

Westfield Parish Council



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Westfield, BA3 3BX
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Chairman: Cllr P Wilkinson Parish Clerk: Ms L J Close FSLCC

Established 2011

All Council Meetings are open to the Public and Press

1st February 2024

TO: (a) All Members of the Environment and Development Committee
Cllrs Diana Cooper (Chair), James Cradock, Geoff Fuller, Ron Hopkins (Vice Chair),
James Honess, Eleanor Jackson, Paul Millard, Pat Williams.

(b) All other Members of the Council for information

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Environment and Development Committee** of Westfield Parish Council on **Monday 12th February 2024 at 7pm at the Board Room, Oval Office, Cobblers Way, Westfield BA3 3BX.**

The meeting will consider the items set out below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LJC'.

Ms L J Close
Parish Clerk

Before the meeting there will be a 15-minute public session to enable residents of Westfield to ask questions, and make comments.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given** Council to receive apologies for absence and, if appropriate, to approve the reasons given.
- 2. Declarations of interest and dispensations** Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items, in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct. The Parish Council may consider agreeing a

dispensation, providing the request is put in writing and the dispensation is allowed on the grounds set out in s.33 of the Localism Act 2011.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** – To agree the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 15th January 2024 (**Pages 1-4**)
4. **Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group** Verbal update
5. **Planning applications for consideration (Page 5)**
6. **Planning decisions (Page 6)**
7. **Recreation Ground – Norton Hill**
8. **Recreation Ground – Westhill**
 - Changing Rooms – Verbal update
9. **Waterside Valley**
 - Feedback on the Scrub Clearance (verbal)
 - Permission to close the Public Right of Way during installation of the new footbridge (**Page 7**)
 - Management of the Grassland (**Pages 8-17**)
 - Management of the Overgrown Hedge (**Page 18**)
10. **Events**
 - D-Day 6th June 2024
11. **Creating Town or Parish Nature Action Plan (Pages 19-20)**
12. **Rural EV Charging** Request to install (**Pages 21-34**)
13. **Powering Communities with Renewables** – Training on 22/2/24 (**Page 35**)

To resolve that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

14. **Quotes**
Flowers in Public Places – quote to follow

Westfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Environment and Development Committee Meeting held in the boardroom at the Oval Office, Cobblers Way, Westfield on 15th January 2024 commencing at 7pm.

Present: Cllrs Diana Cooper (Chair), Geoff Fuller, Ron Hopkins (Vice Chair), James Honess, Eleanor Jackson, Paul Millard and Phil Wilkinson

Also attending: Lesley Close, Parish Clerk, Tracey Stephens, Deputy Clerk

Absent: Cllrs James Cradock and Pat Williams

109. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cradock and Williams and accepted.

110. Declarations of interest and dispensation

Cllr Jackson declared an interest in item 4 – Neighbourhood Plan Working Group as she is on the Planning Committee at B&NES.

111. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: The minutes of the last meeting held on 11th December were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

112. Neighbourhood Plan working group

The Housing needs survey, prepared for the update to the Neighbourhood Plan, was circulated. The survey had been funded by a grant from Locality of £8,527. CNB Housing had been contracted regarding the feasibility of their timing to prepare the survey and distribute it to all households in Westfield.

The B&NES Local Plan consultation was also noted.

Resolved: (1) to agree the questionnaire for the Housing Needs Survey and commission CNB Housing at £8,527.
(2) to respond to B&NES advising that the Parish Council welcomes input to the Local Plan.

113. Planning applications for consideration

There were no planning applications to consider.

114. Planning Decisions

The planning decisions were noted.

Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed Dated

115. Somer Valley Links Engagement Report

Cllr Jackson advised that she would attend a meeting of the scrutiny panel for the Somer Valley Engagement Report and would raise the issue of Westfield not being accurately portrayed in the maps. She would report at the next E&D meeting.

116. Recreation Ground – Norton Hill

Legionella Risk Assessment – It was noted that the quotation from Guardian Legionella Services was accepted in the amount of £395 + VAT because it was the quote most tailored to the needs of the Pavilion.

It was noted that the office staff were undertaking Legionella Awareness training to be aware of what to look out for in the regular reports.

117. Recreation Ground – Westhill

Changing Rooms – it was noted that the Condition Survey was to take place on 17th January and the Asbestos Survey was scheduled for 29th January. There was no date in place for the Topographical survey yet.

118. Waterside Valley

It was noted that a grant application had been submitted to WECA for funding the new footbridge.

Wooden footbridges

Resolved: to go to tender for removal of the wooden footbridges and rebuilding of one bridge in, preferably, recycled plastic.

Brick footbridge

Resolved: to seek permission from the Rights of Way Officer for the works to go ahead to renovate the brick bridge.

Scrub Clearance

It was noted that the contractors, M&G Countryside Developments, were to begin the work on 17th January, provided the ground conditions are favourable.

Request from a resident to build a small plateau on Waterside Valley

Resolved: to respond with admiration for the work that the resident is doing on the valley so far and thanking him for being part of the group of volunteers, but stating that the valley is to be kept as natural as possible so no intervention of this kind is appropriate.

Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed **Dated**

119. Parking on the Westfield Industrial Estate

A report was given on the meeting with Highways Officer Sadie Cox-Alcuaz who has advised that she will visit the site and make suggestions to make access to each of the roads on the industrial estate safer.

120. Events

- **Christmas Home Decoration Competition 15th December** – feedback had been given at Parish Council meeting on 8th January.
- **Christmas Lights Switch on 2024** – discussion was held around closing the small side road leading to numbers 2-10 Elm Tree Avenue as it is right in the middle of the event.

Resolved: a Councillor to speak to the residents asking them if they would refrain from driving on that road from 6pm to 8pm on the night of the event, rather than applying for a TRO to close the road for that duration.

121. Dog fouling at Waterside Crescent

A resident's complaint about dog fouling and the response from the B&NES Dog Warden was noted.

