

Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly Recommendations Report: Executive Summary

How can we in Adur and Worthing collectively tackle climate change and support our places to thrive?

What does this mean for the way we live and our local environment?



Introduction

In July 2019, Adur & Worthing Councils¹ declared a climate emergency. Since then, the Councils have been working hard to address some of the most pressing environmental challenges facing all of us, including climate change, the loss of natural habitats, unnecessary waste and poor air quality. Their aim is to ensure everyone in the community is able to enjoy green spaces and access affordable clean energy and transport.

In 2020, the Councils held a Climate Assembly, and invited local residents to have their say on this important issue. The Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly was the first Citizens Assembly held by the Councils. This report highlights the process and the recommendations that came from it.

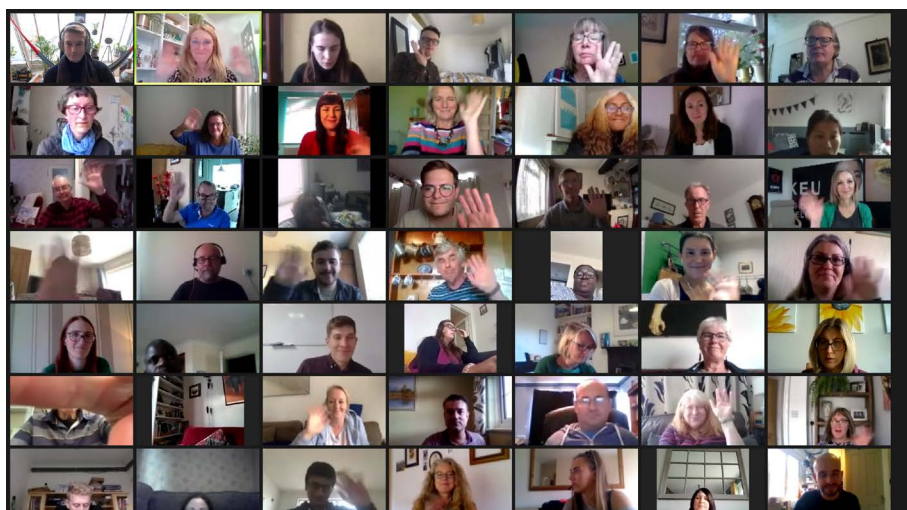
¹www.adur-worthing.gov.uk

Who are the Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly?

The Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly are a group of 43 randomly selected people from the Adur District and Worthing Borough areas. They came together virtually over five weekends between September and December 2020 to discuss how to tackle climate change whilst helping the area to thrive. The Climate Assembly members are:

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Amanda	Geoffrey	Jill	Pamela
Andy	Graham W	John	Patrick
Benjaphorn	Graham D	Kirsty	Peter
Christopher A	Guy	Laura E	Richard
Christopher R	Hannah	Laura O	Shamira
Cody	Heather	Marie	Anne
David	Ian	Mary A	Celina
Denise	Irena	Mary F	Ben
Edmond	Jack	Mike	Sandra
Grace	Jacque	Natalie	Nick
Gemma	James	Oana-Liliana	



Who was involved?



Democratic Society

Democratic Society² (Demsoc) works for more and better democracy, where people and institutions have the desire, opportunity and confidence to participate together. They work to create opportunities for people to become involved in the decisions that affect their lives and for them to have the skills to do this effectively.

Democratic Society led the design and facilitation of the Climate Assembly and compiled this report with support from assembly members themselves.



ADUR & WORTHING COUNCILS

Adur and Worthing Councils (Adur District Council and Worthing Borough Council), in West Sussex, declared a climate emergency. Since then, significant work has been undertaken to develop a strong response to climate change, which is reflected in their ambitious climate-related programme of work³ and the Councils' vision⁴.

The Councils' commitment has led them to work in partnership with the community to deliver the Zero 2030 Climate Conference⁵ and to highlight sustainability work going on across Adur and Worthing through their quarterly online Sustainable AW magazine⁶.

