

An open letter to:

Ribble Valley Borough Councillors, RVBC Climate Change Working Group, Lancashire County Councillors for the Ribble Valley and Nigel Evans MP.

The world is facing a climate and ecological emergency; we see its impact in our own Ribble Valley, with the increasing run-off of torrential rain storms from the top of Pendle Hill; in the repeated damaging flooding in Whalley and Ribchester; in our emptying reservoirs, unseasonal temperatures, in the stormier weather; in the decrease in vital insects, birds and native plants; in rising tides, in the increasingly varied challenges faced by our farmers, to name but a few. We also know that the challenges we face are small in comparison with the extreme flooding and raging forest fires being experienced in other parts of the world.

In this short list, both rapidly changing climate and ecological damage can be seen all too clearly. How do we protect the places we love best, and secure a future in a world which is under serious threat for our children and grandchildren? How do we provide sufficient support for the initiatives already underway here, and encourage more essential action? Are we going to be the generation that was too overwhelmed to act? Surely not.

Many British communities, such as ours, are looking to the **Climate and Ecology Bill** <https://www.zerohour.uk> to help them build more resilience into their local environment and infrastructure. The CE Bill already has cross-party support in Parliament and the support of many organisations throughout the UK. It aims to address the dual emergencies in climate and nature, within the necessary timescale and, crucially, at the level which is essential, if we are to avoid the worst impacts of climate chaos.

Such legislation will energise and prompt our government and our local leaders to the appropriate action, and underpin the excellent local efforts of individuals and small groups. Without the CE Bill we are unlikely to play our part in the UK's aim to reach carbon zero by 2050 and develop resilience to the climate and nature emergency as it unfolds. We will be much more vulnerable to the ongoing climate emergency affecting our flood control, our food and water supply, many aspects of our infrastructure and ultimately our mental and physical health and well-being.

The first report of the **RVBC Climate Change Working Group** <https://www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk> was approved by **RVBC** last Autumn and it has begun by working to reduce the Council's own carbon footprint. All RVBC actions are now required to be considered in the light of their environmental impact but clearly further urgent action is needed.

We urge our elected representatives to get behind the **Climate and Ecology Bill** and show their commitment to preventing further damage to our environment, reversing existing damage and mitigating the damage that is already locked in.

Unlike the UK Parliament and **60%** of local authorities, of all political persuasions, throughout the UK climateemergency.uk, Ribble Valley Borough Council has not yet declared a Climate Emergency. To do so would encourage both the Council and the residents of Ribble Valley to act with urgency. In the run up to COP27 and honouring the pledge made at COP 26 to 'keep 1.5 degrees alive', we strongly urge Ribble Valley Borough Council to declare a Climate Emergency. Groups like the Ribble Valley Climate Action Network, Longridge Environmental Group, and Read and Simonstone Environment Group are testament to the fact that citizens of the Ribble Valley care deeply about this issue, are prepared to inform themselves and work hard to take positive action.

We therefore request our elected representatives to take note of this and work with local people, businesses, charities, schools, community groups to find solutions and shape our beautiful valley for future generations. In order to respond quickly and appropriately to the emergency we are facing, we need to work together. We would like to see **Citizens Assemblies** <https://www.climateassembly.uk> on the climate emergency being held in the Ribble Valley, as they are elsewhere.

We the undersigned are not prepared to sit by while business carries on as usual, when we know full well that changes we make now can have positive and far reaching beneficial effects.