122. Jubilee Green

Residents had reported rot and fungus in the trunk of the Cherry Tree on Jubilee Green. B&NES advised that it was in the schedule for assessment this winter and would be checked.

Some coping stones had been removed from the wall around the herb bed at the edge of Jubilee Green.

Resolved: to report damage to Fixmystreet and to remove the loose stone in case of any further damage.

123. Pit Stop Walks in the Somer Valley Walking Festival – Friday 6th September 2024

It was noted that Somer Valley Rediscovered would be leading a family walk during the Walking Festival, as well as the Waterside Walk being led by Cllrs Fuller and Cooper.

It was resolved that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed **Dated**

Westfield Parish Council

124. Quotes

It was noted that the Housing Needs Assessment funding was to be funded by a grant from Localities Technical Support. Following an assessment assisted by the Technical Team at Localities, the quotation in the amount of £8,527 was agreed because it represented good value for money in terms of Consultant hours and the scope of the work.

The meeting closed at 7:58pm

Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.

Signed **Dated**

Westfield Parish Council Planning Applications – FEBRUARY 2024

Date Rec'd	App No	Applicant	Location	Case Officer	Proposal	Response By
16/01/24	24/00157/SOLPA	Mr Dobson	Bridges Electrical Engineers Ltd Unit 8 Second Avenue	Kirsty Pratt	Prior approval request for the installation of 728No. roof mounted solar PV panels with total installed capacity of 323.96kWp	06/02/24 – extension req via email 16/01/24
17/01/24	24/00180/FUL	Mr Mark Durham	15 Cherry Tree Close	Angus Harris	Erection of single storey rear extension	07/01/24 – extension req via email 18/01/24
29/01/24	24/00294/MAR	Mr Alex Morgan	13 St Peters Road	Kirsty Pratt	Variation of condition 2 (plans list) of application 21/01201/FUL (erection of lean to side extension and first floor rear extension)	16.02.2024

Indicates application received since agenda printed

Westfield Parish Council Planning Decisions – FEBRUARY 2024

Date Rec'd	App No	Applicant	Location	Case Officer	Proposal	BANES Decision
22/01/24	23/04088/FUL	Bath College	Norton Radstock College Wells Road	Kirsty Pratt	Erection of temporary classroom following removal of existing greenhouse	PERMIT
25/01/24	23/03260/FUL	Mr & Mrs Smith	Towerhurst 1 Orchard Close	Kirsty Pratt	Erection of detached triple garage	PERMIT
29/01/24	23/04272/FUL	Mr Mezini	3 Jubilee Road BA3 3SP	Ed Allsop	Erection of workshop / storage building in rear garden following removal of existing shed.	PERMIT



Indicates decision received since agenda printed

Parish Clerk

From: Eddie Procter <eddie_procter@bathnes.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 January 2024 15:15
To: Parish Clerk
Subject: RE: Permission to undertake work on the bridges on Rights of Way at Waterside Valley

Hi Lesley

Yes, we are happy for this work to proceed.

As the PROW will need to be closed to the public during the works then a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) will need to be applied for. You can find further details and apply online at:
<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/streets-and-highway-maintenance/public-rights-way/public-path-orders/temporary-path>

As these are parish council works to improve the PROW then the TTRO application fee will not be charged. Please note that eight weeks' notice needs to be given when applying, to give time for the legal notice process to be completed.

Kind regard

Eddie Procter
Public Rights of Way Inspector – Western Area

Environmental Services
Bath and North East Somerset Council
Telephone: 01225 477650/ mobile 07773 176028
Email: eddie_procter@bathnes.gov.uk
www.bathnes.gov.uk
Twitter: www.twitter.com/bathnes

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Please consider the environment before printing this email

From: Parish Clerk <parishclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Sent: 16 January 2024 11:03
To: Eddie Procter <eddie_procter@bathnes.gov.uk>
Cc: Deputy Clerk <deputyclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Admin Assistant <adminassistant@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Phil Wilkinson <phil.wilkinson@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Diana Cooper <diana.cooper@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: Permission to undertake work on the bridges on Rights of Way at Waterside Valley

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not follow guidance, click links, or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Morning Eddie,

Waterside Valley Grassland Management Advice



Mark Smith
FWAG SouthWest
mark.smith@fwagsw.org.uk

January 2024

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide grassland management advice for 14ha of land at Waterside Valley, recently acquired by Westfield Parish Council to safeguard it as a community asset. Information is provided on grassland management systems, along with costs for restorative and maintenance field operations, and details on government funding streams that could be used to offset ongoing management costs.

This report has been compiled following a site visit on 8th November 2023 with members of Westfield Parish Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council employees.

1.1 Site Overview

- Approximately 14ha of unmanaged agricultural land purchased by Westfield Parish Council in 2021.
- Predominantly permanent grassland bordered by a stream in the south and housing to the north, with areas of developing scrub and some in-field trees.
- Grassland has not been managed for approximately 11 years, prior to this it was grazed by horses.
- Much of the site is south facing with a moderate slope that becomes steep in places.
- Crossed by three Public Rights of Way with other informal paths created by users from the local community.
- Designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest in 1986 for its variety of semi-natural habitat and notable species.
- Recent surveys classified the grassland as modified i.e. little botanical interest. Small areas retain some grassland indicator species.

1.2 Public Consultation

- Key findings from a recent public consultation were that the site is well used and valued by the local community, that the grassland nature of the site should be retained and that it should be managed for nature with improvements for access.
- Livestock grazing was not popular with the public, so the initial focus should be on cutting management, with grazing as a longer term objective following further public engagement.

2 Restoration management

The lack of management over an extended period has resulted in a sward that is very thick with a high predominance of coarse grasses such as cocksfoot and a deep layer of thatch. Injurious weeds such as nettle and broad-leaved dock are also widespread. In an ideal situation, this would be cut and removed in the form of hay or haylage. However, the contractor consulted was not prepared to do this due to the risk of hidden objects in the sward and the damage this could cause to machinery. Disposing of any bales would also be very difficult as they would have a very low nutritional value and therefore would not be wanted by livestock farmers. Other than grazing the sward off, the only other option is to top it. Grass toppers are more robust than mowers and therefore less likely to get damaged.

