

**Minutes of a meeting of the CLIMATE CHANGE TASK GROUP held on Wednesday 2 March 2022 at 1.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Cockermouth**

Present: Councillor R Watson (Chair)  
Councillor I Burns  
Councillor A Semple

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Barnes. Councillor Watson was elected Chair in his absence.

**161 Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

**162 Public Participation**

There was none.

**163 Declaration of Interest**

None declared.

**164 Climate Emergency West Cumbria**

Julia Robinson gave a detailed presentation regarding the works of Climate Emergency West Cumbria.

A copy of her presentation is attached for information.

The Chair thanked Julia for her time and efforts.

**165 Climate Change Emergency Action Plan**

Those present discussed progress to date and which actions should be taken forward during the next quarter.

Recommended – a) The Rotary be reminded about planting wildflowers within the circle of trees in the Memorial Gardens.

b) That a price be obtained from Tivoli to plant wildflowers on Cumbria County Council owned land opposite the St Helen's Street Allotments.

c) That the Town Clerk writes to Julian Smith at Allerdale Borough Council to suggest that wildflowers be planted at the bottom of the Ropewalk below the trees.

d) That a funding application be made to Cumbria County Council to hold a Give and Take Day in the Town Hall in June 2022.

e) That refillable bottles/re-useable cups be purchased for Councillors and staff.

f) That the following additional actions be added on to our action plan

- We support the formation of a climate café
- We support the formation of a repair café
- We support The Great Big Green Week becoming an annual event
- We support the formation of a furniture upcycling works
- The Town Clerk investigates the potential and cost of installing solar panels on council owned buildings

**166 Date of the next meeting**

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 2.10pm

## CEWC, 2022: What We've Done and Achieved So Far

We're an umbrella grouping of several local climate and sustainability groups over West Cumbria (which includes Friends of the Earth- West Cumbria and North Lakes), which covers the council districts of Allerdale and Copeland and Barrow. Due to a low degree of engagement with climate change and its related issues in our area, there isn't a large crowd of us, so we group together to get our voice heard.

We're only three years old, but are growing in numbers and experience in efforts to reach people in our region: we aim to explain the problems presented by climatic change, to communicate the urgency to act on the issue, and the actions that will make a difference for the community and people's lives here.

Joining: People simply join CEWC by signing up to the mailing group- there's no fee, and members pitch in with their time, skills, knowledge and personal interests and passions as they feel appropriate.

Members: Cumbria Development Education Centre (CDEC), FoE West Cumbria North Lakes, Greenpeace, The Green Party, members of Labour Party and the Liberal Party. Two Youth Groups- currently not active

*Since it was first formed in July 2019, CEWC has grown from 9 to +45 members & done the following:*

**CEWC is an active member of Cumbria Sustainable Network (CSN)** Monthly meetings are held, where with other sustainability and climate groups share news, opinions and events in Cumbria on an online platform called Workplace- Roughly six CEWC members join the discussion and shared progress. I helped form the CSN aims and self description.

Two CEWC members **ZCC funding steering committee**. I helped form the assessment process, and am part of the team to assess large grants. We ensure there is a long-term focus within the funding process is to empower under-represented areas/communities and economic sectors, commonly found on the West Coast of Cumbria.

### We've been involved with Allerdale Borough Council:

CEWC lobbied the council with Sustainable Keswick to *declare a climate emergency* via petition, attending council meetings and asking questions to the council, and writing to our borough councillors. The highlights:

Grew the petition from roughly 650 signatures gained by SusKes to roughly 1300.

Held an event in Main St to gain signatures (roughly 100 per hour) and distributed the petition throughout Cockermouth town shops.

Asked climate change-related questions in council meetings to back requests to declare a climate emergency (rejected, but they accepted a climate change action plan).



Two 15 year old young CEWC members from Cockermouth requested a climate emergency- it was refused, but it gained traction for change.

**Played a part in creating Allerdale Climate Change Action [Plan 2019/2020](#):** Several CEWC members were invited to take part in Allerdale's first ever climate change workshop- our recommendations were shaped into an updated plan. We were part of the group who developed and reviewed it, and the council passed it in [March 2020](#).

**Recycling improvements for Allerdale, 2020:** Presented councillors with research showing a ten year drop of 13.5% in household recycling, plus a document listing fourteen actions that the top ten performing UK councils do to achieve up to 61% recycling levels. One member, (me) presented this information and viable options for improvement.

From this, the [A-Z of recycling](#) (to look up what can/can't be recycled)-was introduced on Allerdale website.

