

# Maker with Rame Parish Council



## Environment and Conservation Committee Report of Community Dialogue, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Maker with Rame Parish Council's Environment and Conservation Committee hosted a community dialogue on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August at 7pm. The meeting was attended by 34 people: local community members and councillors, including a couple of councillors from neighbouring parish Millbrook.

The purpose of the meeting was to begin a dialogue with the local community about environment and conservation priorities, whether for the Council, other organisations or individuals. The meeting was structured as follows:

- Welcome from the Committee Chair (Cathy Green)
- Participant introductions
- Introduction of facilitators (Claire Wallerstein and Julian Gray)
- Outline of meeting
- Break out groups to discuss priorities
- Feedback to plenary and discussion
- Final comments and summary of next steps

The meeting took as a starting point a 2020 paper that set out 21 climate change priorities for the Parish Council. This had been compiled by Claire Wallerstein on behalf of local environment and conservation groups and activists. Participants worked in three break out groups to discuss the ideas in the paper (Groups 1-3 below). A fourth group considered various other environment and conservation priorities that extended beyond the original list.

The groups focused on the following:

- **Group 1:** What can the Parish Council do directly?
- **Group 2:** What can the Parish Council do to support others to take action?
- **Group 3:** What wider sustainability projects could the Parish Council support through advocacy / seeking grant funding?
- **Group 4:** What other environment and conservation issues should be priorities for the Parish Council?

The paper in Annex 1 was used as a discussion starter. Each group was asked to consider the following:

1. What is the easy short-term win – something that can be done or initiated within the next 6 months?
2. What is the highest priority for the council?
3. Are there gaps in the lists you're considering? What issues need to be added?

## **2. COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES**

Feedback from the four break out groups and subsequent discussions can be found below.

### **GROUP 1: What can the Parish Council do directly?**

**Policy:** Act as an effective leader/ example in the community on climate action. Mirror Cornwall Council's aim of becoming a **carbon neutral parish by 2030**.

- Undertake a carbon output/sustainability impact audit to establish a baseline. This may relate only to Parish Council activities at this stage, but could also extend beyond this. Publish plan and produce progress reports as a positive example for the parish. Bring forward target to 2026 and introduce milestones.
- Install LED / low energy bulbs in all council-run buildings, but look to reduce consumption as a priority. Take a holistic view before implementing to avoid waste/increasing carbon footprint.

**Policy:** Provide leadership and effective communication and advice on climate issues/ carbon reduction to residents and businesses within the parish. Aim to **get the whole community and all age groups involved**.

- Declare a climate emergency. Talk to other Councils who have already declared an emergency. Learn from their successes and mistakes.
- Have insulation/renewable energy education events to help people make informed decisions.
- Create information hub to help people make informed decisions in their day-to-day lives.
- Investigate what carbon off-setting schemes are available.
- Communicate what carbon neutral/carbon off-setting means.
- Communicate what declaring a climate emergency means (i.e. specifically addressing misplaced concerns that it will affect insurance premiums or house prices).

**Policy:** Become a **‘dark sky peninsula’**

- Change to LED streetlight bulbs if not already using these. Turn off streetlights from midnight or 1am (there are 200+ in Kingsand/Cawsand alone).

**Policy:** Propose areas for **renewable energy generation** in the next revision of the Neighbourhood Plan

- MWR’s NDP is due to be reviewed in 2022. Make sure that this issue is included.

**Policy:** In responding to planning applications request that **any new buildings meet low carbon criteria**; consider whether renovations of existing properties could be done in such a way as to reduce their carbon footprint.

- Build this requirement into the Neighbourhood Development Plan

**Policy:** When awarding contracts for goods or services, recognise **potential carbon emissions** as another element to be considered alongside price.

- Produce Environmental Purchasing Policy
- Produce Environmental Contract checklist/criteria

- Source suppliers/award contracts to those with the best environmental credentials

**Policy: Minimise waste generation** from own operations

- Investigate recycling options, for example, recycling litter bins versus using a contractor who will sort/recycle the waste.
- Drinking water: ask local businesses to sign up to ReFILL scheme. Lots of local businesses have already signed up to this, but there may be some gaps. If appropriate, install “Safe to drink” signs in toilets."

