LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2025

Forest of Dean
DISTRICT COUNCIL

UKRI
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The LGBTQIA+ Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) is a groundbreaking, community-driven strategy developed by LGBTQIA+ individuals for the Forest of Dean. Rooted in intersectionality, environmental stewardship, and social resilience, the plan combines insights from visioning workshops, survey responses, and collaborative discussions to shape a sustainable and inclusive future.

Recognising the disproportionate impact of climate change and socio-economic challenges on marginalised communities, this plan centres LGBTQIA+ voices in local climate advocacy, ensuring both environmental and social justice remain at the forefront. The four-stage participatory process, including collective visioning, structured climate learning, and action-oriented workshops and action planning, has shaped tangible strategies to address housing, health, accessibility, and biodiversity concerns while fostering safety and inclusion.

With this plan, we commit to systemic change, ensuring that LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Forest of Dean are included and empowered to lead in shaping a sustainable, just future.

This document provides:

- Key objectives that were shaped by community priorities from the survey.
- Practical strategies for climate resilience and equitable governance.
- Measurable impact metrics to ensure ongoing adaptation and success.
- Stakeholder engagement pathways for policy implementation.

Introduction

This action plan was co-developed to respond to the lived experiences, hopes, and systemic challenges of LGBTQIA+ communities in rural contexts, interweaving environmental justice with inclusive community development. Each action foregrounds access, visibility, and sustainability, emphasising grassroots knowledge, partnership, and cultural safety. Designed to be practical and transformative, the plan serves as a roadmap for targeted initiatives and a collaborative invitation to institutions and networks ready to do better.

Climate change is not a neutral crisis - it intersects with social inequality, economic instability, and systemic discrimination. As LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Forest of Dean, we experience unique vulnerabilities regarding transport, housing, healthcare, employment, and safety, all of which are exacerbated by socio-environmental instability. This plan responds to urgent community concerns highlighted through research, workshops, and surveys, ensuring that climate resilience and adaptation measures are approached through an inclusive, intersectional lens.

This process was deeply collaborative, with input from diverse stakeholders and five participatory workshops guiding the plan's development:

- Visioning workshops refined core priorities, ensuring community-led strategy.
- Climate Fresk session deepened systemic climate understanding.
- Action-focused workshops translated visions into tangible solutions.
- Collective editing sessions ensure shared ownership and refinement.

| Protects nature | Creates jobs and gains skills for the future | Reduces pollution | Strong commun -ities | Better physical and mental health | Fairer society | Comfort able homes | Eases the cost of living | Easier travel |

The aims of the project were to:
- To ensure LGBTQIA+ voices are heard and represented in the Forest of Dean's community climate engagement programme and wider climate action planning and strategy, ensuring no one is left behind in the Forest of Dean's ambitious journey to Net Zero by 2030.
- Use climate action's co-benefits to bring about change. This is done by identifying issues vital to a community and using climate action and adaptation to address those issues.
- Pilot, test and adapt this approach in a rural setting. It will be part of a broader climate change community engagement programme that FODDC is developing.
- Use community engagement to identify issues that are important to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Co-produce a Community Climate Action plan that focuses on the following co-benefits identified by the FODDC climate action team.

