



## Alton Climate Action & Network Newsletter – Sept 2019

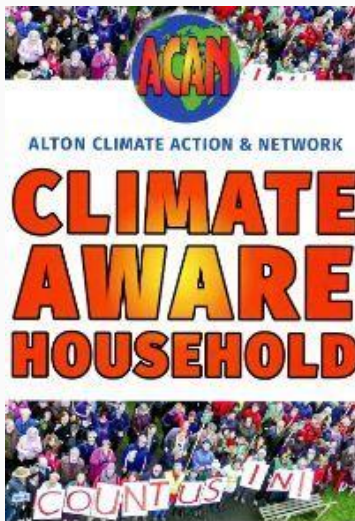


So much has happened since our Open Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June that we can hardly keep up! More people are joining us every week, some just want to know what we are up to and others want to get involved with the various projects that are already getting off the ground. Welcome to you all and if you want to know more do please email for details.

Contact: [altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com)

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### Climate Aware Household

You should have received the latest Round and About magazine this week. Please pull out the beautiful centrefold insert, to read and then display in your window.

We want to see as many of these mini posters in people's windows as possible to make it clear that we all care very much about the climate crisis we are facing together.

If you want extra copies get in touch as we have some spares.

**General strike for climate – if a child asks for help you help!**



Our children are asking all of us adults to join a General Strike for Climate, in solidarity with the school strikers. Please join us on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September in the Market Square at 11am. We are asking people to stand in solidarity for half an hour before returning to their jobs (or retirement etc!).

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## Dates for your diary

7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Sept	ACAN stall at the Green weekend at the George on Butts Road
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	ACAN at the Craft Fair
Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Alton Repair Café first session at the Community Centre from 10am to 1pm
Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Sept Hill	The Climate Crisis – Taking Action with Extinction Rebellion a talk by Eleanor 7:30pm at the Community Centre with an update on ACAN's work and a survey of what local people think about climate change
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Market Square 11am General Strike for Climate supporting the school strikers.
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept Professor Community	U3A open meeting on Global Warming and Climate Change - a talk by Tom Anderson of Southampton university. This is free to attend at the Centre at 2pm.
Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Sept	Energy Alton's display of Electric cars and bicycles at the Alton Classic Car rally
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	ALFI harvest feast at the Methodist Church Hall 10:30am to 1:30pm
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	ACAN stall at the ALFI harvest feast
Sat 12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Alton Repair Café second session at the Community Centre from 10am to 1pm
Sat 19 <sup>th</sup> Oct exhibitors talks chaired by climate change	Energy Alton Home Energy Day at the Assembly Rooms 10am to 1pm – and talks. Event to be opened by Damian Hinds MP and the Ginny Boxall, local councillor and East Hants District Council champion

## Green spaces - renamed Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature

This groups goes from strength to strength. There were at least 30 people at the last meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> August with many ideas and lots of experience to bring to the group. The first decision taken was to rename the group AVLAN and to set up a google group to share documents and send public messages to other members of the group – just get in touch with Gareth (or ACAN) if you would like to have access to that. The August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting also saw Oliver Barnsley (hereafter known as The Hedgehog Highway Man) kindly volunteer to start up a project to help hedgehogs find a home in our gardens. The hedgehog population in this country is crashing and one of the ways we can help them is by creating hedgehog highways between our gardens so that they can extend their range and find enough food. Oliver is volunteering to help people cut holes at the bottom of their fences to let the hedgehogs through. Get in touch if you would like his help.



The possibility of creating a wildlife gardening volunteer group to help other people get started with their own wildlife gardens was also discussed. The group could even adopt gardens of infirm or elderly Altonians, providing social as well as environmental benefits. Rob Simpson mentioned that the Parish of the Resurrection is currently exploring how it can become an "eco-church" and suggested a possible role for the old graveyard around St Lawrence's. This could be designed and managed to be an urban wildlife gardening demonstration site, giving it an educational purpose as well as an environmental one. AVLAN will soon have available a leaflet on wildlife-friendly gardening – it's about to go to the printers! The greening of the patch of ground on Butts Road is still under discussion with the group considering differing options involving differing levels of cost and maintenance.

AVLAN members had a lot to say about those tragic little patches of unloved land scattered about the town and Ginny Boxhall and Suzie Burns of Alton Town Council have asked the group to draw up a list of such spaces that AVLAN and the Town Council working together might be able to improve. If you have any suggestions to add please let us know (include a photograph or a map if possible).

