

# Communicating Climate Change

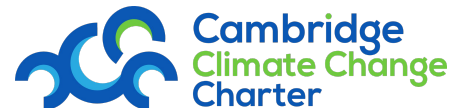
**Alana Sinclair**

Manager, Cambridge Carbon Footprint  
Nov 2023



# My experience:

- Masters in Climate Change
- 10+ years delivering climate communications



# The statistics

- Around three in four adults (74%) reported feeling (very or somewhat) worried about climate change
- Thinking there are more urgent priorities to be worried about was the most frequently reported reason among those who were unworried or neither worried nor unworried about climate change
- When asked about a range of issues, climate change was the second biggest concern facing adults in Great Britain (74%), with the rising cost of living being the main concern (79%).
- Three in four adults (75%) said they made a lot or some lifestyle changes to help tackle climate change.

# Audience

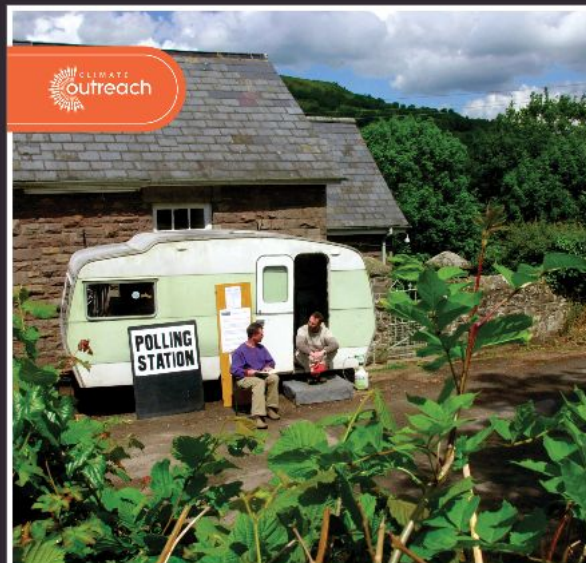




Reports & guides | 25 February 2021

# Rural attitudes to climate change – equipping UK rural councillors to engage with their communities

Download

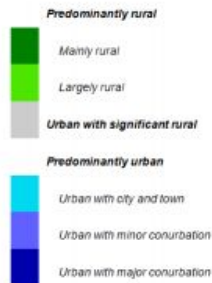


Equipping rural councillors  
to engage effectively  
on climate change



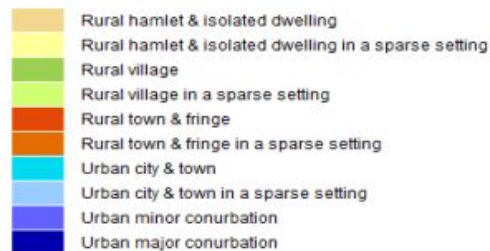
# Rural-Urban classification in England

Rural / Urban classification 2011



Rural-Urban by Local Authorities in England

Rural / Urban classification 2011



Rural-Urban by Census Output Areas

% worried about  
climate change

Rural Conservative  
supporters

**80%**

Rural Labour  
supporters

**95%**

Rural Liberal Democrat  
supporters

**96%**

# Rural citizens are worried about environmental issues

Rural citizens are worried about environmental issues

Universal high concern regarding

- The natural environment (92%)
- Plastic pollution (91%)
- Deforestation (93%)
- Air pollution (90%)

Climate change is a topic of high concern to rural citizens (**87%**)  
across the political spectrum

*(Based on survey results from Britain Talks Climate, 2020. "Rural" label based on Rural Urban Classification system of postcodes from the UK Office for National Statistics)*

Cambridge  
Carbon  
Footprint







# Rural citizens are more engaged than urban

- 60% of rural citizens think that we are already feeling the effects of climate change (56% urban)
- Rural citizens have high civic and political participation
  - 64% donated to charity (54% urban)
  - 54% voted in local elections (50% urban)
  - 45% have signed a petition (39% urban)
  - 22% volunteered in their local community (15% urban)

More likely to say their **ideal UK** is **hard-working** and **environmentally-friendly**, compared to urban citizens

- 85% agree that “too much in our country is decided in London”
- 50% say “the area where I live has been neglected for a long time”

