

Joint Parishes Climate Action Group

Meeting Notes

Wednesday 8 July 2026 – 7.30pm

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Geoff and Ann.

2. Election of Chair

Members discussed future chairing arrangements. Frank suggested introducing a rotating Chair between the three parishes so that each parish would take turns to chair meetings. It was agreed that Frank would act as Chair going forward, with the idea of a Parish by Parish rotating Chair in future.

3. Feedback from the People's Emergency Briefing Film and Next Steps

The Group received an update following the People's Emergency Briefing event.

The Steering Group met following the screening and discussed holding further screenings in Beeding and Bramber, followed by short facilitated discussions.

Melissa and Geoff have continued developing practical guidance on actions residents can take to make a difference. Members suggested that one action could be featured each month in *Your Steyning* to help encourage ongoing engagement.

The Group discussed expanding the People's Emergency Briefing "What Can I Do?" page on the Greening Steyning website to include additional information on water conservation, including drought-tolerant planting, water butts and other ways of adapting gardens to hotter, drier summers. Members also suggested including links to Imperial College London's climate action guidance as an additional independent source of practical advice.

The discussion covered the importance of continuing to write to the local MP and using both individual and collective lobbying to encourage action on climate change. Members felt the People's Emergency Briefing had been a worthwhile and successful event. Although differing opinions had been expressed during the discussion following the film, there was agreement that engaging with a wide range of views was important.

Members discussed preparing a joint statement on water management on behalf of the three parish councils. The statement would be used to support lobbying on issues including water infrastructure, preparing for wetter winters and drier summers, and wider government action. Simon Birstingl agreed to prepare a draft, which may also be useful ahead of Southern Water's attendance at the Horsham District Council scrutiny meeting.

Jonathan Porritt is due to give a talk at Steyning Grammar School on 21st October on practical actions that communities can take, and Geoff is planning a weekend workshop following this to gather ideas and encourage wider community involvement.

4. Update from Amy – Weald to Waves

Amy, Head of Community Outreach for Weald to Waves, provided an update on the organisation's work.

She explained that almost 200 farmers and landowners had now pledged land to the initiative. Weald to Waves is supporting projects including hedge restoration, pond creation, habitat mapping and wider biodiversity improvements across the corridor.

Amy introduced the Actions for Nature tool, which provides practical advice for individuals and communities wishing to support nature recovery.

Much of the discussion focused on community engagement. Amy explained that many people are interested in helping nature but are often put off by concerns about time, cost or uncertainty about what they can do. Weald to Waves is therefore developing a toolkit for parish councils that can be used to support local engagement and provide practical resources.

Members agreed that it is important to demonstrate successful local projects rather than simply tell people what they should do. Examples from Abbey Road and other local green spaces highlighted how relatively small changes can deliver significant biodiversity benefits over time.

Vicci suggested regular articles in *Your Steyning Mag* to promote practical actions and local success stories. Amy explained that Weald to Waves is keen to develop member stories and invited parish councils to share examples of successful projects from across the corridor.

There was discussion about engaging wider audiences, including gardening clubs, schools and residents who may not normally become involved in environmental initiatives. Members agreed that messaging should encourage a range of gardening styles and focus on helping nature rather than criticising existing approaches.

The possibility of bringing parish councils together across the Weald to Waves corridor to share ideas and examples of best practice was also discussed.

Melissa and Geoff will continue developing information on creating more resilient gardens, and Simon offered to lend Vicci a copy of the Sheffield biodiversity study to support this work. Vicci also suggested speaking to the local Gardening Club as another way of engaging residents.

5. Walking and Cycling Plan Priorities

Members received an update from the Sustainable Travel Committee's Steering Group.

Castle Lane crossing proposals are now with West Sussex Highways.

There was discussion about overgrown hedges affecting pedestrian safety across all three parishes. Members noted that no response had yet been received regarding previous correspondence. It was suggested that Victoria continue lobbying West Sussex County Council, while residents should also be encouraged to report issues directly using the County Council's reporting system.

Members agreed that hedge maintenance is an important part of improving walking routes and should form part of the wider Walking and Cycling Plan.

Improving access from Small Dole to the Downs Link remains a priority, and members were supportive of the current Walking and Cycling priorities being taken forward to the Sustainable Transport Committee.

6. Pedestrian Crossing at Church Street, Church Lane and Tanyard Lane

Members discussed proposals to improve pedestrian safety at the junction of Church Street, Church Lane and Tanyard Lane.

The proposed Community Highways Scheme must be submitted before the end of July. Leila, a local resident who has been working with West Sussex Highways to progress proposals for a pedestrian crossing at the junction, outlined the proposed improvements. These included widened footways, dropped kerbs and a central pedestrian refuge. Members noted that the proposals would not reduce the width of the carriageway.

There was discussion about whether only one Community Highways Scheme could be progressed by each parish each year. Members suggested retaining Steyning's existing priority of additional cycle parking while including the pedestrian crossing scheme within the following year's programme.

There was general support for the crossing proposals, subject to further discussion by the Sustainable Travel Committee and a final decision by Steyning Town Council.

Members also discussed whether elements of the scheme could potentially be delivered through a Traffic Regulation Order or by introducing lower-cost measures, such as coloured road surfacing or other traffic-calming measures.

7. Dates of Future Meetings

The following meeting dates were noted:

- 14 October 2026
- 13 January 2027
- 14 April 2027

8. Any Other Business

Carbon Literacy Training

Frank provided feedback on the Carbon Literacy course. He explained that, although some of the material was already familiar, he found the course worthwhile and recommended it for the learning opportunities, networking and practical ideas it provided.

Future Attendance

Members agreed that both Vicci and Geoff from Greening Steyning should be invited to attend future Joint Parishes Climate Action Group meetings and the terms of reference adjusted accordingly