**Climate emergency**

Members may be aware that Wokingham Borough Council has joined the call to declare a climate emergency. As a result, the local authority has called upon local organisations to provide ideas on what the Borough can do to reduce its carbon emissions significantly within the next decade.

The public has also been asked to submit views on how to expedite the measures the council already has in mind.

An initial list of measures proposed by MERA has been presented to Cllr Murray, who is the lead member dealing with the ‘climate emergency’, as shown below.

Cllr Murray was pleased to receive MERA’s proposals and responded as follows:

“Many thanks for getting in touch and for sending over your list of ideas. They are great and will make a wonderful step forward in our plan to tackle climate change.

“The residents’ consultation to generate Climate Change ideas should go live in September. We want to time it after the school holidays to make the maximum impact and also because we want to get as many of the Borough schools engaged and involved in achieving this vital ambition as possible. The consultation will however be open ended, as we will continuously need to generate and review ideas. I have no idea how many ideas it will generate, or what the ideas will be, but based on some that have been shared on Facebook already I am certain they are going to be interesting.

“I am particularly pleased to see tree planting at the top of your list. This is an idea very close to my own heart and objectives. If you know of any suitable pieces of land within the area of Maiden Erlegh I would be grateful if you could highlight them to me.

“I will, of course, include all of your ideas for consideration when we are developing our Climate Emergency action plan. I am sure many of the ideas that you have suggested will be included and form a large element of the plans we intend to take forward.”

MERA is continuing to debate practical measures that the council could introduce within their own remit and if you have any ideas to add to the list below, please use our new website to let us know of them.

If you would like to submit your ideas directly to the council, the formal public consultation can be found on the council’s website – wokingham.gov.uk.

**PROPOSED CLIMATE EMERGENCY INITIATIVES**

1.  We should embark on a major tree planting project with the aim of absorbing more carbon, pollution from roads and to soften noise.  Oak trees should be considered for planting in Maiden Erlegh, which was originally forested with oaks.

2.  Provision of more cycle lanes and paths, preferably separated from roads by kerbs or rails.

3.  Consideration to be given to encouraging schools to stage competitions about the environment with a view to increasing awareness of the damage caused by mankind.

4.  Provision of many more charging points for electric cars throughout the Borough.

5.  A commitment to the early adoption of inductive charging loops in roads to ease concerns about the ownership of electric cars.

6.  Promotion of low energy uses throughout the Borough and the council be asked to consider issuing planning consents for all new builds only on condition that solar energy panels are installed.

7.  The launch of a major initiative to encourage use of buses by working with operators to establish new or improved routes, better frequencies and choice of destinations, installation of bus shelters, seating and real time information wherever possible.  This will encourage residents to use public transport rather than their cars for local journeys and help to ease congestion.