Grass topping is a field operation that most farmers undertake to maintain the productivity of grassland and to control problem weeds. When undertaken regularly, it leaves little plant material

behind and has no adverse impacts on the grass layer. This would not be the case at Waterside Valley. Here there is a large amount of grass to cut which will sit on top of the underlying sward in a thick mulch. Whilst this will rot down over time and the underlying grass will grow through it, it will introduce nutrients to the sward. The impact of this will be increased grass growth in the short term and a possible slowing of wildflower regeneration. However, the effects of this should be short lived and this is a necessary field operation to get the fields to a point where restorative management can be carried out. Subsequent hay cuts will remove any nutrients introduced through topping.

When to cut – The best time of year to cut the sward would be as soon as ground conditions allow in late winter/early spring, before the grass starts growing. This will enable a quicker breakdown of the mulch during the warmer months. Cutting later than the end of March should be avoided if possible, as this could cause disturbance to ground nesting birds and other wildlife.

How to cut – the aim is to reduce the cut grass to small pieces to enable it to breakdown quickly. This can be achieved by driving at a slow forward speed. If the cut material is still quite long, consider running over this again with the topper. It is important that the contractor is made aware of this.

Contractor cost – average contractor cost for topping grass is £46.13 per ha, or £48.46 per ha for long grass margins, which is more typical of the sward at Waterside Valley. Actual costs might be as much as double this due to the steepness of slope, the lower forward speed required and if two cuts are needed to break the mulch down.

3 Maintenance management

The fields will initially be managed by cutting and baling while further public consultation is undertaken regarding reintroducing grazing to the site.

Conserved forage is either made into hay, haylage or silage:

- Hay is the traditional method of conserving forage and is typically cut from July onwards. The cut material is then left to dry on the ground before baling. The length of drying time depends on the weather conditions but usually takes anywhere between three and seven days.
- Silage is generally cut much earlier in the season, with fields cut up to three times a year. It only requires 24 hours drying time and is then either baled and wrapped in the field or carted away in trailers to be ensiled in a silage clamp.
- Haylage sits between the two. It is cut throughout the growing season, dried for two days then baled and wrapped. Both silage and haylage are cut at a younger growth stage than hay.

When and how you cut will depend on what the objectives of cutting are. In traditional farming systems the objective is generally to produce as much forage as possible, with the type of cut dependent on what the feed will be used for.

The short term objective at Waterside Valley is simply to remove the seasons grass growth. The easiest way of achieving this would be with an annual hay cut taken from the end of July through to late August. This type of approach to management is often employed at sites used by local communities and the general public, as it only involves one management operation a year and so has little impact on users. It is also the cheapest option and so is attractive where financial resources are low.

It is important that fields are cut as late in the season as possible, as if they are cut early there will be too much regrowth before the grass stops growing in late autumn. This will then die off over winter

and produce a thick thatch, which over time will impact on forage quality and therefore the financial value or saleability of the crop. Wildflower diversity will also suffer, where this is an objective.

An annual cut approach to management would not suit a silage or haylage system, as these crops typically require multiple cuts a year due to the sward being cut at a younger growth stage (see also potential income below). Cut hay could however be wrapped and made into haylage if the weather conditions are not suitable for hay making, i.e. rain is forecast, but this would have a low feed value.

3.1 Contractor costs for hay making

Hay making comprises a number of field operations: mowing, turning, raking and baling.

The average contractor costs for these operations are:

- Mowing £36.60 per ha
- Turning £21.13 per ha X 2 turns
- Raking £22.07 per ha
- Baling (150cm round bales) £4.69 per bale

The average yield for a poor sward managed without fertiliser is around 3 tonnes per ha but can be as low as 1 tonne per ha. If we assume a yield of 2 tonnes per ha this would produce 5 round bales per ha (round bales weigh approximately 400 kg). The cost for baling would therefore be £23.45.

- **Estimated total cost per ha for all field operations £124.38 per ha** (does not include costs for transporting hay off site if this is required).

3.2 Potential income

The financial value of hay cut in late season will be low due to its poor feed value. Interest in it will be further reduced due to the amount of nettle and other injurious weeds in the sward. It is therefore unlikely that you will be able to sell the hay initially.

With cutting management in place, the quality of the sward should improve over time, making the hay more marketable. The British Hay and Straw Merchants' Association lists the current market value of big bale hay as £86 per tonne. Prices are lower during the summer during the summer months when there is more product on the market. During summer 2023 the price was around £75 per tonne.

Hay from the site would need to be sold off field as there are no barns to store it in, so it will need to be sold when prices are lower. At a yield of 2 tonnes per ha, the potential income would be £150 per ha.

NOTE: it will not be possible to make hay in southern most field as it is too steep and has ant hills.

3.3 Silage and haylage market

Selling the grass crop as silage or haylage is unlikely to be a practical option for the site due to the frequency of cuts required. Although it is not a fast growing and high yielding sward, a minimum of two cuts would be needed to produce the quality required. Aftermath grazing, or early spring grazing would also be necessary to ensure the crop can be cut at the correct growth stage. This would be essential for silage production. Haylage could just be cut twice but this may affect quality.

The current market value for round bale silage is around £26 per bale. Contractor costs for making and wrapping round bale silage vary depending on the yield per ha but are about £16 per bale for lower yielding sites. At this stage it is difficult to assess the yield for Waterside Valley, but if we work

on a conservative figure of 8 bales per ha spread over two cuts this would give a profit of approximately £80 per ha, which is higher than for hay.

However, it is important to note that interest in making silage is likely to be very low as the swards are not really suited to this: silage is a high feed value product and is generally made from swards containing productive grasses and legumes.

4 Grazing management

It has been established through public consultation that reintroducing grazing is not a popular management option. However, this remains a longer term objective for the site.

