlife out! One garden alone isn't big enough, hedgehogs need to roam across our neighbourhoods via holes in our fences or under gates. You can find out more about hedgehogs on our Facebook group but if you want to create a Hedgehog Hole in your garden but don't know how or don't have the tools, contact gabhurd@gmail.com and we can arrange for one of our volunteers to help you out

Food

The food group have been keeping busy too.

Liaising with supermarkets

- Emma has been in touch with Waitrose to ask about having a stall outside to inform shoppers about low/no packaging options – this request was refused because head office would not permit it.
- Sainsbury's were more positive in that they have introduced loose produce bags and now allow you to bring your own container to the deli & fish counters, where they could do more is on communicating these options to shoppers.

Sourcing local food

- Although Morrisons stock local food in their Basingstoke and Bordon stores it has been harder to find locally grown food in Alton. It was agreed the group should try to find more local growers and work with them to publicise their produce and where to buy it.
- Stefan John runs a community allotment scheme in Basingstoke called Greenfingers in conjunction with Mencap. They are looking for outlets to sell their produce. Sam offered to pick up vegetable boxes as he goes to Basingstoke regularly, he could then keep them in his garage for Alton customers to pick up. Do get in touch if you are interested in a veggie box in the spring /summer.



Alton Community Cupboard

Great progress is being made on setting up Alton's free food outlet. Importantly it now has a name and a strap line. "No referrals needed, no questions asked. Come and help us reduce food waste!" Discussions are ongoing regarding a location and timings. Likewise people are talking to supermarkets, allotment holders etc about sourcing unsold and surplus food.

Donations of a fridge and some shelving have been gratefully received from Paula Langley and Resurrection furniture respectively so get those shopping bags ready and keep checking the Facebook page for final details.

What the project still needs is volunteers to collect the food and / or staff the venue, so do get in touch if you would like to get involved and help make this a success.



Alton Repair Cafe

The Alton Repair Café continues to provide an excellent service to local people, providing not only satisfaction to the visitors who bring their items in for repair but also to the repairers who get a great deal of pleasure from doing the repairs.

Alton Repair Cafe dates:

Saturday 14th December
Saturday 11th January
Saturday 8th February

Alton Community Centre
10am to 1pm
Volunteers welcome - email
altonrepaircafe@gmail.com



Stuff

There was discussion at the open meeting about other ways to cut down on stuff and on single use plastic.

Refill station

- The need for a refill station for cleaning products, shampoo etc was recognised.
- Eleanor has been in contact with a couple of people who run a mobile shop for refills and dry goods, they are considering coming to Alton one Saturday a month, maybe to co-incide with the Farmers Market.
- Another option to consider is for the Community Cupboard to also keep refill supplies which would be available weekly during CC opening hours.



Clothes swap

- It was noted that Suzanne at The George is running a clothes swap weekly, on Mondays.

Lobbying

Alton Town Council

The lobbying and campaigning group has held constructive meetings with Alton Town Council and can report that they are very positive in their intentions for tackling the climate crisis. We now have 1 ACAN member and 1 Energy Alton member on the ATC working group on climate. They have yet to hold their next meeting so watch this space.

As for the marmot - this image came from the *Belfast Telegraph*!!!
If nothing else it is putting Alton on the map.
For the record it cost as much as the community centre lost in funding from ATC this year. Hmm.



East Hampshire District Council

EHDC is not quite so proactive although much progress has been made since Alton's own Ginny Boxall was confirmed as the EHDC Climate Champion.

We are now waiting on the announcement of the first half dozen actions to be undertaken by the council. We will continue to monitor progress and demand ever more ambitious actions particularly on building regulations and the rewilding of EHDC land.

Unfortunately Purdah (the clamp down of party activity during the run up to the election) has led to the cancellation of opportunities for the Let's Talk team to meet with public to discuss the non-party political issue of the climate crisis.

It was agreed the lobbying group should do more by way of submitting written questions to committee meetings and then attending the meetings to hear the discussions. Particularly on the subject of building regulations and the need for more social and council housing.

Hampshire County Council

HCC is also dragging its heels regarding the climate crisis as it still intends to carry on with airport expansion at Eastleigh and Farnborough as well as road "improvements" at junction 9 of the M3 and the Arundel bypass.



