

# Aylsham Town Council

## Aylsham Climate Emergency Working Group (ACE)

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### Terms of Reference

Approved by Aylsham Town Council on

#### 1. Background

Climate change is a global challenge, with its impacts visible in extreme weather events, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and biodiversity loss. Recognising the urgency of this issue, Aylsham Town Council declared a climate emergency on 18 August 2021, committing to local action to mitigate climate change and promote sustainability.

#### 2. Purpose

The Aylsham Climate Emergency Working Group (ACE) is established to:

1. Coordinate action towards making Aylsham a sustainable community.
2. Make Aylsham Town Council net carbon neutral by 2030.
3. Define measurable targets and track progress towards achieving them.
4. Collaborate with local organisations, community groups, and stakeholders to inspire and enhance sustainability efforts.
5. Identify and pursue external funding, including match funding, to support climate and regenerative initiatives.
6. Engage with the local community on climate change and environmental issues.

#### 3. Membership and Quorum

1. The Working Group shall consist of **up to twelve members**, including at least **four Aylsham Town Councillors**.
2. A **quorum** for meetings shall be **four members, including at least one Town Councillor**.
3. The group shall elect a **Chair and Vice-Chair annually**.
4. Membership may include **co-opted individuals** with relevant expertise or interest, subject to the group's approval.
5. Any member who **fails to attend three consecutive meetings** without valid apologies may have their membership reviewed at the discretion of the Chair.

#### 4. Meetings and Conduct

1. **Frequency:** The group shall meet **at least quarterly** or as required by the Chair.
2. **Failure to Meet:**

- If the **Chair does not convene a meeting** within three months, the Clerk, in consultation with the Town Council, **may convene a meeting** to ensure the group's continuity.
  - If the group remains **inactive for six months**, the Town Council shall review its status and decide whether to amend the Terms of Reference, restructure the group, or disband it.
3. **Notice and Agenda:** Agendas and supporting documents shall be **circulated at least three clear working days** before each meeting.
  4. **Declarations of Interest:** Members must **declare any personal or financial interests** in matters under discussion. These declarations will be **recorded in the minutes**.
  5. **Minutes:**
    - Formal **minutes of all meetings** will be recorded, documenting key discussions, decisions, and recommendations.
    - These will be made publicly available via the **Town Council's website** and other official communication channels.
  6. **Code of Conduct:** All members must adhere to the **Aylsham Town Council's Code of Conduct**.

## 5. Reporting and Accountability

1. The **Working Group is advisory** and shall report to the **Full Council**.
  - All **recommendations** must be submitted for **Council approval before** implementation.
2. The group may **advise the Council** on proposed allocations of **grant funding**, but final decisions rest with the **Full Council**.

## 6. Financial Expenditure and Authorisation

1. The Working Group **does not have spending powers**.
2. **Expenditure related to ACE initiatives may be authorised by the Clerk, provided that:**
  - The expenditure **falls within an approved budget allocation** for ACE-related activities.
  - The spending **aligns with the Town Council's Financial Regulations and procurement procedures**.
  - The **Full Council has explicitly delegated authority** to the Clerk for the specific expenditure via a recorded resolution.

### 3. **Urgent Expenditure:**

- Any **urgent expenditure exceeding £500** must be authorised under **Section 4 of the Financial Regulations**, reported to the **Chair of the Council**, and formally recorded at the next Full Council meeting.
4. The **Working Group itself cannot authorise spending or enter into financial commitments** without Council approval.

## 7. **Transparency and Public Access**

1. **Meetings of the Working Group shall be open to the public** to ensure transparency and community involvement.
2. The group may engage with the community through **events, consultations, and public forums** to gather input and promote its work.
3. As the Working Group is advisory and not a decision-making body, meetings are not subject to statutory public recording rights under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. However, members of the public may record meetings, provided that recording does not disrupt proceedings.

## 8. **Review of Terms of Reference**

1. These **Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually** to ensure they remain fit for purpose and reflect any changes in the group's objectives or legislative requirements.
2. Any **amendments must be approved by the Full Council**.