

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT OFFICE TEAMS
ON 23rd JUNE 2025**

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

Councillors

*David Cockburn-Price
Ash Sutcliffe
Yvonne Tennant*

Co-optees

*Sue Fairweather
David Penney*

Officers in attendance:

*Phillip Spurr - Director of Place
Ryan Gifford - Senior Regeneration Officer and Acting Head of Economic Growth
Victor Equere - Climate Programme Manager*

Also in Attendance:

*Jack Spees - Ribble Rivers Trust
Ian Chapman*

(Apologies for absence were received from *Iftikhar Bokhari, Sylvia Godfrey and Stephen Sykes.*)



1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Phillip Spurr asked for nominations for a Chair for the 2025/26 Municipal Year. Cllr Ash Sutcliffe proposed, seconded by Cllr David Cockburn-Price, that Cllr Sarah Cockburn-Price as Chair and it was resolved that Cllr Sarah Cockburn-Price be re-appointed as the chair of the group.

(Cllr Sarah Cockburn-Price in the Chair).

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair, Cllr Sarah Cockburn-Price invited nominations for a vice-chair for the 2025/26 Municipal Year. Cllr Yvonne Tennant put her name forward as nominee for the position of vice-chair. It was resolved that Cllr Yvonne Tennant be appointed as the vice-chair for CEWG for the municipal year 2025/26.

3. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Climate Emergency Working Group held on 12th March 2025 be agreed as a correct record subject to the date of that meeting, the date having been changed from 17th March 2025 to 12th March 2025.

4. RIBBLE RIVER TRUST

Jack Spees, CEO of Ribble Rivers Trust, gave a presentation on the work of the Trust and, especially, the benefits of woodlands to prevent dangerously high-water temperatures which would harm wildlife. He highlighted some of their on-going projects in the Trawden area.

He also recounted their success in establishing a community Tree Nursery in Marsden Park and Nelson. He noted that this nursery is one of four that was recently set up and it's the best performing on as they can start supplying Ribble River Trust with trees for woodland creation projects this winter.

Mr Spees also highlighted ways that the Council and Members of CEWG could support the Ribble River Trust:-

- encourage landowners to get involved?
- volunteer or point others to volunteer with us.
- Become a sponsor for as little as £3 a month
- Fundraising or encouraging businesses to become corporate supporters.

Mr Spees also recommended that Ribble River Trust should be included in list of potential partners to support the Council deliver their Natural Capital and Green Solution (e.g. Lancashire Wildlife Trust) within the Pendle Climate Change Strategy.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the presentation be noted and sent round to all members
- (2) That thanks be given to Mr Jack Spees for attending the meeting.
- (3) That Mr Spees be invited by the chair to speak to Trawden Parish Council
- (4) That Ribble River Trust be listed as a partner for delivering Natural Capital and Green Solutions in the Climate Change Strategy document.

5 BACKLOGS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY CONNECTIONS TO THE NATIONAL GRID

CEWG received a presentation from Ian Chapman where he stated that many of the pending connections have now been put on the tech register, which is a transmissions entry capacity register.

He also highlighted that the number of renewable energy projects awaiting connection to the National Grid has since grown from 1,700 in November 2024 (stated in his petition) to 2,216 projects now within the UK.

He further noted that these 2,216 pending projects were waiting to be scoped in as they've got consents approved, they've been built, they're awaiting consents from the National Grid. These projects included all sorts of renewables, including biomass.

The Climate Programme Manager noted that the Government has proposed investing £40 billion to upgrade the grid capacity to accommodate more renewable energy connections.

Cllr Ash Sutcliffe noted that it was poor planning for the Government to go creating so much renewable energy projects across the country without first thinking about the infrastructure to connect them to the National Grid. He further suggested that CEWG ask Ribble River Trust about the possibility of generating hydroelectricity from the river in Ribble River.

It was agreed that CEWG would write a very polite letter to the minister for DESNZ asking for an update on the infrastructure upgrade, noting the expenditure; and also saying that there really needs to be a joined up strategy before these various different renewable energy generation projects and different technologies are added all around the country and the effects that they might have inadvertently.

AGREED

- (1) To include this matter in our next round of emails to our MP, and to write the Minister or DESNZ on this matter.
- (2) To ask Mr Jack Spees about the impact of producing hydroelectricity from the river at Ribble Valley, what progress has been made?

6. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Climate Programme Manager noted that no presentation had been made for this session as various versions of the Climate Change Strategy document had been circulated previously ahead of the meeting. Hence, this session was to receive comments from Members who had read the final version of the Climate Change Strategy.