There are a number of reasons why reintroducing grazing will be advantageous:

- The southernmost field is too steep for tractors to operate safely so will need some form of management intervention to prevent it from scrubbing over. If it isn't grazed it will need to be cut by hand, requiring ongoing financial outlay. Grazing will be cost neutral at worst and could potentially generate a small income.
- Cutting hay, or any forage crop, is reliant on good weather, which is no longer guaranteed with our changing climate. In summers with higher than average rainfall there is a distinct possibility that you may not be able to cut for hay. The chances of this happening will be higher for sites like Waterside Valley as it will be at the bottom on the contractors list, who will prioritise their commercial clients. Grazing will provide a back up if this happens.
- There may be years when you cannot find anyone to buy or take the hay such as in good summers when there is lots of good quality hay on the market, or in summers following that when livestock owners may still have stocks left over from the winter. Because there is no barn storage on the site you will either need to not cut the fields, or cut them and stack the bales on a level part of the site and sheet them down. Storing bales on sites used by the general public carries its own risks e.g. injury due to falling from bale stacks, fire.
- Having access to grazing livestock will be beneficial in areas where botanical enhancement is the objective. Managing the site with a single hay cut will keep the sward in reasonable condition and may lead to some botanical enhancement. However, a single cut will not provide ideal conditions and better results could be achieved with cutting followed by aftermath grazing, as this will produce better growing conditions for wildflowers in the spring and early summer when competition from competitive grasses is high.
- Grazing will provide better diversity of habitat. Shutting the fields up for hay will provide many benefits for wildlife such as safe nesting and sheltering habitat and insect rich foraging habitat for breeding birds. However, introducing grazing would provide a more varied sward structure and therefore more niches for wildlife to exploit.

4.1 Type of grazing livestock

In most situations the choice of grazing livestock will be limited to cattle and sheep, which is largely determined by what stock are available in the surrounding area. Cattle are considered to be better for conservation grazing purposes as they are less selective grazers than sheep, which actively target flowering plants with subsequent impacts on species diversity. Where botanical enhance is the objective, I would strongly advise against sheep grazing during the spring and summer months. Sheep do however make a good job of tidying swards up at the end of the growing season so could be used over the winter months.

It is unlikely that anyone would want to graze sheep on the site due to the public access and the risk of dog worrying. This is not so much of an issue with cattle as they larger animals and generally more docile, so landowners do not worry about this so much. The main concern for landowners when grazing sites away from the main holding is bovine tuberculosis (bTB). Landowners have learnt to live with this on their own holdings but there are implications with movement restrictions when grazing off lying sites. This is likely to limit the number of interested graziers.

4.2 Income from grazing

The average rental income for an annual grazing licence is £151 per ha. Whilst this would generate useful funds, charging for grazing will severely limit the number of people interested in grazing the land. A more common approach for sites like this is to offer the grazing free of charge and then enter the land into a Stewardship scheme to generate an annual income (see section 5).

4.3 Reducing opposition to grazing

The proposal in the public consultation to reinstate grazing was not popular, which is understandable given there has been unrestricted access to the site for a considerable length of time. As outlined above, the site could be managed simply with one hay cut which would help to retain the grassland nature of the site, something highlighted as desirable by the public. There is however a risk with relying on just hay cutting as a management tool, as described in section 4. This simpler approach to management would also miss opportunities to further enhance the value of the site for biodiversity and deliver outcomes that help to address the ecological emergency.

The ultimate decision on how the site is managed will need to be made by the management group and may be influenced by what animals are available if interest in grazing the site is low. However, this should still be an inclusive process involving consultation with site users and the public to set out the proposals and current thinking and to get their feedback on this. Conservation grazing can take many forms and has progressed in recent years to include new grazing systems such as mob grazing. Whilst practitioners understand grazing systems, the detail will be confusing to most of the public. Consultation does not need to include the finer detail about grazing systems and should avoid the use of jargon. There are essentially three questions that it would be useful to get feedback on:

1. Should the land be grazed by a small number of animals over a long time period? With this approach livestock will be kept on site throughout the whole of the grazing season but the impact on the public would be low as the small numbers of livestock would only occupy a small part of a single field at any one time. This approach is used at Stoke Park in Bristol. The cattle here get used to the public and are easily avoided as they tend to congregate together in a small area.
2. Should the land be grazed by a larger number of animals over a shorter time period? With this approach livestock will be on site or in individual fields for a much shorter length of time, but the impact on the public would be much higher during this period.
3. Should grazing be restricted to certain fields or cover the whole site?

Either of the two grazing management strategies will be suitable to deliver botanical enhancement and structural diversity. As a minimum the southern field will need to be grazed due to the uneven topography here. From a conservation grazing perspective, aftermath grazing should be introduced to the other fields.

Some people may be apprehensive about the reintroduction of grazing due to a fear of livestock, particularly cattle. It would be worthwhile discussing this during the consultation process to reassure

them that cattle will be chosen carefully to ensure they do not pose a risk to public safety. The following measures should be taken to reduce risk:

- The site should only be grazed by store cattle and youngstock, including dairy replacements.
- The site should not be grazed by suckler cows with calves at foot as they can be very protective and charge dogs when they come near.
- Where possible, the site should be grazed by the same group of animals for the entire season or multiple seasons. They will then become used to people and dogs and ignore them rather than being inquisitive.

Keeping people and livestock apart at Waterside Valley is problematic as a number of public rights of way cross the fields. Fencing these off is not practical and would make site management more difficult as all the fields have multiple footpaths. It would be possible to fence off a wide strip alongside the stream for at least part on the length, which would give the public somewhere to walk that is free of livestock. This would make fencing along the stream boundary easier, as it would be a straight run rather than trying to fence around meanders. It would also make management of the scrub edge much easier.

5 Grants and funding

Agriculture is currently going through a transitional period with area based payments being phased out, to be replaced by payments for delivering public goods. These payments are accessed through environmental land management schemes and there are different schemes to suit different farm types and situations.

At the recent Oxford farming Conference on 4th January 2023 the Environment Secretary set out how schemes will change over the next 12 months. This included making access to the schemes more streamlined and widely available, along with the introduction of new options and higher payment rates.