The Climate Assembly is another demonstration of their strength of commitment towards tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

²www.demsoc.org

³<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/sustainable-aw/>

⁴<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/platforms-for-our-places/#platform-3>

⁵<https://futurecologic.co.uk/zero-2030/>

⁶<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/sustainable-aw-magazine/>



Sortition Foundation

The Sortition Foundation⁷ promotes the use of sortition (random selection) in decision making. They were responsible for recruiting people to take part in the Climate Assembly. Their aim was to ensure the Climate Assembly was broadly representative of the diversity of the population of Adur and Worthing.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone involved in making this online Climate Assembly happen. Our sincere thanks goes out to all of the participants, expert leads, guest speakers, facilitators, support team staff and the Advisory Group.

⁷www.sortitionfoundation.org



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Foreword

In July 2019, Adur & Worthing Councils declared a climate emergency. We knew that it wasn't enough for us to focus solely on what action we could take, we needed to engage with the wider community to see what could collectively be done.

That's why we decided to hold a Climate Assembly - our first attempt at a Citizens Assembly. The questions chosen for assembly members to deliberate were intentionally focused on both climate change and on thriving communities, in recognition that many of the issues causing climate change, such as poorly insulated houses, are as much social issues as climate issues.

We had many hopes for this work and have learned a huge amount that we intend to build on going forward. We also had some trepidation, especially given that COVID prevented us from meeting in-person to deliberate on the topic and, given the urgency of change needed, we had decided to shift online to hold a virtual assembly process.

Despite our concerns, we witnessed some extraordinary benefits of holding this process online, including increased digital confidence and digital access for a number of participants, and increased participation for those who would not have been able to attend an in-person event. The creation of smaller group sessions between each large group meeting also enabled relationships to be formed and individual views to be heard that may have been missed in the larger group sessions. We also had a wonderful calibre of speakers who were willing to attend sessions and record expert talks, some of whom would have been unable to take part in a 'live' in-person event.

It was inspiring to witness the dedication given to this process and we are extremely grateful to everyone who played a part in what was one of the first fully-online assemblies in the world. We're especially grateful to the residents who made up the assembly.

The recommendations within this report are testament to the hard work and commitment shown by everyone involved. They not only outline the role for Adur & Worthing Councils but also the vital roles that communities and businesses in the area need to play if we are to make a difference, as well as the role of central government in reforming policy to prioritise the welfare of both planet and people.

We are determined, in partnership with our communities, to take forward these recommendations. Ultimately, the power of this assembly will be the knowledge that the solution came from the community we serve. Adur and Worthing will be stronger for it.



Cllr. Daniel Humphreys
Leader, Worthing Borough Council



Cllr. Neil Parkin
Leader, Adur District Council

Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly: Executive Summary

Adur & Worthing Councils declared a climate emergency and committed to become carbon neutral across Adur and Worthing by 2050 and for the Councils' own buildings and operations to be carbon neutral by 2030. Achieving this goal would only be possible by working closely with the wider community to make positive changes to how people live, work and travel.

The Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly was called as part of the Councils' commitment to strengthen its response to the climate crisis. Assembly participants were asked to consider two questions and make recommendations for:

Q: How can we in Adur and Worthing collectively tackle climate change and support our places to thrive?

Q: What does this mean for the way we live and for our local environment?

How it worked

Following the model for a Citizen's Assembly, the Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly brought together a randomly selected group of local people to learn about climate issues and discuss them together, and then make recommendations about what should happen and how things could change.

Over five sessions taking place between September and December 2020, the 43 residents met to listen to evidence from expert speakers, deliberate and then make recommendations which were formally presented to Adur & Worthing Councils on 12th January 2021. All expert speaker videos are available on the Councils website⁸.

