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# 10. How to get involved

As outlined in the Introduction this is the first annual review following on from our main report. By setting out a clear framework and defining a vision for each area we hope to help engage the wider community to ensure there is a clear understanding of the scale of the problem alongside the options and opportunities to address each issue. The question that remains is how we make things happen; how we turn vision into action.

The **Zero Carbon Dorset** project is open to everyone, led by volunteers and has opportunities for people with different skills and experiences to get involved; helping with organising our events, collating case studies, preparing reports, creating videos, general administration etc. If you haven't already, please sign up to receive information about our reports and events via this link.

You can also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

However, our fundamental aim is to encourage people to take action in their own communities; ultimately, we would like to see some form of community-based climate action group in every town, village and suburb, working with other groups and special interest organisations together with county-wide coalitions like **Dorset CAN** and **Sustainable Dorset**. To support this, we can attend meetings in person, or on-line, to talk about our project and how it can help inspire community action - just email us at [ZeroCarbonDorset@gmail.com](mailto:ZeroCarbonDorset@gmail.com) and we look forward to joining your conversations.

## Our plans

During 2023 we aim to continue to host webinars and look to broaden appeal to the wider community, using our social media and YouTube channels to reach different groups and provide a platform to those normally excluded from discussions and decisions. We also aim to use more visual aids, such as the Dorset 2030 image, to promote conversations and seek funding to do more, particularly in education and outreach, rather than always relying on volunteers.

Woven through all the above is the desire to keep telling stories; stories of those showing what can be done, both within Dorset and further afield where so many places are rising to the challenges, such as the retrofit revolution in Manchester, pioneering community energy in Bristol, creating gardens from fly-tipping hotspots in Hounslow and others in this great story from Positive News<sup>1</sup>.

We're particularly looking forward to co-hosting the first Dorset COP in September 2023 to which all community groups will be invited to send representatives. This will be Dorset's very own opportunity for the community to have its say on the climate and ecological crises. By bringing together a wide cross section of community-based groups from across the county, we hope to raise awareness of the need and desire to act locally, in a way that puts people at the heart of decisions and is socially just.

## Talking personal action

In the context of a global crisis, the value of just one person changing their habits is often questioned. There are many who argue the most effective things you can do is to make your elected representatives, and others in positions of power, know you expect them to act on the science and, at every possible opportunity, only ever vote for those committed to effective action. Former US Vice President Al Gore encourages people to ***"Use your vote, use your***

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*voices, use your choices*". And while a fundamental aim of ZCD is to make more people *use your voices*, the power of influence, awareness raising and encouragement when you *use your choices* is very powerful. We list a few of these below.

### Discover your own carbon footprint.

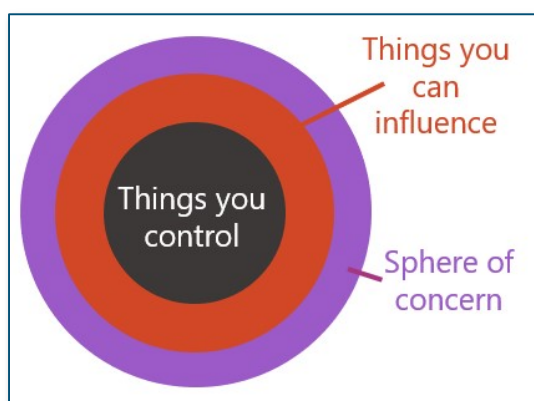
In 2020, the average carbon footprint of a person living in Dorset is 4.5 tonnes. But there are two things to remember about this figure. First it is an average so some people will emit more and some less. Generally wealthy people emit way more than those less well off. Second, it is an underestimate because the figures do not include emissions from air travel or those from manufacturing and transporting consumer goods (most of which is now outsourced to other countries, often with dire social and environmental consequences (for example, go to Ethical Consumer<sup>ii</sup> for information on brands). So, for you to understand how you can best address your personal impact, we suggest your starting point is to calculate your own carbon footprint. There are various on-line carbon calculators, such as this one at Carbon Footprint<sup>iii</sup>.

### Adopt a 1.5 °C lifestyle.

The following table provides some suggestions on how you can reduce your environmental footprint without costing you the earth. It is not an exhaustive list but we hope it is a good starting point. There are lots of online resources and books that provide tips on how to save money and the planet, such as this BBC video<sup>iv</sup> and Jen Gale's website; Sustainable(ish)<sup>v</sup>. The good news is that many of these things are also good for your physical and mental health and wellbeing, such as spending time in your local park or down by the sea.

