

# Climate and Nature Convention Report 2023



Gedling  
Climate  
Change  
Group



## Climate and Nature Convention Report 2023

18<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Organised by Gedling Climate Change Group



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Climate  
Change  
Group

“

*When ordinary people come together anything is possible.*

*So please do not read this report with “Well we can’t do that” or “That’s not in our remit.” Instead ask yourself “How can I help make that happen?”*

*The alternative is to watch helplessly while the planet hits 3C or more above pre-industrial temperatures and increased flooding and heatwaves in Gedling Borough and elsewhere make life harder and harder for us and our children.*

”



**“Thanks for a stimulating event, scary and motivating”**

## Foreword

While 90 citizens came together in the Civic Centre in Arnold, Nottinghamshire to discuss what needs to be done to tackle the worsening climate and nature crises, the planet sent a stark and frightening message:

November 18<sup>th</sup> was the first day ever that the planet reached over 2<sup>o</sup>C above preindustrial temperatures. 2023 will be the hottest year since records began.

This report represents both a plea and a demand for more rapid and far-reaching action from our political representatives, to both mitigate and adapt to the reality of what these crises will bring – more flooding, more heatwaves, more storms across the world and in our local area. None of us, or our natural surroundings, will be immune from their impacts.

### TIME IS RUNNING OUT

Gedling Climate Change Group are grateful to all the participants for their time, energy and enthusiasm as well as the local community groups who helped mould the event and promote it more widely. We are also grateful to the local Borough Council for providing the Civic Centre with all its facilities to enable the event to take place.

## The Convention

An open invitation to this convention was taken up by 120 local citizens, 90 of whom gave up their day to consider the Climate and Nature Crises. Attendees listened to two keynote speakers, one setting out the science of climate change and the other the awful consequences of global warming on us and our natural world. Then, importantly, participants in small group discussions talked about what could and/or should be done about these crises. It clearly shows that climate and nature are high up the agenda of a growing number of residents.

This was in essence a Community Assembly, a new and compelling way to engage with local people and gather their views. Participants were also asked to vote on ideas they thought were particularly important – thus giving an indication of strength of feeling.

It is now time for politicians to consider these ideas and start to incorporate them into their Carbon Management Strategy and, importantly, agree timetabled and measurable targets for which they can be held accountable.

## The Results

For each area, the total number of votes received is recorded, plus the number of groups who raised the issue in their discussions. Comments in *grey italics* have been added from Gedling Climate Change Group's perspective. All illustrative quotes were taken from convention attendees.

## 1// New Buildings

69 votes  
6 out of 8 groups

All new buildings – private, public, residential and commercial new builds - should be fit to meet the demands of our changing climate.

Higher levels of insulation and glazing, solar panels on all appropriate roofs, a charging point and zero carbon heating systems e.g. heat pumps installed.

- This should be mandatory. *Failure to do this will result in higher costs for the owners, as all buildings will need to be retrofitted sooner rather than later.*
- *National planning and building regulations need urgent overhaul to ensure all new builds are required to meet the highest standards to reduce carbon emissions. Meanwhile many councils are putting these standards in place in their areas.*

## 2// Community Engagement and Public Education

38 votes  
6 out of 8 groups

There was a lot of support for a whole variety of ideas around ensuring that the public were both informed about the climate and nature crises and properly engaged and consulted about solutions.

- We need politicians more visibly committed to the green agenda.
- Achieved through creating a ripple effect for positive change e.g. promoting communication skills for how to talk to people about climate and renewables through use of stories. This was an area that many people felt the local councils were well placed to do much more of as well as enabling grassroots voluntary organisations to do the same.
- These ideas included: setting up systems to offer talks to community groups of all kinds including young people, BAME groups, older people; positive community fun activities; community-led decision making – citizens' assemblies which create informed and better-quality debate and engagement - received significant support; Eco buddy schemes; countering climate anxiety.
- *It took a small local group (Gedling Climate Change Group) to initiate such a well-supported event – use of the civic centre may well have contributed to its success. In addition, GCCG would like to see all local councillors, Members of Parliament and officers receive significant and on-going mandatory training on Climate and Nature issues.*

“Thank you  
for organising  
an inspiring  
event”





### 3// Existing Buildings

34 votes  
5 out of 8 groups

All existing buildings to have relevant adaptations to reduce their emissions:

- Retrofitting: insulation (external or internal), solar panels with feed-in tariffs, green heating.
- There should be incentive grants to encourage this take-up and publicity on the savings that would be made.
- Consider incentivising building owners through increased rates if improvements not taken up. Maybe putting % of inheritance tax to retrofitting homes.
- Turn empty shops into well-insulated, affordable accommodation for young people.
- *Planning regulations should ensure these actions are easier and cheaper and keeping a register of approved contractors would prevent exploitation of customers as the transition is ramped up.*

### 4// Transport

29 votes  
6 out of 8 groups

There were many comments around the need to reduce carbon emissions from the way we travel and plan communities.

