

Climate Change Working Group

(a sub-group of Argyll and Bute's CPP Management Committee)

Friday 10th September 2021 at 1000 - 1130am

Minutes

Attending:

Stan Philips, Operations Manager, NatureScot (Chair)
David Rennie, Social Enterprise Officer Argyll and Bute Council
Ross McLaughlin, Head of Commercial Services, Argyll and Bute Council
Lucinda Gray, Projects and Partnerships, Highlands and Island Enterprise
Angela Anderson, H&L ACPG representative and Plastic Free Helensburgh
Stephen Kelly, Area Station Commander and Energy Champion, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Cathleen Russell, Chair of Cowal Development Trust and Director Scottish Rural Action
Charles Dixon-Spain, B&C ACPG representative (Vice-Chair)
Sarah Davies, Helensburgh Community Council and Plastic Free Helensburgh
Nicola Reaney, Administration Officer, Argyll and Bute Council (Secretary)

Apologies received:

Willie Lynch, B&C ACPG
Jamie Joyce, ACT
Ian Brodie, MAKI ACPG,
Anne Horn, Councillor Argyll and Bute Council Kintyre and the Islands

1. Stan welcomed everyone to the meeting especially those who are new to the meeting including representatives from each of the Area Community Planning Groups. Round table introductions were given from attendees.
2. **Climate Change News** Stan noted that since the last meeting there had been 3 major reports published on climate change.

- The Climate Change Committee's Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk sets out the priority climate change risks and opportunities for the UK. It is worth noting that the report states that we "are less well adapted to climate change now than we were 5 years ago".

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/independent-assessment-of-uk-climate-risk/>

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 6th Assessment provides an update on where we are on climate change. Stan noted that this is not a pretty report and contains the starkest warning yet, that we are at "code red for humanity".

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-i/>

- Farming for 1.5 degrees: From here to 2045. The report opens with a note that doing the same thing this year, as we did last year is no longer an option for Scottish farmers and lays out how the Scottish farming sector needs to adapt to the new climate change landscape.

<https://www.farming1point5.org/>

Charles asked what recommendations there are for support to hill farmers in the last report and if there are any leads on that that local farmers can contact. Stan advised that is still being worked out as the farming report for 2024 is still in development and NatureScot and the Scottish Government are working on the issues but there are no obvious signpost at present. Lucinda pointed to the farming report area of “rapid uptake in low methane breeding for cows and sheep” and advised of an R&D project taking place on this, however, there are no findings available at the moment but that may be something for the group to look at / take forward in future. Angela asked if it would be possible for links to slides / reports to go out with the agenda and / or recirculated with minutes. Stan noted that it is not always possible to send in advance but that links and reports will be issued with minutes.

3. **Climate literacy training overview** - Jamie was not able to attend the meeting so this discussion could not take place.

4. **Overview of Nature Based Solutions** - Stan advised this refers to the use of nature and natural environments to help tackle socio-environmental challenges for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This can include reducing net emissions, providing habitats for biodiversity and helping society adapt to climate change. Practical examples of mitigation include local variety tree planting and restoring peat bogs. Of note, 75% of all peat bogs in Scotland are in poor condition and area actually releasing carbon. Adaptation can include improving flood risk defences, such as removing culverts to create open naturalised water courses, and provision for heat waves and drought.

Nature based solutions are already happening and Stan gave examples of:

- Peatland Action - £250m to repair bogs over next 10 years
- Woodland planting - Scottish Government have committed £100m to plant 18000 hectares per year over next 5 years.
- Green infrastructure to be embedded into National Planning framework NPF4 in near future.

Lucinda thanked Stan for the presentation and asked about education and awareness raising i.e. for tree planting, should we be making sure that there is information resources and advice available for the public. She also felt the need to look at the economic potential of the different types of skills and jobs that “adaptation” require and could the group look at this in more detail to ensure that education establishments can provide the right curriculum for the future. Stan noted the education side of adaptation planning needs a comprehensive strategy for education and raising awareness, and that can be looked at by this group. Angela added that in Argyll and Bute a lot of tree planting has a commercial bias and that there is spruce planting being allowed without a requirement to have a high percentage of natural broadleaf planting, and allowing spruce planting too close to ancient woodland. Angela felt the type of trees to be planted must be clarified during planning permission process. Ross clarified that tree planting is permitted by Forest and Land Scotland (the land holding arm of Scottish Forestry) and they issue the licenses (the Council planning teams can only be advised by them). Stan added that NatureScot definitely want to see a wider variety of benefits from planting programs and the inclusion of native varieties, not just spruce.

5. **Islay natural capital project** - Stan was asked to give an overview of this project. Natural Capital is another term for the stock of renewable and non-renewable resources that combine to yield a flow of benefits to peoples, and looks at how these can be provided and how sustainably they are being used and how we support agricultural system in the future. Whilst still being worked out, this will be a reward system for demonstrating good quality management of “natural capital” assets. NatureScot have proposed this pilot project to look at how this will actually work on the ground, clarify what it will reward and what is important to reward to agricultural support. This will be an independent and objective look at how it can work on Islay. The project is awaiting a formal funding decision but it is likely the bulk of work will be carried out in 2022. Stan can provide more information if required. Lucinda asked if this will include the offshore wind farm in Islay? Stan felt no, as this would be a land based model.

6. **Priority Action Topics discussion** - At the last meeting the group came up with priority areas to focus on, the broad topics areas agreed are Messaging and Education, Business, Adaptation Planning and Area group feedback. The suggestions that came forward from the ACPGs were collated and included developing a horticulturally trained workforce, minimising transportation of goods and the role of Argyll & Bute in the hydrogen economy.