**Box 1: Group 1 Summary**

**Quick Wins**

- Declare a Climate Emergency. Learn from other Councils.
- Wider promotion of ReFILL scheme (free drinking water from local food outlets/pubs). Safe drinking water signs in public toilets.
- Explore options for improved recycling/waste management system.
- Pursue Dark Skies initiative

**Top Priority**

- Review Neighbourhood Plan from climate and environmental emergency perspective.
- Undertake carbon audit.

**Gaps**

- Public transport/community transport scheme that people use and designed to meet the needs of the community.

**GROUP 2: What can the Parish Council do to support others?**

**Policy: Support local Climate Action**

- Engage with local environment experts and groups. Ensure a cross-peninsula approach. Reach out to Millbrook and other Parish Councils.

- Work with local groups to draw up a Climate Action Plan for the peninsula.

**Policy:** Actively support projects to **plant trees/ promote wildflower growth/ permaculture/ community growing projects/ rewilding** etc. in the parish in order to minimise carbon emissions and enhance wildlife/ habitats.

- Minimise grass cutting. Use scythes where possible (less energy use). Review Parish Council tenders / contracts from a green perspective. Look at how green practices can be introduced into grass cutting and other land management contracts.
- Check Cornwall Council and MWRPC policy on use of weed killers (e.g. glyphosate) and ensure contractors follow these.
- Communicate Cornwall Council's rewilding of public areas (e.g. verges) policy to ensure local understanding and buy-in.
- Explore alternative land management approaches/techniques with relevant landowners (e.g. Mount Edgcumbe Estate, Country Park, farmers) to store more carbon and improve habitat and biodiversity.
- Methods used to cut back hedgerows can be "brutal" (e.g. side arm flailing). Use alternatives (e.g. emphasis on hedge laying, letting hedgerow trees to grow out). Establish and train local volunteer group of hedge-layers.
- Place emphasis on laying / improving existing hedgerows.
- Speak to Mount Edgcumbe Estate about hosting a community composting scheme (this could benefit the Country Park). Note that 30% of black bag waste is food waste. Local community members would benefit from having a place to leave garden waste (in the knowledge that this will be used to improve the environment).
- Provide information ("Green Guide") on resources / locally available expertise for local residents (e.g. to encourage rewilding etc). Get ready to issue prior to COP26. Include introduction on why the Parish Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency. Focus guide on Peninsula as a whole (approach Millbrook as a starting point).
- Explore opportunities linked to the new Environmental Land Management Scheme, which is to replace the old Common Agricultural Policy payments to farmers. This will require discussions with local landowners (e.g. Mount Edgcumbe Estate, Country Park, local farmers etc). Explore and facilitate opportunities for fact-finding

visits to other farms in Cornwall that are leading the way with rewilding/use of regenerative agricultural techniques etc.

- Hold Rame Peninsula 'open wild gardens' summer event for people to go around and visit local gardens/ land that are being managed for nature, get some ideas/ tips about how to garden in a greener way etc., grow own food in a nature friendly way. This could be done as a fundraiser for a local green initiative.
- Encourage more wildlife-friendly gardening techniques on the peninsula. Nationwide the area of all our gardens put together is greater than that of a national park. The “No Mow May” campaign had good reach and messages about growing flowers for bees have spread far and wide. We have a good basis to do more in this area.
- Find ways to support particular local projects like rhododendron removal from our woodlands to improve tree health/ prevent spread of phytophthora.

## **Box 2: Group 2 Summary**

### **Quick Wins**

- Produce Green Guide (resource for local residents) in time for COP26. See Annex 2.
- Review council contracts from a green perspective – integrate use of green practices.

### **Top Priorities**

- Facilitate discussions with local landowners on ELMS opportunities and greener land management practices. Arrange site visits to see good practices where appropriate.
- Train local volunteer team of hedge layers.

### **Gaps**

- Place emphasis on climate and ecological emergency (not just climate) since both are intertwined.