By implementing this plan, we can mobilise local resources, advocate for intersectional policy change, and build a sustainable, just future where LGBTQIA+ individuals are visible, protected, empowered, and integral to climate solutions.
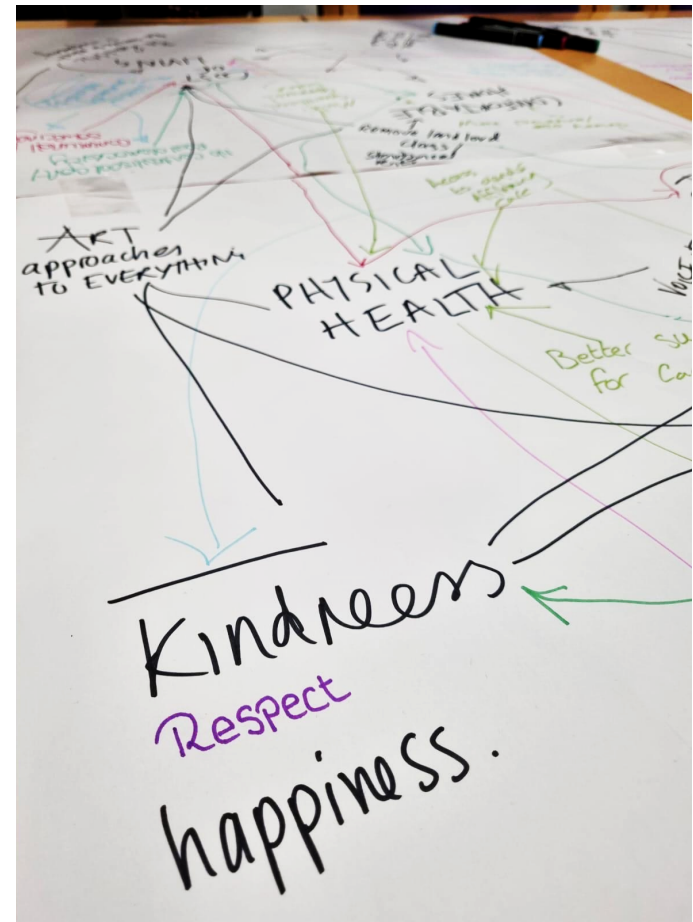
What is Climate Action?

Climate action refers to various initiatives and efforts to address climate change and its impacts. These actions are not always explicitly labelled as 'climate' or 'nature' actions, but they encompass a range of benefits, including:

- Health and Well-being: Promoting physical and mental health through cleaner air, greener spaces, and reduced pollution.
- Skills Development: Enhancing individual and community capabilities through education and training in sustainability practices.
- Reducing Social Isolation: Building stronger, more connected communities by engaging people in collective environmental efforts.
- Lowering Energy Bills: Implementing energy-saving measures to reduce household and community energy consumption.
- Minimising Food Waste and Poverty: Encouraging sustainable food practices to reduce waste and support food security.

Benefits of Creating Community-Based Climate Action Plans

Creating community-based climate action plans has multiple benefits. Through this work, we have brought people together around a shared vision for the future, transforming aspirations into actionable steps. There will be new opportunities for partnerships, unlocking new opportunities for financial support and strategic collaborations. Elevating community leaders as nature and climate champions enhances the organisation's profile and influence. Ensuring LGBTQIA+ voices are heard in policy-making promotes inclusive and equitable climate policies. Establishing robust support networks bolsters community resilience and cohesion. Generating evidence and insights for Queering the Wye and other rural LGBTQIA+ groups to inform research and advocate for LGBTQIA+ needs in rural areas.

Visioning Workshop 2: Mapping Needs

Methodology & Project Timeline

How We Developed This Plan

Forest of Dean District Council has been developing a Climate Change Community Engagement Programme that supports an 'equitable transition'. The LGBTQIA+ Community Climate Action plan is part of ensuring an equitable transition. Officers wanted to develop, test, and adapt an approach based on the work done by Bristol Climate and Nature Partnership. Working with a trusted messenger, already embedded in the LGBTQIA+ community, was crucial, leading to partnering with Aimee Blease-Bourne, who runs the Queering the Wye project with the Wye Valley River Festival.

This plan was built through a cooperative and careful process led by Aimee, a respected voice in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Survey

Collected feedback from various community members. Engaged with potential stakeholders and partners

Nov 2024 - March 2025

Visioning workshops

These workshops allowed community members to share their views and ideas.

February and March 2025

Climate Fresk Session

An interactive session to understand climate challenges better.

April 2025

Action-Oriented Workshops

Translated community ideas into clear steps for action.

