

Cookhams Footprint Impact Report for the Climate Partnership August 2023

“Taking energy saving steps together”

Overview: Cookhams Footprint is an unincorporated organisation with a constitution and a committee including a chair, treasurer and secretary. The Climate Partnership has provided some funding to Cookhams Footprint over the last year to support community engagement activities.

The mission of Cookhams Footprint is “to empower our community to tackle sustainability in Cookham and dramatically improve the wellbeing of Cookham, individually, as a community and a place with local people at its heart”.

Cookhams Footprint is developing initiatives based on the three pillars of save, self-generation and community energy and welcomes ideas, experts and volunteers who together can build a greener Cookham.

Cookhams Footprint has received £946 from the Climate Partnership to date (financial year 2022-23). This funding has enabled the group to reach c.5,000 people (90% of the population of the Cookham villages) in year one with carbon-saving messages; and has directly impacted on the lives of at least 350 people who have taken action to reduce their energy usage, reuse or recycle items that would otherwise be discarded.

The CP approach to supporting community groups has been significant in helping Cookhams Footprint to succeed:

- Straightforward process with support to prepare proposals
- Quick decision-making process – usually one month or less
- Fills a ‘funding gap’ by providing dedicated funding for carbon saving projects, which the parish council cannot provide
- Opportunity to partner with other Climate Partnership projects and connect with other organisations – for example Cookhams Footprint is supporting SaveEnergy on decarbonisation of domestic homes, increasing local capacity; and is learning from the MaidEnergy experience regarding renewables generation

The Cookhams Footprint budget for 2023-25 is attached in appendix 2 for funding consideration by the Climate Partnership board. The organisation is asking for £5,445 over two years (September 2023-August 2025) to fund their plans. This includes two community events in partnership with energy businesses Yunity and Octopus and other engagement activities; direct support for hundreds of local people to reduce energy consumption, save carbon and improve wellbeing; a community-wide consultation piece to gather data on their impact; and fundraising support to ensure that Cookhams Footprint is financially sustainable beyond 2025.

Activities: To date, the group has participated in seven local events and engaged the families and staff of all three schools in the Cookhams. The group’s steering committee of nine are supported by two additional regular volunteers.

‘Save’ pillar activities:

- Delivered 100 free thermal surveys, 50% of householders took immediate action to reduce energy usage, and all others were provided with advice on actions they could take in future, follow up planned for Autumn 2023
- Distributed 3 free humidity monitors and created a case study (see appendix 1) to demonstrate energy reduction and improvements to health and wellbeing
- Organised three clothes re-use events attended by 250 individuals; 50% of items were re-used in Cookham, 15% were redistributed to a homeless charity in London and 35% were distributed to the Windsor Babybank
- Gained support from all three local primary schools, with engagement from pupils and parents
- Supported two householders to apply for Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme grants for retrofit solutions, surveys carried out, outcome unknown
- Promoted energy-saving messages in the Parish Magazine every month

'Self-generation' pillar activities:

- Created fact sheets for homeowners on solar PV, ASHPs and battery storage offering straightforward advice and recommendations
- One case study created about a local householder who has taken every possible step for domestic energy generation and decarbonisation, demonstrating what is possible in the home

'Community energy' pillar activities:

- Engaged with 'Energy Local' to explore micro-generation networks
- Engaged with MaidEnergy to explore the potential for hydro at Cookham and for solar on public buildings
- Local heat networks – working with residents of Sutton Close in Cookham to explore local opportunities for residents to work together to decarbonise their homes

Partners/potential partners

The following groups have engaged with Cookhams Footprint, offering a range of advice, support and funding opportunities which will be developed further in the coming year:

Draughtbusters, Maidenhead
Holy Trinity, Cookham Rise and Cookham Dean primary schools
Elizabeth House Day Care Centre, Cookham
Parish Council and Borough Council
Wild Cookham
SaveEnergy
The Climate Partnership
Green Doctors (<https://south.greendoctors.org.uk/>)
Energy Local
Octopus
Younity

Community consultation

Cookhams Footprint has recorded data around the number of visits, interventions and events attended, feedback from community members and a case study. They intend to undertake community consultation in Autumn 2023, engaging with:

1. local people they have already supported to understand the impact of their offer
2. the wider community to understand what difference their generalised messages around energy saving and sustainability have made so far

We anticipate that the consultation will provide data around:

- The number of people who now understand how they use energy at home
- The number of people who understand how they can save energy at home
- The number of people who have taken action to reduce their domestic energy consumption
- The number of people who are actively engaged as volunteers, or who are sharing their 'green' skills with others in the community
- How Cookhams Footprint has helped to build relationships and/or strengthen the community's response to the climate emergency.
- The impact on health and wellbeing, fuel poverty and carbon savings of the above

Comments from satisfied residents:

"We're so please with the advice from Toby, who helped us completely rethink how to tackle our home. Initially we were going to install solar pvs on our victorian cottage, but Toby encouraged us to improve the insulation and double glazing in order to reduce our carbon footprint. We have now pretty much done what he suggested, and can already feel an improvement. Hopefully a warmer house, and lower energy bills."

“Heartfelt thanks for your advice, most of which I've been able to implement. You gave me the confidence to realise that I can top up the loft insulation myself (with the help of Youtube videos). I've been singing your praises and hope more people get in touch as a result.”