

COMMUNITY CLIMATE PROJECTS

There has been much discussion over the years about climate concerns, but there are many local projects to benefit the environment that also carry other community benefits:

- Planting more trees helps to take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere but fruit and nut trees also provide us with a better diet. New community orchards are becoming popular - see more at the [Orchard Network](#).
- More locally grown fruit and vegetables improves the quality of the food that benefits our health, as well as reducing food cost and reducing pollution due to food imports from overseas ("food miles" - the UK currently imports 50% of our food). Growing our own food means more exercise as well!



[Hulme Community Garden Centre](#)

- Creating new allotments can help with all of this, one of the few statutory responsibilities for English town and parish councils – see more information at [The National Allotment Society](#).
- Less food waste saves everyone's pockets, and community larders can be one response to that. Ventures such as the [Ottery Larder](#) can also spread more joy at special times of the year such as Christmas.
- Further community action such as setting up repair cafes and other sharing and recycling can also help save money, rather than everyone always buying new goods – find out more at [Repair Cafe](#).

- Less use of private cars through car sharing and car-pools makes our streets safer for the young and elderly as well as reducing local air pollution which is hazardous to health – you can find more advice on the [Parkers website](#).
- Involve people with and promote public transport, such as engaging with national events like [Catch the Bus Month](#), [Walk to School Week](#), [Cycle to Work Day](#) or [Community Rail Week](#), and/or running stand-alone events/schemes like try the train trips with local colleges or green travel roadshows.
- More home working where appropriate means less commuting, with a similar benefit of less car transport and potentially greater support for local shops and businesses – advice on home working is available from the Government's [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service](#) (ACAS).
- Many people are isolated in their own homes for a number of reasons, with no private transport to help them get about. A locally-run minibus scheme can help improve people's lives while also keeping down the use of private cars – see more at the [Community Transport Association](#).
- Greater house insulation together with a shift towards home-produced energy such as installing solar panels also reduces household bills. Retrofitting public buildings is one possible approach to showing the way – the Centre for Sustainable Energy is currently updating its guide to [improving energy efficiency in community buildings](#).

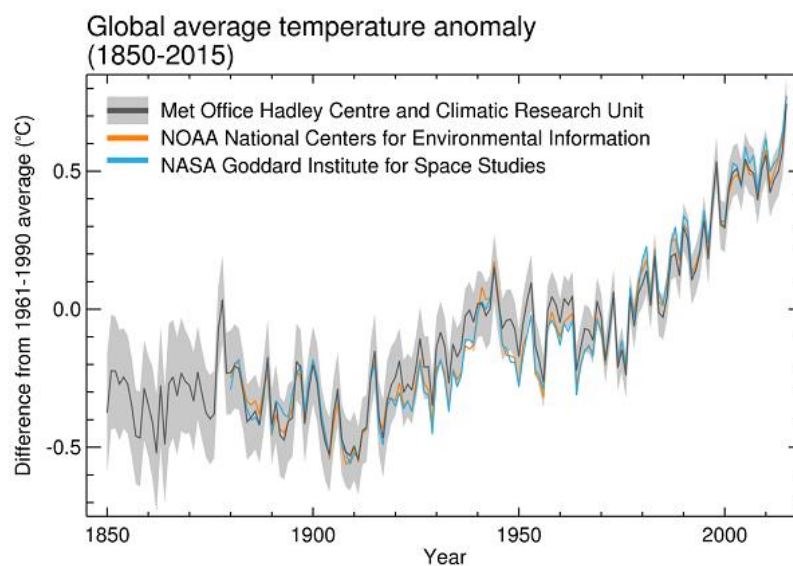
Case studies and more “how to” guidance covering an increasing range of community climate projects can be found via the [The Community Works website](#).

SLCC have an Environmental and Sustainability Advisor contactable via the SLCC members' [Advice Service](#), and One Voice Wales also have a [Local Places for Nature officer](#). Other advice is available from a range of organisations, including:

- [The Centre for Sustainable Energy](#) (CSE)
- [The Centre for Alternative Technology](#) (CAT)
- [Carbon Copy](#)
- [Friends of the Earth](#)
- [Keep Wales Tidy](#)
- [The National Association of Local Councils](#) (NALC)

Ultimately, making gradual changes in the way we live and work should make life more bearable and positive for our children and grandchildren – and in the immediate future is likely to cause them less stress. A 2021 [survey](#) by the BBC found three-quarters of young people felt the future was frightening. Positive local action with and for our community can help us all in so many ways.

The background to climate concerns is that the increase of so-called “greenhouse gases” (particularly carbon dioxide and methane) in the atmosphere is preventing heat from escaping into space, and the subsequent global warming is causing increasing changes in weather patterns.



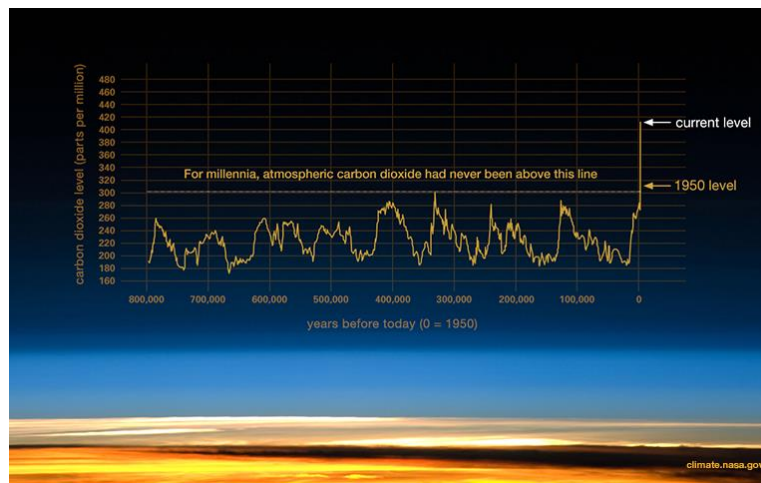
[Global-average temperature records - Met Office](#)

The UK Met Office has published this chart of measurements from several different sources, showing that average global temperatures have increased by at least 1°C in the last 70 years - and we are certainly seeing increasingly wild weather patterns around the world.

The causes of global warming have been investigated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) since it was set up by the United Nations in 1988. Their latest [reports](#) are unequivocal that the recent increase of carbon in the atmosphere is due to human activity.

There have been some claims that the visible symptoms of global warming are no more than part of a natural cycle, but the recent sharp increase in carbon dioxide levels measured by America's National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NASA) throws doubt on this idea. There was indeed more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere millions of years ago, but it took a long time to develop, not just within 70 years.

Those ancient levels did not support human life as we know it today, and certainly date long before our current levels of world population with more carbon dioxide being pumped into the air daily than the earth can readily absorb.



[Evidence | Facts – Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet \(nasa.gov\)](#)

There are twin concerns currently being discussed:

1. Global warming and its many impacts are increasing faster than previously expected.
2. Despite a sequence of [international conferences](#) organised by the United Nations, the response to this crisis has been much slower than expected.

While new technology is being developed, there is as yet no horizon as to when it may resolve the climate crisis on its own. Governments have the power to respond in different ways, but again, there is not enough money to resolve matters without a lot of personal decision-making and voluntary support.

Community climate projects can be our contribution to make the future more bright.

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