May and June 2025

Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

Discussions with key local stakeholders.

Sept 2025

With support from the Forest of Dean District Council (FODDC), Aimee brought people together from across the region to ensure the plan reflected real-life experiences rather than just policies.

Working with FODDC officers, Piers Cardiff and Katie Clubb, Aimee created a community survey to capture what matters most to the community. The survey asked questions about housing, safety, and environmental concerns, allowing us to understand the community's needs clearly.

After gathering the survey results, we organised five accessible ways for community members to come together and share their ideas. These included creative workshops like zine-making and sessions where people could share their visions for the future. We also ran tabletop activities, including the Climate Fresk card game. We identified themes and considered how we could work towards change, assessing the feasibility and impact of each action. We then worked out our top priorities and began to establish actions which could be taken to enact climate mitigation and adaptation.

For each prioritised area, we identified:

- Who could help?
- The resources needed,
- The changes we hoped to see,
- And achievable timeframes.

We reviewed these priorities with local partners, climate experts, and community leaders, ranking them to decide which actions to take first. Finally, we combined everything in a Community Action Plan - a document that explains the process, shares the key findings, and invites further input from the community.

The Role of the Survey

The community-wide survey reached 46 LGBTQIA+ individuals across the Forest of Dean. While not 'representative' of the LGBTQIA+ community, it provided essential insights into challenges like housing, climate worries, and everyday access issues. This feedback ensured our goals were rooted in the community's real experiences. The process has enabled us to capture the thoughts, problems, and challenges of the "hidden" community, which has rarely been engaged in issues.

New Connections & Broader Collaborations

The project also helped us build new relationships with organisations that support LGBTQIA+ rights and local climate efforts. Our new partners include:

- **Gay Gloucestershire**
- **LGBT+ Partnership**
- **Gloucestershire Constabulary** (supporting safety and community matters)
- **Pride in Gloucestershire**

- **The Diversity Trust**

These collaborations help strengthen our work by bringing in more diverse voices and support from across the region.

> *These sessions with Aimee and FODDC have offered a little sliver of genuine hope in a time when it's so easy to focus on the bad news. A true sense of community with like-minded folks and the opportunity to dream big while still focusing on achievable, meaningful action have meant that this doesn't feel like an exercise in navel-gazing. I have left the two sessions I was able to attend full of inspiration, energy, and hope!*
>
> Sian Jones

> *I came to the queers for climate action group because I am passionate about doing what I can to tackle climate change. Being surrounded by people I know who will respect my identity made it easier for me to attend this group. I learned a lot about the science and interlocking nature of different climate-related issues through the Climate Fresk card game, which I enjoyed. Being part of this group empowered me to take action against the climate crisis. It helped me realise the importance of communities and local groups building their resilience, and that we can't exclusively rely on the people in power to protect us. I'd love to see more queer*

> *community-building initiatives as a result of this, creating a stronger knit community that can build resilience against climate change.*
>
> Piper

Context: Our community

LGBTQ community in the Forest of Dean

The 2021 Census shows that in the Forest of Dean, approximately 1,662 residents, roughly 2.3% of respondents aged 16 and over, identified with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Within this group, nearly 45% identify as gay or lesbian, while around 42% identify as bisexual. Although 90.6% of respondents reported a heterosexual orientation, note that a significant number, several thousand, chose not to answer these voluntary questions. This underlines both the visibility and the complexities of self-reporting in rural contexts.

For gender identity, census data reveal that roughly 237 residents (or 0.3% of the population) reported a gender identity different from that assigned at birth. This group includes 30 trans men, 38 trans women, and 30 non-binary individuals. While these figures may seem small in absolute terms, each number is a vital contribution to the intricate mosaic of queer identity in the region.

A trend is evident among younger residents. For those under 35, about one in 20 now comfortably identifies as LGBTQIA+ (2021 census). This growing openness among the youth speaks of evolving social attitudes and a generational shift toward self-acceptance, even in rural settings where traditional norms have long held sway.