**Tree Planting:** The Tree Group formed in 2020, and tree planting events have been promoted/attended. CEWC member and Wigton councillor Nick Robson formed the group *Trees for Wigton* (called [TWIG](#)- it doesn't fit, but sounds like a good acronym!)- From its beginnings by approaching and requesting local landowners to plant trees on their land, this group has grown- now landowners approach TWIG for trees to be planted on their land.

We attend and publicise Cumbria Wildlife Trust and SusKes tree planting events, too.

**Transport:** onto several transport issues.

**Cycling-** CEWC members regularly lobby Allerdale councillors and MP for better cycling network for commuting and leisure- letters written to MPs and councillors.

**Electric (E) bicycles-** after a lapse of 15 years, the Cumbrian E-bike charge point network was revived by one CEWC member. CEWC and SusKes members contacted tens of places in the Allerdale area to add to this. After enquiries to many hotels, cafes and shops all over the county, there are now over 30 charging locations promoted across Cumbria.

**Electric Vehicle charging points-** Supported Non-profit organisation Charge My [Street](#) on their crowd-funded initiative for Wigton, Cockermouth and Keswick (2021).

**November, 2021: members contacted their Cockermouth town councillors to support installation of the town's first charging points.**

**Two members give climate change presentations to the community.** These explain the causes and effects of climate change and how it affects our lives, with the purpose of making it real for people- so far, to the Cockermouth and Lorton communities.

**CEWC members have lobbied MPs from the Workington and Copeland constituencies since it started-** asking what they are doing to tackling various aspects of climate change, increasing green jobs in skilled livelihoods (such as retrofitting household insulation and fitting solar panels and air pumps), increasing opportunities for low carbon transport- better bus services and cycle lanes.

And letters to urge them to oppose the Woodhouse Colliery coal mine, both by email and face to face meeting with our MP, Mark Jenkinson, plus the prime minister and two secretaries of states.

Woodhouse Colliery Coal Mine: CEWC supports the findings of the UK Committee on Climate Change which informs government policy, the United Nations Panel on Climate Change and its reports, the Zero Carbon Cumbria Baseline Report findings, plus the UK's legally binding obligations as signatories to the UN Paris Agreement in opposing it due to the harm it will cause to the climate:

**The mine's coking coal will create the same quantity of emissions every year as the entire county currently does.**

**Future UK emission reduction plans (now enshrined in law) state that by 2036, the mine's coking coal will create yearly emissions roughly be equal to that made by the entire UK.**

**BUT- we agree that creating new, well paid local jobs in the area is absolutely vital**, and so we back the creation of thousands of jobs in West Cumbria that play an integral part to enable emissions reduction and adapt to the changes (a recent study estimates this as 4,500)- such as fitting solar panels, renewable local community-level energy production, constructing low emission, high insulation-rated new homes and retrofitting older homes.

This has already been achieved in the North-East, with opening of initiatives including Wind Turbine blade works, and Battery Factory at Blythe.

**Supported FoE WCNL, South Lakes Against Climate Change and Coal Action Network events** and created events to raise publicity of local action, gain local opposition to the mine and new members. Anti-coal mine events attended and were involved in planning included-

Lodged a CEWC objection with the public enquiry (I wrote it), together with a number of personal objections to the mine.

Several CEWC members attended and spoke at the public enquiry in September.

National petition was formed by youth members and interviews with local, national, international press to raise focus on local opposition.

Demonstration at the proposed Woodhouse Mine site, Guided walk to Mine's proposed coal loading site

Information giving, meeting public to hear individual points of view for and against the mine, screenings of films on local mining industry, and panel discussion debate on the pros and cons of a new Cumbria coal mine taking a neutral stance.

Pop up shop in Cockermouth 'Climate Crack' to meet, listen to and chat with the public, and reconnect with people sympathetic to climate action/coal opposition, and those against.

## **Youth Members- including the groups Cockermouth Youth Climate Action, and National Student Climate Network.**

**CEWC's Youth members have held effective climate actions- including interviews with national newspapers and international news corporations, channels, held protests, hosted arts events and participatory decision-making since 2019.**

The main points include:

**Fridays for Future**: Youth members led a series of protests both in school and on Main Street, supported by fellow CEWC members.



In 2021, two of our youth members - Clare and Isabella - held **places on the Steering Committee for the Cumbria Youth Climate Conference**. They then took part in [Cumbria Youth Climate Summit](#) in October 2021.

They helped produce a list of key climate recommendations for the county council and ZCC to inform Zero Carbon Cumbria partnership goals and long-term planning for the county.

