

# SAVE OUR SHROPSHIRE CIO

## PROPOSAL TO SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL CARBON LITERACY TRAINING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



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## Introduction

Shrewsbury Town Council want to facilitate training for businesses within the Shrewsbury Town Council area. They recognise it is vital that businesses engage in reducing emissions to help tackle climate change, and let them positively engage with the opportunities which they might get.

Specifically, they wish to establish a Carbon Literacy course for around 12 companies, initially, which will enable them to achieve Carbon Literacy certification.

As part of Shrewsbury Town council's objective to achieve silver status in the Carbon Literacy Project's awards for Carbon Literate organisation, they recognise it is important to reach out to businesses and enable them to take practical action on climate change.

This document sets out the details of our proposal to carry out this training in collaboration with Shrewsbury Town council, and to support this with pre-event promotion and publicity with timings, content, and costs of the training.

This will be carried out in collaboration with The Sustainable Life Coach – Anne-Marie Soulsby – who provides SME education and Training for Micro businesses using material approved by the Carbon Literacy Project.

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## Background

Save Our Shropshire was set up in July 2021 on the basis that the biggest challenge with respect to tackling climate change is human behaviour. Lifestyles need to change to bring about the changes required to reduce our emission of greenhouse gases.

The House of Lords in October 2022 released a report<sup>1</sup> which stated:

- Behaviour change is essential for achieving climate and environment goals, and for delivering wider benefits.
- Priority behaviour change policies are needed in the areas of travel, heating, diet, and consumption to enable the public to adopt and use green technologies and products and reduce carbon-intensive consumption.

In June 2023, the Climate Change Committee (UK Government's advisory committee on climate change) stated in their 2023 report<sup>2</sup>:

1. There is not enough urgency.
2. There is a need to empower and inform households and communities to make low-carbon choices. Despite some positive steps to provide households with advice on reducing energy use in the last year, a coherent public engagement strategy on climate action is long overdue.

Based on our experience, in a change project human beings want answers to two questions:

1. **Why** do we need to change? We believe that **education** describes this activity. This is a process for laying out the positive reasons for people to make changes to their lifestyles. Thus, with respect to climate change people need to understand the causes of climate change, the impacts on their own and society's lives, and the positive impacts that result to them of making the changes (with respect to health, welfare and happiness etc.)
2. **How** do we need to change? We believe that **training** describes this activity, and naturally follows education. Thus, with respect to climate change, people might need to change to use electric vehicles. They will need

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<sup>1</sup> In our hands: behaviour change for climate and environmental goals - [REPORT](#)

<sup>2</sup> 2023 Progress report to Parliament [REPORT](#)

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to learn how to use electric vehicles, charge up their vehicles, and use apps to find charging stations and so on.

We have developed – based on the Carbon Literacy Project model – four courses:

- 1. Parish and Town council course.** This course is designed to address the role of Parish and Town Councils in not only making their estate carbon-neutral but to build on their ability to influence and engage their communities in reducing consumption to zero.
- 2. Householders' Course.** This course is aimed at individual householders to enable them to understand the changes they need to make in their personal lifestyles, as well as enable them to influence friends, family, and colleagues at work to change their behaviours.
- 3. Local Authority Executive Course.** This course is designed for the senior members of a Local authority and emphasises what they can do in their estate, as well as how they can influence around 33 % of a county's emissions with a goal of net zero. We have delivered this course to the Cabinet and elected members of the Shropshire council, which enabled them to become a Bronze accredited Carbon Literate Organisation.
- 4. Local Authority Managers Course.** This course is designed to show the managers in a Local authority why and how to build carbon-reducing practises and processes into their daily ways of working. We have delivered this to the Assistant Directors of the Shropshire Council.

Note that we have delivered training on the Parish and Town Council course to 16 people at Shrewsbury Town Council.

We also work with The Sustainable Life Coach to deliver courses to the above, as well as Small to Medium Size Enterprises.

The course offering is detailed on their website at <https://www.thesustainablelifecoach.com/business-services>. The course which is most likely to be relevant is Carbon Literacy for Sole Traders, Freelancers & Entrepreneurs, as many businesses in Shrewsbury are of this type.

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## Carbon Literacy Project

The Carbon Literacy Project is an organisation based in Manchester that has done extensive research on climate change issues and then developed training toolkits to support organisations in understanding what they need to do and how to act in communities.

They do not deliver training but empower others – like us – to deliver the training.

They describe Carbon Literacy as:

*Carbon Literacy®: “An awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.”*

Not only do they provide the material, but they also act as an organisation that certifies those who have attended their courses and completed a short assessment.

We believe this process is incredibly important, as not only do people need to get an awareness of the impact of climate change, but also, they need to commit to taking action.

