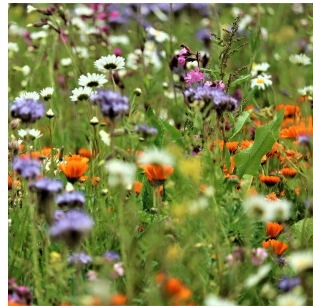


SHAFTESBURY
TOWN
COUNCIL

Sustainable Shaftesbury



Vision Statement and Masterplan

Shaftesbury's response to the climate and nature emergency

'Think Global, Act Local'

Produced by *Sustainable Shaftesbury Working Group* for Shaftesbury Town Council October 2023

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The Vision

[moved to beginning + re-written]

- 1** People are at the heart of a sustainable Shaftesbury. Health and wellbeing are paramount; no one should be disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change; there should be a transition towards a net-zero future; climate inequalities and fuel poverty are reduced; and there is harmony between society and nature.
- 2** The Shaftesbury community is empowered and supported to create sustainable, inclusive and thriving places that are net-zero, climate-resilient, well-connected, with access to energy-efficient, comfortable and affordable homes, local services, and local quality outdoor space.
- 3** Shaftesbury's natural environment, greenspace, and biodiversity is restored, protected, enhanced, and respected, enabling basic needs like clean air, clean water, and healthy soils, as well as many other health and wellbeing and economic benefits for the people of Shaftesbury.
- 4** Shaftesbury Town Council demonstrates leadership and innovation in the transition to a thriving, net-zero, climate-resilient, and circular economy. In collaboration with others we should aim to protect and enhance our natural resources as well as help in the transition towards net-zero and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 5** The Shaftesbury community is engaged and the active community is stronger and better-equipped to address local challenges and better able to thrive.



Definitions

Sustainability has been variously defined as having three or more 'pillars' or main subject headings covering economic viability, environmental protection and social equity. The usual definition is the 1987 United Nations one of 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (*United Nations Brundtland Commission*). In Britain the most commonly-accepted definition is 'the long-term maintenance and enhancement of human well-being within finite planetary resources' usually focussing on the three dimensions of environmental, social and economic needs (*The UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, March 2012*). Neither definition gives equal importance to non-human species such as wildlife and nature, the planet's flora and fauna, all of which are now seen as being of just as much significance as humankind in the survival of the vital ecology of the planet.

History

In July 2019 Shaftesbury Town Council (STC) declared a climate emergency in keeping with similar declarations made by Dorset Council and other local authorities across the country. This included the aim that the Council would become fully carbon neutral by 2030.

In January 2021 STC adopted its first Environment Policy that listed its five aims:

Increase environmentally conscious practice and improvement across STC responsibilities and assets for the benefit of the local community.

Promote the importance and value of a *quality** environment, and to support local people in their enjoyment of it.

Carry out its work in such a way that as much as possible eliminates any adverse impact on our environment.

Promote the development of a circular economy: an economy in which each part feeds or supports another to reduce consumer waste.

Integrate environmental considerations into all council decisions and adopt greener alternatives throughout its operations.

* *Quality in this context means an environment in which the protection of nature and biodiversity are the top priorities.*



STC then produced an Environmental Statement that outlined what the Council is already doing to mitigate its impact on the environment and to help clarify its position, promote action, and secure positive outcomes on key environmental issues. This built on an earlier climate change position paper issued by Dorset Council (*Dorset Council Planning for Climate Change—Interim Guidance and Position Statement*) that stated, in the following terms:

‘There is clear scientific evidence to show that climate change is happening and is due to human activity. Atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) is now at its highest level in at least two million years, with global emissions in 2022 just shy of 2019’s record level. Average global temperatures have risen by 1.2°C on pre-industrial levels, with 2011-20 more likely than not the hottest period in 125,000 years. This is causing a huge increase in the severity and likelihood of weather extremes like heatwaves, floods and wildfires – with 50-75% of people globally facing ‘life threatening’ extreme heat by the end of the century.

‘The latest IPCC report confirms we are likely to exceed 1.5°C well before the UK Government target of 2050, which will have severe impacts on our climate and therefore on ourselves. Coupled with increasing fuel and food costs which will impact people’s quality of life, there is a need to act as soon as possible in addressing climate change.’



There have been further global, national and local analyses and reports since but all paint a similar picture—that we urgently need to address climate change and biodiversity loss at every level of society.

Background to the Sustainable Shaftesbury Vision

Towards the end of 2022 STC turned to a working group of local environmental experts, activists and volunteers for guidance on the development of a new environmental policy and action plan for Shaftesbury. Provisionally called *Sustainable Shaftesbury*, the group set out to produce a wider, more ambitious and detailed vision with plans for immediate action. In discussions during 2023 this document evolved to contain not only earlier policy aims, objectives and achievements to mitigate the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss (such as STC's Environment Policy document of January 2021) but also a comprehensive list of practical action plans to be undertaken by both the town council and the wider community as soon as possible to meet the perceived urgency of the global situation.



UK's Climate Change Committee report – June 2023

The latest report by the UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC), an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 chaired by former Conservative cabinet member Lord Deben (John Gummer), published on 28 June 2023, found that the UK Government is not doing enough quickly enough to combat climate change and states that it is 'highly unlikely' that the UK will meet its climate change targets without much more radical and rapid action.