The group also wants to offer talks to local schools, Scouts/Guides groups, local residents associations and other local groups such as the WI and ALFI. Volunteers to give these talks would be welcomed.


June Chatfield mentioned that there is a Bioblitz coming up in Alton in the near future. Anyone who doesn't know what a Bioblitz is can find out more at <https://www.bnhc.org.uk/bioblitz/> and Councillor Suzie Burns who is working on a project for every ward in Alton to have its own notice board suggested that these might be a good location for posting local wildlife information.

Another discussion topic at the August meeting was about the environmental damage resulting from new building projects such as the Treloars Meadows site. The planning process itself makes it hard to protect existing wildlife. It tends to be very much an afterthought once the project has already been designed and

costed. Members were asked to keep their ears to the ground and report back about any new planning applications in their areas in the hopes we can raise concerns before it is too late.

## Food


Clare and Mary have been busy putting together their pilot cooking course, working with Havant and East Hants MIND and with ALFI. Starting a 6 week pilot on Wednesday 18th September - it will run from 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. at Alton Methodist Church. The cost is £2.50 per session and the aim is to learn to cook, share a meal together and look at environmental issues around food. They are looking to recruit more participants - if you or anyone you know may be interested please let us know.



### **Alton Climate Action & Network\***

### **Cook and Eat Together, Alton**

An opportunity to learn some basic cooking skills, have fun and share a meal together, in an environmentally friendly way.




Wednesdays from 11.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. at Alton Methodist Church, Alton High Street  
(next door to Marks and Spencer Foodhall and opposite the Ivy House, Wetherspoons)

Dates: 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October. £2.50 per person per week  
Participants will be invited to contribute some ingredients.

Course members will help decide what to cook – we will aim to use seasonal fruit and veg and include vegetarian options. Max class size 8.

**\*ACAN** aims to support reduction of food waste; elimination where possible of single use plastic packaging and reduction of the distance which food travels from producer to plate.

For more information, or to book a place, please contact: Clare Allen –  
[clare.allen47@gmail.com](mailto:clare.allen47@gmail.com) Tel 07703 635272



Alongside the course development, Emma is writing to the supermarkets and Mary is writing to EHDC about ways of tackling food waste, but the group are keen to make progress on other issues. The next Food Group meeting will be on 30th September at 7.30 p.m. at 26 Berehurst, Alton GU34 1PA. This is off Borover Lane - and number 26 is in a small block of flats on the right as you enter Berehurst. The group are hoping to explore other issues and set priorities for further work. If you have any ideas, energy and/or enthusiasm to bring, do please come along. The Town Council is keen to set up a community fridge (as already exists in Petersfield) and the Food group will be exploring this idea with them.

## Alton Repair Cafe





The Alton Repair Café will be holding their first repair session on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September at the Community Centre from 10am to 1pm. No charge will be made although donations will be welcomed to help cover costs. The team have been successful in raising funding to help cover their costs for room hire and tools.

**They currently do not have enough repairers for the first session, so anyone who can step up to join the ranks of repairers please do let us know urgently.** We would like to have enough repairers to cover portable electrical goods, laptops, mechanical items, furniture, bikes, clothes and textiles.

Future ambitions may be to set up a tool share and swap facility. There was some interest in looking at clothing with perhaps a clothes swap shop. Do get in touch if you want to get involved with this or the repair café.

## Lobbying

Since the mass lobby of parliament on climate change in June when Damian Hinds, our MP, was unable to meet with us, we now have a meeting arranged on 20<sup>th</sup> September for a couple of ACAN representatives, plus an Energy Alton representative to meet him here in Alton to discuss the climate crisis.

The lobbying group has had more success meeting with Alton Town Council. In fact on Friday Philippa Brealey, our representative on the ATC Task and Progress group working specifically on environmental issues attended a meeting at the town hall. The group has come up with a great many exciting ideas notably to run an Eco-Fair in the Town Gardens in June next year, with a whole variety of stalls, plus a talks tent similar to the Farnham Eco-Fair this summer. Also to green up as many spaces around the town as they can manage, to focus on waste and recycling at the Yuletide festival in December and to install a water fountain at The Assembly Rooms garden.



On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August a group of ACAN members met with 4 EHDC councillors to discuss what the district council can do with its different remit.