The assessment involves individuals pledging to act in two areas:

1. A personal pledge that a delegate can undertake on return to their workplace – e.g., to commit their council to purchase energy from a renewable supplier, assuming they have the authority to do so.
2. A group pledge, which a delegate can undertake through working with a group of people on return – e.g., to establish a repair café in their locality along with other people (who could be delegates on the same course).

These pledges provide a vital platform from which to launch a climate change project within a community.

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## Why this Education?

We recognise that Small to Medium size businesses face two major challenges with respect to climate change.

The first is that the current activities with respect to climate change present both threats and opportunities to these companies.

These companies need to respond to customers who will want them to operate in a climate friendly way. These may be “B2C” – Business to Consumer Companies – or “B2B” – Business to Business customers.

Thus they will expect these companies to be working actively to reduce their carbon emissions in all that they do, and in all that they sell. These activities can be grouped into the following headings:

Scope 1 – Activities which are under their direct control (e.g. insulation of premises, and travel using cars)

Scope 2 – Activities which depend on purchase of items for their business – e.g. electricity and heating fuel which should be sourced from renewable suppliers

Scope 3 – Carbon contained in items which are bought from their suppliers (for instance packaging and/or materials which are bought from third parties and perhaps manufactured in the Far East).

They need, therefore, to understand which materials cause carbon emissions, and other greenhouse gases, and get guidance on how to remove these from their emissions.

They will also need to understand how to measure their carbon emissions, and monitor them.

Companies will also be able to get commercial opportunities as a result of this work, and they should understand how this can be made to happen.

The second challenge is that these companies – particularly small to medium-sized companies of which around 90 % in Shropshire are micro companies (<10 people) – are run by people who are very “time-poor” and will not feel that they have the time to attend education and training.

Hence, we will provide education and training that is focused, relevant, and will demonstrate the value to their business of engaging in this training.

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## Course content and style

We propose delivering a course that requires 7 hours of attendance and 1 hour of preparation, which meets the criterion established by the Carbon Literacy Project for Carbon Literacy certification.

We believe it is sensible to discover businesses that want to be “Beacon Businesses” in Shrewsbury Town, who will want to take this activity seriously, and then provide leadership and an example to other businesses within Shrewsbury.

The SME/Micro business courses are invaluable in providing delegates with a clear understanding of the reasons for climate change, what actions to take, how to achieve funding, and how to communicate with and engage with other local businesses. The key modules are:

1. **Basic science and impacts.** This module describes the basics of the science to equip people with the ability to be clear as to the scientific basis for concerns on climate change. It will also cover the impacts globally and locally of climate change.
2. **The global and local commitments.** This module explains what has been set out by the United Nations, how these commitments are reviewed through the annual conferences (COP 27,28 etc.) the local legal commitment in the UK, and in Local Authorities, and progress against targets.
3. **The types of activities which businesses can undertake to reduce carbon emissions.** We will cover the basic principles of buildings (insulation etc.), energy (heating and lighting fuels), travel (cars, lorries, and business travel), and materials bought from third parties. We will cover how to measure and how to report these items. We will refer to and direct delegates towards examples of other projects.
4. **Funding.** We cover several sources for funding these activities, to show that funds can be raised to support projects. We will also show the opportunities which they can get through committing to carbon and other greenhouse gas reduction.
5. **Pledges.** We will go through what is required to create pledges for the assessment to be provided to the Carbon Literacy Project



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- 6. Communication.** We cover how to engage people in a conversation about climate change and how to engage with employees, suppliers and customers.

The course is carried out through the medium of using PowerPoint presentation slides, with plenty of breakout sessions to facilitate discussion on the various aspects of the course.

This will be delivered on-site either in a meeting room at Shrewsbury Town Council or some location such as the Shrewsbury Football Club.

## Value of this education to attendees

We believe that businesses will gain a number of benefits through taking part in this course, through the teaching and the interaction with other companies:

- Businesses gain a deeper understanding of carbon emissions, environmental impact, and sustainability, fostering a culture of environmental consciousness amongst the people in the business.
- The implementation of practices learned in the course enables businesses to identify energy and many other resource inefficiencies, leading to cost savings through targeted reduction of waste.
- Customers may well insist on eco-friendly operations in order to continue business with companies. Some may well get certification themselves as being "Carbon Literate organisations" (See [CLO](#) for information on the CLPs approach, and a list of current organisations, which includes Shropshire Council).
- Carbon Literacy and associated certification will help businesses build a positive environmental image, contributing to enhanced brand, product, and service reputation which will attract more environmentally conscious customers.
- Businesses gain a competitive edge by demonstrating a commitment to sustainability, which will appeal to a growing marketplace that prioritizes eco-friendly businesses.
- Carbon Literacy fosters a culture of innovation, encouraging businesses to explore eco-friendly practices, adopt green technologies, and adapt to changing market trends, which will expand the opportunities available.