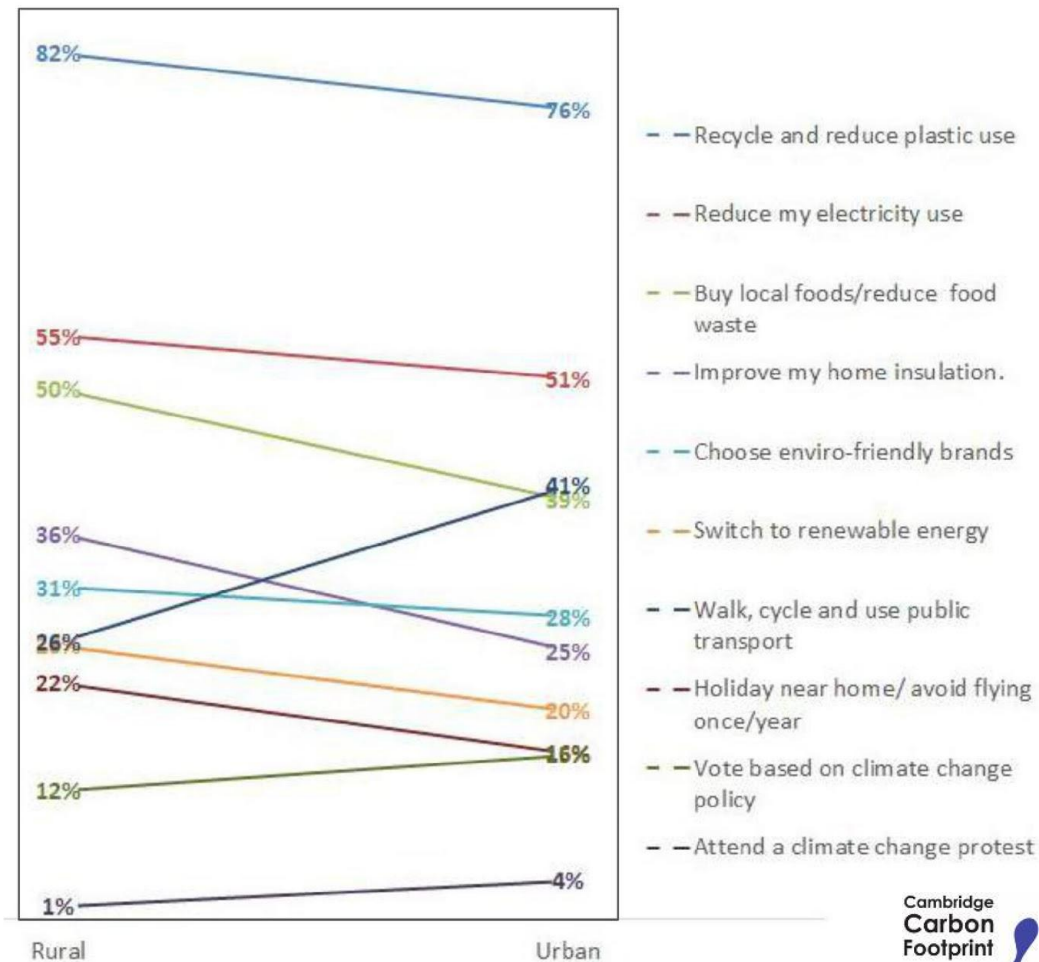
# Behaviours

Compared to those in urban areas, **rural citizens are more likely to** engage in a range of personal actions to reduce their climate impact

- Recycle, reuse plastic
- Reduce electricity use
- Buy local food
- Improv home insulation
- Switch to renewable energy
- Holiday near home

## They are less likely to

- Walk, cycle, and use public transport
- Vote for a political party based on their climate policies
- Attend a climate change protest



Based on survey results from Britain Talks Climate (2020)