Stan suggested the need to make a recommendation to CPP Management Committee for funding to resource an exercise to agree and identify priority areas in Argyll and Bute and create an action plan of what Argyll & Bute should be doing regarding climate change in an area wide strategy. Stan asked the group to consider this.

Lucinda fully supported that suggestion as without looking at the practicalities of how improvements can be taken forward we end up with a “wishlist” that is undeliverable. Ross added his support and noted how it dovetails with the Council strategy on climate change (as a business) and he supported a look at having a baseline check. He noted there is an EV infrastructure Strategy being considered by the Council which he hoped that would be picked up when the review takes place. Ross felt the area did have a role in the hydrogen economy for local haulage and timber / aqua culture industries. He added it would be great to get business buy in for a carbon neutral Argyll and Bute. Ross also felt that “Waste” should be added under Messaging / Education and Business as waste forms 47% of the Council’s carbon footprint from the area (but they are not in control of what is being deposited as waste) and there is a need to look more at how people treat their waste. Sarah said that waste is raised repeatedly at community council level and it is felt that the majority of residents do want to dispose of their waste properly and they need to know how to do that. Stan said that there is a small project with Argyll Countryside Trust looking at waste - they have engaged with the Co-Op to offer food for free that is about to go out of date rather than dispose of it, replication of that across Argyll and Bute would be good. David noted that this is happening in other areas that are benefiting food banks.

Ross suggested that any action plan needs to start by looking at what the highest regional carbon emitters are and he shared the carbon footprint information for the region as defined by the [National Atmospheric emissions inventory](#) (which is used

by UK government). The region emits appx 570000 tonnes of carbon in total. The largest contributor was road transport from A roads (157000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) with road transport on minor roads, domestic fuels, gas and electricity making up the bulk of the remainder. The biggest advantage for this region is the sequestration benefits through woodland and peatland etc (which offsets over 510000 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent).

It was noted that whilst Argyll and Bute region has the lowest net carbon footprint in the UK per head, and although it looks like A&B are not far from being carbon neutral, Stan added that there are other measures such as looking at the carbon footprint of items imported in to the area (that have an impact in the place of production yet are used in our area) and it would be useful if we could include that in the figures in future. Stan added that carbon accounting and measuring is changing all the time, so whilst Argyll and Bute look good now that may change as modelling changes so we must continue to do the maximum that we can do.

Stan felt an action plan would help to pull all existing plans together and look at what is beyond that, beyond organisational decarbonisation plans. Lucinda said to change behaviours there also needs to be communication highlighting the benefits and impacts.

Cathleen suggested the supermarkets should be challenged regarding excessive packaging and that there may be an incentive for the Council to give communities land to be used for food production for local consumption. Ross advised that there is already an Asset transfer process (via the Community Empowerment Act) and that the Council can be contacted to enquire about use of council land (there has already been approaches by groups for land for allotments). The Council is also looking at a Food Strategy (this includes schools having veg patches for use by the school). David advised that groups are being worked with to form "allotment societies" but that there is actually not that much Council land available that is suitable for growing. All available land is put on the council website. Cathleen felt the Asset Transfer process was not easy. David invited Cathleen to contact him at any point to discuss the process and that he is happy to help support any enquiry regarding council land.

Charles felt there is an urgency around what is required and the Council pledge of being carbon neutral by 2045 is too late and asked if this group should put pressure on speeding up the process and challenging targets set to be more ambitious. He added that if there are other regions doing work that is ahead of us then that should be included in the audit / action plan so that we can use it to learn and improve upon. Stan noted there are great examples of what is already being done in Argyll and Bute on the Council Climate [webpage](#).

Action - It was agreed that the CPP MC should be approached for funding. Stan to table a paper with that request to the next CPP MC.

7. **Mission Statement discussion** - Draft words for a group mission statement were put forward by Cathleen at the last meeting. Stan felt the need to include adaptation and making representations to the full CPP Management Committee in the previously noted statement. Charles felt the statement was too passive and was

about increasing understanding rather than taking action. He felt it should be more energising (but did not have any wording suggestions at present). Cathleen felt there should be an inclusion for working in partnership and that the work should include the 17 UN Sustainability goals and be led by the Council. Stan asked for a volunteer to take forward shaping the mission statement - Charles and Cathleen agreed to take this forward.

Action - Charles and Cathleen to draft new mission statement.

Sarah agreed that we need to be talking about working with community groups and co-ordinate Argyll and Bute activity to inform on what is happening. Ross noted that although this CPP subgroup do not have current funding, we can apply for funding so there is no need to view that as a barrier. He also felt that it would not be helpful to name and specific organisation in the mission statement. Although there are crossovers with existing strategies across partners, the vision needs to be generic enough that all partners can sign up for it collectively.

8. AOCB

Climate Financing - David noted that he [Climate webpage](#) has been updated with a funding search to highlight where communities can look for climate funding. That page will be updated on a monthly basis.

9. Date of next meeting is 21 October 2021 at 1000.

CPP CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP ACTION GRID – from 10th September 2021

	Complete		In Progress		Outstanding	<i>Please highlight actions as per traffic light system to show progress</i>
---	----------	---	-------------	---	-------------	--

Date Set	Action	Who	Required by Date
10/9/21	It was agreed that the CPP MC should be approached for funding. Stan to table a paper with that request to the next CPP MC.	Stan	15 September 21
10/9/21	New mission statement to be drafted.	Charles / Cathleen	21 October 21