

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

I suspect you will be pleased this is your last Cabinet Meeting, so you do not need first hand to hear me telling the truth about how poorly your Administration has treated the City and the wider North East Somerset community.

The Climate & Ecological Emergency is very important to me and, quite frankly, to all our residents.

When I read, and I quote:

“Cabinet is asked to note the positive progress and achievement over the last year on the implementation of the Council Climate Strategy”.

Wow – how I wish this was completely true.

I've taken the trouble to read the Report on the Action Plan and wonder how many of you have read it in detail – some may have, but if you all had, then you would not be proceeding with the destruction of the Tufa-Field which a Cabinet member had said to residents he will spend whatever it takes in obtaining Planning Permission – what an admission.

And when you continue to waste money and have new surveyors spending days on the site recently and openly admitting recently that the Field is too wet to build on, it says it all, why do you want to save face before the Environment. You should be ashamed of your decisions.

This Project must not go ahead if the Climate & Ecological Emergency means anything, and no animals or reptiles should be killed as they were a few years' ago on the field by contractors, instructed by this Council.

It is good to hear some honesty in the Report saying you are not on track to deliver net-Zero by 2030 or to reverse the decline in wildlife by the same date, but then read on and the blame game begins.

In the recommendation to Cabinet, you are to note progress in understanding renewable energy in BANES. I wonder if your new Renewable Energy Manager has looked at the failure of your Development Company to provide PV's on the roof of Keynsham Riverside, despite this being strongly promoted in the Planning Permission and part of that Consent. We've all heard the excuses year after year – I know why it's not been provided– but do you?

Why are you putting all your 'eggs in one basket'? I see no reference to Wind Turbines. Why I may ask – I'm sure if you took the trouble to speak to officers, you would know I've spoken at a Conference on Wind Turbines at the House of Commons and my speech, even if I say it myself, was well received.

What progress has been made since then on Turbines – by the look of it; none. It's been put on the back burner.

I see you are triumphing Air Source Heat Pumps at Charlton House; perhaps you should have been more concerned about what was happening to the residents sitting in their own urine before having pictures taken alongside heat pumps. Still, those Cabinet members do not have the gumption to resign – that is disgraceful.

I support engagement in retrofitting insulation to Listed Buildings – there is much more to be done, and those at Historic England must be persuaded that some Listed Buildings can have good retrofitting. This must be a high priority.

I fully accept there is more to do on traffic, but the way you are going about it is alienating residents – you must bring them with you and look to proper consultation which MUST not be ignored. YOU MUST LISTEN.

The excuse of a slow response to the Ecological Emergency using Covid, and shortage of staff on not working on the plans is just not acceptable.

I remember only too well my discussions with the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency prior to the motion on Ecological Emergency being put to Full Council, and her reluctance to do so. I suspect I shamed her in making her change her mind.

I still am immensely upset that I was forced to resign as a Trustee of Avon Wildlife Trust because this Council did not like my criticism of what was happening at Entry Hill and other Ecological Areas – I wonder which one of us has been proved right.

Even now, there is a Cabinet member promoting the Cycle Park. Its' a good job Cllr Roper understands the issues and puts a halt to it. Let's hope it stays that way.

Stop playing politics and put the Climate and Ecological Emergency FIRST.