Picture: Wildbore Queers by Carrot

Beyond numbers, the cultural and social landscape in the Forest of Dean has very few LGBTQIA+ services. Queering the Wye, a Wye Valley River Festival Project, runs LGBTQIA+ youth sessions, events and some

nature-based initiatives which serve LGBTQIA+ people from the wider community outside the Forest. This is enriched, to a certain extent, by limited county-wide initiatives. Organisations in Gloucester, such as the Gloucestershire Gay & Lesbian Community and GayGlos, serve as hubs for support, offering relaxed meeting spaces that help counter the isolation often felt in rural areas. However, a lack of public transport and other limitations frequently prevent people from the Forest of Dean from accessing these services. The Forest of Dean has an annual Pride event, which is organised by Pride in Gloucestershire. A post-event survey reveals a deeper context that underscores the urgency of integrated climate and social justice planning. 40% of respondents reported feeling unsafe in the Forest of Dean due to their LGBTQIA+ identity, and nearly all residents surveyed had experienced hate crimes. Furthermore, hesitancy to report these incidents and a lack of perceived community support highlight systemic gaps in safety, advocacy, and inclusion.

Picture: Forest LGBTQIA+ Folks by Carrot

Broader Rural Context and Further Afield

Nationally, recent figures indicate that as many as 3.2% of people in England and Wales might identify as LGBTQIA+ when accounting for both census data and other surveys. In contrast, the Forest of Dean's rate of 2.3% reflects a typical rural pattern where LGBTQIA+ identities are less frequently reported. This gap may be due to privacy concerns, lower survey participation, or persistent fears of stigma in rural settings.

Rural LGBTQIA+ identities often face distinct challenges compared to their urban counterparts. Wider statistics suggest that non-response rates to questions on sexual orientation and gender identity tend to be higher outside metropolitan areas. Factors such as limited access to specialised services, less diversity and visible role models, and a tighter grip of traditional norms may contribute to this trend.

Surveys beyond the census also highlight emerging trends: for example, studies have found that only about 71% of Generation Z identify exclusively as heterosexual (Stonewall: 2022). This indicates that even in rural contexts, younger generations are more exploratory and open regarding their sexual and gender identities. Such shifts reflect national movements towards inclusivity, even as rural areas continue to navigate unique social dynamics.

Understanding Local Priorities

Our survey, conducted from November 2024 to March 2025, explored the intersection of LGBTQIA+ lived experiences and environmental challenges in the Forest of Dean. The findings present a community navigating compounding pressures, social exclusion, economic instability, and ecological degradation, while actively participating in sustainability practices. Respondents expressed deep concern about deforestation, biodiversity loss, and poor air and water quality, with many linking these issues to real impacts on housing, food security, and transport access. They also highlighted how climate-related disruptions, such as flooding and interrupted transport, affect their daily lives in tangible ways.

Importantly, the data reveals the unique vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in rural settings, where discrimination, inadequate healthcare, and a lack of inclusive infrastructure amplify barriers to safety and well-being. Yet despite these challenges, individuals demonstrate strong engagement in climate action, embracing circular economy practices, reducing reliance on fast fashion, and adopting energy-conscious behaviours. LGBTQIA+ individuals in the Forest of Dean are taking direct action through a variety of practical, values-driven steps. The report calls for a holistic strategy that centres visibility, intersectional support, and

education. Tackling environmental justice cannot be disentangled from the urgent need to foster inclusive and resilient community systems. This evidence base lays a foundation for shaping the LGBTQIA+ Community Climate Action Plan, ensuring that both climate and social equity outcomes are meaningfully pursued in tandem.

Key Findings & Insights:

The Forest of Dean is home to a diverse and resilient community navigating a complex mix of systemic challenges and collective strengths. This summary captures the lived realities of residents, particularly LGBTQIA+ individuals, and highlights opportunities for meaningful change across key areas.