Land management grants could provide a valuable source of income to help with the reintroduction of livestock grazing and ongoing habitat enhancement. Below is an overview of the schemes and options that you could consider.

The two main schemes to consider are The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Mid Tier Countryside Stewardship. There is also Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship which focuses on high priority sites such as SSSI's and priority habitats. This is a competitive scheme unlike SFI and Mid Tier which are non-competitive. It is presently understaffed with very few applications being successful as the scoring threshold is set very high. It is unlikely that Waterside Valley would meet the current scoring threshold as it does not have any designated sites or priority habitats. I would therefore recommend SFI and/or Mid Tier for the time being. Nearly all Higher Tier options are now available in the Mid Tier so you will not necessarily miss out on any funding.

Additional staff are being recruited to Natural England to enable them to process more applications so you could look at Higher Tier again in the future when the scoring threshold is lower. This could tie in with the expiry of an SFI/Mid Tier agreement which run for three years. Note: Mid Tier is currently a five year scheme but we assume this will change to three years to bring it in line with SFI.

Before applying for the schemes you will need to register your land with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and get a Single Business Identifier (SBI) number. This is a reasonably straightforward process.

To be eligible for the current SFI scheme you need to have been a Basic Farm Payment Scheme (BPS) eligible farmer on 16th May 2022 or 15th May 2023. However, this is due to change and the scheme will soon be made available to a wider range of landowners. You do not need to be a Basic Farm Payment Scheme eligible landowner to apply for Mid Tier. Land owned by Parish Councils is eligible for the schemes.

The application process for SFI and Mid Tier is due to change. There are currently separate application processes for SFI and Mid Tier, with SFI being open all year and Mid Tier from February to July only. The two schemes will merge in summer 2024 into one single application, allowing you to pick a mix of SFI and Mid Tier options.

The options listed below are those currently available. New options continue to be added, with the next release due by the summer. The new application process will allow you to enter additional options into your agreement at the end of each scheme year. You could then start conservatively with just a few options and add to this when you become more confident or when livestock become available to manage the site.

5.1 Options for grassland

Mid Tier

GS2 permanent grassland with very low inputs £151 per ha. All land parcels would be eligible for this option. **Potential annual income £1963** <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/permanent-grassland-with-very-low-inputs-outside-sdas-gs2>

GS17 lenient grazing supplement £28 per ha. Can be stacked on top of GS2 and should be deliverable as the site will be grazed at a low stocking density. Cannot be used on field parcels cut for hay. All land parcels would be eligible for this option. **Potential annual income variable** depending on how many fields are cut for hay <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/lenient-grazing-supplement-gs17>

GS6 management of species rich grassland £646 per ha. This can only be used on fields identified as priority habitat grassland. None of the fields will currently meet this criteria but may in the future with botanical enhancement. The payment rate has been reviewed and has increased considerably. <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/management-of-species-rich-grassland-gs6>

NOTE: GS7 restoration of species rich grassland is likely to become available in Mid Tier. The payment rate for this is also £646 per ha. Some of the fields may be eligible for this option. Report to be updated when we have clarification on this.

SFI

LIG1 manage grassland with very low inputs £151 per ha. **Potential annual income £1963**. This is essentially the same option as Mid Tier GS2 but has more management flexibility. Graziers may prefer this. It will deliver the same environmental outcomes.

5.2 Capital grant funding

Capital grants are currently available either as part of a Mid Tier application or they can be applied for on their own as a stand alone capital only agreement. This means you could apply for capital grants even if you do want to enter the land into a Mid Tier agreement, or if you want to delay an application. Capital grants will be available through the joint SFI and Mid Tier application process.

The main grant that you might want to apply for is fencing. There are two fencing options that would be applicable:

FG1 fencing £6.34 per metre. This is for post and plain steel or barbed wire
<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/fencing-fg1>

FG2 sheep netting £7.47 per metre. This is for post and stock netting. Although stock netting isn't required when grazing with cattle you should consider using it in case the site needs to be grazed by sheep. <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/sheep-netting-fg2>

Fencing materials have increased significantly in the last few years and the grant will not cover the full cost of erecting fencing when using contractors. The current average contractor price for erecting stock netting is around 50% more than the grant provides and 30% more barbed or plain wire.

FG12 wooden field gates £489.90 per gate <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/wooden-field-gate-fg12>

A water supply will be required if livestock are introduced to the site. Grants are available for water troughs, concrete bases to sit them on and pipework:

LV7 livestock troughs £152.92 <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/livestock-troughs-lv7>

LV8 pipework for water troughs £3.31 per metre <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/pipework-associated-with-livestock-troughs-lv8>

LV3 hard bases for livestock drinkers £179.15 <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/hard-bases-for-livestock-drinkers-lv3>

There are various grants for managing or planting hedges:

BN5 hedge laying £13.52 per metre <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/hedgerow-laying-bn5> The average contractor cost for laying hedges is £17 per metre.

BN6 hedge coppicing £5.33 per metre <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/hedgerow-coppicing-bn6>

BN7 hedge gapping-up £17.22 per metre <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/hedgerow-gapping-up-bn7>

BN11 planting new hedges £22.97 per metre <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/planting-new-hedges-bn11>

Parish Clerk

From: Sonia Parsons <sonia@cpreavonandbristol.org.uk>
Sent: 22 January 2024 17:51
To: Paul Millard; Parish Clerk
Cc: Deputy Clerk; Admin Assistant
Subject: RE: Photos Waterford hedges

Hi Paul and Lesley,

Thanks for the info. It definitely sounds like to hedgerow will be a more difficult one to lay than I originally thought due to the size of the trees and thickness of the hedge. It would certainly require several professional hedgelayers to make a start on it in one day, which unfortunately we can't assist with this year due to budget constraints. If the parish has a decent budget for hedgelaying I can recommend a hedgelay to you, although you may be looking at £300-£500 for a days work, and if the hedge is challenging will require several days. There are 2 alternative courses of action that I can think of: 1) If you would still like to keep it as a hedge, have it coppiced (this will still need a professional but will be much cheaper as it is quicker). Or 2) leave the hedge to just grow into a line of trees, and maybe see if a hedge could be planted elsewhere on the site with a plan to lay it in 10 years time. I think this is what I would do as the hedge is so wide it clearly has plenty of benefits for wildlife, so maybe just keeping on top of the blackthorn suckers to stop it getting too out of hand would be best.

