

## **ELCAN Launch: Breakout Report**

### **Introduction**

What follows is a structured report pulled together from the individual reports from the breakout groups at the ELCAN launch event on 5 October. The breakout groups were invited to make suggestions on the main functions of an East Lothian Climate Action Hub. Thanks are due to all those who contributed.

The composite report does not at this stage represent the agreed functions of the hub. These will be a matter for the ELCAN membership to decide upon at a meeting to be arranged shortly for that purpose.

### **1. Hub Structure**

The hub should be:

- community-led, by ambassadors from poor and rich communities; or
- structured as a charity or community interest company guided by a board of Directors or Trustees selected for that purpose;
- geared towards providing both support and leadership, whilst recognising the independence of local groups; and
- staffed by paid employees, while welcoming unpaid help

### **2. Reach Out**

#### ***To Isolated Communities***

90% of the population of Stenton is untouched by climate change messages (*communication issue? Lack of broadband?*)

Provide support and networking opportunities for isolated village communities. Sit down and be with people, be friendly.

#### ***To New Locations***

Reach out to the public where climate emergency etc., issues are not yet prominent.

Organise and deliver satellite events in towns and villages across East Lothian

Focus more activities in west East Lothian: take the learning from the East.

#### ***To Schools***

A schools/education remit should be a fundamental strand of activity

How do we get communities engaged? Through schools / parents/ grandparents?

### ***To Faith Groups***

The 'church' (*faith groups more generally?*) is part of our civil society.

Support and share the work of Eco Congregations:

#### ***And Be Inclusive***

Reach out and encourage others in an inclusive way.

Engage with people and groups outside the network.

Don't centralise too much; maintain ELCAN as a broad church supporting its diverse member groups.

#### ***And Work collaboratively***

#### ***And include fun***

Help make things fun, like Lil!

### **3. Good Communication is Key**

- with groups;
- with local media; and with
- the local authority and other community-facing organisations (e.g., APs and CCs)

Provide a regular Newsletter

Promote awareness of the local effects of climate change and the need for adaptation and resilience measures

Use the website to:

- communicate what's going on;
- map who's doing what and where, and with contact information; and
- provide appropriate guidance and grant funding advice online

### **4. Sharing, Supporting and Networking**

Support new groups by providing help on governance and funding issues

Provide mentoring support to new and established groups

Where appropriate, encourage a kind of 'buddy' support system whereby someone from an established group helps another

Help connect groups by type of activities and by location

Help build wellbeing capacity

Provide themed sharing opportunities on e.g. community gardening, recycling/reuse, etc.

Support groups by sharing information on:

- what works and what doesn't;
- how to get local people involved e.g. climate cafes, village events; and
- simple easy-to-use resources

## **5. Provide Expert Advice**

Provide *accessible* expert advice on:

- home energy
- community renewables
- heat pumps
- district heating systems

Develop a directory of advice sources and toolkits

## **6. Create a Welcoming Space**

Provide a welcoming and accessible space for community groups

Promote the space as a Climate Cafe

Don't dampen enthusiasm by working in large groups

Encourage physical meetings. Want to spend time with people

Have regular events, for social as well as learning purposes

Allow everyone to be heard

Have fun!

## **7. Provide Support on Funding**

Identify and share funding opportunities

Recognise that new and/or smaller groups may need more support than larger and/or more established groups

Offer bid-writing assistance

Help address groups' needs for longer-term funding (the continual quest for short-term funding is draining and time consuming)

Where appropriate, encourage collaborative funding bids

Communicate communities' needs to funders

Consider donations from wealthier East Lothian residents as an income source

## **8. Training**

Provide training, or refer to other providers, on

climate change

climate justice

carbon literacy

carbon sequestration

carbon footprints, personal and organisational, and

employment skills, such as those provided by the Ridge

Develop a knowledge and resource bank on various themes e.g. the carbon sequestration

Develop learning opportunities on e.g. housing, agriculture and transport

Support volunteers.

## **9. Beyond Climate Change**

Develop a dialogue with local providers and growers (farms) on food and its local availability for community kitchens.

Bring people around food for discussions on where it comes from, etc.

Help support communities through the energy and cost of living crises.

Lobby for more affordable (possibly free) public transport and better public transport connections in rural areas where services are likely to be fewer and uncoordinated.

## **10. Partnering/Lobbying**

Develop a positive and strategic relationship with ELC

One staff member should be focused on this and work with the six Area Partnerships

Establish and support climate change champions in each Area Partnership

Hold ELC to account on delivery of Climate Change Action Plan

Encourage an ELC carbon budget

Provide an amplified voice for community groups' needs and aspirations

Connect with the Local Development Plan process

## **11. ELCAN and ELC**

There's a positive willingness within ELC for partnership working with ELCAN and communities.

There's a recognition within ELC that the climate change strategy needs to be much more ambitious but some of what needs to be done would require new legislation. ELC and ELCAN might identify issues that are stumbling blocks to implementing the climate change strategy and where ELCAN might lobby the Scottish Government for legislative support.

ELC now has a new cross-party Sustainability and Climate Change Forum. ELCAN already has links through its chair, Dr Shona McIntosh. ELCAN should work closely with Shona and the Forum.