Demographics and Inclusion

The population is predominantly White, reflecting the broader regional makeup. Gender identity is notably diverse: while most respondents identify as female, there is a high proportion of non-binary individuals, with males and transgender respondents in the minority.

A significant number of respondents live with disabilities or long-term conditions, including neurodiversity, mental health issues, and chronic illness. Around half report experiencing limitations in daily activities, suggesting an urgent need for more inclusive services and accessible infrastructure.

Health and Well-being

Self-reported physical and mental health scores cluster around "average," with concerns around poor access to health services. LGBTQIA+ individuals consistently describe negative experiences when seeking mental health support, including misgendering, outdated practices, and long wait times. These challenges are compounded by a lack of understanding among providers and limited local options.

The data reflects a critical need for improved training in gender-affirming care, trauma-informed practice, and LGBTQIA+ mental health support, particularly tailored to rural contexts.

Housing and Transport

Approximately 60% of respondents own their homes, yet housing insecurity remains a pressing issue. Renters frequently report poor conditions, landlord mistreatment, and lack of long-term stability. These challenges are often linked to poor health outcomes, especially for disabled and marginalised residents.

Public transport usage is low, with 60–70% reporting infrequent or no use. Limited routes, unreliable service,

and affordability concerns restrict mobility, particularly for young, disabled, and low-income individuals, reinforcing isolation and inequity.

Employment and Discrimination

High rates of self-employment may reflect both a strong entrepreneurial spirit and limited access to traditional job opportunities. LGBTQIA+ individuals report widespread discrimination at work, from overt harassment to subtle biases like deadnaming (calling a transgender person by their birth name when they have changed their name as part of their gender transition), and stereotyping. The Forest's tight-knit social dynamics can create a culture of silence, where fear of coming out leads to invisibility and deteriorating mental health.

There is a clear call for inclusive workplace policies, education on bias and allyship, and leadership that reflects the community's diversity.

Climate and Environmental Justice

Environmental issues impact daily life and are directly connected to concerns around housing, food, infrastructure, and well-being.

Local respondents show strong climate awareness through daily actions:

- 70% recycle and reduce energy use
- 60% embrace DIY approaches to reduce consumption
- 50% shop second-hand
- 25% actively avoid fast fashion
- Many reduce travel-related emissions by holidaying locally

These behaviours reflect a values-driven, resourceful community where economic pressures are met with sustainable responses.

LGBTQIA+ Experiences and Safety

Many LGBTQIA+ residents feel a moderate to poor sense of belonging. Reports of harassment, online and in person, are common, and safety at public events remains a concern. Despite this, there is a strong appetite for change: respondents call for more mental health support, inclusive social spaces, LGBTQIA+ representation, and education from an early age.

Systemic reforms are needed to address both policy gaps and community culture, alongside sustained investment in safer spaces, affirming services, and digital protections.

A Community Ready for Change

Despite the stark challenges outlined here, from discrimination to environmental degradation, this data also highlights a community rich in resilience, creativity, and care. People are already taking action, adapting their lifestyles, supporting one another, and advocating for fairness and sustainability.

This report calls for targeted solutions rooted in empathy, inclusion, and community knowledge. By investing in intersectional policies and amplifying the voices already leading the way, the Forest of Dean can evolve into a place where everyone has the safety, support, and opportunity to thrive.

Picture: zine page

Our Vision

Building a Just and Regenerative Forest of Dean

Picture: Zine page

By 2035, we envision the Forest of Dean as a region where environmental sustainability and social wellbeing are deeply interconnected. Climate action here is holistic, rooted in everyday life and shaped by the people it affects most. Our future centres on three inclusive priorities: protecting nature, supporting physical and mental health, and building stronger communities.

Nature will be protected and restored, not only for ecological health but as a public good accessible to all, including LGBTQIA+ people, newly settled communities, and disabled and neurodivergent individuals. Biodiversity conservation and climate resilience will go hand-in-hand with cultural expression, community engagement, and local partnerships.