### **GROUP 3: What are the wider sustainability projects that the Parish Council could support through advocacy and seeking grant funding?**

**Policy:** Promote sustainable transport on the Peninsula

- Investigate installing **electric car charging points** if policy supports a move in this direction. Are electric cars the answer if associated batteries present disposal challenges or will technology shift to solar/hydrogen powered cars? To support electric cars are charging points required and/or a battery exchange facility? Wait to see how UK government policy responds to COP26 discussions.
- Promote car sharing, greater use of public transport. Ask ourselves whether we have too many cars per family?

**Policy:** Support improved land management practices

- Explore how land management can be improved in the community. Consult / begin dialogue with Mount Edgcumbe Estate, Country Park, farmers, estate land agent, smallholders etc. Hold engagement forum to establish the appetite for collaboration and learning.
- Could local land management include 'green' burials and/or a memorial woodland? (Note that Mt Edgcumbe have set up a memorial woodland not far from Maker Church).

**Policy:** Support use of renewable energy and other sustainable practices

- Explore what type of renewable energy better supports MWR – tidal, solar, wind, biomass or a combination. Do cost-benefit analysis and hold informed consultation.
- Integrate 'green flavour' to traditional projects (e.g. grey water and solar power to supply public toilets).
- Place emphasis on 'reduce, re-use and recycle', with recycling as third best option. Encourage greater use of milkman (and other local suppliers) rather than plastic milk/orange. Introduce public water fountain (explore further – ReFILL scheme may be adequate).
- Encourage local pubs/cafes to end use of disposable takeaway cups / glasses.

- Encourage greater production and use of local foods.
- Promote water conservation measures e.g. rainwater capture.
- Explore options for greater integration between Plymouth Marine Park and local land/MwR projects e.g. more eco-buoys? In the longer-term investigate extending the swimming buoys further out to stop boats anchoring on the seagrass. Provide information and engagement with boat owners (also for swimmer safety now that more and more people are swimming regularly and long distances).
- Challenge use of solar panels in conservation area.

**Policy:** Communicate green opportunities

- Explore how the Parish Council can inform the community about ‘green’ initiatives. Also how these messages can be transmitted outside the community to holiday makers.
- As part of the NDP review develop and promulgate a MwR Strategy as an exemplar ‘green’ community. Introduce a ‘green’ tax on local holiday destinations to help fund ‘green’ initiatives.

### **Box 3: Group 3 Summary**

#### **Quick Wins**

- Communicate green initiatives and opportunities to local community
- Begin dialogue with local landowners / users on regenerative land management practices.

#### **Top Priorities**

- Integrate strong focus on environmental sustainability ambitions to NDP in 2022 review.

#### **Gaps**

- Important to see how COP26 influences/changes government policy. Will it become more directive?



## **GROUP 4: Other Environment and Conservation Issues for the Parish Council**

### **Policy: Protect Marine Environment**

- The Parish is surrounded by water on three sides. The marine environment is therefore incredibly important. The area has designations of Special Area of Conservation (SAC - international designation) and National Marine Park (not formal designation). Also several SSSIs. There is a potential conflict between the formal port function and SAC in being able to deliver environmental marine benefits around Cawsand Bay and hence a voluntary mechanism is preferred (e.g. Voluntary Marine Conservation Zone/Area). This will advise people mooring boats to stay clear of the area of seagrass (important from sequestration perspective). Set up a working group to take this forward. Opportunity: bring in Helford Estuary to explain how they've managed to set up such a scheme.
- Explore opportunities for engagement and interpretation of the special nature of the area off-shore (e.g. on buoys and launch points). Also information to go out to local marinas/ press etc.

### **Policy: Promote Sustainable Transport and Access**

- This is a cross-cutting theme which includes promoting active travel, reducing car speeds across the peninsula, looking for opportunities for park and ride, improving facilities for cycling (including safe storage and recharging of e-bikes).
- Support opportunities to improve designation of formal public rights of way to better connect communities with places and promote walking and cycling. An example is Four Lanes End School up to Maker Heights. Promoting walking also fits with the healthy living policy agenda.
- Investigate park and ride scheme from Tregantle with emphasis on cycling within the Peninsula.
- Slow the speed of traffic around Peninsula to ensure that rural lanes are safer places for walking and cycling.
- Review provision of public transport on the Peninsula and start conversation with Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council about more sustainable and more affordable provision of public transport (e.g. e-hopper).