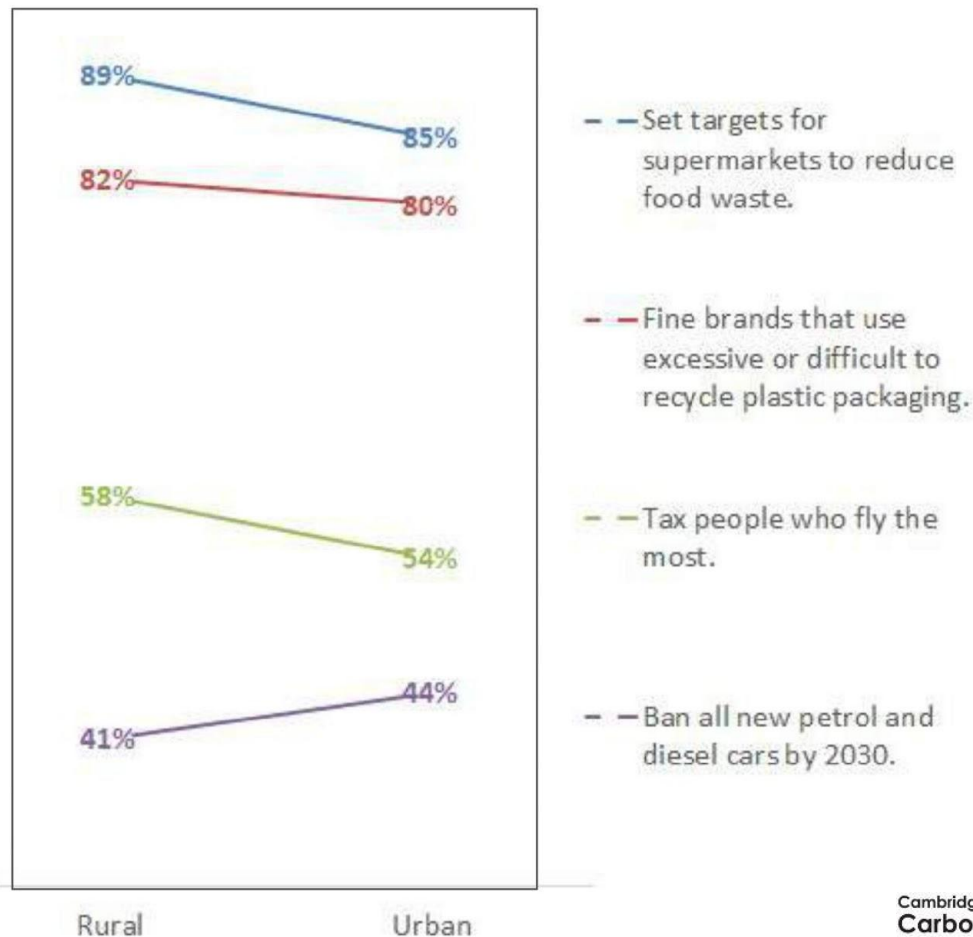
# Policy support

Compared to those in urban areas, rural citizens are more likely to support several climate policies

- Food waste targets for supermarkets
- Fining brands for excess packaging
- Taxing frequent flyers

They are less likely to support

- Banning petrol and diesel cars by 2030



Based on survey results from Britain Talks Climate (2020)



# Petrol and diesel cars

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- 45% of rural citizens are *very or somewhat worried* that tackling climate change means they **won't be able to drive their petrol or diesel car** (29% urban)
  - Some see bans as unfair because the government previously encouraged people to buy diesel (61%)
  - Some are concerned about extra costs to daily life (55%)



# Support for renewables is higher in rural areas

- Support for **renewable energy (in general)**, biomass, wave/tidal and solar was found to be **higher in rural areas**
- 75% of rural citizens think that **cutting carbon emissions is an opportunity to create new jobs** in the UK
- Support for high-carbon industries such as fracking is **decreasing every year**, most of all in areas with **high employment in oil and gas**. People **do not want more high-carbon industries**

*(Roddis et al., 2019; Britain Talks Climate, 2020)*

Reports & guides | 18 November 2020

# Britain Talks Climate

Download



Source: [climateoutreach.org/reports/britain-talks-climate](https://climateoutreach.org/reports/britain-talks-climate)

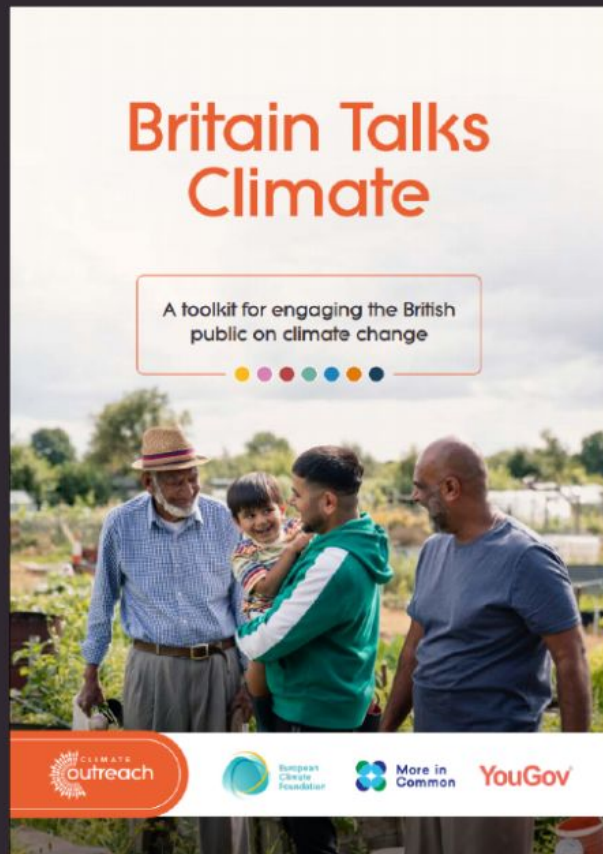






Photo credit: Ken Biggs / Alamy

# Why Britain Talks Climate?

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A new approach for communicating climate change based on:

- Survey of 10,385 including England, Wales, and Scotland, with 2 follow-up polls in May and September
- Used hierarchical cluster analysis to find 7 groups who have similar psychographic and behavioural patterns
- 10 focus groups + 35 interviews

The research goes beyond simple accounts of public opinion (left vs right, leave vs remain) to go deeper on issues that include climate, politics, gender and race, but also community, safety and progress.