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- Carbon Literacy encourages businesses to engage with local communities, showcasing their commitment to sustainability and creating positive relationships.

## Marketing and selling of education.

We believe that it is essential to prepare the ground for this education amongst local businesses.

It might be possible to sign up – say – 12 to 15 companies instantly to the education. However, our experience in other areas is that people need to understand the reasons why they should devote the time to learning “Carbon Literacy” and spending a day of their precious time in such activity. They will state clearly that they are very time-poor (which they are) and will not see this education as essential for their business.

So, we propose carrying out a two-hour promotional seminar in a central location at which members of Shrewsbury Town Council will explain the objectives of the training for local businesses and Save Our Shropshire will explain the content and relevance of the course to local businesses.

This event will have the objectives of:

1. Explaining why this education is essential and how it will benefit them
2. The content of the course, and the costs and timings for it.
3. Gain their input (and commitment) to such an activity along the lines of what they want to know, what outputs they want from it, and their enthusiasm for participation.

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## Cost and Timing

1. Our standard price for courses is £ 130.00 per delegate when carried out remotely. The price for in-person courses is £ 160.00 per delegate. We would suggest that around 12 delegates attend the course, and hence the total cost for the initial course would be £ 1,560 on Zoom or £ 1,920 in person. We understand that Shrewsbury Town Council will fund all or some of this. Note some cost increases commitment to the event.
2. This excludes any travel and out-of-pocket expenses which are incurred which will be charged at cost for each session.
3. We will not charge for the delivery of the seminar/webinar event as part of the marketing activities. However, a location may need to be hired which could cost between £ 300 to £ 500. This should be arranged and paid for by Shrewsbury Town Council
4. We suggest the following timescales (note Easter is Mar 31)
  - a. Agree programme/contract details etc. Dec Week 49-51
  - b. Source location, advertise and arrange seminar Jan Week 1-8
  - c. Hold seminar Week 9 or Week 10 (around 4<sup>th</sup> March)
  - d. Advertise promote and get bookings for course Week 10-17
  - e. Hold Training week 18/19 (w/c 29<sup>th</sup> April)

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## Who are we?

The facilitators from SOS and Sustainable Life Coach will be Allan Wilson, Richard Watkins, and Anne-Marie Soulsby.

### **Allan Wilson**

Allan co-founded Save Our Shropshire CIO (SOS) in July 2021, a charity dedicated to increasing people's understanding of Climate Change. SOS provides education to Householders and Parish/Town Councils to enable them to make lifestyle changes to achieve a net-zero carbon future in Shropshire.

Allan had a 33-year career in the Police Force until 2015. Alongside his service, he provided 3-day courses in drink/drug driving and rehabilitation, to bring about behaviour change.

Since retirement in 2015, he has been actively involved in his passionate concern for the environment. He co-founded the Edgmond Wildlife Group to increase biodiversity and protect the parish where he lives. In 2017 he created a hedgehog preservation organisation. He became a parish councillor and then was elected to become chair of the council in 2019. He was also elected to become vice-chair of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils, holding the portfolio responsibility for climate change matters. Allan has presented to councils extensively on their responsibilities under the Climate Change Act 2008.

### **Richard Watkins**

Richard co-founded Save Our Shropshire in July 2021. He gained Carbon Literacy certification in 2020 and pledged to get involved in the fight against the effects of Climate Change. His enthusiasm builds on the power of education to bring about transformational behaviour change.

Before that, he had set up his own consultancy for manufacturing companies in 2002, which helped big and small businesses change their systems, processes and culture. Clients saw phenomenal improvements in the way that they performed. Core to that change was a behaviour change built on the establishment of a consistent vision, a desire to change, and a proven pathway to change built on teamwork. Before that, he worked from 1990 to 2002 with similar consultancies involved in delivering facilitation



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and education, which led to the transformation of those companies. He has written a book – “Integrated Business Leadership”.

Between 1978 and 1990 he worked for ICI Agrochemicals in a global marketing role, and in a project team which radically changed the way that division worked.

After university, he worked in industrial marketing with Tube Investments Ltd.

## **Anne-Marie Soulsby**

Annie has always been passionate about the environment. She first became aware of the fragility of our planet from hearing news reports as a child of the '80s, watching the destruction of the rainforests, the devastating oil spills and the hole in the ozone layer. This spurred her to gain an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science from the University of Leeds and a Master's in Conservation Biology from Manchester Metropolitan University.

She's led ecologically-focussed projects in Africa, won awards at a climate change solution competition at MIT University, consulted for the World Bank, and contributed to the IUCN's Red List, an inventory of the global conservation status of biological species at the Institute of Zoology. She is currently eco-renovating her house, chairing a local climate action group, a spokesperson for a divestment campaign and the climate champion of her hometown.