



**Sustainable
Wymondham**

**Public Meeting Workshop Feedback
Nov 2023**

Executive Summary



A/ INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Wymondham CIC was set up in 2023 in response to Wymondham Town Council's Climate Emergency declaration, with a remit to co-produce a strategy and action plan for our town to become more sustainable and climate resilient. Our first public meeting, with over 40 attendees, took place on 19th November 2023 at Fairland Hall. It comprised three presentations on climate change, resilience and personal action, followed by group work on identifying existing good practice in Wymondham and what more could be done.

B/ FINDINGS

1/ Water

Only '**rainwater harvesting**' was offered as an example of existing sustainable practice. Suggestions for future actions included: **Increased water collection** e.g. via industrial and domestic roofs); **Improved environmental water management** e.g. storm drains; flood defences; silt clearance; **Nature-based projects** e.g. maintain biodiversity; clearing Becketswell pond.

2/ Transport

Examples of current good practices in Wymondham included the new daily buses to Silfield and train services. Suggested developments focused on **reducing the need to travel** ('keep it local'), **improving and promoting pedestrian and cycle infrastructure** (South Cambridge Cycle network was an example), in addition to **developing community transport** and improving frequency, reliability and **accessibility** of public transport services. Interestingly, nobody commented on e-bikes and e-scooters schemes.

3/ Waste

Only litter picks and '*Clothes Swap - Wild Tribe*' were offered as examples of good practices. Suggested developments included **reusing, recycling and repairing items**, supported by swap-shops / online portal, repair cafes, mending circles and skills training. Notably absent were references to the role of local businesses such as 'refill shops' and charity shops in reducing waste and primary plastics use.

4/ Food

Participants noted the 'allotments', 'vegepod', 'Browick Road Community Orchard' and two refill shops as good examples of existing sustainable practice in Wymondham. Suggestions for further development focused on **increasing access to community fruit and vegetable growing**; reducing waste by **expanding community composting; sharing resources such as garden space** and giving **excess produce to food banks / community pantry**. The role of Wymondham Town Council in championing public space and influencing planning proposals to include growing spaces on housing developments was also highlighted.

5/ Nature

Examples of existing good practices centred on achievements of community-based nature and environment groups (e.g. Greening Wymondham, Tolls Meadow Volunteers, Eco Church, Toad Watch) rather than individual or business-related actions. Many attendees were themselves volunteers. Ideas for future development included **increasing green spaces, community growing** near children's play areas, **developing a tree nursery** from local gardens, **planting Miyawaki forests** and developing a '**nature hub**' to turn ideas into actions.

6/ Energy

Only 'LED lighting' was offered as an example of sustainable and good practice regarding energy in Wymondham. Suggestions for further development focused on **increasing renewable energy on public buildings and new-builds** (e.g. solar panels on roofs and EV charging points) plus **increased access to insulation and apprenticeships to help deliver retrofitting**. Interestingly, no suggestions on reducing energy consumption were made.

7/ Community action, networking and information

Additional comments highlighted the important role of community networking and action in making positive change happen. These included: Wymondham's community spirit; the Town Council's Climate Crisis Declaration; pro-active and information-sharing organisations e.g. Greening Wymondham, Lizard Trust, Eco Churches, WyNG, Farmers Market, Ketts Books, the local library and leisure centre.

Ideas and suggestions for further development included: **developing a network 'hub'** for local organisations to coordinate climate and sustainability information-sharing, **resource and skill sharing** and action; **improving the town centre** to support the local economy and reduce the need to travel; for the **Town Council to promote more climate change information** and groups and other organisations doing 'good things', **enable more diverse voices to contribute** (e.g. a 'citizen's assembly, youth council etc);

C/ DISCUSSION

Future sustainability ideas centred 're-use', 'recycle' (and redistribute) with little reference to 'reduce' in terms of consumption generally. Suggestions for developing sustainability focused mainly on expanding and supporting community-based action to improve and protect natural resources vital to life (especially food and water), renewable energy, insulation, public transport and pedestrian / cyclist access to Wymondham town centre. Interestingly, no reference was made overtly to plastics, nor local e-bikes, / e-scooter schemes. The latter may be due partly to the predominantly older demographic of attendees.

Participants desired better networking, resource-sharing and communication between volunteer groups and also with the Town Council, including the need for a 'hub' to facilitate better planning and coordinated projects and activities. Wymondham Town Council was also seen to have an important role in promoting information on sustainability, resources, events and existing examples of good practices in the town. Further, it was seen as having a key role in developing the inclusion of more diverse voices in shaping the town's sustainability. Indeed the voices of younger people, families and businesses were noticeably absent at the public meeting.

D/ CONCLUSION

The participants in our public meeting shared valuable ideas and suggestions on how our town may become more sustainable and climate resilient. However, it is evident that more needs to be done to engage with younger people, families and the local business community (including the charitable sector) who were under-represented and under-referenced in our workshops and who might raise additional issues not identified by the attendees at our public meeting. Their inclusion will be vital if we are to develop a strategy on sustainability and an action plan to address the likely impacts of the climate emergency that is wider ranging, inclusive, collaborative and hence more likely to succeed.