# Britain Talks Climate

**Progressive Activists:** politically active, vocal, focused on climate

**Backbone Conservatives:** patriotic, proud, food, farming & rural life

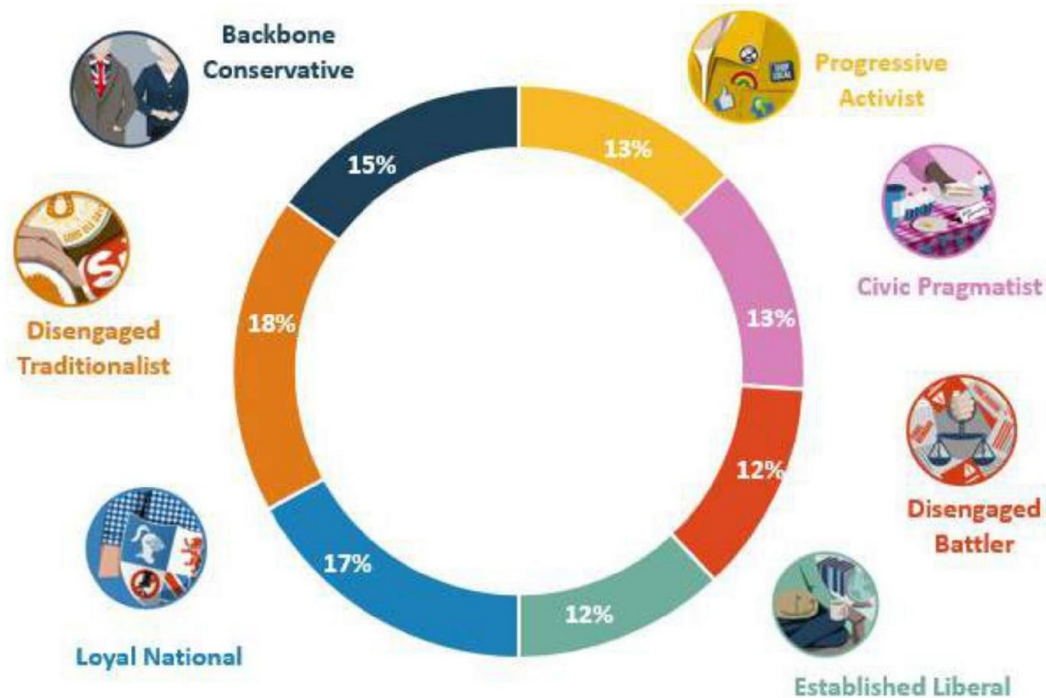
**Civic Pragmatists:** moderate, politically demotivated, but sustainable at home

**Established Liberals:** optimistic, empowered, low-carbon solutions & growth

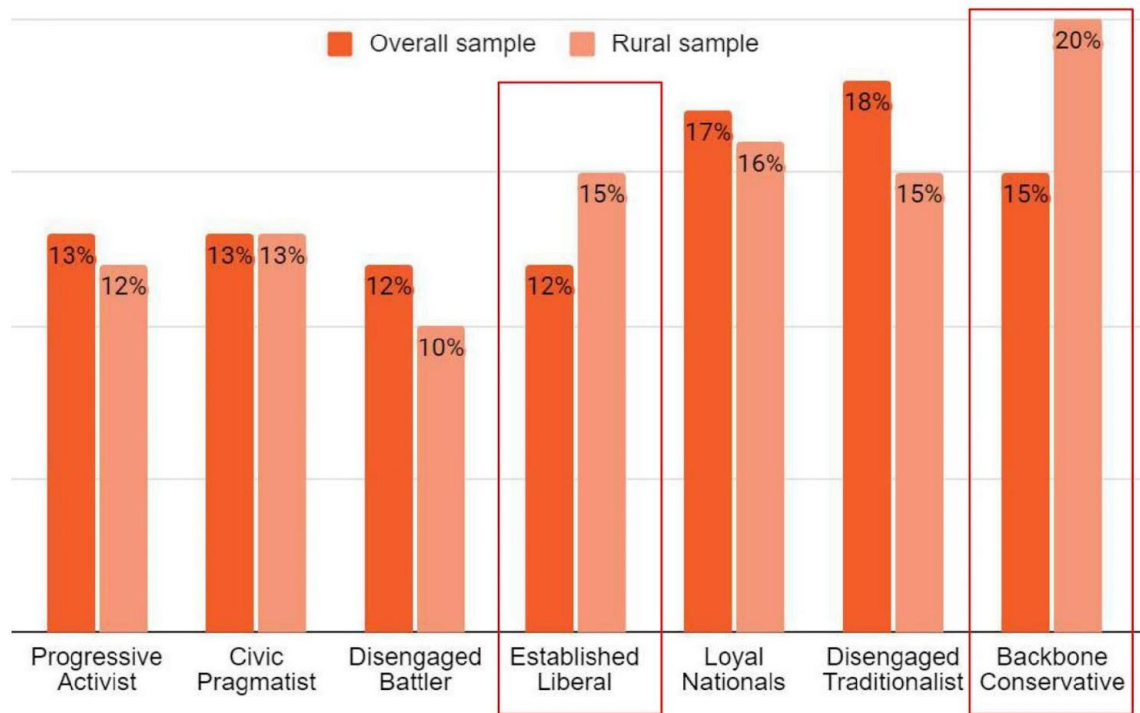
**Disengaged Battlers:** unheard, frustrated by middle class environmentalism

