**Lancashire Community Climate Action Forum**

Wednesday 17 May 2023

Edge Hill University, Ormskirk

**REPORT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

* Following consultations between Lancashire council representatives and a multi-stakeholder group led by Prof Christopher Dent (Edge Hill University), the first **Lancashire Community Climate Action Forum** event was held on 17 May that brought together over 160 people from almost 90 organisations from across the county. These were mainly community-based organisations involved in different aspects of climate action.
* The main aim of the event was to capture Lancashire’s ‘community voice’ on climate action on a scale never before achieved, and subsequently find an organisational way forward of mobilising this ‘community voice’ over the longer-term to help advance the county’s broader efforts on climate action in collaboration with Lancashire’s councils and political leaders. This includes collaborative efforts to help realise the climate, environment, community and other priorities of the [Lancashire 2050 Plan](https://www.lancashire2050.co.uk/media/939097/l2050-web.pdf).
* To meet the above aims and develop a stronger collective capacity for Lancashire’s community organisations to work as a more effective partner with Lancashire’s councils, political leaders and others on climate action, the **Lancashire Climate Action Network (LancsCAN)** has been created as a consequent outcome of the 17 May Forum event. We expect this new Lancashire network to grow and develop over the months and years to come. The LancsCAN website in currently in development that will provide the main organisational, communications and resource hub for the Network.
* All three Lancashire universities – Edge Hill, Lancaster and UCLan – are working together to support LancsCAN’s development, drawing upon their own institutional assets and capabilities in collaboration with Lancashire’s community organisations. The three universities are exploring funding options to secure financial support for future LancsCAN events, collaborative projects, other activities, website development and management.
* This is a long-term plan. We are aiming to make LancsCAN a growing and sustainable network community and collaborative partner. UCLan will host the next Lancashire Community Climate Action Forum event sometime in 2024, and possibly Lancaster University in 2025, with more to follow every year at different locations around Lancashire. A LancsCAN Leadership Team will be created based on representation from community organisation, local council and university members that will help drive forward the Network’s development.
* In late June 2023, Prof Christopher Dent contacted Lancashire County Council to outline the main outcomes of the 17 May Forum event and suggest an initial meeting to open up a consultation dialogue with Lancashire’s councils and political leaders on how the new LancsCAN network can establish collaborative links with them. There will be an initial conversation between some of LancsCAN’s leaders and the Lancashire Climate and Environment Officers group (of local councils) on 2 August 2023 that we hope will be the start of a useful and wider dialogue process.

**WHAT THE FORUM SOUGHT TO DO…**

* Understand the goals, problems and challenges of Lancashire’s community organisations working in some way on climate action efforts.
* Share good practice among event participants and explore new ideas on developing collaboration and mutual support.
* Explore how participating community organisations can establish new forms of collaboration and can mutually support each other.
* Provide expertise from also participating specialists working on different aspects of climate action and community engagement.
* Feedback ‘community voice’ outputs from this climate action focused event to Lancashire’s councils and political leaders as they implement the [Lancashire 2050 Plan](https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/organisation-and-partnerships/lancashire-2050/).
* Consider follow-up activities after the event, such as creating a network of participating community organisations and the climate action linkages between them.

**HOW THE FORUM WORKED…**

After an opening plenary session introducing the day event, participants engaged in three Activity Sessions of just over an hour in length on average. There were five groups of participants for each Activity Session (roughly 30 each group), every group being led by a Moderator and small team of supporting Facilitators. This included a Student Facilitator that helped upload participants’ contributions onto the assigned [Miro](https://miro.com/) page board for each group. In every Activity Session, participants sat around tables working in small groups to respond to three task questions, as noted below:

Activity Session 1 (Where are we now, and where do we want to be?)

1. What has worked well up to now in achieving your organisation’s climate change and other related goals?
2. What could have worked better?
3. What would your organisation like to achieve in the next 3 to 5 years, and what could be reasonably done in the next 12 months or so?

Activity Session 2 (Pathways to achieve our goals)

1. What is your organisation doing to achieve its short-term and long-term goals?
2. What does it need to achieve those goals?
3. What are the main hindrances and constraints it faces? How could it best overcome these?