One thing to remember is to have some fun with this and recognise we are all on a net zero journey and not to beat ourselves up if we do not manage to live the perfect sustainable lifestyle all of the time. This is normal, as life sometimes gets in the way and we live in a society hard wired to encourage unsustainable activity.

One way to think about taking action is to adopt the 'Sphere of Control' model (below).



Start with what you can control yourself, such as reducing energy/water use or joining a local community group and then look at who you can influence to change as well, such as family, friends and colleagues. The trick is to avoid spending time in the sphere of concern, worried about the enormity of the crises but not actually doing anything to tackle the problem. This can then lead to eco-anxiety and a feeling of helplessness. By taking control of your actions you can achieve a sense of empowerment and spiritual wellbeing.

## Where to go for help and advice?

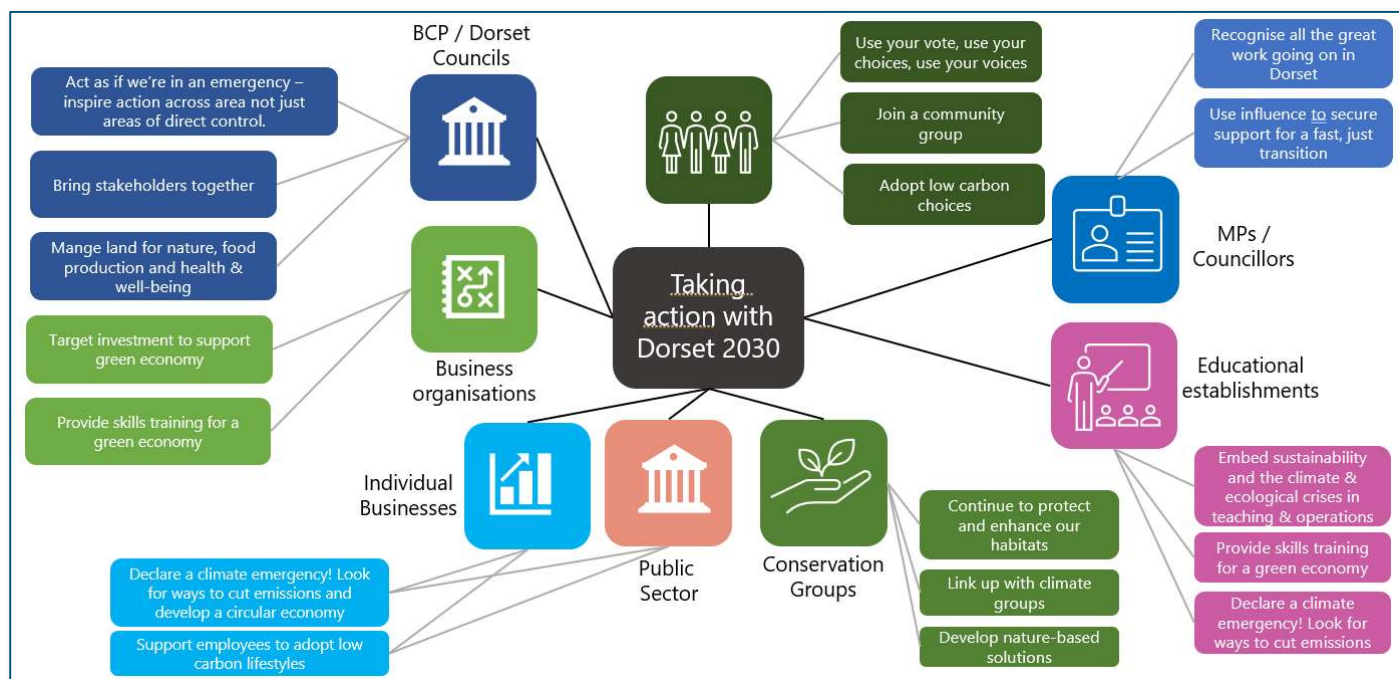
You can find help and advice on-line, such as the **Energy Saving Trust**<sup>vi</sup> or contact your **Citizens Advice** for residents of BCP<sup>vii</sup> and Dorset<sup>viii</sup> Council areas. There's also support at the **Sustainable Dorset Hub**<sup>ix</sup> and **Dorset Community Action**. Both **BCP**<sup>x</sup> and **Dorset**<sup>xi</sup> **Councils** set up on-line support for the cost-of-living crisis and there is also advice on the UK Government website<sup>xii</sup> on whether you qualify for a government grant to help install energy efficiency measures. You can also contact your energy supplier to see if you qualify for financial help.

