

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 15th DECEMBER 2025**

*PRESENT –
Councillor Sarah Cockburn-Price (Chair)*

Councillors:

*Chris Church
David Cockburn-Price
Yvonne Tennant*

Co-optees:

*Sylvia Godfrey
Angela Moran
David Penney
Stephen Sykes
Jane Wood*

Officers in attendance:

*Iftikhar Bokhari Head of Economic Growth
Rebecca Ferguson Committee Administrator
Philip Riley Operations Manager*

Also in Attendance:

*Christopher Appleton – United Utilities
Ellie Brown – Ribble Rivers Trust Head of Data, Evidence & GIS
Ian Pilling – United Utilities Area Engagement Lead for Lancashire
Clare Rainsford – Climate Programme Manager from January 2026*

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ash Sutcliffe and Phillip Spurr.)



1. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group held on 15th September 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

2. GUEST PRESENTATION

United Utilities

A presentation was given by Christopher Appleton, from United Utilities on dry weather impacts on the water network.

It was explained that United Utilities is governed by a drought plan which can be found on its website. During dry weather in 2025, United Utilities took action to combat the impacts by using the following approaches: -

- Enhanced Leakage Activity
- Pressure Management
- Customer Comms Campaign
- Finding Additional Water
- Abstraction Licence Review
- Reduce United Utilities Water Consumption

Christopher highlighted the focussed customer comms activity and explained that this was done via the following channels: -

- Broadcast Media
- Social Media
- Direct Communications
- Community Water Saving Roadshows
- Increased Web Page Visits
- Primary School Education Sessions
- Ofwat Water Efficiency Communications Trial

There had also been an increase in internal colleague communications activity.

It was asked if rainwater could be collected from heavy rain events as a result of climate change? It was advised that it would depend upon the topography of the land as effective rainfall is needed. If there was 100mm of soil moisture deficit, whereby the first 10cm of the soil would be dry, 100ml of rainfall would not be effective, as the ground would act like a sponge.

The speaker was asked if strategies had been put into place to open new reservoirs and whether overlapping issues in Pendle had been considered, as Yorkshire Water is responsible for the Craven District, which includes Earby and Barnoldswick? It was advised that new reservoirs had been part of the action plan for 2025. United Utilities had considered utilising river sources, building new reservoirs and utilising abandoned reservoirs with abstraction licences. Christopher further explained that he is unable to provide a response to the ongoing flooding in Earby & Barnoldswick, but stated that he would look into the issue and provide a response to the Group.

A member asked if United Utilities held regular meetings with Local Authorities to consider forward plans in order to prepare for the changes to housing structures? It was advised that development requests come through and are, on the whole, part completed. A Group member said that the developers of Further Clough Head,

Nelson, had been asked by United Utilities to place a pumping station on site. Christopher could not comment on this particular site.

It was asked if any resources could be shared with the Group to provide to the constituents of Pendle? It was advised that some practical interventions could be promoted to customers and Pendle constituents and an event could be put on to support water efficiency.

It was asked if an integrated water management plan been considered for Lancashire? It was said this would be a priority, however with local government reorganisation on the cards, it would be complex to complete.

A member asked often how leaks are fixed? The Group was informed that the response rate to fix a leak is normally done within a 24-hour period. New technology had been considered to detect water leakage with radar.

It was asked if in an emergency, whether United Utilities had the power to extract water from canal reservoirs? It was advised an extraction licence would be particularly difficult to obtain, so in most cases, other sources of water are considered.

A presentation was given by Iain Pilling, Area Engagement Lead – Lancashire, United Utilities on sewer flooding. He said that since the beginning of 2015 United Utilities had spent over £231 million to reduce sewer flooding risk for properties. Sensors had been put in place across the North West to monitor flooding & leaks. The data received from the sensors was analysed and acted upon. Storage tanks, bigger pipes and flood mitigation devices had also been put into place. Communications campaigns were implemented to inform customers of the correct ways to dispose of oils. A target programme of inspection had been put into place. Emergency funds had been set aside for customers affected by a sewer flood who do not have home insurance. United Utilities had received funding to carry out a targeted Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) campaign. This campaign would target areas that had received a mass amount of hydraulic flooding. It was advised a rainwater management strategy had been put into place to hold discussions with schools, highway authorities and retail businesses.