**Disengaged Traditionalists:** alienated, sceptical, least engaged on climate

**Loyal Nationals:** patriotic, threatened, concerned about localised inequality



# Britain Talks Climate: Rural



The seven segments of Britain Talks Climate are all represented in rural\* areas.

There are proportionally more Backbone Conservatives, more Established Liberals, and fewer Disengaged Battlers and Disengaged Traditionalists.

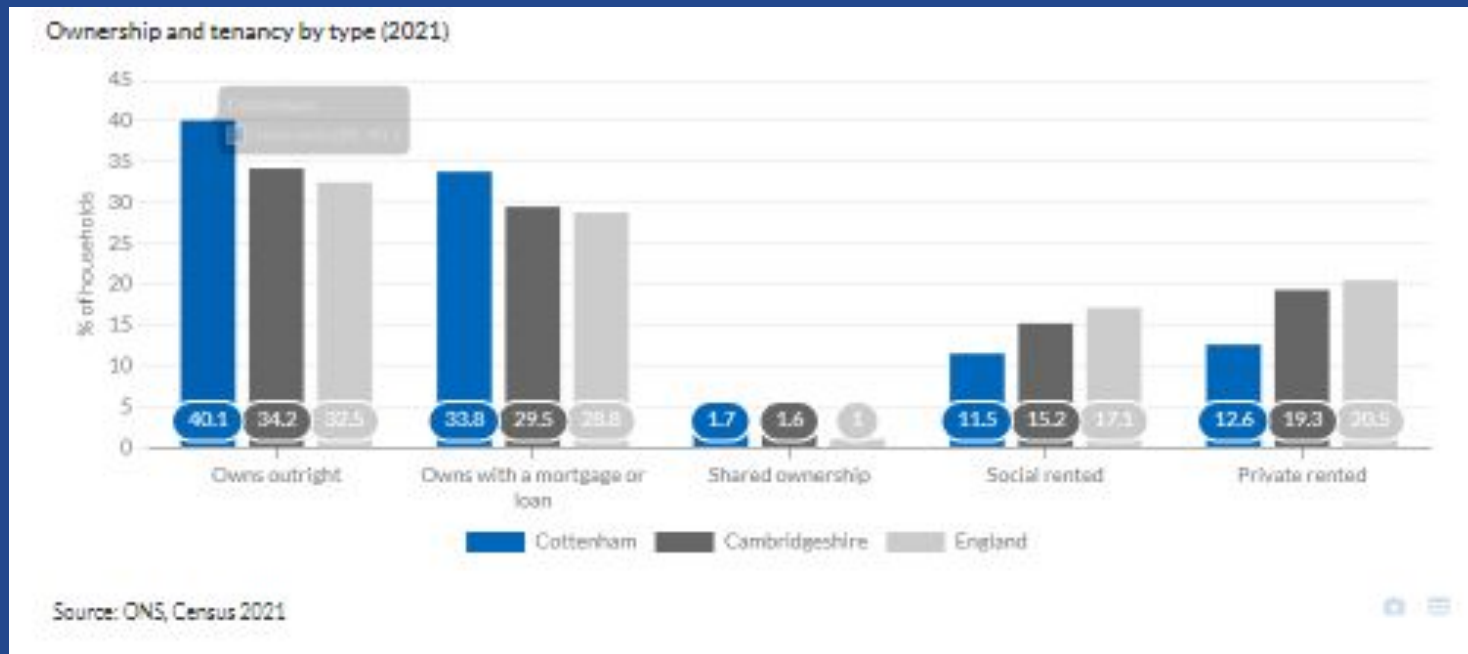
- More **higher-income Conservative party** voters
- Fewer **lower-income** voters, **"Red Wall"** voters, and **Labour voters**
- Fewer **"non-voter"** populations

\* "Rural" label based on Rural Urban Classification system of postcodes from the UK Office for National Statistics



**It all starts with audience**

# Other information sources



# Other information sources












# A conversation - your audience

- Who are you trying to reach?
- What do you already know about them?
- How might you find out more?