ACAN are working with HCAN (Hampshire Climate Action Network) to hold their feet to the fire on these issues.

On 22nd October Philippa and Eleanor attended a meeting hosted by HCC who invited groups active in Hampshire to find out what we are doing in our local communities and to ask what we would like HCC to do to help us in working towards a low carbon future. Although it was interesting to meet the other groups we came away not really sure what we have gained from the experience and not convinced it was anything more than a PR exercise – watch this space!

General Election

Please do attend the hustings events listed above and ask all our candidates challenging questions on how their respective parties intend to address the climate and environmental crisis.

Buildings

Building standards and retrofitting were also discussed at the open meeting although as yet we do not have a sub group dedicated to this thorny topic.

Lobbying

- The group weren't sure whether lobbying came under their remit or the lobbying group.
- They wanted to see lobbying on building standards for future homes
- Also the need for lots more social/council housing built to Passivhaus standards

Retrofitting

- This is needed by EHDC for their own properties
- The public needs information on what they can do, how much it costs and what grants are available.

Outreach

- Talks, leaflets, website, perhaps a double page spread in the Herald are all possible ways of disseminating knowledge about retrofitting.
- Visits to passive houses and low energy, retrofitted houses to help people see what can be done
- A small group visited a passive house in Medstead recently demonstrating what can be done.

Materials

- Promote alternative sustainably produced materials especially for insulation

Anyone interested in getting a buildings group started please get in touch on altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

Energy Alton

The discussion group at the 2nd open meeting agreed that continuing to provide information and advice should remain a key focus of the group and that its availability should be made more prominent. There was also discussion of the possibility of setting up a community renewable energy project though EHDC. Sadly the application for a grant for a project to create a microgrid in the Froyle area was not successful.



The Saving Energy in Your Home event on Saturday 19 October was not as well attended as we had hoped, possibly due to the clash with the rugby! However those present were very positive and grateful for the opportunity to find out more about home energy, in a non-pressured way.

It also became clear that Energy Alton needs to keep reminding people that we are here and happy to provide free impartial advice, plus thermal imaging surveys of their homes, where appropriate to allow them to make informed choices about how to make their homes more energy efficient, as it is clear that many people are unaware of this service. If you would like to call them in do please contact them at energyalton@gmail.com

Transport

There is not yet a transport sub group of ACAN so the discussion at the open meeting was about what a new group could do and focussed on:

Walking and cycling

- The new estates need safer and cleaner routes into the town centre and to the station with signposts. Crossings also need to be planned ahead of development and many more dropped kerbs are required in existing streets.
- To increase awareness of the health giving green credentials of cycling Bob suggested we attempt to fill the High Street one day during National Bike week (June 6th to 14th) by turning out in large numbers on bikes and cycling very slowly.

EHDC

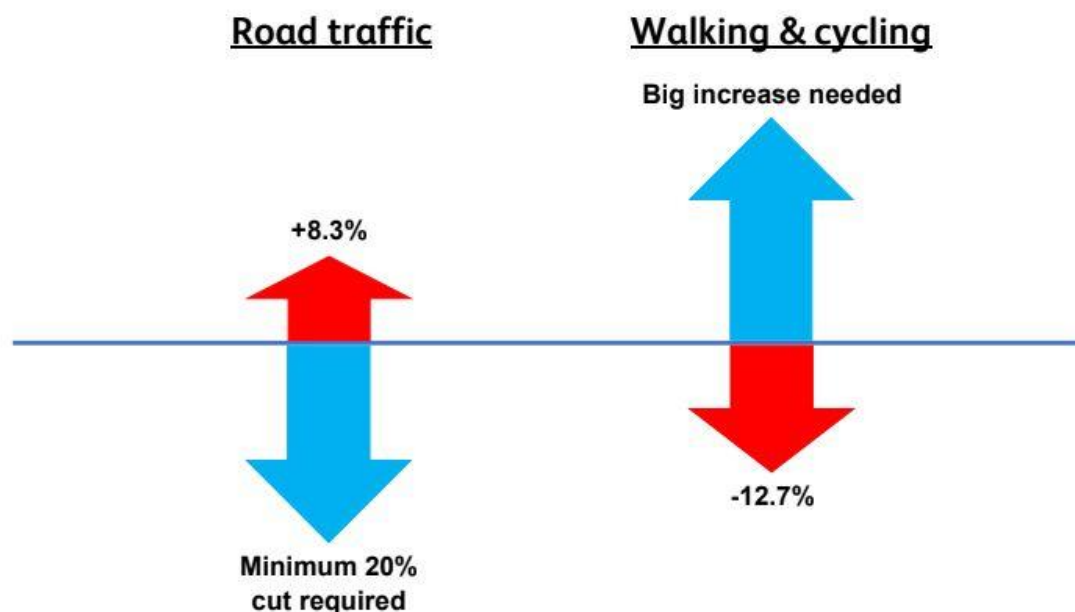
- Paula and Janice have both been involved in planning a transport strategy for the town.
- All agreed we should lobby for the High Street to be pedestrianised.