It was asked if United Utilities had issues in their treatment plants from polluted water from river courses caused by runoffs from land, and if United Utilities co-operates with the Environment Agency to prosecute any landowners responsible? It was advised a more informed answer could be provided at a later date.

A member asked if 'living roofs' had been considered for retail businesses to help combat rainwater management? This issue had not yet been discussed at United Utilities.

It was asked if peat management had been looked into, and members were advised that this had been put into place on the West Pennine Moors, and a more detailed update could be provided at a later time.

It was stated that as a business United Utilities had a commitment to plant trees.

A member raised a concern regarding concrete often being placed over green spaces as part of Permitted Development, and it was asked if United Utilities would support lobbying the Government to stop this from happening? This was noted by Iain Pilling, as the Group had planned to discuss this topic later in the agenda.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the presentations be noted and sent round to all members.
- (2) That thanks be given to Christopher Appleton and Iain Pilling for addressing the Working Group.
- (3) That United Utilities be invited back in late 2026 to present on the £3 billion of investment to prevent sewage outfall into watercourses and marine environments

Ribble Rivers Trust

A presentation was given by Ellie Brown Head of Data, Evidence & GIS, on Marsden Park Tree Nursery. Ellie talked through the Health & Environmental Action Lancashire ('Heal') project which took place over 18 months to aid the setting up of the nursery in 2022. The project relied upon volunteers undertaking regular tasks which included watering, weeding and applying treatment to the water butt. Ellie advised that native tree saplings were planted and that biosecurity measures were put into place to help prevent the introduction of pests and diseases into the nursery. It was said that all trees in the nursery were grown from local provenance seed, ancient semi-natural woodlands or very old woodlands & hedgerows.

Ellie advised that in the autumn/winter season of 2025/26, 617 seeds were planted. Owing to the lack of volunteers currently helping the Nursery, they were unable to operate at full capacity, which could cope with around 3,000 seeds being planted per year.

Ellie provided details of how to register to volunteer: volunteering@ribbletrust.com or visit [Join our conservation volunteers - Ribble Rivers Trust](#) to receive weekly updates about forthcoming events.

A member asked if Ribble Rivers Trust had links with 'The Northern Forest' project? It was advised that the Trust had worked closely with the Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust and local authorities. Ellie praised the CEO, Jack Spees, for his ability to link up with other organisations.

It was asked if other appropriate sites around Pendle had been considered for planting saplings, such as Gibb Hill Nature Reserve in Nelson & Colne? Ellie reiterated that the primary focus of the Trust is to try and improve river habitat and river water quality by planting trees along the riverbanks. It was said that the Trust is reliant on landowners wishing to participate in the project, but that if there are opportunities on Council owned land, the Trust would be able to operate more projects around Pendle.

A member also asked if Ribble Rivers Trust had applied to the National Lottery Climate Action Fund? It was said that it is an option to look into additional funding pots, however, the Trust requires additional team members in order to facilitate this.

An idea was put forward that proposed Ribble Rivers Trust contacted the NHS, to request social prescribing for patients willing to participate in the project, as it could be beneficial to their mental health, whilst aiding the advancement of the project.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the presentation be noted and sent to all members.
- (2) That thanks be given to Ellie Brown for addressing the meeting.

At this point Councillor Yvonne Tennant left the meeting which meant there was no longer a quorum. Although the meeting was not quorate, it was decided to continue with proceedings, as the agenda largely consisted of information items.

3. RECENT ENGAGEMENT OF CEWG WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER BODIES

Pendle Council officers recently received a presentation from the applicants of Calderdale Energy Park, and this presentation was shared with the Group by Iftikhar Bokhari.

It was explained that Calderdale Energy Park is a proposal for a largescale onshore wind farm with battery storage systems in Yorkshire. The company, Calderdale Wind Farm Limited, is sponsored by Next Gen Infra, who is focussed on the development of energy infrastructure within the UK. Originally, the project aimed to erect 65 wind turbines, but due to technical issues and peat bogs, it was not viable to do so. The current proposal aims to erect 41 wind turbines, each standing 656 feet tall. It was said that collectively, the turbines would generate 300 megawatts of energy which would power 250,000 homes. The project location would be Walshaw Moor, close to other wind turbine arrays with the aim to connect into the Northern Powergrid and the Rochdale distribution grid. It was explained that when the wind is blowing, energy collected will be stored in a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to enable all the power generated to be used, without any need for turning the turbines off during high winds.

