

VONNE Climate Action Alliance (VCAA) OVERVIEW

Introduction

The VONNE Climate Action Alliance exists to help the North East of England respond collectively to address the climate crisis.

VONNE established the VCAA as a means of delivering a specifically voluntary and community and social enterprise sector programme of actions. VONNE convened those VCSE organisations from across the region with long experience of working with – and listening to – locally place-based community organisations. These agreed to become formal Alliance members with VONNE in delivering a climate action programme.

It did this in the context of the particular history of the North East and climate change. Peter Stark's report on this subject 'From Cause to Effect' also available on this website provided a foundational base for VONNE becoming involved with the climate emergency.

VCAA Members

Area 'place based' members

- o Northumberland Wildlife Trust
- o Tyne Rivers Trust (working North & South of the Tyne)
- o Community Action Northumberland
- o Durham Wildlife Trust
- o OASES (County Durham)
- o Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
- o Tees Valley Nature Partnership (direct delivery programmes)
- o North East England Nature Partnership (GENEE programme)
- o Greening Wingrove and Arthur's Hill (Newcastle)
- o Middlesbrough Environment City (also shortlisted for a CAF award)

Regional sector specialists

- o Climate Action North
- o NE England Nature Partnership (strategic role)
- o Tees Valley Nature Partnership (strategic role)
- o Youth Focus NE
- o Groundwork NE and Cumbria

National sector specialists based in the region

- o Zero Carbon Futures (transport strategy specialists)
- o National Energy Action (energy, insulation & fuel poverty lead)
- o FareShare North East (coordinating Food Waste)

'Backbone' support

- o CAST/The Catalyst (digital specialist input)
- o The Collective Impact Agency (process advice & critical friend)
- o True North Sustainability (Smart Carbon & AI Gore accredited training)

The NLCF Climate Action Fund (CAF)

The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) announced in the late summer of 2019 a new Climate Action Fund (CAF) of £100m over 10 years. The VCAA applied to this fund but was unfortunately not chosen to receive one of the final 15 awards, though it did make it to the first short list of 40. (A copy of the full document (215 pages!) can be made available.)

VCAA response

The members of the VONNE Climate Action Alliance responded to the bad news with a desire to continue to work together. The members engaged in a 'widening of the focus' for our programme to bring the immediate reality of the global pandemic into the frame of reference alongside the impacts – economic and environmental - of leaving the EU.

The Alliance is now in the process of 'narrowing the punch' to arrive at an initial programme of local and regional activity over the months to the end of 2021. Over the next 18 months:

- COP 26 will have happened (in Glasgow in November 2021).
- the second phase of NLCF Climate Action Funds will have been announced (summer 2021).
- there is a reasonable likelihood that a way of living with the Coronavirus will have been found.

We start that journey with the continued financial support of the Lankelly Chase Foundation and of the CATALYST Clusters programme and with the determination to deepen our commitment to an Alliance structure designed to deliver collective impact on the climate emergency in the North East from the VCSE sector.

More information on plans and information on how more organisations can become involved, will be available in August.

VONNE also convenes a wider regional response to the climate emergency

An Interim Steering Group (ISG) for the **North East England Climate Coalition (NEECC)** has been established. Membership of the ISG includes representatives of:

- the Region's three Combined Authorities;

- the two Local Enterprise Partnerships and the two Nature Partnerships;
- the Integrated Care System for the Region (Hospitals Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups);
- Public Health England and the Environment Agency;
- Schools North East and Youth Focus North East;
- VONNE Climate Action Alliance;
- Business Representative Bodies and the TUC.

The ISG has established a cross-cutting working group on indicators and has endorsed a set of priority 'preparatory' projects based around those of the Government's Climate Change Committee, including Waste, Housing and Public Engagement. The most progress has been made on agriculture and land use (with additional reference to the urban fringe) led by the North East England Nature Partnership.

A video meeting has been held with the Climate Change Committee (CCC) Chair, Lord Deben, the Vice Chair and CEO to discuss the NEECC's proposition that the North East act as a pilot region for the CCC's land use proposals. The NE LEP joined the meeting along with observers from Durham and Northumberland Councils. At the encouragement of Lord Deben, the NEECC has now formally approached DEFRA with that proposition.

The Coalition aims to be able to launch its website with details of its plan of action for an initial period up to the UN's COP26 (now scheduled for November 2021 in Glasgow) in early August.

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VONNE Climate project
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