

## Thornhackett Parish Council Environment Champion (EC) Report February 2026.

In February I want to highlight some critical data, and look at how “The Great Collaboration” may help Local Town and Parish Councils. Recently it is apparent to me that the matters of climate volatility, environment degradation, and nature loss, are causing inconvenience. Further that adaptation to these changes is also perceived as inconvenient. Al Gores "Inconvenient Truth" comes to mind.

The changes in the decision making process have become difficult, trying to help us adapt our lives to new and varied conditions whilst not being “Inconvenient”. In my opinion the work of all those in positions of responsibility or authority, from parishes upwards, will get more difficult, trying to help people accept the new normal, even if it is even an unstable “normal”.

We have experienced a year of record dry spells, record warming of our oceans, record windspeed and most recently record levels of rainfall. For farmers we had a record wet spring in 2024 followed by a record dry spring in 2025. The Met office now record that we have on average 5 fewer days of lying snow per decade since 40 years ago, and 12 fewer days of frost per decade over the same time frame. The warming of our atmosphere by just 1 degree C, leads to the atmosphere being able to hold 7% more water, 2025 saw 1.4 degrees, 9.8%. This combination of warming and extra water explains the rainfall intensity we are now experiencing. Yet we continue to try and carry on as before. At a Parish Level, for example, recent discussions of the Budget did not appear to contain any discussion, or actual provisions, for the impact of changing climate or environmental issues. In a Climate Emergency this should be included in future budget discussions.

Governments have implemented statutes for change, regional local authorities have set targets for changes, most have declared emergencies, as have Thornhackett. All to try to reduce the impact from toxic and overheating levels of CO<sub>2</sub>, Methane, Nitrous oxide and cfc's, and other environmental pollutants. Yet we are mostly carrying on as normal.

We are not going to meet targets for biodiversity by 2030, and not going to meet targets for reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, and have already exceeded, in one year, warming targets of 1.5 degrees above the baseline pre industrial period between 1850 and 1900. The current measure of CO<sub>2</sub> is at 427 ppm, compared with a safe level of 350 ppm, this level is an increase on February last year. The average level for 4 primary greenhouse gases in 2023 was 51% higher than in 1990. Temperatures rising are driving pressures on Food security, and Weather stability, which in turn affects pollution in our rivers and seas.

It can feel overwhelming and "over there" i.e. a perception that it is not happening here, as you read from the above, and have experienced recently, it is happening here. Every decision taken now and since the PC declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2023, should in my opinion, have the impacts on climate or nature or environment at its heart. Do you agree and can you implement?

There is a lot of help available locally The Great Collaboration (TGC) provides a smaller councils plan for Parish and Town Councils, I attach it to this note, with its longer version separately. My recommended *Action for February* is for the PC to undertake to adopt TGC recommendations, start a programme from now to incorporate all those principles considered possible into the PC's

processes. This initiative is being promoted by the Society of Local Council Clerks who may offer further help. NALC also has a Climate Emergency Network set up to help councils.

Time was cut very short last meeting, and some of the recommended Action points did not appear to be discussed. I set out the main ones for consideration, debate or decision as follows:

1. Maintain pressure on water company with continuing high levels of overspill. 2. Consider taking advice from Dorset Council on whether to ban harmful herbicide use on land it uses or leases. 3. Examine and document the PC's Carbon footprint.

*Environment Champion 10<sup>th</sup>*

*February 2026*