

Here are the answers from the East Herts Green Party candidates

Questions:

1. The FoE analysis of progress on addressing climate change in different local authority areas across England and Wales (Dec2020) says that EHDC has made **average progress on addressing climate change**. Researchers at the Tyndall Centre say that East Herts should reduce its carbon emissions by **at least 13% per year**. What would be your priorities in reaching the HCC target of zero emissions by 2030?

Answer:

We're the "Green" Party, so clearly we are passionate in our determination to reach or exceed the 2030 target. And just as we are already doing at district and town councils, our priority at HCC will be work collaboratively with other councillors, council staff and residents to accelerate an understanding of the issues we all face, as well as the best solutions, so that we can take everyone in the county with us as we change Herts for the better. We will be open-minded, bring new ideas, work to change the traditional mind-set held by many, and push HCC to engage specialists who can help plan this shift as rapidly as possible.

2. Transport is the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. **In E Herts 43% of emissions come from transport**. Here in Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth congested roads and poor air quality (in particular at Hockerill and in Sawbridgeworth) have become the norm. What would you do to address this issue which is so harmful to the health and well being of the population here as well as to that of the planet?

Firstly we will work to get this issue taken seriously by HCC. Although many problems are due to Government decisions, HCC can do plenty to counter over-crowded roads and dirty air. HCC requires a more ambitious programme of sustainability measures to cut emissions from transport and reduce their impact. A combination of solutions is needed, including: improved pollution monitoring, on-street e-car charging, on-demand bus services using technology to create new flexible modes of public transport, the use of mass-transit systems, a park and ride network, the use of both road and work-place charging to help fund change, a reduction in new road building, and a rapid programme of urban greening since roadside plants help trap and remove air pollution.

3. **Home heating:** In East Herts **33% of emissions come from housing**, only 44% of homes are well insulated, individual gas boilers continue to be installed in the new developments in Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth. A detailed Heat Decarbonisation strategy is essential. What would be your priorities here?

Our priority is to change HCC mindset so that it looks beyond conventional gas heating and switches to sustainable heating modes. Here we need county-wide energy master-planning that identifies key opportunities to develop district heating systems, combined heat and power generation, and potential sites for potential renewable electricity generation and storage. Funding opportunities for home insulation must be prioritised, and we would work to accelerate and update local plans that specify improved energy efficiency in all new developments.

**4. Biodiversity:** The recent report by the **Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust (Hertfordshire's State of Nature)** calls for **30% of land in Hertfordshire to be restored for nature by 2030.**

How would you address this?

Residents have an incredible passion to see green spaces protected and enhanced. Unfortunately our councils have not proved agile enough, and often remain wedded to out-of-date land management strategies. We want to work with councils to accelerate a change in mind-set, to reduce reliance on familiar park-style management and accelerate a programme of tree planting, rewilding and the creation of wildlife highways across the county, all in collaboration with local communities. We also support communities wanting to purchase and preserve local green spaces so they can work with wildlife groups to restore and protect the land on their door step. This should be carried out collaboratively across the county to create joined up spaces for wildlife. In Ware for example, our councillors have already begun work developing a community orchard project and a wildflower/wildlife initiative with schools.