It was said that 'Wind Farmer', software which maps wind velocities, was used to inform the layout. The project has been classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. Thus, the final decision as to whether the development would go ahead would be made by the Secretary of State for Energy. Members were informed that, owing to the project aiming to be connected to the network, advanced monitoring systems would be put into place which would measure what the Grid is requiring, what the capacity and demand is, and which primary sources of fossil fuels would be used. It was said that the UK Government had a target of 95% low-carbon electricity by 2030 and Net Zero by 2050. It was also advised that constituents of Pendle should expect possible delays when commuting, as the development would require abnormal loads being transported to the site, plus thousands of HGVs carrying aggregates.

It was advised that the development is part of a long process with a lot of preparatory work still required to be done to support the application. It was said the project is currently at the pre-application stage with lots of consultations set to take place, including with the Climate Emergency Working Group. Iftikhar advised that colleges, universities and institutions should be considered as consultees as the project develops. Additionally, there would be opportunities and job creation, which would support the Group's aim in trying to future proof jobs for the younger generation looking for careers in the areas of sustainability, energy generation and distribution. It was said that interest groups are being consulted on to protect habitats and conservation areas and that strategies would be put in place to reduce the adverse environmental impact.

Several members expressed concern about the project and agreed that the social and environmental impacts should outweigh the economic benefits. At a previous meeting, the Working Group had asked the Chair to write to Ed Miliband expressing dismay that protected peatland could be considered for this kind of development.

AGREED

That the presentation be circulated to members.

5. UPDATE FROM THE ECONOMIC GROWTH TEAM

Verbal progress on providing EV chargers in Pendle Car Parks

A short update was provided by Iftikhar Bokhari. It was said a report was currently with Councillor Lola Whipp for her feedback. It was agreed that the report would be presented at the next meeting.

AGREED

That a report be presented at the next meeting on EV chargers in Pendle Car Parks.

Verbal update progress on recruitment of a new Climate Emergency Officer

Clare Rainsford introduced herself as the new Climate Emergency Officer and provided a verbal overview of her varied career working for Housing Associations and at Kew Gardens. Members welcomed Clare and looked forward to hearing more from her at the next meeting.

6. LOBBYING OUR MP AND H.M. GOVERNMENT ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY ISSUES

AGREED

It was decreed that due to the meeting no longer being quorate, this item, a draft email written by the Chair on the 30by30 Treaty, would be brought to the next Climate Emergency Working Group meeting on Monday, 19th January 2026.

7. TO BRAINSTORM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN 2026

AGREED

Members had decided to move this item to the next Climate Emergency Working Group meeting on Monday, 19th January 2026 to allow time for further brainstorming.

8. ITEMS FOR NOTING

It was reported that the glyphosate ban that had taken place in Brighton had not been wholly successful and would be difficult to complete with contractors. It was asked that this item be brought forward to the next meeting to allow Pendle Borough Council officer, Philip Riley, to make contact with Brighton Council for more information.

AGREED

It was decided that owing to the length of the meeting, items for noting as set out on the agenda would be brought to the next Climate Emergency Working Group meeting on Monday, 19th January 2026.

9. ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA

Future Guest Speakers

January: Nature Recovery Strategy for Lancashire

Lancashire County Council: Ollie Mackrill, Senior Ecologist - Nature Recovery

Other potential for guest speakers to invite

- Lancashire Peat Partnership
- Guest Speaker from Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) Active Travel Team
- Recycle IT
- Inviting the LCC officer responsible for Street Trees

AGREED

That Senior Ecologist Ollie Mackrill from Lancashire County Council be invited to the next meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group on Monday, 19th January 2026.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

That next meeting of this Working Group be held on the following date:

Monday, 19th January 2026 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday, 16th March 2026 at 6.00 p.m.

Chair _____