# Communicators



# Climate communicators

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
 <b>Progressive Activist</b>	David Attenborough 4.47	Greta Thunberg 3.87	Chris Packham 3.72	Michaela Strachan 3.36	Emma Thompson 3.10
 <b>Civic Pragmatist</b>	David Attenborough 4.42	Chris Packham 3.63	Greta Thunberg 3.42	Michaela Strachan 3.33	Prince William 3.28
 <b>Disengaged Battler</b>	David Attenborough 4.00	Chris Packham 3.06	Michaela Strachan 2.88	Prince William 2.79	Greta Thunberg 2.78
 <b>Established Liberal</b>	David Attenborough 4.21	Chris Packham 3.45	Prince William 3.27	Prince Charles 3.24	Michaela Strachan 3.19
 <b>Loyal National</b>	David Attenborough 4.22	Prince William 3.45	Chris Packham 3.34	Prince Charles 3.25	Michaela Strachan 3.11
 <b>Disengaged Traditionalist</b>	David Attenborough 3.73	Prince William 3.18	Prince Charles 2.96	Chris Packham 2.85	Michaela Strachan 2.81
 <b>Backbone Conservative</b>	David Attenborough 3.98	Prince William 3.54	Prince Charles 3.40	Chris Packham 3.05	Michaela Strachan 2.98



# Trusted communicators



**Place local people at the centre of communication.** Actively seek out communicators who are seen to be representative of the local population (with a rural heritage, diversity of income)

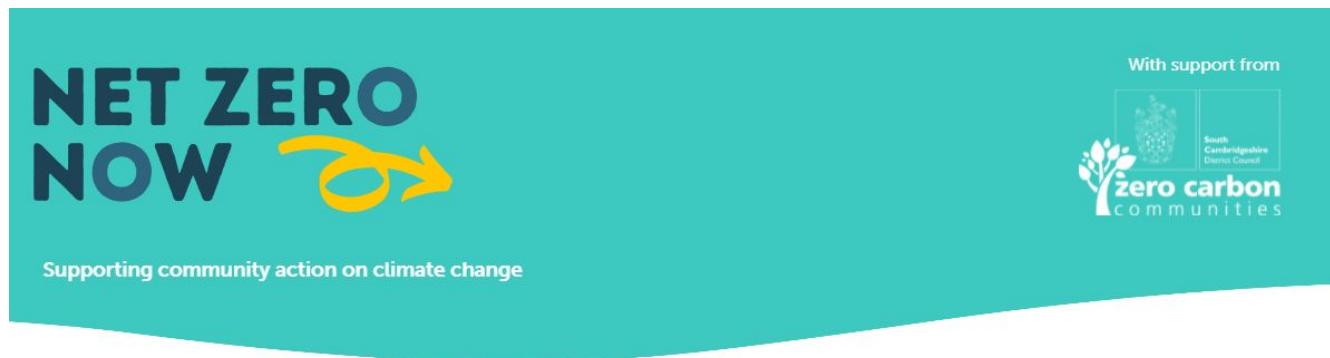


**Avoid being overly dependent** on communicators who are incomers, have higher education, or do not have strong roots in the area. Ensure that communicators are balanced by representation of local people



Photo credit: Keith Morris/ Alamy

# Trusted communicators



## Free training for community action on climate change

The Net Zero Now training scheme helps local communities to identify how and where they can take action on climate change in South Cambridgeshire.

This free training course is designed to enable everyone, regardless of knowledge, skills or experience to participate. By the end of the programme participants will have the tools to get started on a carbon reduction initiative. This could be something as simple as setting up a new local clothes swap, or something as big as a community energy scheme.

## Find out more



### About Net Zero Now Webinar & Q&A

Watch a 30 minute webinar to find out more about the free Net Zero Now Training.

## FAQs



# Messanges



# Building your message

- Resonate with your audience
- Foster knowledge, empowerment and action
- Be positive and engaging