Wellbeing will be upheld through inclusive healthcare, self-advocacy tools, and mental health support that meets people where they are, offering care and dignity in the face of systemic barriers. Our approach recognises that thriving individuals create thriving environments.

Communities will be empowered through safer spaces, mutual aid, and welcoming infrastructure that fosters belonging and connection. Through collective organising, climate education, and co-designed interventions, community care will become a cornerstone of environmental transformation.

This vision recognises that systemic change grows from local action, and that healing our relationship with the land includes healing our relationships with each other.

Our priorities and actions

Overview of the Climate Action Framework

Priorities are organised around co-benefits (multi-solving benefits of acting on climate change previously identified by the FODDC climate and communities team) that cut across both environmental sustainability and social wellbeing. They emphasise protecting nature while creating job opportunities and building future-focused skills. In addition to reducing pollution, these priorities aim to strengthen communities, improve physical and mental health, foster a fairer society, ensure comfortable homes, ease the cost of living, and simplify travel. These goals reflect a holistic approach that ties everyday actions, such as commuting and energy use, to larger systemic transformations.

The co-benefits approach recognises that social, environmental, and cultural progress are not siloed, but deeply interconnected. This framework reframes' community engagement' as a form of climate action by mapping out actions that simultaneously improve well-being, address inequality, and support ecological resilience. Each area, from access and inclusion to land use and systemic reform, offers multiple pathways to justice, creating shared value across movements, identities, and sectors.

The group identified three co-benefits to prioritise:

- Protecting nature,
- Better physical and mental health,
- Building stronger communities.

They believe these co-benefits to be all-encompassing. We began writing this plan in the UK at a particularly volatile moment in history for trans people. Access to healthcare has become increasingly difficult to achieve. Meeting others and reducing isolation and loneliness are essential and life-saving for community members. Building a strong community that feels welcoming and being accepted into wider society is vital.

These priorities and associated actions emerged through extensive community engagement, with residents working alongside partners such as FODDC, The Diversity Trust, and Gloucestershire Constabulary. The collaborative process extended beyond the core neighbourhood, involving diverse groups around the county, reinforcing a shared county-wide commitment.

The framework isn't developed in isolation. It connects and aligns with other local and citywide initiatives, e.g of other projects. Including:

- Climate change community engagement programme
- Coleford Citizen Visioning Project

- Climate and Nature Emergency strategy and action plan
- Parish and Town Council Climate adaptation plans
- Active travel strategy

Ultimately, this plan fosters resilience, inclusion, and nature-based approaches while addressing climate-related challenges. By aligning community actions with local and wider initiatives, residents are collectively building a future where safety, accessibility, and opportunity are the hallmarks of everyday life.

The recommendations are evaluated based on four criteria:

- Monetary Cost (Resource: Cost)
- Staffing and Effort Required (Resource: People)
- Potential Reductions in Carbon Emissions (Impact: Carbon)
- Positive Social Impact (Impact: Community Co-Benefits)

This structured approach helps balance financial feasibility, resource allocation, environmental impact, and the broader social benefits.

The plan identifies key stakeholders and potential collaborators who are either already engaged or whose future support is critical. While the document hints at timescales that span quick wins and long-term strategic changes, the current focus is on how these measures fit within a broader, ongoing community action process.