- Public local transport use to be increased through better and cheap or free (subsidised) local bus services – so that car use is reduced for short journeys. Ticketing should be integrated.
- No new road building unless it is shown to reduce carbon emissions.
- Improved cycling and walking provision for all new roads and, importantly, where feasible all existing roads.
- Speed limit reductions – urban 20mph and motorways to 50/60mph – reduces emissions and reduces accidents/fatalities. *Reducing urban speed limits would also encourage more people to cycle, especially women, as it makes it safer.*
- Reduce need for car use for transporting children to school. Introduction of School Streets (reducing traffic and parking round schools, especially at drop-off and pick-up times) for primary and better public transport for secondary schools. *This would reduce air pollution for children, the most vulnerable to fossil fuel pollutants.*
- Re-nationalise the railways and reduce fares to incentivise use.
- Fossil fuel for transport should be taxed more, thereby reducing carbon emissions and making other alternatives financially viable. Some support for banning short haul flights. *Aircraft fuel is not taxed at all now and flying creates disproportionately high emissions.*
- More charging points to encourage a move to electric cars.
- Planning communities where everyone has easy access to necessary services. Transition towns.
- Reduce business rates for local shops that source products within 50km away.

“Great speakers - thought provoking”

## 5// Education in Schools

20 votes  
5 out of 8 groups

It was recognised that children influence parents. So ensuring children are engaged in the wider climate and nature challenges can both have a long-term and short-term impact on public opinion.

- What support is available to teachers to communicate about climate change in a way which gives hope as well as communicating the need for urgent action?
- Should it be a mandatory part of the curriculum? *There is a new Natural History GCSE to be launched in Sept 2025, which includes sustainability but it is not part of the core curriculum.*

## 6// Energy and Green Jobs

20 votes  
4 out of 8 groups

There were several suggestions around energy and energy policy – phasing out fossil fuel use and replacing with renewables and nuclear.

- Promotion of community renewable energy ownership and eg Ripple Energy (where individuals can own part of wind and solar farms)
- There was some support for nationalising energy presumably to ensure renewables were prioritised.
- Investment in green jobs should be prioritised.

## 7// Local Accountability

19 votes  
3 out of 8 groups

- All Council strategies, policies and decisions should contain a written Climate and Nature Impact Assessment – this will ensure that councillors take account of how their decisions are compatible with a secure future for citizens. This would provide improved transparency.
- There was also support for the publication of environmental targets monitored by residents.
- Sewage treatment was specifically mentioned as needing urgent action.
- Gedling Borough Council booklet 'If you want to be green' should be updated annually and promoted via social media. The Council should publish this report on their website and social media. *It is acknowledged that Gedling BC declared a Climate Emergency in December 2019 and have a Carbon Management Strategy 2021-30 and aim to be net zero by 2030. However, the plan lacks any meaningful interim targets by which the Council can be measured. This target for net zero only applies to council buildings and there has been no measurement since 'baseline figures' from 2018. It would also not appear to include emissions from building activity and resulting extra housing stock passed through the borough planning process.*



“Really educational and inspiring”



## 8// Controlling Water

13 votes  
5 out of 8 groups

The flooding in Gedling Borough is clearly a big concern for residents.

- Stop approving planning permission for new housing on flood plains.
- Should all houses have soakaways, water butts and reduced areas of paving? Should new builds have water-capturing systems, which could reduce demand for water as well as prevent run-off.
- It has also been suggested we ban artificial grass.
- People raised natural ways to reduce flooding – rain gardens in new developments, introduction of beavers and slowing down stream and river water by encouraging them to meander across flood plains.
- More trees to be planted in the borough. It should be made clear how newly planted trees will be cared for – increasing the survival rates of young trees, especially during drought.
- Water companies should be nationalised.

## 9// Food Waste

11 votes  
3 out of 8 groups

The wastage of food as well as the disposal of food waste generated significant discussion.

- Can we do more to ensure that food from households is not wasted and food from shops is not thrown away but provided to those that need it.
- Are sell-by dates appropriate?  
In addition, could the Council not have a food waste collection from both households and businesses to prevent it going into land fill, causing methane production and instead be a source for fuel for biodigesters?