# Resonate with your audience

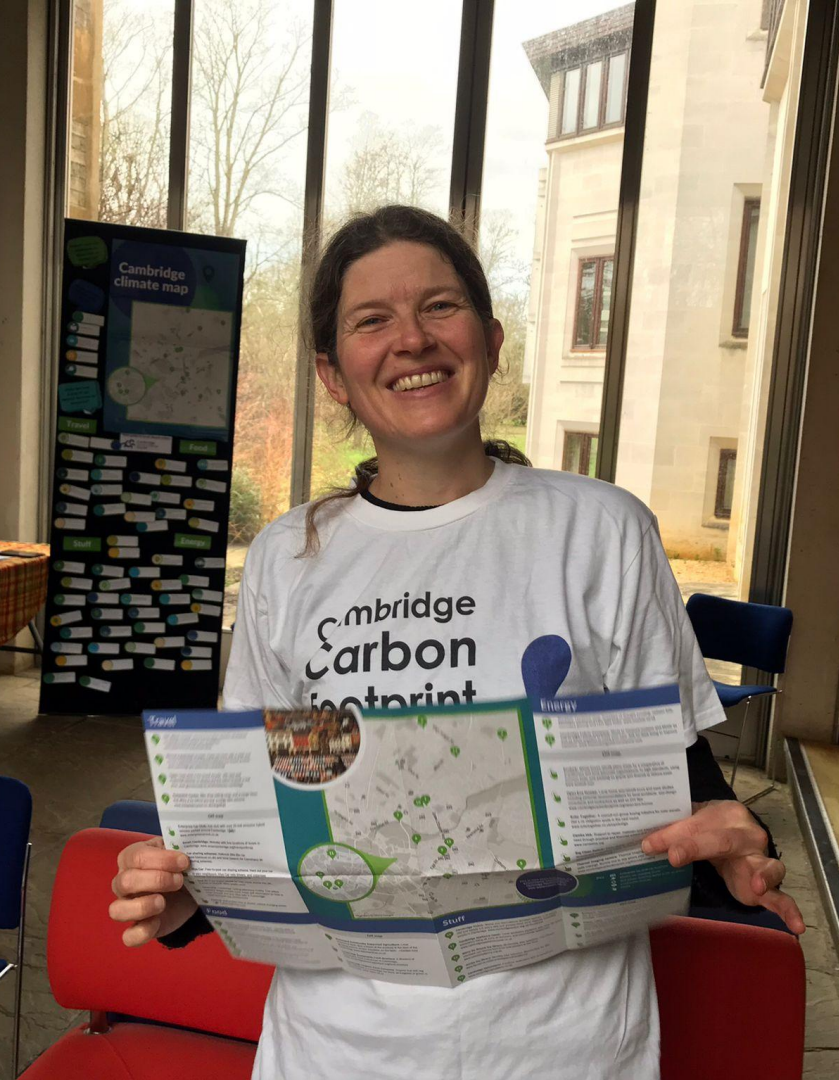
- Find out what your audience knows. What are their values, beliefs and attitude?
- Use trusted, credible communicators who connect with the interests of your group.
- Make the engagement personally relevant and familiar.
- Connect with what matters to your audience, using shared language.

<https://theclimatcommsproject.org/climate-communication-in-practice/>

# Foster knowledge, empowerment and action

- Help your audience realise what they can do, and what are the key, most important actions
- Encourage a sense of control and efficiency. Build confidence to take action and to know what is impactful.
- Catalyse individual and collective changes, and boost political engagement around climate change.

<https://theclimatcommsproject.org/climate-communication-in-practice/>





# Create positive and engaging communications



- Hold people's attention, be concise and get to the crux quickly. Make it interesting.
- Use captivating visuals, stories, narrative, humour and other creative forms of engagement.
- Recognise the scale of the problems we face, but emphasising how to overcome them.
- Keep communications two-way. Learn together, avoid preaching, and don't coerce change.

<https://theclimatecommsproject.org/climate-communication-in-practice/>



# Avoid



- Language which evokes divide e.g. of left/right, conservative/labour.
- Divisive issues, and echoing top down or out of town messages.
- Telling people how they should or shouldn't act.
- Language which suggests radical change as instability.
- Language that suggests overhaul.

# Look for unifying themes



- **Connect with universal values**  
e.g. Reducing waste, protecting future generations, creating a healthier society
- **Tap into local pride and identity**  
e.g. supporting local industry and agriculture, local resilience and self-reliance, community pulling together
- **Tap into a sense of stewardship and shared responsibility to protect the environment**  
e.g. duty, tradition, integrity, defend, secure, safe, restore, rebuild, repair, renew, beautiful, pure, pollution, dirty, mess
- **Emphasise stability**  
e.g. How changes being made help to maintain security and preserve what people value.
- **Stress the continuity between the past and the future, drawing on past experiences**  
e.g. changes to the weather are new, but our responses are part of a steady and intelligent response to an evolving situation.

# A conversation - themes

- What themes and messages do you think might resonate with your community?
- How might you use them to put together activities and communications?

# Some examples





Cambridge Carbon Footprint  
Presents

# THE WWII RATIONING CHALLENGE

FOOD FROM THE PAST, FOOD FOR THE FUTURE



## WHY A RATIONING CHALLENGE?

2015 is the 70 year anniversary marking the end of WWII. It is an opportunity to remember some of the hardships that people endured in their daily lives during and after the wartime years. Rationing in Britain was unpopular, in other countries food shortages and rationing were a matter of life and death.

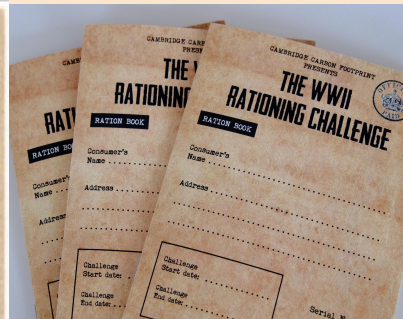
A rather surprising outcome of rationing in Britain was that despite the queues, shortages and lack of variety, people were healthier during the war years than they are today. They consumed less meat and dairy products, fewer processed and out of season foods.