Happy to help if you have any other questions.
Thanks,
Sonia

From: Paul Millard <Paul.millard@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 7:55 PM
To: Sonia Parsons <sonia@cpreavonandbristol.org.uk>; Parish Clerk <parishclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Cc: Deputy Clerk <deputyclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Admin Assistant <adminassistant@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: Re: Photos Waterford hedges

Hi Sonia

Trees and hedges are not my specialty however the original hedge made of hawthorn and other trees has now grown to a height of 20-30 feet, possibly higher, this includes the hawthorn that has grown into trees. Both hedges in places are now up to approximately 20 foot wide in places made up of mainly hawthorn and brambles and elder. Without cutting your way into the centre of the hedge you can't really get any idea of what would be involved in laying them.
I hope this is helpful.

Regards
Paul

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Sonia Parsons <sonia@cpreavonandbristol.org.uk>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 1:07:01 PM
To: Parish Clerk <parishclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Cc: Paul Millard <Paul.millard@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Deputy Clerk <deputyclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Admin Assistant <adminassistant@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>
Subject: RE: Photos Waterford hedges

What is a Parish/Town Nature Action Plan?

A Parish or Town NAP is simply a way for parish and town councils to plan the action they will take to help nature in their area. They are intended to help parish and town councils identify their existing assets for nature and opportunities for restoring nature in their area. Opportunities may exist on land they own and arise through engaging with residents and communities, businesses and local landholders.

In this document the council have provided ideas for how to develop and deliver a NAP. A template for a NAP is provided in Appendix I: A template for a NAP, although parish and town councils are not expected to strictly follow this, and there is flexibility to design plans to best suit the needs of local residents.

This work builds on the concept first developed by South Gloucestershire Council. For examples of completed plans by parish and town councils, visit South Gloucestershire Council Local Nature Action Plans ([hyperlinks](#)).

For those interested in developing a combined 'climate and nature action plan'; Frampton Cotterell's Climate and Nature Action Plan ([hyperlinks](#)) is a good example of this. In 2023, the council published a document ([hyperlinks](#)) that includes some additional guidance and resources on actions to address the climate emergency. **Parish and Town Nature Action Plans: Guidance for Parish and Town Councils** January 2024

SECTION 2: CREATING A PARISH OR TOWN NATURE ACTION PLAN

Those struggling for resource to develop a NAP are encouraged to consider funding officer time using the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) ([hyperlinks](#)).

Working in partnership

The most effective NAPs will be developed in partnership with local expertise and community groups, securing buy-in from as many people and organisations as possible. Organisations that could be useful to work with include:

- • Neighbouring town and parish councils
- • 'Friends of' groups and volunteer groups
- • Local nature groups and action groups
- • Local and regional charities
- • Local businesses
- • Local landholders
- • Resident groups
- • Youth organisations such as: scouts, guides and youth clubs
- • Sports clubs
- • Local faith groups
- • Local experts
- • Bath & North East Somerset Council

This list is by no means exhaustive and there will be other people or groups that could be involved. Appendix IV: Local Organisations and Groups you could work with' lists some local groups that you might be interested in working with, depending on your area. Parish and town councils might want to form a partnership group to develop the NAP. This should bring together a range of representation and expertise appropriate to the area but should not be too large.

Parish and Town Nature Action Plans: Guidance for Parish and Town Councils
January 2024

Stakeholders and communication

There will be a broader range of stakeholders (those with an interest in the development of the NAP) who will need to be engaged and communicated with.

It is important to consider the level of interaction that will be needed with different stakeholders. Those with more interest in the NAP and influence on the actions that will be delivered will need to be the most actively engaged.

Stakeholder mapping tools like the one shown below can be used to help scope and plan engagement. Low Stakeholder Interest		High Stakeholder Interest
High Stakeholder Influence	Satisfy and Influence	Collaborate
Low Stakeholder Influence	Inform	Show consideration

Parish Clerk

From: Tim Middleton <hello@ruralevcharging.co.uk>
Sent: 21 January 2024 17:18
Subject: Electric Vehicle Chargers in the Parish
Attachments: FAQ Rural EV Charging.pdf; Rural EV Charging.pdf

Hello,

I was wondering if you would consider allowing public electric vehicle chargers to be installed in your Parish car park land? This would be at no cost to you and you would receive a rental income for each installed charger.

To give you some context, I currently work for a large county council deploying Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers for them and on behalf of other Local Authorities including Town and Parish Councils. I have been negotiating EV contracts for 7 years so I fully understand the opportunity and indeed specific challenges that Town and Parish Councils face. To have a wider impact, my wife and I set up a small business matching EV chargepoint operators who are looking for land, with smaller landowners.

We work on your behalf to make sure you get a rental payment at market value from the chargepoint operator who pays to install, maintain and operate the chargers for the contract term. The Council wouldn't be required to pay for anything and we only work with reliable, ethically minded chargepoint operators.

Our website provides more information and I have attached a FAQ sheet here and a few slides about us.

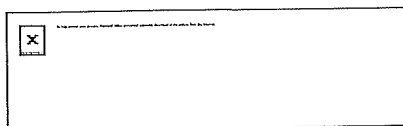
Website: www.ruralEVcharging.co.uk

Please do let me know if this is of interest. I would be happy to chat this through to answer any questions you might have or can give a short presentation to councillors.

Many thanks indeed,

Tim

Tim Middleton



w: www.ruralEVcharging.co.uk

e: hello@ruralEVcharging.co.uk

Frequently Asked Questions

Why would you want to install Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers in rural locations?