**Greening.** There was a focus on greening as EHDC has promised to plant 120,000 trees in the district. Gareth Hurd suggested that biodiversity would be better served by offering people the opportunity, with EHDC help, to replace their existing wooden panel fences with hedging and wondered if it would be possible to insist on post and wire fencing with hedging on all new build instead of wooden fence panels.

**Transport.** Cllr Platt reported that EHDC have already agreed to look into free or reduced license fees for electric taxis and this will be discussed when the fees are due for review in November. The possibility of increasing the provision of community buses was discussed and the need for funding came up. Increasing council tax would help as would increasing car parking charges. Cllr Platt made the point that EHDC offers

community grants it was suggested that ATC could apply for a grant to run community buses as long as they were not profit making.

**Waste and recycling.** On this subject Ginny suggested that while the new waste contract with NORSE that is replacing the Veolia contract in the Autumn was still not set in stone, now would be a good time to lobby for domestic food waste collections. Watch this space.

**Housing and Planning.** Rod Eckles brought a long list of suggestions to this discussion including issues to do with the urgent need for retrofitting of existing housing stock as well as raising the environmental standards for new build. The possibility of insisting on more eco-friendly building materials and design was covered and Cllr Hunt suggested the EHDC cabinet liaison panel could be lobbied regarding any of these suggestions.

Following **Hampshire County Council** declaring a Climate Emergency, James Willis called a meeting with Andrew Joy, Alton's HCC Councillor, to discuss ways ACAN could work with him to encourage the County Council to focus their funds and energies on reaching carbon neutral status by 2030. The group is hoping to meet with Cllr Kemp-Gee (councillor for Alton's surrounding villages) for a similar discussion. At a time when some very major infrastructure plans are still on the table, including airport expansion at Eastleigh, Farnborough and Hurn and road developments at junction 9 of the M3 and a possible bypass for the A27 at Arundel, we really need to remind HCC that we are in a crisis situation and it would surely be better to abandon these big projects before they start and divert the money to improving public transport infrastructure and to get people out of their cars instead.

## Energy



Energy Alton continues to be the main mover on Energy campaigning of all kinds in the area. Energy Alton is a member of the Alton Town Council Task and Progress Group, and providing advice on an energy audit of Town Council buildings.

Please also note that the Energy Alton Home Energy Day will take place at the Assembly Rooms on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October. This is an opportunity for anyone to attend talks or talk to suppliers of alternative energy options from LED light bulbs to solar panels, air source heat pumps and domestic batteries. On 1<sup>st</sup> August an Energy Alton group met with some representatives from a company that is looking to find a group of home owners in the area who have, or would like to have, solar panels installed who would consider investing in domestic batteries which benefit them by storing the solar energy produced during the day for use when the sun goes down but which can also be used by the national grid for balancing demand. This is very much in the exploratory stage, but could be interesting.

## Transport

There is still no separate group dealing with transport. It has been included as a subject for lobbying and we gather the town council intends to install several more EV charge points in the town.



We also need better infrastructure for cyclists as the town is currently not very cyclist friendly and a lot of people are deterred from cycling by the perceived dangers and the polluted air they would have to breathe. There are a couple of people expressing an interest in working on this so if you feel you would like to join them let us know.

Look out for Energy Alton's display of Electric cars and bicycles at the Alton Classic Car rally on September 21st.

**BTW** In 1884, over 20 years before the Ford Model T, Thomas Parker built the **first** practical production **electric car** in London using his own specially designed high-capacity rechargeable batteries. How different our lives would be now if it had taken off instead of the internal combustion engine!

## Building standards

This group has been largely swept up with the lobbying group and those liaising with our local councils. See section above.

## Information and Outreach

We have been busy preparing leaflets on the things individuals can do to reduce their carbon emissions. As they become ready we will launch them on our Facebook page.

We are happy to report we have received a grant from Cllr Suzie Burns for £1000 to go towards the building of our web site. Many thanks to Suzie for that. We will send out an announcement when the site is launched.

Please get in touch if you have contacts with any groups who might be interested in inviting us to provide speakers, or if you would like to help with materials and/or speaking yourself.

Lesley Willis came across a new book by Seth Wynes called "SOS – what you can do to reduce climate change" (Penguin). It is a useful, clear guide to what we can all do to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and we will have copies available on our stalls at a reduced rate of £6 thanks to a discount from Waterstones.