## LEARNING FROM THE PAST

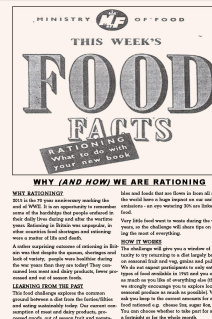


This food challenge explores the common ground between a diet from the forties/fifties and eating sustainably today. Our current consumption of meat and dairy products, processed goods, out of season fruit and vegetables and foods that are flown in from all around the world have a huge impact on our carbon emissions - an eye watering 30% are linked to food.

Very little food went to waste during the war years, so the challenge will share tips on making the most of everything.



FOOD RATIONS PER PERSON PER WEEK		
SUGAR Dec 1974	MARGARINE Dec 1974	BACON AND HAM Dec 1974
CHEESE Dec 1974	OIL / LARD Dec 1974	TEA Dec 1974
MEAT Dec 1974	BUTTER Dec 1974	MILK Quota (1.15 litres) Dec 1974
EGG Dec 1974	RAM / PRESERVED LARD Dec 1974	EGGS Dec 1974



get clicking to find out more

### INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

**RATION BOOKLET**  
Download your ration challenge booklet

**WAR-TIME COOKERY**  
Our top tips and recipe ideas for ration planning

**LAURA'S LARDER**  
Find out the carbon footprint of your diet

**CCF BLOG**  
Get inspired at the CCF Food Blog

**PINTEREST**  
More resources, recipes, ideas and inspiration

**FACEBOOK**  
Follow the ration challenge on Facebook

**LAUNCH EVENT**  
Find out more about WWII rationing

**EATING LOCALLY**  
A list of local producers and distributors

**SIGN UP NOW**



# Conversation

Considering behaviour change and climate communication strategies, why do you think the Ration Challenge worked so well?





Cambridgeshire  
**REPAIR CAFE**  
Network

## Cambridgeshire Repair Cafe Network

Things break and Repair Cafes help fix them, pairing skilled volunteer repairers with people who need things fixed, preventing useful goods from going to landfill, tackling climate change, and building community. Cambridgeshire Repair Cafe Network supports a fast-growing network of Repair Cafes.



[Campaign overview](#)

[Aims](#)

[Where's the money going?](#)

[Impact & reporting](#)

## Situation

Every day, useful items are being thrown into landfill because it's cheaper and easier than getting them fixed. In the UK we have per capita the second highest rate of electronic waste in the world, and every replacement television or laptop purchased has the equivalent carbon footprint of a return short haul flight, so it's bad news for our climate. Many people are frustrated by the short lifespan of their products and are keen to make them last longer but struggle to do so.

## Solution

We will expand access to repair by supporting local communities across Cambridgeshire to set up and run their own Repair Cafes. These events pair skilled volunteer repairers with people who have all sorts of things that need fixing, such as phones, laptops, jewellery, clothing, toys, and furniture. Useful items are fixed, and connections are made, with repairers and attendees valuing the opportunity to connect with others in the local community.



# Social norms

## Climate Action Case Studies

Everyone can be part of the solution to climate change in Cambridge – whether that is by becoming a climate leader and raising awareness in the local community or by making changes in our everyday lives through addressing our individual carbon footprints. Many members of the local community recognise the difference their emissions can make and have been taking climate action to help build a sustainable future for Cambridge.

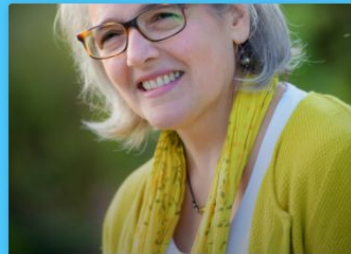
Discover their stories below.



Growing vegetables from home to reduce carbon emissions



Anna's Carbon Footprint Reduction Journey



Mindful home renovation – a case study of repurposing old household objects



# Visuals





# 7 core principles for climate change communication



Show real people



Tell new stories



Show climate change causes at scale



Show emotionally powerful impacts



Understand your audience



Show local (but serious) impacts



Be careful with protest imagery



# Top tips & take aways





- Lists of benefits
- Policy arguments
- Statistics

- Narratives
- Themes
- Visuals





- Listen
- Speak personally
- Tell stories
- Make it tangible and vivid



- Speak in positives, not negatives
- Be aware of the context and being timely
- Address everyday concerns
- Avoid technical jargon



# Summary

- Understand your audience
- Think about your communicator
- Speak to people's values
- Use visuals with people and place

# Resources

- **Climate Comms**
  - Climate Outreach
  - Climate Visuals
  - From Ambition to Action
- **Audience**
  - Cambridgeshire Insight
- **Comms tools and strategy**
  - Charity Comms
  - NCVO
  - Media Trust



# Thanks!

## Any questions?

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