

Minutes of Climate Action Newtown Open Meeting held on Thursday 16th February 2023

On zoom and in person at 22 Millfields, Newtown

BP

Stephen gave a short presentation on BP's Plan to get to net zero by 2050 or earlier. This 43-page document outlines a credible (on paper) pathway for the oil and gas company to transition to producing and selling energy from renewables, and giving up fossil fuels.

A discussion followed, the main points of which were:

- BP had promised to become "beyond petroleum" decades ago, but had not moved very far down this path
- The Plan could be rejected or modified by shareholders at BP's AGM in May; it was rumoured that some shareholders wanted to slow the transition down
- The market for fossil fuels is demand-driven; hence there is still a lot of work to be done (including by CAN) to persuade people to drive less, switch to other modes of travel, and/or to electric vehicles

It was agreed that BP's Plan to accelerate progress towards net zero should be monitored and that the extent to which other oil and gas majors have put forward credible plans to get to net zero should be investigated (**Action, Stephen**)

CAN Household Survey (carbon footprint)

David reported on how the household survey was progressing; the first part (which covers the basics such as house type and size, household size, types of fuel used etc) is now available on the CAN website and CAN members are requested to download it and fill it in. The second part which covers household energy use will go live next week. Other parts to follow will cover transport and travel, food, and waste reduction. The plan is for the survey to be trialled by CAN members before making it available to a wider group of Newtown households.

David asked for help in framing the right questions and defining the data requirements for the sections on food and waste as he was not an expert in these fields.

While the survey will generate useful data and (eventually) allow CAN to monitor household emissions in Newtown, its main purpose is to make households aware of their energy use and the associated emissions, to enable them to make reductions in a way that makes sense to them. It will therefore play a part in **Welsh Government's National Behaviour Change Campaign** which will be starting soon.

Jeremy pointed out that Welsh Government was now requiring all public sector bodies to produce their carbon accounts. Powys CC has to do one, and will be asking community councils and town councils to do the same. There is therefore scope for CAN to work with Newtown and Llanllwchaearn Town Council on this.

Richard reported that he was involved in a food mapping project in north Powys which included research that might be helpful to David in covering the food section of the survey. David and Richard agreed to get in touch so they could take this further (**Action David, Richard**) dcmarkwell@gmail.com , richardtats@gmail.com

All CAN members were encouraged to visit the CAN website and get familiar with it, and also click on the household survey button and fill in the form. Here is the link: <https://climateactionnewtown.cymru>

The meeting expressed its thanks to David for taking on this crucial and challenging work.

Update on Powys CC Action

Jeremy gave a short report outlining his and Adam Kennerley's new roles as PCC councillors in pole positions working on the climate emergency and the nature emergency respectively. Good to have two CAN members in such influential positions within the County Council. For those who don't know, Powys CC is now run by a Labour/Liberal Democrat alliance with an agreed set of priorities, which include more effective action on the climate emergency.

An external stakeholder group will shortly be established to monitor progress and provide expert input. This group will include, but not be restricted to, members of Powys Action for the Climate Emergency (PACE), of which CAN is a member.

Working groups have also been set up to manage the transition to a net zero Powys. Two CAN members have been co-opted onto the Transport Working Group (Patrick Adams and Stephen Hughes).

Powys CC will be hosting a Climate Change Conference in June this year to publicise its own plans for getting to net zero, and to encourage town and community councils to do the same. CAN will support Newtown and Llanllwchaearn Town Council to respond positively. Mike Childs is a Town Councillor and CAN member and has agreed to act as facilitator in this process.

Actions and Events in 2023 that CAN members might like to support:

- Accessing and completing the Household Survey as it becomes available on the CAN website, and encouraging others to do the same **(Action: all)**
- CAN presence (e.g. manned table) at local events in and around Newtown. Stuart Owen (Open Newtown) has a spreadsheet with all such events listed **(Action: Patricia, Mel, Sharon, Liz Davies and others to be co-opted)**
- Local CAN event timed to coincide with XR manifestation in London in May (with music?). Public liability cover from FoE **(Action; volunteer awaited)**
- Working with PAVO to encourage and support local voluntary sector organisations to help deliver Welsh Government's Behaviour Change Campaign **(Action: Stephen and others to be co-opted)**
- Working with Powys CC to enable four large windfarm schemes to progress which would make Powys self-sufficient in renewable energy. Main obstacle is transmission of electricity around Powys and for export; local transmission network needs investment; electrification of the railway at 25,000v could provide a means of exporting electricity outside Powys **(Action: Patrick Adams and others)**
- Developing a demand-responsive town bus network in Newtown using electric vehicles **(Action: volunteer awaited)**

AOB:

Mike Childs reported that the Town Council is looking for nominations for awards for local activists in various fields, including environmental action. The meeting unanimously agreed to nominate Stephen and Patricia Hughes for an award. Richard Edwards did not vote as he is on the awards committee.