- Investigate subsidised travel to school via public transport and investigate other opportunities for supporting a safe walking programme to school.
- Push radical new ideas into Cornwall Council's Transport 2030 plan. Promote more behaviour change and low-tech solutions rather than relying on hard engineering and car-based solutions.

**Policy:** Support Government Agenda in Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain and Connecting People with Nature

- Support policies and actions that enhance the natural beauty AND cultural heritage of the Peninsula (these are intertwined).
- Build local capacity in green skills to help deliver biodiversity net gain (e.g. support and promote the AONB's hedge skills training programme).
- Talk with farmers and landowners through the AONB to ensure take up of the new farming in protected landscapes (FIPL) and environmental land management scheme (ELMS) with a view to improving biodiversity and public access in the area – and reducing impacts of some farming practices (e.g. reducing surface runoff, phosphate pollution etc).
- Compile local landscape character assessment as part of review of NDP.
- Identify distinctive features under threat (e.g. hedgerows which have suffered biodiversity loss and are natural wildlife and access corridors).
- Engage with Mt Edgcumbe, Pigshill CIC, Forest of Cornwall and tenant farmers on ash die-back and other threats to native tree population (and supported communities). Undertake audit of affected areas and instigate replanting programme across the Peninsula where appropriate. Look for grant funding to support this initiative.

**Policy:** Promote Green Economy and Jobs

- Explore how to build green skills, counteract youth drought/lack of employment opportunities.
- Promote Green awards for businesses (local scheme).

**Policy:** Promote Sustainable Living

- Parish Council to be a conduit for information on how to be green around the home and garden (and for local businesses).

- Hold environmental fair to share learning / best practices.

**Policy:** Promote Green Tourism

- Investigate other schemes that have successfully implemented green tourism / visitor payback / social licence to operate programmes. Consider options for implementing similar scheme on Peninsula.

**Box 4: Group 4 Summary**

**Quick Win**

- Declare climate emergency.

**High Priorities**

- Transport: address the nexus between sustainable transport, access, active travel, health and wellbeing and supporting a “slow Peninsula”.
- Implement tree re-planting and tree health schemes to address ash die back and tackle phytophthora. Encourage all groups working on trees on the peninsula (Pigshill and Clarrick Woods CIC, Rame Outdoors, Country Park, etc) to devise a joined up peninsula-wide policy and approach. Look for opportunities to create connected habitats / corridors to join different areas together, plan what trees are put in where, limiting disease spread.
- Establish working group to explore Voluntary Marine Conservation Zone.

### 3. PRIORITY LIST OF ACTIONS

During the meeting several quick wins and high priority actions were identified for the Parish Council. A large number of other issues that are perceived as important by the local community were also identified. The quick wins and high priority actions are summarised below. The Parish Council's Environment and Conservation Committee will recommend to the Full Council that these issues are taken forward as a priority. The other issues set out in this document are also important and will help to inform the business and priorities of the Council. They will also feed into the Neighbourhood Development Plan review process, which is due to take place in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

IMMEDIATE AND HIGH ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION PRIORITIES FOR MWR PARISH COUNCIL			
	Quick Wins		High Priorities
1.	Declare climate/ecological emergency	1.	Integrate focus on environmental sustainability ambitions in NDP review (2022)
2.	Communicate green initiatives and opportunities to local community (website, social media etc)	2.	Begin dialogue with local landowners / users on regenerative land management practices (will need to be led by AONB)
3.	Produce Green Guide (resource for local residents) in time for COP26. Devise costed plan.	3.	Transport: address nexus between sustainable transport, access, active travel, health and wellbeing and support a "slow Peninsula"
4.	Review council contracts from a green perspective – integrate use of green practices	4.	Train local volunteer team of hedge layers. Invite proposal from local experts
5.	Extend ReFILL scheme and introduce signs in public toilets about safe drinking water	5.	Explore tree re-planting and tree health schemes to address ash die back and tackle phytophthora / other diseases. Invite proposals from local groups working on these issues
6.	Dark Skies Initiative: switch off street lights after midnight / 1am.	6.	Establish Marine Conservation Working Group
		7.	Undertake carbon audit of MWR parish.

