

Notes of SECA Steering Group 2/7/20

Present Jay, Sally, Pat, Sherry, Anne, Carrie, Chris, David, Geoff, Graham, Gregory, Julia, Karen, Kia, Liz, Paul, Petra, Tom, Vivian, Tony

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Update on new groups that have joined SECA recently:

Kent Canterbury Climate Action Partnership

Surrey- Guildford XR

Hants- Havant Climate Alliance

XR Petersfield

E Sussex- Cuckmere Community Solar

OVESCO

Hanover Action (Brighton)

XR Lewes

W Sussex- Ardingly Climate Action

XR Crawley

Meadow Blue Community Energy

It is good to see that SECA is welcoming more groups that cover a wider area of the South East.

A breakdown of our membership by location and types of groups is attached at the end of these minute.

3. Update on progress from councils

Surrey. Paul and Pat reported on how Dorking Climate Emergency is responding to Surrey CC Climate Change Strategy and encouraging Mole Valley District Council, Waverley and Surrey Heath to widen from focusing just on their own emissions. They have set up working groups on travel, housing, waste and the circular economy – and air quality – which have attracted a range of experts who can provide the authorities with free advice. The authorities commissioned consultants to devise strategies but are producing their own action plans.

Paul reported that MVDC feel their hands are tied by building regs – Geoff pointed out that Reading are pushing through plans requiring more than building regs.

Paul felt that the Surrey Climate Commission was working slowly, currently seeking funding but the university connection helps. Graham said the working group on communities and engagement lacked expertise in large scale behavioural change which would be needed to focus on engagement rather than publicity.

East Sussex. Julia and Sherry reported that since Maya Evans' role has apparently changed, no Hastings Cabinet member has climate change in their remit but one does now have transport responsibilities. Energise South is progressing community energy schemes, supported by Energy for All.

Sally asked about contact with Andy Arnold, East Sussex Climate Officer, who had responded to the SECA Survey and was concerned to get community support to link the, politically varied, districts with the County devised strategy.

Sherry explained that efforts recently had gone into the Emergency Relief Hub. She is trying to bring in climate and bidding to the Emerging Futures Fund for initiating local conversations on climate change. She asked what contacts SECA has with the LEPs, which are key to money. Jay suggested SECA could pursue this.

West Sussex. Geoff and Tony reported that 22 SECA members had made thoughtful responses, via SECA, to WSCC strategy consultation. Tony made some points at scrutiny committee, which were apparently well received. Anne asked if aviation was discussed. Geoff explained a conversation with Catherine Cannon, who feels that currently the “elephants in the room”, which also include oil exploration, should not specifically be included for fear of the strategy getting stuck at the first stage. She argued that current wording – that climate change will be considered in every decision - allows them to be addressed in the future.

There were also 200+ people watching the webcast which Geoff felt was helpful in holding councillors to account. Having got through the scrutiny committee, the strategy is very likely to be approved on 21/7 so no further action required. Virtual attendance would do no harm though.

Hampshire. Gregory felt that there had been push back from local councils to the XR brand. There was discussion of approaching using different hats, including SECA's – whilst affirming that XR has an important role eg as the grit in the shoe. Pat said that XR Godalming had managed to hold a constructive meeting with the climate officer at Surrey CC.

Gregory said that Hampshire had approved their strategy yesterday and was now moving to action planning. XR hopes to supply a few action point suggestions, with funding sources.

4. Where do we go next – how can SECA help facilitate community engagement with councils ?

Tom suggested pushing for Citizens' Assemblies. Geoff asked how far can we help with implementation eg of retrofit. Carrie explained the Horsham Future Forum and Climate Cafe, which had brought together many groups with different expertise and that funding to reach out to different levels with solutions would help. Up to now, she has found that engagement with HDC and W.Sussex has been frustratingly difficult.

Jay said that SECA can help constituent groups make contacts with local councils where this isn't happening. It would be good to know more about what is happening in Hampshire and Kent.

Sherry suggested simple graphics to help visualisation of climate change. She will share if she finds them.

David suggested closer links with the South East Transport Forum and urgent lobbying on the strategy which Transport for the SE are scheduled to fine tune on 16/7

Geoff has since spoken to Catherine Cannon, who is keen to discuss options for partnership and engagement not just with green groups, but with a big range of other stakeholders. Creating better links with Districts and Boroughs so they are sending consistent messages in an early priority and she has calls booked with Chichester and Adur/Worthing. She also spoke of exploring the scope for teaming up with Parishes. This is a big agenda so one to watch, and feed in ideas on.

Approximate breakdown of SECA members by type of group (July 2020)

Type of Group	Number
Local green group	29
XR	10
Transition	9
FOE	6
Campaign	6
Energy Coop	6
Faith group	3
Repair cafe	4
School/youth	3
Local network	4
Regional network	4
National	1
Other	3
Total	88

Distribution of SECA members by county (July 2020)