**Youth Members** wrote to local MPs and the Prime Minister objecting to the proposed coal mine.

**They also gave interviews and statements to national/local press objecting to the coal mine**, with highly visible media presence. One represented the youth and anti-coal mine position in a televised discussion with an ex-miner from Whitehaven. And two others featured in a major news segment for Norwegian television.

**Youth members were active in COP26 county-wide action**, meeting well-known climate campaigners beforehand. Two youth members spoke at the associated rally in Carlisle.

Youth members currently have an [online petition at Change.org](#), to make climate change education in UK primary schools mandatory.

**COP26 in Glasgow** -one CEWC member went to Glasgow, supported the action, reported back.

## Membership into other groups, organisations and networks across Cumbria:

**CEWC has been a partner in the Zero Carbon Cumbria [Partnership \(ZCCP\)](#) since 2020**. It makes representations on behalf of the residents of West Cumbria, pressing for change and a fair, equitable transition to zero carbon for the people of our area of Cumbria.

we prioritise the needs of underrepresented areas, the most vulnerable households on the lowest income, and those with the least means to adapt to climate changes.

### Participated in country-wide climate event

**The first West Cumbrian Great Big Green [Week](#) (18-26<sup>th</sup> Sept) event was held in Cockermouth last year- on the 21<sup>st</sup> September at the Kirkgate Centre, for nine hours of discussion, presentations, creative events and performance.**

CEWC held a free afternoon/evening of climate-related arts/crafts display, youth poetry and crowd poetry creation, climate change presentations/talks, screening of the film 2040, post-film climate discussion, Wild Chorus Choir recital, Climate Café and Bar. This joined over 5000 GBGW events across the UK, aided by grants from Zero Carbon Cumbria & the Climate Coalition (CEWC's first, and successful funding bids).

## What do we have planned for the future?

Currently our plans are temporarily on hold. This is because our major decision-making session will be held later in March to discuss and establish our priority actions, with all members' voices being heard.

**BUT- some suggestions that have been made in recent months we're keen to get going, and feel the council may be interested in, are-**

**Apply for Zero Carbon Cumbria's funding, to get a Climate Community Grant to start projects to benefit the local community, for one or several of the following-**

**Climate Café-** a social time to find out new climate news, information join climate discussions, share our opinions, and get up to date with events across Cumbria and beyond.

**Repair café** for broken but repairable electrical small appliances. One has recently been established in Carlisle.

**Swap shop-** bringing in and taking away useable but unwanted items- this has already successfully done in several towns in the county- and last year, in Lorton village.

**Furniture upcycling workshop-** to reduce repairable furniture and home décor taken to landfill/or disposed of to be chipped and incinerated.

**Tackle domestic food waste, water waste, and improve recycling practices and composting-**more street and indoor events and actions designed to alter people's thinking and everyday habits.

**The Great Big Green Week** as an annual event, with additional street stalls, films, creative events.

**Climate Reading Group-** there are roughly ten currently running in Cumbria

**A solar power survey for the town (done by satellite imaging)-** finding out which homes and businesses benefit most from fitting solar panels- this has already been done in Ambleside, and Keswick is going forward with this.

**Thermal household surveys-** using an infrared camera to find drafts and solveable cold spots- Ambleside Action for a Future are doing this.

### And more of our general actions-

**Endorse and further recommendations of Copeland People's panels, and Youth Climate panel- and in Allerdale-**

Continue to request and lobby for emission reducing measures on transport, energy, recycling and waste, green/transitional job creation, tree-planting, re-wilding and peat restoration.

**More media articles and letters** to bring accurate, up to date climate action information and advice to the area.

**More climate change presentations to the community**, as people generally understand this is a concerning issue, but are not sure what to do about it. Hence presentations to community groups will help change this- we want to aim to reach sectors with an environment or outdoor-related interest, such as allotment owners, gardening and fishing clubs and associations, rambblers, walking groups and runners, friends of park areas.

### **Lastly, I have two requests of the Climate Change Task Group:**

1. **One or more members to join the Cumbria Sustainable Network's sharing platform-** to receive regular news and progress of climate change and sustainability actions from our sister organisations and bodies, across the county, including news of the above suggestions.
2. **Would it be possible for the task group to meet more often?** I can see there's good progress being made by the group, and the volume of changes will increase, together with the need for council response and involvement-

**Lastly, I'd like to offer my assistance to the task group, if you feel it to be acceptable-** including experience of Zero Carbon Cumbria, Cumbria Sustainable Network, contacts including our sister groups in neighbouring towns. Additionally, I can offer research on applicable/best practice and effective measures and advocate uptake on parish town, and borough scale