⁸<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/climate-assembly/>

⁹<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/climate-assembly/>

In line with government advice relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19), all sessions took place online.

How residents were selected

Members of the assembly were selected using a two-stage lottery where

- Firstly, addresses were randomly selected for sending invitations to, and
- Secondly, of those people who expressed an interest, another random selection took place to ensure the assembly accurately represented the diversity of the area's population.

Climate Assembly Advisory Group

An independent advisory group was established to oversee the design and implementation of the Climate Assembly. Their role was to provide advice and oversight to ensure the Assembly's plans, evidence and materials were accurate, balanced and unbiased.

Wider engagement

As part of the Climate Assembly, a survey to collect the views of local residents was also carried out alongside five themed focus groups. Further details about the results of the survey can be found on the Councils website⁹.

The Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly Recommendations

The Climate Assembly developed a set of recommendations for the Councils, community organisations and wider stakeholders to consider and take forward. Each of the final recommendations received over 75% support through a ballot vote on the final day.

The recommendations from assembly members of the Climate Assembly fall under six clear themes:

GREEN SPACES & BIODIVERSITY	
1	Support the restoration of natural kelp - promoting the positives and managing the negative effects on the environment and the local community
2	Establish a plan for a network of small community growing spaces, focussed on food production and tackling food poverty
3	Adur and Worthing actively encourage and promote biodiversity by managing rewilding of parks, open spaces, verges, waterways, 'waste spaces' chalk banks and involve partners - for example WSCC, community and businesses
4	To protect, invest in and actively enhance biodiversity in existing outdoor green spaces including community gardens, allotments, nature reserves and orchards and establish more. Ensure these are promoted in and accessible to the local community.
INFORMATION & EDUCATION	
5	The Councils publish widely and act upon their annual carbon audit, share learning, enabling/ incentivising local businesses and organisations to do the same so the whole community are more aware and able to make informed choices
6	Develop New Salts Farm and Brooklands as centres of excellence, educating and engaging residents and schools around key themes, e.g. growing, pollination and biodiversity, recycling, energy use, reducing plastics, sustainability
7	There should be easy to find locations and sources of key information on sustainable practices for residents (e.g. on energy use, green front gardens, travel, local food directory)
8	Collectively influence behaviour by raising awareness of our purchasing power and ability to improve our health and the planet through the food we buy, eat and by reducing the food we waste
9	Influence educational establishments to enhance their outdoor spaces for biodiversity and use them for education about growing vegetables and wild flowers, and the importance of pollinators. Councils (Adur & Worthing and WSCC) should work in partnership with community groups to provide mentoring, support and other resources.

GREEN FINANCE & ENERGY	
10	Adur & Worthing Councils will champion and support the set up of a local community energy company for green and affordable energy which benefits everyone in our area and is well promoted and advertised
11	Actively encourage and incentivise energy efficiency improvements, including insulating and green energy schemes and ensure they are accessible for all homeowners. Engage with private landlords, businesses and local authorities.
PLANNING	
12	Adur & Worthing Councils to encourage and promote planning and development that exceed national standards, must incorporate the highest standards of biodiversity and sustainability and protect environmental standards from compromise by other policy areas or subsequent changes - using conditions and enforcement, and reject applications that do not meet those standards.
TRANSPORT	
13	Promote more cycling by implementing clear and safe travel routes, ensure cycle safety training for all ages and ability and ensure legislative changes are pursued to promote access e.g. through parks
15	Adur and Worthing needs better connected, affordable, accessible, greener public transport and more local, connected communities (both with businesses and local people) that encourages less commuting
WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING	
16	The Councils should set up, in collaboration with the community, more projects like Repair Cafes. Introducing hub(s) for upcycling, repairing, art creation and deliver training to provide skills in repairing/recycling
17	The Councils should collaborate with local allotments/groups to encourage composting. Enable people to compost with provision of free community/residents compost bins
18	Deliver ongoing awareness campaigns to eliminate unnecessary waste by promoting refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and recover. Incentivise everybody in Adur and Worthing e.g. households, businesses, to adopt these principles

The assembly also voted on a 19th recommendation during the ballot vote on day five. It received less than 75% support from members and so was not presented to the Councils at the end of day five.