Activity Session 3 (Coming together to move forward)

1. Who could we collaborate with others to help achieve our goals, and what would that collaboration look like and involve?
2. As an outcome of this first Forum event, there is a plan to create a Lancashire network community of organisations like your own to help facilitate and develop such collaboration. How could such a network best serve your organisation’s goals and future work?
3. How might your organisation engage with or support this network?

The Miro page board content generated by each of the five groups across the three Activity Sessions were then analysed, this being summarised in the section below, combined with relevant comments also made in the post-event survey feedback.

**WHAT THE FORUM PARTICIPANTS SAID…**

MAIN CHALLENGES THEY FACE:

* Recruiting volunteers and new members as well as generating public engagement and interest in climate action
* Establishing new connections and partnerships with other organisations with shared or similar climate action and other goals
* General funding shortages and resource constraints, while acknowledging the current difficult financial environment faced by both community organisations and local councils.
* The need for community organisations to improve their local political engagement and partnership with councils.
* Having to work increasingly to short timescales on funding opportunities and project deadlines.
* Funding schemes that encourage competition rather than collaboration between community organisations.
* Securing more technical advice, support and assistance from experts and other organisations.
* Sometimes having to navigate complex council systems, to find relevant departments and officers to work with or contact.

PATHWAYS FORWARD:

GENERAL

* Scaling up climate action across Lancashire’s community organisations generally and being able to see (measurable) aggregations of such activity to encourage further progress.
* Seeing the connections between different aspects of climate action and how they can work together. For example, the links between biodiversity loss and climate change.
* Helping bring about public behavioural and lifestyle changes on climate action on various fronts such as energy, food, transport and mobility, the appreciation, protection and reclamation of green and blue spaces.
* More succession planning within community organisations with long-term goals and clear plan on who will take on roles over the long-term.

NETWORK-BUILDING AND COLLABORATION

* Develop stronger community organisation network links across the county on climate action, to better develop collective resources (e.g. on training, skills development, ideas and knowledge assets generally), share good practice (e.g. through case studies) and mutual support.
* Foster a sense of community-building and alliance-building among Lancashire’s community organisations on climate action through LancsCAN. To this end, LancsCAN members should all agree on a set of shared aims and objectives for the Network.
* Develop joint strategies and projects with others (e.g. a sustainable community food strategy and a community energy alliance) and develop mechanisms to expand connections with other community organisations, relevant bodies and experts.
* Work closer with Lancashire’s universities on various climate action fronts. Get them more involved with community organisations. This can include setting up student internship positions, expert consultancy services and other knowledge exchange activities.
* In a mentoring context, create information packs for new community organisations such as on baseline data/information, contacts, guidance links and basic training.
* Create ‘anchor organisations’ that help create holistic communities working in particular climate action areas in sub-network arrangements.
* Connecting up with other similar county-based or city-based initiatives on community climate action across the UK (e.g. via Klimate Konnect) and within the North West England region.
* To the above end, also developing LancsCAN’s links to other Lancashire or local region networks on issues of common ground (e.g. the Lancashire Rotary Clubs and Groundwork’s Northern Network project) and other local initiatives like the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

WORKING WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

* Community organisations to foster closer and more organised collaboration with Lancashire’s councils, including establishing stronger communication channels with them.
* Working more effectively with local councils to help keep up better pace with changing (local) regulations. At the same time, recognising that many policies are designed at the national level, and that local councils and community organisations both have to work in that same policy environment and a central government determined pace of change.
* Better understanding of local council climate strategies and plans including how they are formulated (including through public consultation processes) and the impact of their policies and actions on community organisations.
* Following on from the above, how community organisations can work more closely with local councils on the future development and formulation on the Lancashire 2050 Plan, especially on its environment, climate, communities and place priorities.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

* Building on the already well-established work of the Lancashire Schools Sustainability Forum and other relevant initiatives and organisations, further enhance youth and schools engagement, including organising more youth-oriented climate action events and activities across the county. This could include a *Lancashire Youth Climate Conference* to be organised in early 2024.
* As well as schools, expand engagement with other youth-based organisations like Scouts/Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, etc.
* Organising more actions and events aimed at young people that help them see themselves as ‘agents for change’ on climate action and sustainability more generally.