The Chair noted that she was very pleased with how the team provided justification to why any comment sent by each reviewer was excluded in the final version, adding that many of the suggestions were reflected in the final document.

Cllr David Cockburn-Price noted that since the Executive seems to content that the carbon neutrality target would not be met by 2030, that maybe the 2050 target should be given a bit more mention in the document. He further recommended that

the timescales for the actions be amended from a maximum timeline of over 3 years to a maximum timeline of over 10 or 20 years to align with the 2050 target. His final point was that, given that air source heat pumps are so expensive, the Council should consider other cheaper decarbonisation alternative technologies.

David Penny expressed his opinion that the Council's Carbon neutrality target was not sufficient given the severity of the impact of Climate change. He proposed that the target should be Net Zero by 2030.

Phillip Spurr mentioned that in future, climate change would no longer be the sole responsibility of the Climate Programme Manager. He added that the Council was working to spread that responsibility across Officers within the Authority.

Furthermore, all portfolio holders now had a climate change responsibility as part of their role.

Phillip Spurr further noted that there were limited resources for the Council to pursue its decarbonisation ambitions since the Council relied heavily on external funds for this purpose. However, significant progress would be achieved once the PSDS project was completed (i.e. decarbonising Pendle Wavelength and West Craven leisure centres).

David Penny further suggested that tree be planted within the urban spaces to form a carbon sink. However, some Members of the group, while agreeing, raised the concern of complaints from residents about leaf litter and sticky deposits from tree dwelling aphids.

AGREED

That the points raised by the CEWG members be noted.

7. UPDATE FROM THE CLIMATE PROGRAMME MANAGER

The Climate Programme Manager highlighted the initial figures showing the impact of the newly installed 272kW solar panels on the Pendle Wavelength Leisure Centre. The data presented shows that the new solar system saved the Leisure Trust £250 of electricity bills on the 22nd May 2025, and further achieved an electricity offset of 1,000 kWh. This was noted as a positive initial outcome and continuous performance monitoring was encouraged.

The Climate Programme Manager also updated the group on Pendle Borough Council's latest score on the Climate Action Scorecard. In the latest scores released on the 17th June, 2025, PBC had moved up from 21% to 30%. It was noted that while the Council progressed in other criteria, it lost some marks in the Collaboration and Engagement Criteria. This was noted as a positive news and the Group encouraged the team to sustain the pace of improvement.

The Group was also notified of the ongoing progress being made by the Climate Programme Manager and the Comms. Team to upscale the climate change section of the Council website, despite the limited resources available. The aim of this upgrade was to provide better engagement with residents on climate change issues and progress being made, as well as signposting and giving reliable advice. This was noted as a positive milestone and the Group requested that the brochure would be sent round to members.

The Chair recommended that the section named “save money on energy bills” should be further split along residents and commercial lines to ease navigation for website users and provide more specific, relevant advice.

The Group was also updated about the joint bid being worked on by the Council and New Ground Together to continue their Greener Together project in Pendle. The Climate Programme Manager noted that because of the declining funding stream, from the Government, the Council will have to work with charities more to access funding to advance its climate ambitions, since most funders are more disposed to fund charities than funding statutory bodies.

The Chair of the Group expressed satisfaction with the progress made by the Climate Programme Manager and pointed that there is work on-going with a peat prohibition policy document that has been drafted by the Climate Change Manager.

David Penny noted that the decision of Council to work more with charities to achieve their climate ambition was a good one and recommended charities like Eco-Barnoldswick, and the Lancaster Community Action Network.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (2) That the brochure for the climate website revamp be sent round to all members
- (3) That David Penny be asked to share the information he has on the EV charger funding he found to be suitable for Councils.

8. CALDERDALE WIND FARM NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Chair noted that the proposal to put up an onshore wind infrastructure is a good one and something most people on the Group would, ordinarily be in support of. However, her research shows that the project was likely to result in significant adverse ecological impact in terms of possible peat depletion and destruction of carbon capture abilities of blanket bog, owing to its proposed location.

David Penny noted that this was a clear case of conflict of interest between protecting our environment and the need for renewable sources of energy. He further recommended that the developers must demonstrate how they intend to avoid totally or at best minimise the potential negative ecological impact that has been flagged before they are granted planning permission and that he would only support the project on the basis that it does not cause damage to the environment.