Assembly members have set out for each recommendation, proposed actions and who needs to be involved in delivery. Further details are in section 3 of the full report.

Members views and voices: highlights

At the beginning and the end of the process, Democratic Society completed an evaluation with assembly members to gather their views and understand in what ways the Climate Assembly had made an impact. Further details are included in section 5 of the full report.

Changing views

Views were more strongly supported after the Climate Assembly



Before 70%

thought the climate assembly will lead to positive changes and will support our place to thrive



After

89.5%



Before 58%

thought Adur & Worthing Councils will act on what comes out of the Climate Assembly



After

76%



Before 33%

felt that Adur & Worthing Councils listen to residents



After

61%

Creating impact and action



83%

have more knowledge
about climate change



83%

have more confidence to
talk about climate change
with others



67%

want to now get involved
in actions to help tackle
climate change

Feelings about taking part



97%

I met people I normally
would not have



97%

I felt included &
supported to take part



97%

I am happy that
I took part



97%

I felt inspired by what
was achieved by working
together



100%

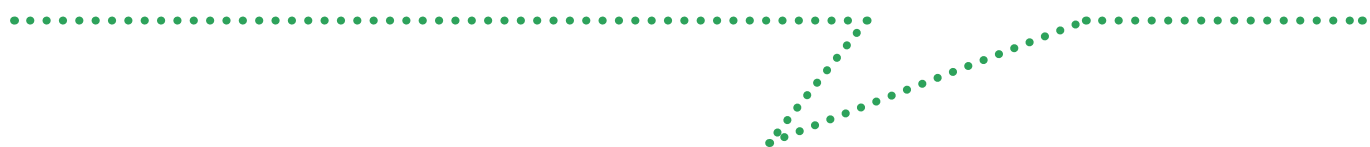
My Micro Group
was a good place to discuss
learning with others



84%

The online platform helped
me feel more connected
with the process


“From a personal growth perspective, the democratic process of sorting through information together to decide collectively what is important at a community level has taught me so much. Learning how to listen, engage, be brave enough to put myself out there and voice my opinion has been an incredibly positive aspect of being a part of the assembly. As for our topic, I will carry many of the points I learned about the climate crisis with me. I now think of my personal footprint on our planet as a literal thing, instead of a concept. This has been life changing. Thank you.”

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“I have gained a **sense of place in my community** and a new hope for its **future**, along with a sense of connectivity to other members of that community.”

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“My assumption that there was little I could personally do to make an impact has totally changed. There are many **small changes** to the way I live my life that I am now doing and if **everyone** did them it would make a **huge difference**.”

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Next steps

Following on from the launch of the recommendations, it is proposed the Councils focus on three key areas:



Develop internal and external stakeholder groups to review and progress the recommendations



Communicate widely about the recommendations and the work that the Councils and others are already doing



Integrating all climate-related work into one action plan for Adur and Worthing under the Sustainable AW¹⁰ umbrella, ensuring considerations around a thriving community

By prioritising these three areas, it is hoped the following will be achieved:

- A celebration and awareness of the Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly, the process involved and the recommendations stemming from it
- Adur & Worthing Councils, Assembly Members and the wider community continue the momentum of this process
- Residents are aware of what the Councils and other organisations are doing, and will do, to tackle climate change and protect our natural environment; and feel supported and able to take actions themselves

For local residents, community groups, organisations and businesses that would like to get involved, further information can be found on the Councils website¹¹.

¹⁰<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/sustainable-aw/>

¹¹<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/climate-assembly/>





Democratic Society

Get in touch with us! We love democracy, participation and new ways of doing government.

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