Adopt Alton Station

- Bob reported that The Alton Society and ALFI have been approached by SW Trains to participate in their "Adopt a Station" scheme and work to improve the facilities and attractiveness of what is a gateway to Alton.
- It was also suggested we should lobby for CCTV on the cycle racks at the station to encourage more people to commute by bike and train.

Eleanor attended the **Transport Action Network (TAN)** workshop on Saturday 16th November to consider the [TfSE strategy](#) report on the future of transport in the South East of England, on which the public is invited to comment by 10 January 2020. It was very clear that despite the summary document being full of positive words and promises, when you looked more closely at the detailed report (linked above) the option TfSE is favouring (Sustainable route to growth) still leaves us with an increase in road traffic, a decrease in walking and cycling and no-where near enough expansion of the public transport network or a rational means of diverting freight traffic off our roads. The consultation questionnaire is quite a formidable document in itself with 27 questions but if you are interested in taking a look, and perhaps getting together with others to discuss a group response, do get in touch on altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com

'Sustainable' Route to Growth vs Today



The option favoured by TfSE for the future was a combination of pure growth and pure sustainability which results in 8.3% more road traffic and 12.7% less walking and cycling provision than currently. No-one attending the workshop considered this to be a positive choice for our future transport policy.

Alton Community Bus

The Alton Community Bus will be running on both days of the yuletide weekend, with an extended service until 5pm on Saturday to cover the Christmas lights switch on.

£1 suggested donation and all proceeds go towards running the regular Saturday service.

The timetable and route will be published shortly on their Facebook page.

Information and Outreach

Work continues on the development of our website and we are hoping to see it go live in December. In the meantime please continue to visit our Facebook page for news, posts and events.

Our next public talk will be on Wednesday 15th January when Richard Folland will be talking about Finance, Investment and Climate Change. This will be held at The Community Centre at 7:30pm.



Tackling the climate crisis together
www.energyalton.org.uk

Wed 15 January 2020, 7.30 – 9.30 pm

Alton Community Centre, Amery Street, Alton GU34 1HN

FINANCE, INVESTMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Why it matters – and will matter even more at COP26

Richard Folland, Climate & Energy Associates



What does climate change mean for your pension fund? What are institutional investors doing about it? How does this connect with COP26, the UN summit to be hosted by the UK Government in December 2020? Find out from an expert in the field.

Richard Folland has worked in the climate and energy sector for 15 years. He was Co-Founder and Partner of Sustineri, advising stakeholders on low carbon and responsible investing strategies. Richard is also JPMorgan's European climate change and energy policy adviser, and policy and government affairs adviser to Carbon Tracker Initiative.

All welcome. Bar. Free event – donations welcome.

Philippa addressed the Senior Lunch Club at the Alton House Hotel on 11th November, prompting much interest and discussion.

Lesley created a very eye catching display in the library for us which remained on view for 10 days and received very positive comments.

We had a stall at the Gilbert White eco fair on 23rd November, which was well attended and has led to further contacts and requests for speakers.



Our next stall will be at the Alton Yuletide festival on Sunday 1st December. Our stall being in the Assembly Rooms from 10am to 4pm. Do come along to see us and catch up on more of our news. No doubt the Alton Marmot will be a major talking point!!

And of course we are continuing to plan for the Alton Eco Fair on Sunday 12th July in the Town Gardens. Stalls, speakers and entertainment are being arranged.