*“Where are the young people and communities of colour?”*

## 10// Recycling

10 Votes

4 out of 8 groups

- We need a national recycling strategy for improved and more consistent recycling.
- Better and clearer information on what can be recycled could make it easier for residents to recycle more, with the Council promoting this better.
- Re-use also mentioned as well as reducing packaging, especially plastic wrapping and bottles, through a green tax and banning single-use plastic.
- Encourage pop-up repair shops. Move away from consumerist and growth strategies.
- *The time for a wider discussion on our throw-away society is urgently needed. Too much "stuff" is bought and then thrown away rather than repaired – destroying natural environments for the raw materials needed to make them and then creating waste when thrown away or inadequately recycled. What is the Council doing to consider and promote a circular waste economy?*

## 11// Allotments and Community Garden and Greening

5 votes

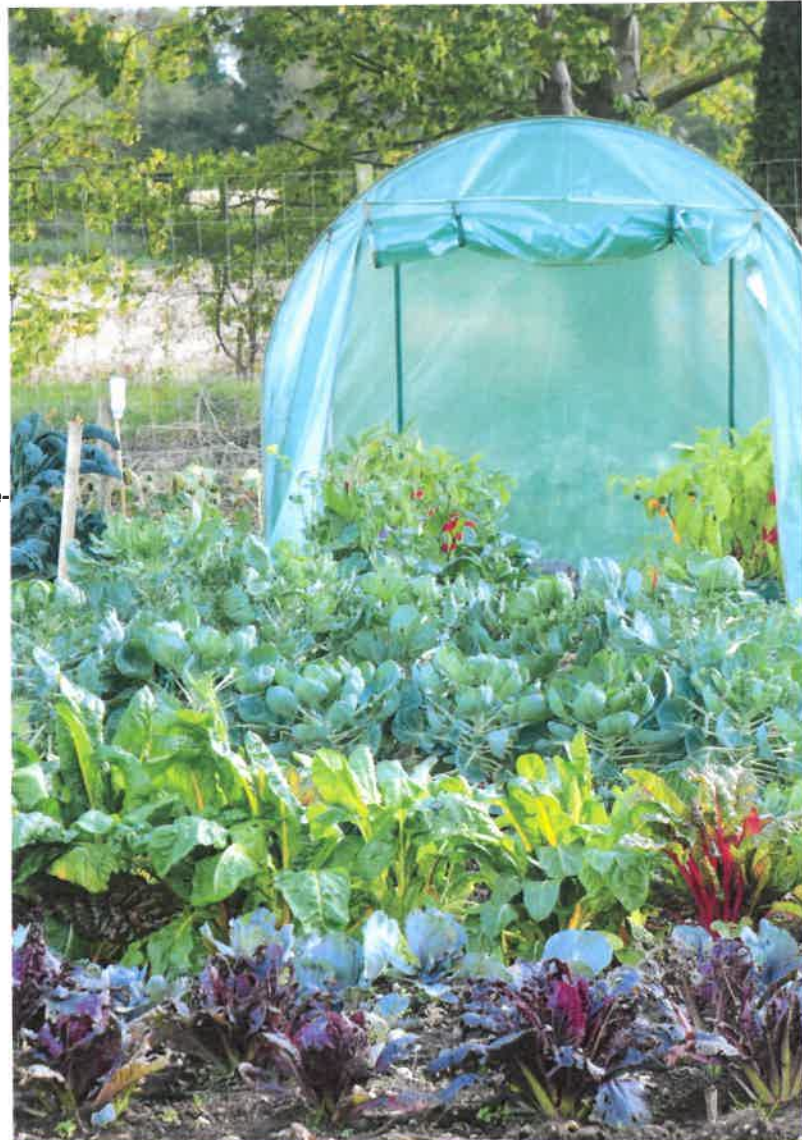
4 out of 8 groups

Allotments, country parks and community gardens and public spaces are seen as having personal as well as wider benefits to society and nature.

- What more can the Council do to promote them, allocate more land for green spaces, including as part of new developments and improve the facilities available at existing allotment sites?
- The wider use of roadside verges and central reservations would improve biodiversity, as would the introduction of swift boxes to some houses.

## 12// Miscellaneous

- Food education and promotion of the health and climate benefits of reducing meat consumption (6 votes, 1 out of 8 groups)
- Change agricultural subsidies to encourage regenerative agriculture. (4 votes, 1 out of 8 groups)



*“Hope a manifesto comes out of it”*



## Closing Comments

While the voting on these issues helps to give a bit of focus on the things that participants thought were particularly important, it is worth reminding readers that everyone had a limited number of votes. Thus, just because an idea scored fewer votes does not mean this is not a useful thing to do or is not supported by many participants.

Please read this in the spirit of it being a catalyst for urgent action and as just the start of the means by which local people can have their say on the biggest challenge that has faced us all. It is incumbent on our local and national politicians, business leaders and citizens to listen, be bold and put in place a liveable future for all of us, all our children and all our grandchildren.

The Gedling Climate Change Group will be continuing to work hard locally to ensure the outcomes of the Convention are pursued. If you like to join us, please contact us at [gedlingcgc@gmail.com](mailto:gedlingcgc@gmail.com)

*“Really great,  
loved the focus  
on action”*





*“Thanks for an enjoyable day - so well organised and constructive”*

# LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION STARTS HERE



Gedling Climate Change Group