The move to electric vehicles is building real momentum with petrol and diesel cars being phased out by law. To enable that to happen, charging infrastructure must be installed where it is needed most.

Rural communities often get left behind in infrastructure investment but tend to rely more on driving with less access to public transport. Providing reliable, accessible chargers for residents and local businesses in rural areas is regarded as critically important infrastructure for the new electrified future.

What is a chargepoint operator?

Chargepoint operators are companies that install and maintain Electric Vehicle chargepoints. They can be existing fuel retailers but more often they are new entrants looking to provide infrastructure to support the transition to EV's. Charging an EV can be quite different to refuelling a petrol or diesel car and so new opportunities exist for them and landowners.

Who pays for installing and maintaining the chargers?

The chargepoint operators will fund all the works and retain ownership of the chargepoints. Therefore they will arrange for maintenance, servicing, insurance and deal with any issues that may arise. If the units are vandalised or accidentally damaged then the chargepoint operator will arrange for the repair. A phone number and email address will be provided to report any damage or issues with the chargepoints.

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Contact us: hello@ruralevcharging.co.uk

How do the chargepoint operators make money?

The chargepoint operator will sell electricity and make a small margin on each kWh sold.

How much money will we be paid?

This would depend on the location but typically an annual land lease fee will be paid to you by the chargepoint operator. Chat to us and we can give you some more specifics based on your location and market value at the time.

How long will the contracts be?

Generally speaking, the chargepoint operators invest considerable amounts of money into a location and they need time to recoup that money and hopefully make a return. Therefore contracts tend to be around 15 - 20 years. This is not always the case, they can be shorter or longer depending on a variety of factors. Often the longer the contract you can agree to, the higher the income will be to you. We know this market very well and will help to get best value for you as a landowner.

What is the role of Rural EV Charging?

The chargepoint operators are looking for locations to install their chargers but finding the land, winning procurement tenders, negotiating contracts and building relationships takes time and knowledge.

We are experts at this having done so on behalf of local authorities, community groups and private landowners for the last 7 years (about as long as the market has been going for public chargepoints).

We liaise with landowners and help guide you through the process. We investigate the location in the first instance and discuss options with you,

as the land owner, negotiating with the chargepoint operator on your behalf.

We ensure a fair deal for both parties at market value and make sure we only work with market leading chargepoint operators who install the best equipment to the highest standards.

How do you make money?

We ask the chargepoint operator for a small cut for supporting them and you through the process.

What is an Electric Vehicle (EV) charger?

An electric vehicle chargepoint looks similar to a petrol pump but instead delivers electricity to an EV. Although the technology is evolving quickly, it is currently not possible to refuel in as little time as at a petrol pump nor do many EV drivers need to. For some users, charging an electric vehicle may require a shift in mindset away from gorging on fuel to grazing more frequently on electricity.

There are several chargepoint types available and each has the ability to charge vehicles at different speeds, measured in kilowatts (kW). These range from a 3 pin plug or 7kW home chargepoint right up to what is called 'ultra-rapid' charging - generally available on the motorways and designed to provide up to 100 miles of range in 5-10 minutes.

What type of chargers will we get?

It depends a little on the location and the chargepoint operator, but typically they look to install 50kw chargers and 7kw.

How many parking bays will we have to allocate for EV charging?

Again, it depends a little on the location and the chargepoint operator, but typically they look to install in between 2 and 6 bays. We can discuss

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this though depending on your preference. It is worth noting that the bays should then become solely for exclusive use of EV's charging up.

Will we need to sign any terms and conditions or a legal agreement?

Yes, we will require all landowners on whose land the chargepoints are to be placed to sign a legal agreement and a lease with the chargepoint operator. This will protect both parties and set out the terms in easy to understand, clear language.

Although we ensure contracts are fair and easy to understand we understand you may want legal advice. If required, we can signpost you to experienced legal professionals used to dealing with similar arrangements.

Which chargepoint operators do you work with?

We work right across the market and have extensive experience and relationships with a range of suppliers offering lots of different equipment and services. However, we are very picky and only work with the best. When the time comes we can discuss this with you, gather references and show you some of their work.

What if the charger provider goes out of business?

In the unlikely event that happens it will be simple to swap to an alternative supplier. This is because we make sure that the chargepoint operators only use chargers that can be easily taken over by another chargepoint operator.

We do this by making sure they work to a set of standards called The Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP). If they were to default, a new chargepoint operator could come along, replace the sim card in the unit and begin running that kit as their own within a day.

Who sets the price of charge?

The chargepoint operator. It is important that they can react to market prices, wholesale energy costs and allow for a profit margin.

Unfortunately charging on public infrastructure is always going to be more expensive than charging on a driveway. Factors such as VAT differences, infrastructure costs, stringent maintenance and safety requirements and the cost to install in the first place all lead to a higher cost per kWh for the end user. However, this often still works out at less than petrol and diesel and there are things chargepoint operators wish to use such as cheap off peak tariffs to bring that cost down - something particularly useful for local residents.

How will the end user pay for their charge?

The chargepoints have a publicly available payment mechanism. This includes a mobile app and RFID card reader. On faster chargers they accept contactless card payments too.

Who provides the electricity?

There are two options:

- 1) The electricity is brought in from a new connection to the grid. If this happens then the chargepoint operator will take responsibility for that connection and will pay the electricity bill and standing charge directly. This is often a good thing for the landowner as that connection has value beyond the end of the contract. It could be used for future technologies such as heat pumps. Improved grid connections can increase land value in certain situations.
- 2) The electricity is taken from the existing supply on the land (often from an existing building). The party responsible for paying the electricity bill to the utility provider will continue to do so but power consumption will inevitably rise - leading to higher bills. This will

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then be repaid to you by the chargepoint operator.

Does my location need to be available all the time?

Ideally access will be 24/7 to maximise the times that the chargers can be used. However, depending on the location, shorter opening hours may be acceptable to the chargepoint operators. For slower speed 7kw charging it is more common to charge overnight but for rapid charging it is less likely that a resident will wish to charge then. We can advise on this and talk you through the options even if you are unable to offer 24/7 access.

