

A Message from Newent Climate, Energy & Environment Forum :

**Re: Motion to Declare a Climate Emergency in the Forest of Dean on 6th December 2018**

They did it! Forest of Dean District Councillors agreed as one to take action on Climate Change in accordance with the motion put forward by Chris McFarling, Green Councillor and coalition Cabinet Member for Environment, Wildlife, Heritage and Culture. The lobbying of councillors by local people, along with the massive interest in IPPC1.5, the Met Office report, COP24 and this year's weather events around the world, all helped to convince Councillors to support this motion.

Many of you will recall that Chris presented two powerful workshops on Biosphere Reserve Designation (see <https://www.unesco.org.uk/designation/biosphere-reserves/>) at the Newent Forum in October so it will be no surprise that his speech proposing the motion was heartfelt, well-informed and compelling. Importantly, the motion was strongly supported by Di Martin, Leader of the Labour Group on the Council, thus emphasising Labour's commitment to addressing climate change (see <https://www.labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/The-Green-Transformation-.pdf> ). The whole FoDDC meeting can be viewed through the link to be found at <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/about-the-council/councillors-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes/>

This result means that climate change mitigation and adaptation will in future inform all the council's thinking and decisions. The council will always have to consider how to use its powers and responsibilities for the environment, for housing, planning, permitting, waste management, and for leisure and recreation and wellbeing, all with preventing further climate change in mind. The same applies to its dealings with the County Council, with Town and Parish Councils on Neighbourhood planning, and with Westminster on big infrastructure projects, and of course with the private sector.

So here's the next opportunity to do something else to stop climate change. Contact or speak to your District Councillor again to tell them how you think the Council should be exercising its powers to respond to climate change. This will range from the need to support those who are most affected by climate change, to reducing emissions, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, properly enforcing development controls, community safety and security, promoting local art, entertainment and cultural development and much more. Remember too, that the council should thinking big and long term and looking at such ideas as community energy projects or even a District energy cooperative like the one established by Bristol City Council (see

<https://www.bristol-energy.co.uk> )

You could also consider arranging a meeting for local people to meet and exchange ideas with their District Councillor about climate change and other matters. And with the May elections approaching, you will be wanting to see climate change in all candidate manifestos with clear ideas about what the next Council will be doing to implement and build on the motion agreed last Thursday.

Do please share your ideas and let us know how you get on.

Best wishes

The organising team

PS. The video from the Forum event on October 20th is finished and should be available in a few days time.