Some of the ideas below are already well known and the list is not exhaustive, however, we hope it serves as a useful reminder of some of the options available at different costs.

Zero Cost	£	££	£££
<p>Educate yourself &amp; others.</p> <p>Join a community group (or form your own if one doesn't exist).</p> <p>Write to your Councillor/MP.</p> <p>Start a conversation at work.</p> <p>Limit your showers to 4 mins.</p> <p>Fill kettle to number of cups required.</p> <p>Adopt a plant-based diet and/or reduce meat/dairy.</p> <p>Reduce flying.</p> <p>Walk or cycle where possible.</p> <p>Switch car journeys to the bus or train.</p> <p>Car share where no other options exist.</p> <p>Put lid on saucepan.</p> <p>Vote.</p> <p>Fit a loo hippo.</p> <p>Switch off items on standby.</p> <p>Volunteer.</p> <p>Use your library.</p> <p>Reduce - Reuse - Recycle</p> <p>Turn down thermostat &amp; boiler temperature.</p> <p>Stop buying fast-fashion.</p> <p>Spend time in nature.</p> <p>Eat what you buy and reduce food waste.</p> <p>Shop local.</p>	<p>Fit draught excluders.</p> <p>Fit curtain linings.</p> <p>No internal flights.</p> <p>Fit LED lights.</p> <p>Garden for wildlife.</p> <p>Charity clothes shop.</p> <p>Repair items.</p> <p>Use zero waste shops.</p> <p>Buy Fairtrade.</p> <p>Fit water butt(s).</p> <p>Fit window film as secondary glazing.</p>	<p>Roof/cavity wall insulation.</p> <p>Energy &amp; water efficient appliances.</p> <p>Double/triple glazing.</p>	<p>Switch to an electric car.</p> <p>Install a heat pump heating system.</p> <p>Install solar panels &amp; battery storage.</p>

## Engaging with the wider community

The following illustration provides an indication of what various individuals and organisations can do to tackle the climate and ecological crises.



## In summary

If you've made it this far, **thank you!** If you've found the review interesting, please share with others. As noted in the chart above, one of the most effective ways we can get out of this mess is to educate ourselves and others. The **Climate Book** by **Greta Thunberg** and **How to Save Our Planet** by **Professor Mark Maslin** are two helpful, easy-to-read books on the subject. There of course many more exploring the issues in more depth.

The climate and ecological crises can appear overwhelming but collective action builds hope.

The more people who get involved and make changes, the more the pressure grows on our leaders to follow public opinion with the policies and actions needed to accelerate the progress to net zero emissions and save nature. There is evidence that supports the notion of *social tipping points*,<sup>xiii</sup> suggesting that not everybody needs to be actively campaigning, but if at least 25% are on-board a critical point is met and the political, economic and social conventions move to supporting a new way of doing things.

The changes needed are dramatic, but there are times in our history where changes of similar magnitude have been made, here in the UK the response to World War Two and the dramatic societal and political changes immediately following this are two examples that come to mind. If we work together, we can once again deliver the changes our point in history demands of us.

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- <sup>i</sup> <https://www.positive.news/society/best-places-in-uk-for-positive-change-in-2022/>
- <sup>ii</sup> <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>
- <sup>iii</sup> <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx> or WWF <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/>
- <sup>iv</sup> [https://youtu.be/cY\\_A4\\_Nih5c](https://youtu.be/cY_A4_Nih5c)
- <sup>v</sup> <https://www.asustainablelife.co.uk/>
- <sup>vi</sup> <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/>
- <sup>vii</sup> <https://www.citizensadvicebcp.org.uk>
- <sup>viii</sup> <https://citizensadvisedorset.org.uk/>
- <sup>ix</sup> <https://www.sustainabledorset.org/>
- <sup>x</sup> <https://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/Communities/Cost-of-living-help/Cost-of-living-help.aspx>
- <sup>xi</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/cost-of-living-help>
- <sup>xii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency>
- <sup>xiii</sup> <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aas8827#con2>