BUSINESS

* Chamber Low Carbon and other existing business members of LancsCAN to help engage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular with the new Network and become part of it.
* Encourage business to become more involved in community climate action projects across Lancashire, including sponsorship and technical support, e.g. GA Petfoods and Bretherton Energy Partnership. In addition, advice/guidance on green finance options and instruments would be useful.
* More collaborative advocacy work with local business, such as mitigating supermarket food waste.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

* LancsCAN members to collaborate together on joint applications for funding new projects and other activities.
* Exploring different funding options, such as crowdfunding, business sponsorship and co-organising future festivals to help fundraise for community organisations.
* More consistency and continuity of practice, to be achieved through dependable volunteerism and funding.
* Develop a volunteers database for LancsCAN members.

SOCIAL MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

* Smarter use of social media and developing clearer important messaging to the public and other organisations. For example, on linking climate action with community wealth-building, green social prescribing, jobs creation, skills development, etc.
* Better analytical tools (e.g. on carbon footprint calculator of actions and activities) and (baseline, local, benchmark, monitoring) data to help make the right decisions and assessments on actions.
* Investigate how new emerging forms of artificial intelligence (AI) can help develop resources and collaboration.

MISCELLANEOUS

* Organise a webinar series for the new Network to showcase the climate action work of different members.
* The new Network to also organise carbon literacy courses and other forms of climate action related training.
* Helping provide local disadvantaged people with better, more affordable sustainable choices, e.g. food and transport.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS FOR LANCASHIRE’S COUNCILS AND POLITICAL LEADERS:

* More ambitious goals on climate action, such as achieving a county-wide net-zero target date of 2030.
* All of Lancashire’s councils to declare a climate emergency and have in place their own climate strategy or action plan by the end of 2023.
* LancsCAN to offer Lancashire’s councils with a new, useful communication channel with local community organisations collectively on climate action matters, especially at the county-level.
* Consider various ‘climate jury’ options for Lancashire, or parts of it, similar to [Lancaster City’s Climate Change People’s Jury](https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/sites/climate-emergency/lancaster-district-people-s-jury) and [Kendal’s Climate Change Citizens Jury](https://www.kendalclimatejury.org/) both held during 2020.
* Push for a food waste action plan (infrastructure) following Environmental Act 2021.
* Lancashire-wide award schemes for local community organisation work linked to the environment and climate priorities of the Lancashire 2050 Plan.

**LancsCAN and PLANNED NEXT STEPS…**

* The new **Lancashire Climate Action Network (LancsCAN)** has been created as a consequent outcome of the 17 May Forum event, its original membership derived from organisations that attended the 17 May Forum event. By end of July, LancsCAN had 80 members from 59 organisations. Once the LancsCAN website goes live in August, we will be inviting many other targeted community organisations (around another 60 in number) to join the Network.
* A basic starting **LancsCAN website** is in development, hosted at the moment on the Edge Hill University site. This will serve as an initial platform and portal on which to develop the LancsCAN community and actions.
* On 25 July, Lancashire’s three universities – Edge Hill, Lancaster and UCLan – met to discuss **initial funding options** to help secure financial support for future LancsCAN events, collaborative projects, other activities, website development and management, and future annual Lancashire Community Climate Action Forums. Two or three grant fund options are being initially pursued and applications will be made over the summer. We will also consider how the climate action related scientific research and expertise of the three universities can serve and support the work of LancsCAN of its member organisations where possible.
* LancsCAN aspires to develop a collective capacity for Lancashire’s community organisations to work as **a more effective partner with Lancashire’s councils, political leaders and others on climate action**. Capturing Lancashire’s ‘community voice’ on climate action on a scale never before achieved at the 17 May Forum event was a first step. The intention is for LancsCAN to provide the organisational and operational means to mobilise that ‘community voice’ over the long term. We all want Lancashire to achieve realistic ambitious goals on climate action and sustainability. The formation of LancsCAN enables Lancashire’s councils and political leaders to collectively communicate with an already large and growing network community of local organisations on this front. This we hope will lead to more effective collaboration within the county on many priority objectives of the Lancashire 2050 Plan, and also working more effectively together to champion Lancashire’s climate action agenda in our wider region and national context. The initial conversation between LancsCAN leaders and the Lancashire Climate and Environment Officers group on 2 August 2023 will be we hope the start of a useful and wider dialogue process to the above ends.
* LancsCAN has **a long-term plan**. We are aiming to develop it into a growing network community and collaborative partner underpinned by sustainable funding streams. Future Lancashire Community Climate Action Forums are being planned. UCLan is set to host the next Forum event sometime in 2024, and hopefully Lancaster University in 2025, with more to follow every year at different locations around the county. A **LancsCAN Leadership Team** is being formed based on balanced representation from community organisation, university and local council members of the Network. This will help drive forward the Network’s development and provide it with a starting governance structure.
* LancsCAN’s membership comprises a wide variety of climate action related interests. Much of its **core work will be organised around a number of ‘challenge themes’** that allow members to cluster, associate and work more specifically together on particular shared issues where there are benefits of doing so. This could take the form of certain events, activities, projects, etc and the formation of sub-networks based on these challenge themes. Each could have a Leader and small leadership team that would be responsible for organising activities and be part of the aforementioned Leadership Team. Suggested challenge themes are: Energy, Nature and Green/Blue Spaces, Biodiversity and Wildlife, Food, Transport and Mobility, Youth and Schools, Recycling and Waste Management, Housing and Buildings, Business and Climate Action.
* The current members of LancsCAN by July 2023 are listed in the table below:

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| **Lancashire Climate Action Network (LancsCAN)** | |
| **MEMBERS (July 2023)** | |
| **Organisation** | **Location** |
| **AONB Forest of Bowland** | Bowland |
| **Ashbridge School** | Preston |
| **Blackpool Council** | Blackpool |
| **Bretherton Energy Partnership** | Bretherton |
| **British Hydropower Association** | Nation-wide |
| **Chamber Low Carbon** | Accrington |
| **Charge My Street** | Lancaster |
| **Chorley and District Natural History Society** | Chorley |
| **Climate Action Preston (Friends of the Earth)** | Preston |
| **Climate Challenge UK** | South Ribble |
| **Community Rail Lancashire** | County-wide |
| **Co-operative and Mutual Solutions** | Darwen |
| **Dept for Energy Security and Net Zero (ESNZ)** | Nation-wide |
| **Eco Barnoldswick Group** | Barnoldswick |
| **Edge Hill University (SustainNET)** | Ormskirk |
| **Environment Agency** | Northwest, Nation-wide |
| **Friends of the Earth (Ormskirk and District)** | Ormskirk |
| **Friends of Astley Park** | Chorley |
| **Friends of Paradise Park** | Leyland |
| **Friends of Tawd Valley** | Skelmersdale |
| **Friends of Worden Park** | Leyland |
| **Fylde Coast Youth Climate Action** | Fylde |
| **Green Living Chorley** | Chorley |
| **Green Rose CIC** | North Lancs |
| **Greenslate Community Farm** | Orrell |
| **Groundwork** | Morecambe |
| **Guardians of Nature - South Ribble** | South Ribble |
| **Halton Lune Hydro** | Halton |
| **Klimate Konnect** | Nation-wide |
| **Lancashire Badger Group** | County-wide |
| **Lancashire County Council** | County-wide |
| **Lancashire Local Nature Partnership** | County-wide |
| **Lancashire Schools Sustainability Forum** | County-wide |
| **Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT)** | County-wide |
| **Lancaster University** | Lancaster |
| **LESS and FoodFutures** | Lancaster |
| **Lets Grow Preston** | Preston |
| **Longridge Environment Group** | Longridge |
| **Longton Eco Group** | Longton |
| **Morecambe Bay Community Renewables** | Morecambe |
| **Mums for Lungs** | County-wide |
| **Natural England** | Nation-wide |
| **NHS Lancs and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board** | County-wide |
| **North West Net Zero Hub** | County-wide |
| **Pendle Climate Action Group** | Pendle |
| **Pendle Council** | Pendle |
| **Penwortham Climate Change Working Group** | Penwortham |
| **Preston Climate Emergency Centre** | Preston |
| **Preston Pedals** | Preston |
| **Proffitts - Investing in Communities** | Haslingden, Rossendale |
| **PROSPECTS Foundation** | Accrington |
| **Readstone Environment Group** | Burnley |
| **Ribble Rivers Trust** | County-wide |
| **Ribble Valley Climate Action Network** | Ribble Valley |
| **Rossendale Valley Energy (IoT Horizon)** | Rossendale |
| **Sharenergy Co-operative** | Nation-wide |
| **University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)** | Preston |
| **University of Manchester** | Manchester |
| **West Lancashire Borough Council** | West Lancs |
| **West Lancashire Climate Action Group** | West Lancs |