

Plant Based Food Motion for Shrewsbury Town Council, Fully Council, 30/9/24

This Council agrees to:

Ensure that food provided at all council catered events and meetings is plant-based by default, preferably using ingredients sourced from local food producers.

Explore via the Council's Climate Emergency Committee opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based eating to the local community.

In March 2019, this Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency. It then established what is now the Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery Standing Committee and set up a Climate Change website outlining initiatives the Council is taking to become Carbon Neutral by 2030, with pages outlining initiatives including a section titled 'What You Can Do' aimed at residents of the town. However, at the moment there is nothing there pertaining to how we can tackle Climate Change through what we eat and drink, two of the most important drivers of the Climate Emergency.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and EAT-Lancet Commission have pointed out in multiple reports that substantial reductions in demand for animal-based foods are vital for achieving climate targets and for keeping food production within planetary limits. The Lancet Planetary Health journal published in November 2021 showed that sustainable, plant based diets can be up to a third cheaper than diets that include a traditional ratio of animal-based food.

Aside from the science, there is a shared understanding in our society that we need to eat less meat and consume less dairy. One of the most effective ways to reduce carbon emissions and free up land for nature is to cut back on animal proteins. Eighty five percent of the land used to feed us is used for livestock farming, even though meat and dairy only account for one third of our calories.

Leading on from this and at a national level, one of the recommendations of the Government-commissioned National Food Strategy report published in

2021 was a long-term shift in our food culture. Another of the recommendations of the report was a Good Food Bill which would make it incumbent on Local Authorities in England to develop food strategies with reference to national targets and in partnership with the communities they serve. In June 2021, the Committee on Climate Change recommended that UK-wide consumption of beef, lamb and dairy should be reduced significantly. Putting those directives together, it makes sense for Shrewsbury Town Council to move towards making all meetings and events the Council caters for plant-based by default. Such a move would not by definition be prescriptive but would provide a lead aligning with the advice and conclusions of the bodies outlined already in this introduction to the Motion.

Shrewsbury Town Council has a relatively modest carbon footprint generated by the food and drink it provides at functions and meetings, but by passing this motion it can add significantly to the direction of travel towards becoming Carbon Neutral by taking a lead in highlighting that what we eat and drink really does matter. It also keeps open an educational aspect by asking the Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery Committee to explore further the opportunities to encourage behaviour change via the Council's activities.