Cllr Yvonne Tennant also echoed that this is a case of a good proposal in a wrong place since the proposed site on Walshaw Moor has enormous peat deposits and many environmental protections. She also cited issues with putting battery storage close to homes, and further supported David Penny's point that she would only support the project once the developers could demonstrate that the project would not damage the peat and the local biodiversity in the area.

The chair proposed to collate all the concerns expressed into a draft document and have the group make inputs to the draft before the final version is sent off to the MP Jonathan Hinder, and Ed Miliband.

AGREED

- (1) That the chair prepares a draft write up highlighting the concerns raised by members of the Group.
- (2) That all members review and make input to the draft.
- (3) That the final version be sent to Jonathan Hinder and Ed Miliband.

9. PLANT BASED TREATY

The Chair commented on the plant treaty link that was received from David Penny. The Chair noted that the treaty was quite reasonable and clarified that it was not asking for everybody to give up meat or anything like that. The treaty was a medium for individuals or organisations to express their support for national governments to come together to negotiate a global Plant Based Treaty, including the three core principles and 40 sustainable farming practices suggested within the proposals as outlined.

In the opinion of the chair, this treaty was a good one for the CEWG to lend their support on.

AGREED

That Members be given more time to consider the content of the link and come back to the chair on their position via email.

10. REUSABLE CLOTH NAPPIES

On this subject, the chair noted that Philip Riley (Green Spaces Manager for PBC) had contacted her to put forward his opinion that he did not feel that washing cotton nappies at high temperatures and the production of cotton was good for the environment and that we might be better off with disposable nappies

The chair requested the Climate Programme Manager and the Senior Regeneration Officer find out if there were nappy ready business suppliers or someone that might be interested in providing that service in Pendle.

The chair further noted that while washing cotton nappies at high temperature may not be good for the environment, it would be good to compare the environmental impact of this action against the impact of the massive amount of landfill waste created by damp nappies. David Walker (Assistant Director Operational Services) would provide the statistics.

The Chair further noted that based on her experience, the reusable nappies had the benefit of making children toilet trained faster than disposable nappies which ultimately then reduced the need for nappies all together. This was a position that was seconded by David Penny, Cllr Ash Sutcliffe and Phillip Spurr.

AGREED

(1) That David Walker (Assistant Director Operational Services) be asked to provide the statistics for how much disposable nappies contribute to the landfill waste in Pendle.

(2) That the Climate Programme Manager and the Senior Regeneration Officer should research and find potential nappy laundering businesses in Pendle and report back to the chair.

(3) That in the future, the Council could roll out a campaign to make residents aware of the impact of disposable nappies on the environment and encourage them to switch to reusable ones, which are cheaper.

11. WRITING TO OUR M.P./ NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The chair brought the attention of the group to the habitual nonresponse treatment that one of Pendle's MPs (Jonathan Hinder) has given to all our letters and emails. Yvonne Tennant also confirmed that the MP seems to be ghosting everyone not just the CEWG.

The Chair recommended that another letter to the MP that encapsulates the various views that we have in terms of renewable energy and sensitive locations.

AGREED

That the chair puts together another writing that encapsulates the views of the CEWG on recent issues discussed to the MP.

12. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The chair shared her experience from visiting Trawden Community Composting Scheme. The scheme was funded by this Working Group at its inception. Hence, it was a delight to see this very successful community scheme in action.

AGREED

That the item be noted as a good case study of a project funded by the Working Group.

13. ITEM FOR NOTING

The Chair acknowledged the email from David Walker (Assistant Director Operational Services) on where Pendle was sourcing their HVO fuel from. The email from David Walker stated that Pendle Council was sourcing its HVO fuel from a reputable supplier who takes all due diligence in their operations.

AGREED

That the item be noted.

14. ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA

The following were suggested for inclusion on agendas for future meetings:

- Climate Engagement Programme Update (ongoing)
- Community Energy / Community Heat Networks / Rossendale Visit
- Geothermal Energy – opportunities being scrutinised by our Climate Emergency Officer
- Guest Speaker(s) from Lancashire Peat Partnership should be invited to speak.
- Guest Speaker from Lancashire County Council's (LCC's) new Active Travel Team (invitation issued)
- Guest Speaker from LCC's Transport Team (invitation issued)
- Integrated train, bus networks, perhaps with more freight on our railways
- Presentation on 2030hub (presentation would be delivered at the next meeting)
- RecycleIT
- Sponsoring a Tree Nursery in Pendle
- Street Trees

15. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

That future meetings of this Working Group be held on the following dates:

Monday, 15th September 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

Monday, 17th November 2025 at 6.00 p.m.

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

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

Chair _____