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that upcoming changes in planning policy may have a bearing on this process.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

Next steps for MwRPC are as follows:

- Published this report on the MwRPC website and communicate that it is ready for community review.
- Invite further input to the report at the MwRPC Environment and Conservation Committee to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> September at the Old Ship.
- Based on the outcome of this meeting, the Committee will prepare recommendations on priority actions to the full council meeting which will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- Based on agreed priorities, the Committee will invite the formation of 'Parish Action Teams' to take the various initiatives forward. These are likely to be established in a phased manner.

## ANNEX 1: BACKGROUND PAPER ON POTENTIAL PRIORITIES<sup>2</sup>

### GROUP 1: What can the Parish Council do directly?

**Policy:** Act as an effective leader/ example in the community on climate action. Mirror Cornwall Council's aim of becoming a **carbon neutral parish by 2030**.

*Action: Install 'welcome' signage to inform residents and visitors that they are entering a **zone that aspires to be 'carbon neutral'***

*Action: Switch to **100% green electricity and heating for council use**, supplied by a company that is investing in new renewable energy generation*

*Action: install **LED / low energy bulbs** in all council run buildings*

**Policy:** Provide leadership and effective communication and advice on climate issues/ carbon reduction to residents and businesses within the parish. Aim to **get the whole community and all age groups involved**.

*Action: Provide updates on the council's aims/ what it has achieved on the council website, as well as other local signage.*

*Action: Invite a local energy consultancy to offer a drop-in day for local residents/ businesses to look at how they can access grant **funding to improve insulation/ install renewable energy**.*

**Policy:** Become a **'dark sky peninsula'**

*Action: turning streetlights off after 1am and changing to LED streetlight bulbs if not already using. We have almost 200 street lights (including car park lights) in the villages of Kingsand and Cawsand alone.*

**Policy:** Propose areas for **renewable energy generation** in the next revision of the Neighbourhood Plan

**Policy:** In responding to planning applications request that **any new buildings meet low carbon criteria**; consider whether renovations of existing properties could be done in such a way as to reduce their carbon footprint.

**Policy:** When awarding contracts for goods or services, recognise **potential carbon emissions** as another element to be considered alongside price.

*Action: Source locally wherever possible.*

**Policy:** **Minimise waste generation** from own operations

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<sup>2</sup> Based on 2020 paper submitted to MWRPC on potential climate change priorities following declaration of a climate emergency (Claire Wallerstein on behalf of local environment and conservation groups).

*Action: go single use plastic free*

*Action: encourage local businesses/ households to do the same (Plastic Free Rame)*

*Action: Install **recycling litter bins** instead of/ as well as general purpose litter bins.*

*Action: **Drinking water fountains** locally to encourage refills/ minimise plastic waste generation*

## GROUP 2: What can the Parish Council do to support others?

**Policy:** Support local Climate Action

*Action: Engage with **FoRame Now**, a **location climate coalition** already bringing together Millbrook and MwR parish council representatives and a large number of local environmental experts and groups.*

*Action: Participate in a local public engagement and information event to gather suggestions and ideas from community members to draw up a Climate Action Plan for the peninsula.*

**Policy:** Actively support projects to **plant trees/ promote wildflower growth/ permaculture/ community growing projects/ rewilding** etc. in the parish in order to minimise carbon emissions and enhance wildlife/ habitats.

*Action: Minimise grass cutting/ prevent use of weedkillers.*

*Action: **support a community composting scheme** to create great garden compost from our own waste.*

*Action: investigating composting of dog waste.*

*Action: **Support Local flight/ lifestyle offsetting scheme** through investment in local woodland management/ tree planting e.g. at Pigshill Woods.*



### GROUP 3: What are the wider sustainability projects that the Parish Council could support through advocacy and seeking grant funding?

