

BANES council to declare a climate emergency

My name is Adam Ley-Lange. I'm a resident of Widcombe. I'm here tonight to urge BANES council to declare a climate emergency. This means committing to carbon neutrality by 2030 at the latest. 2025 would be better. 2050 is absolutely out of the question.

I'm sure many councillors are aware of the seriousness of the crisis we face. I would like to use my time now to suggest some practical solutions.

1. In the area of transport and congestion.

Transport in Bath is responsible for approximately 40% of Co2 emissions. Bath is one of the most congested cities in the UK.

We could:

- 1) Electrify the bus service, improve the frequency of the service, and provide school busses.
- 2) Designate the city centre as a car-free zone. Take measures to reduce car use at the edge of the city. Encourage rail and bus travel, cycling and walking.

2. In the area of Housing

The most effective way to reduce carbon emissions in housing is through investing in energy efficiency.

We could:

- 1) Retrofit existing social housing and housing association homes with proper insulation and methods of generating clean energy, such as solar panels. Build new homes that are energy efficient and both run on and generate clean energy.
- 2) Provide support and incentives for private sector landlords to improve their properties in line with the measures already mentioned. Apply penalties and sanctions for non-compliance.
- 3) Demand that developers ensure all building projects are carbon neutral and car free.

3. In the area of renewable energy

The council already supports and encourages energy generation projects such as Bath and West community energy. We could extend this support.

We could use any of a number of renewal energy options in the South West: solar, wind, geothermal and ground source heat pumps.

There's an amazing programme at Bath Abbey called Footprint where they're using Bath's thermal waters to heat the building, as well as installing energy efficient lighting.

In conclusion, these are just a few suggestions. There are many other ideas. We have a wealth of knowledge, creativity, and expertise in this city, and we need to enlist all of it. The solutions to the climate crisis we face exist. What we are lacking is political will.

There's an old political adage that goes like this: "If a person is not a liberal when he is twenty, he has no heart; if he is not a conservative when he is forty, he has no head." I don't believe that. What I do believe is that we don't have the luxury of making climate change a political issue. It can't be about points-scoring or having your eye on the next election. It can't be about voting down a motion because a rival party put it forward, or diluting it to the point of meaninglessness. We all have heads and we all have hearts. We need to use them both and work together, or they'll be no future for us to disagree in.