What happens if the land use changes or we are unsure what will happen to it?

We advise only entering into a contract if you are fairly confident the land usage will remain consistent. The chargepoint operator will ask for that certainty and the contract may ask for the landowner to repay them their costs for any years left on the contract.

However, we understand things change and the chargepoint operator can be flexible if we move the kit to a compatible location if that is an available option. We can help with that discussion.

Do we need planning permission?

Usually planning permission is not required, however in some specific instances it may be, such as if it is located within two metres of a public highway or is within a conservation area. The local Planning Portal advice will help to determine if your location will require planning permission but if you are unsure, we will help with this too.

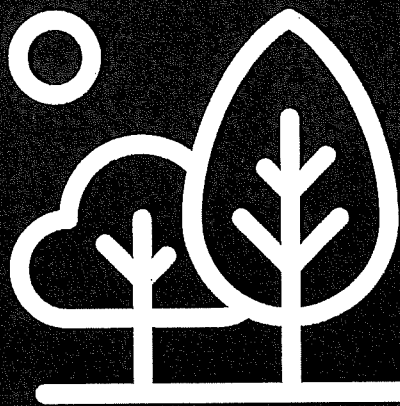
How long will the process take?

We will work quickly to investigate and market your land to the most appropriate chargepoint operators. However, they will likely want to

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Contact us: hello@ruralevcharging.co.uk

receive a quote to connect to the grid which can take 8 weeks. Additionally, finalising contacts and then the install are subject to their own requirements. We generally expect installations to have occurred within 6 months of you first making contact with us.



Rural EV Charging

We help local community groups and landowners to install EV chargers for their community at no cost to them and to share in the income.

Who are Rural EV Charging?

We are a wife and husband team passionate about bringing Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers to local communities. With 7 years of experience negotiating and managing EV chargepoint contracts on behalf of Local Authorities, Community groups and landowners we understand the needs of local communities and know the best chargepoint operators who can make that happen.



Local Charging

We are looking for locations to host some Electric Vehicle chargepoints for use by the public and businesses.

We will consider all locations but we generally work with:

- Parish Councils
- Village Hall Associations
- Community groups & buildings
- Places of Worship
- Educational settings
- Hospitality
- Retirement Properties
- Resident Associations

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Fair Contracts

The chargepoint operators fund all the works.

They retain ownership of the chargepoints.

They will arrange for maintenance, servicing, insurance and deal with any issues that may arise.

As landowner you are paid an income

Contracts are typically 15 years long, to give time to earn back the high investment cost. However, this is flexible so please chat to us.

www.ruralEVcharging.co.uk

Expert Guidance

We investigate the location in the first instance and discuss options with you.

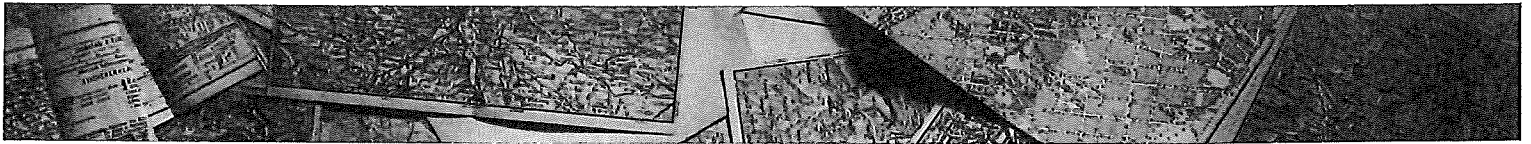
We negotiate with the chargepoint operators on your behalf ensuring the best deal at market value.

We help guide you through the process.

We only work with market leading chargepoint operators who install the best equipment to the highest standards.

www.ruralEVcharging.co.uk

Do you have a location in mind?



Please get in touch for an informal chat.

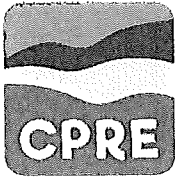
Email: hello@ruralEVcharging.co.uk

For lots more detail about how it all works, please
visit us at:

www.ruralEVcharging.co.uk

Parish Clerk

From: Phoebe Barker <phoebe.barker@cpreamonandbristol.org.uk>
Sent: 22 January 2024 14:28
Subject: CPRE Workshop Invitation: Powering Communities with Renewables



The countryside charity
Avon and Bristol

Hello,

On behalf of CPRE Avon and Bristol, we'd like to invite you to attend our upcoming event that may be of interest to you.

Powering Communities with Renewables: A CPRE Workshop

On the afternoon of the 22nd of February, CPRE Avon and Bristol will be hosting a workshop in Bristol to talk to community groups, town and parish councils, and CPRE supporters in the West of England about how we can support their ambitions to transition to renewable energy.

The focus of this workshop will be how communities can plan for renewable energy projects in their area based on our award-winning 'Community Energy Visioning' programme and our [Rooftop Renewables campaign](#).

We will examine the factors that inform decision-making on renewable energy, the barriers to implementation, and how to overcome them.

We want to make renewable energy accessible and attainable for all. So, we are reaching out to groups that show an interest in the climate crisis, the environment, and clean energy – to personally invite you to this event.

The workshop will be hosted by the Community Energy Visioning lead Andy Tickle, and there will be short presentations from CPRE's Head of Policy and Planning Paul Miner, Marion Britton from the West of England Combined Authority, and Will Houghton and Marianne Brown from Bristol Energy Cooperative (BEC).

There will be an opportunity to discuss your personal experience with likeminded individuals and a chance to network with people from other environmental, climate, and community groups in the area.

The workshop starts promptly at 12:30pm on Thursday, February 22nd at the Engine Shed next to Bristol Temple Meads Station, and will close at 3:15pm. A light lunch and hot drinks will be provided on arrival.

If you are interested in attending, please find more information and book a space on our ticketing page:

[Powering Communities with Renewables: CPRE Workshop Tickets, Thu 22 Feb 2024 at 12:30 | Eventbrite](#)

Spaces are limited so book now to avoid disappointment!