The renamed **Sustainable Shaftesbury Vision Statement** takes its view of sustainability from the most recent Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of March 2023 and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform *Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2019 Global Assessment Report*. The IPCC listed ten key solutions needed to mitigate climate change and biodiversity loss, and to create environmental resilience—thus leading to a sustainable future.

The ten areas are:

- **Ending** energy production from fossil fuels
- **Investing** in clean energy and energy efficiency
- **Retrofitting** and decarbonising buildings
- **Decarbonising** cement, steel and plastics
- **Moving** to electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles
- **Increasing** the use of public transport, cycling and walking
- **Decarbonising** aviation and shipping
- **Halting** deforestation and restoring degraded lands
- **Reducing** food loss and waste and improving agricultural practices
- **Eating** more plants and less meat



STC understands that these ten areas do not cover everything that needs to be addressed and that not all the categories listed can be addressed at a local level. But it believes some items are within the capability of a town council and local people to manage and influence.

The Action Masterplan 2023–2031

The action plan is intended to start now and will be working in conjunction with local and national targets.

Taking the IPCC's 'ten points' as its base, the **Sustainable Shaftesbury Vision Statement** focuses on the environmental imperative of the need for a harmonious relationship between human activity and nature. STC's sustainability action plan therefore aims to meet the urgent global challenge to human society posed by the climate breakdown and biodiversity loss through local action based on the established principle of *'Think Global Act Local'*. It is based on the conviction that it is a principal duty of the town council to do whatever it can within its statutory restraints to counter, prevent and mitigate the serious and increasing effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and ecological degradation on all life within its parish boundary.

STC will implement its vision by adopting the three 'pillars' of **climate change**, **biodiversity loss** and **environmental resilience** proposed in March 2023 by Dorset Council's *Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023–25 Refresh* (NECES) document and its April 2023 planning consultation document that followed its declaration of a climate emergency in 2019.

As the parish council for a market town of approximately 9,000 people, STC understands it cannot have a major impact on all subject areas but it will do its best in areas it believes it can have an effect or influence by working in close partnership with national, regional, county, local and community groups with similar aims and objectives. Above all, it agrees with the informed consensus for action based on the concept of a 'circular economy' and its support in restoring nature.



The State of Nature report 2023

Put together by more than 60 organisations, including wildlife conservation groups, government agencies and academics, it says the numbers of plants and animals monitored since the 1970s have decreased by an average 19%. The report, published in September 2023, looks back at some 50 years of research and found that natural spaces and the wildlife that depends on them are all in decline in the UK (see www.stateofnature.org.uk).

The Three Pillars of Sustainable Shaftesbury



Climate Change

Cutting our greenhouse gas emissions

STC will adopt a climate change action plan which supports the national/global target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The plan will aim to match national targets by promoting sustainable travel; promoting sustainable local food production and consumption; campaigning to reduce energy demand; supporting feasible plans to produce green energy; and by providing, where possible, additional charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.



Biodiversity

Helping nature recover by protecting and enhancing our land, rivers and seas

STC will adopt a biodiversity action plan that will seek to help nature to recover by in keeping with the *Nature Positive Dorset 2030* declaration and the joint *People's Plan for Nature* report of March 2023, through the promotion of re-wilding for open spaces and green areas. This would include support of initiatives such as *Orchard Town Shaftesbury* and *Nature First Shaftesbury*. This action plan includes a Biodiversity Checklist of actions to be followed by all the town council's contractors and sub-contractors and can also be used as guidance by residents with its *Let's Go Wild* leaflet.



Environmental Resilience

Adapting for the impacts of unavoidable environmental change

STC will adopt an environmental resilience action plan to mitigate the impact of unavoidable environmental change or damage. Ideas such as adaptation (or 'managed retreat') and support of a circular economy, as well as opportunities for the town council to acquire more open areas for productive community use such as for allotments and horticulture, will be actively pursued. The action plan will also support positive measures for safe and environmentally-friendly transport and travel as outlined in the Active Travel *England* policy documents.



Delivery, Review & Public Engagement

Delivery and Review

The delivery sees STC working in partnership with other community groups and organisations. This document will be reviewed on an 'as needed' basis but at least annually.

Other Policies

STC will continue to review all its policies and procedures as they come up for review for their environmentally positive stance in wording, intention and enforcement. *Note: STC has already updated its investment strategy to stipulate its reserves are invested prudently in sustainable activities and not in fossil fuel development or its use.*



Public Engagement

To advance this policy STC will:

- promote awareness of, and information about, environmental and ecological issues within the local community
- support, and act as an added voice for, local environmental and ecological concerns within the local community
- partner with local environmental and community groups and allotment holders to spearhead a major cost-of-living mitigation awareness campaign focusing on practical improvements that can be achieved with:
 - ⇒ Energy
 - ⇒ Transport
 - ⇒ Food
 - ⇒ Environment (i.e. soil, air and water improvements)

ensure that everyone involved in the operation of STC (including contractors) are aware of their environmental.



Sustainable Shaftesbury Vision Statement and Masterplan