What can we do individually about climate change?

There are a number of small actions that we all can take to reduce carbon emissions to help meet the target suggested recently by the IPCC1 and the CCC2. There are several useful websites that give helpful advice about small changes individuals can make that can help4.

Shipbourne Parish Council (SPC) has recently responded to the consultation on the emerging Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan. Along with other responses to the consultation the PC has made comments on the need for new buildings and changes to buildings to be to a standard and design that both mitigates against climate change and provides adaptation to climate change impacts such as flooding and overheating. Our response is up on the Parish Council website <http://shipbourne.com/parish-council/> and reflects the policies in the Shipbourne Design Statement which is adopted by the Borough Council. (A hard copy is available from the Parish Clerk). We hope to be able to be present at the Examination in public later in the year to give evidence in support of our views. Do contact the Parish Council if you would like further information.

We will be making a series of suggestions that each of us can undertake to help meet the target of zero emissions by 2050 in the Parish newsletter. Some will be small actions, others more difficult! Please contribute your ideas as well to the Parish Clerk.

Number 1.

An idea for reducing use of energy: in Shipbourne we live in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (KDAONB). Tranquillity is identified as one of its special characteristics and qualities, and our dark night skies are an element of tranquillity3. We can contribute both to energy efficiency and conserving our dark night skies by ensuring our outside lighting is minimal. A way of doing this is to ensure lights only come on when absolutely necessary and activated by heat or movement, and by keeping all amenity/leisure lighting, even that run on solar, just on for special events and switched off afterwards. This way we can contribute to everyone’s amenity and our special dark night skies as well as reduce our emissions!

1 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

2 Committee on Climate Change <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>

3 Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-19<https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/landscape-management/management-plan/>

4 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-45775309>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/08/climate-change-what-you-can-do-campaigning-installing-insulation-solar-panels>

Various lobby groups such as Friends of the Earth and World Wildlife Fund have ideas about what individuals can do practically. <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/climate-change> <https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved>