

Horsley Parish Council

Response and Policy towards climate change

It is proposed that the Parish Council should ;-

1. Acknowledge the urgent need for global society to reduce carbon emissions, recognise the part which we have to play and commit to an active role in achieving this by -

- Reducing our own carbon emissions as an organisation
- Seeking to encourage and enable our community to decrease their emissions and improve their resilience to climate heating
- Seeking to influence the policies of other organisations to encourage them to reduce emissions
- Working with other groups and organisations such as the District Council, other Parish councils and community groups to develop carbon reduction schemes and policies such as the reduction of energy use in homes and businesses ,or development of low carbon affordable housing

2. Take active steps where possible to encourage -

- More sustainable transport
- Reduced energy use within our community
- Use and development of renewable energy sources
- Production and sale of locally sourced food

3. Examine the environmental implications regarding CO₂ emissions and any other negative climate impacts alongside legal and financial implications in the decisions that are made.

Background

The simple evidence of global ambient temperature rise is now accepted. Seventeen of the 18 warmest years in the 136-year record all have occurred since 2001, and global temperatures have increased by 0.9°C since 1880 (NASA/GISS, 2018). The most surprising warming is in the Arctic, where the 2016 land surface temperature was 2.0°C above the 1981-2010 average, breaking the previous records of 2007, 2011, and 2015 by 0.8°C, representing a 3.5°C increase since the record began in 1900 (Aaron- Morrison et al, 2017).

The warming of the Arctic reached wider public awareness as it has begun destabilising winds in the higher atmosphere, specifically the jet stream and the northern polar vortex, leading to extreme movements of warmer air north in to the Arctic and cold air to the south. At one point in early 2018, temperature recordings from the Arctic were 20 degrees Celsius above the average for that date (Watts, 2018). The warming Arctic has led to dramatic loss in sea ice, the average September extent of which has been decreasing at a rate of 13.2% per decade since 1980, so that over two thirds of the ice cover has gone (NSIDC/NASA, 2018). This data is made more concerning by changes in sea ice volume,

which is an indicator of resilience of the ice sheet to future warming and storms. It was at the lowest it has ever been in 2017, continuing a consistent downward trend (Kahn, 2017).

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report in Oct .2018 on the subject of global warming of 1.5 degrees ; how society might limit this and the consequences for not doing so. This report represented the current scientific consensus and stated -

- Human activity has already caused 1.2 degrees of warming to the earth.
- To limit warming to 1.5 degrees it will be necessary to halve global carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve near zero by 2050
- The consequences of 2 degrees warming are significantly worse than 1.5 degrees, involving large scale water shortages, flooding and destruction of the natural world.