**Policy:** Engage with local landowners/ farmers to support **regenerative farming methods**, e.g. reduction of the large amounts of topsoil running off into the bay during heavy rains, reduction of chemical use and ammonia, promotion of biodiversity, tree growing and timber/ biochar production, agroforestry, etc.

**Policy:** Investigate installing **electric car charging points**. As time goes on more and more visitors/ locals will have electric cars, so this makes good sense and will encourage earlier take-up of electric vehicles.

**Policy:** Aim for 50% of electricity within the parish to come from renewable sources by 2030.

**Policy:** Work with Millbrook to **conduct a peninsula-wide local energy audit** to get a baseline (an audit already carried out in 2012 may still be valid).

**Policy:** Set up a [Terracycle Scheme](#) for hard-to-recycle material not collected locally  
(in partnership with Millbrook, which is already looking into this?)

**Policy:** Support a **Green burial ground/ memorial woodland**. Could earn money as people would pay for plots/ pay to have a tree named in memory of a loved one.

**Policy: Promote car-sharing** schemes  
(e.g. <https://liftshare.com/uk/community/cornwall/> /  
& <https://pastyconnection.com>) and/ or provision of pool cars locally (some people in the community may have vehicles they only rarely use, and may welcome the opportunity of help with covering cost of insurance etc.)

## **GROUP 4: Other issues for the Parish Council**

### **Marine**

Work with National Marine Park and other marine groups to identify opportunities to protect marine habitats and engage people in our marine environment

Create a Voluntary Marine Conservation Zone

### **Landscape and biodiversity**

Identify opportunities for the Parish Council and wider peninsula to contribute to (and access grant funding for) national policies such as biodiversity net gain and connecting people to nature

AONB – compile landscape character assessment to identify the special nature of the area (to protect via planning and enhance via AONB grant funding)

Ash dieback – engage with Mt Edgcumbe, Pigshill & Forest of Cornwall for replanting programme across the Peninsula. Undertake audit of affected areas/trees.

Protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural heritage (e.g. finding new uses for redundant built heritage).

### **Access**

Slow Maker and Rame – 20 mph limit – promoting safe walking and reducing emissions.

Improve cycling and walking opportunities – active travel – esp. linking hubs in the peninsula.

Promote cycling from car parks (e.g. e-bike storage and charging).

Promote integrated transport around peninsula.

### **Green economy and jobs**

Building green skills, counteracting youth drought/lack of employment opportunities.

Promote Green awards for businesses (local scheme).

### **Promoting sustainable living**

Support schemes that promote and enable sustainable food: eating local, plant-based, organic, seasonal etc.

### **Green Tourism**

Develop a green tourism project to get tourism businesses to sign up to a 'social licence to operate' i.e. paying back into supporting the environment of the peninsula

Supporting tourism businesses to operate sustainably.

## ANNEX 2: IDEAS FOR GREEN GUIDE

### Ideas for “Green Guide”

1. Introduction to Maker with Rame Parish Council Environment and Conservation Committee.
2. Explanation of climate and ecological emergency. Why the declaration has been made.
3. Quick overview (e.g. by Rame Wildlife Group) of what there is to be proud of on the Peninsula: the important habitats/ species/ 'natural capital' plus some of the challenges/ threats facing them (including the Country Park, Pigshill Woods, graveyards as last havens for vanishing species, farmed land, verges, Cornish hedges, rocky shore, seagrass, estuarine mud, cliff faces etc).
4. Information about green businesses/ organisations/ services/ events locally and possibly also a bit further afield.
5. How to source information/ materials etc from outside organisations, e.g. Woodland Trust (e.g. how to source trees etc).
6. Volunteering/ skill-learning opportunities (scything, hedge laying, wildlife recording, rhododendron removal, foraging etc)
7. Some top green tips on how people can help in their own homes and gardens, household carbon calculator etc
8. Information to counter “green wash”.
9. Call for further ideas on what could be done. Suggestions to date have included: repair café; clothes swaps; car sharing etc.

Adopt Peninsula-wide focus. Explore whether advertising (of green businesses etc) could pay for production costs.