Picture: Zine page
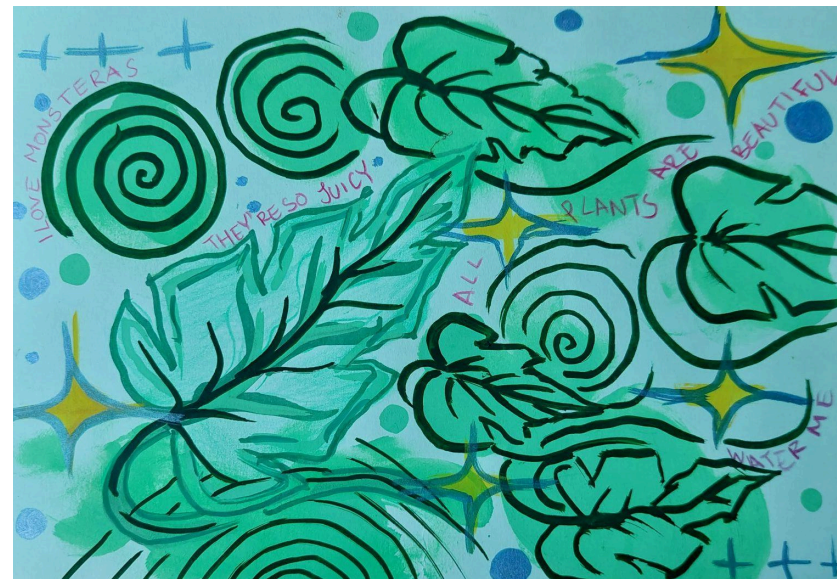
Priority 1: Protecting Nature

This priority puts nature at the heart of community wellbeing and climate resilience. It focuses on preserving the local environment while ensuring outdoor spaces in the Forest of Dean are accessible, welcoming, and supportive to all, including disabled, neurodivergent, and marginalised individuals.

Key actions under this priority include:

- **Improving Access**: Removing physical, sensory, and social barriers to outdoor areas so everyone can engage with nature safely and comfortably.
- **Nature-Based Wellbeing**: Developing inclusive programmes, such as walking groups, creative sessions, or quiet nature activities, designed to support mental health and social connection, especially for underrepresented communities.
- **Amplifying Local Climate Stories**: Launching eco-art and storytelling campaigns in collaboration with local farms, rewilding projects, and biodiversity initiatives to connect people with place and celebrate environmental heritage.
- **Intersectional Inclusion**: Recognising the layered needs of newly settled residents, disabled people, and other marginalised groups, and designing nature initiatives that address these realities directly.

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration**: Working with educators, schools, and local organisations to co-create workshops and activities that embed environmental sustainability and social justice into everyday learning and community life.

This priority reflects a commitment to holistic, inclusive climate action, where environmental stewardship is interwoven with equity, wellbeing, and creativity.

Picture: zine page

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
1. Protecting Nature: Increase Biodiversity					
Develop biodiversity projects with marginalised groups. For example, seed bombing	FODDC, GYCG, Wyldwood Arts, Candi, Inclusion Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Community Builders team, Cinderford Grows, Lydney Exchange, Gloucestershire Libraries, Forestry Commission, RSPB, Severn Trent, local town councils, Transition Towns, FODCAP	Venue, equipment, materials, staff **3**	**2**	Raises ecological literacy and shifts behaviour towards low-carbon living (e.g. rewilding, composting), Promotes native planting, pollinator pathways, and carbon-capturing habitats	Sparks shared understanding, skill-sharing, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and community pride, Collective creativity, joy, and shared land ownership
				Restoring & Safeguarding Biodiversity for Future Generations – Preserve ecosystems, ensure sustainable land stewardship, and maintain public access to green spaces while protecting habitats from exploitation.	Encourage cross-generational knowledge sharing, ensuring wisdom from past movements is passed forward.
Develop educational, intergenerational and creative workshops to engage wider public and children about biodiversity, climate change and social justice.				Embeds climate awareness early, encouraging long-term carbon-conscious actions	Builds youth leadership, confidence, and links climate with justice and inclusivity
2. Protect nature: Develop Climate Awareness with Communities					
Develop opportunities for educational/cross party talks and film showings about climate change: Host accessible events, including discussion groups, skill-sharing workshops, and storytelling sessions to encourage engagement and broaden participation. For example, Eat and Educate evenings. Facilitate guided discussions that focus on active listening, respectful debate, and empathy-building to create safe spaces for difficult conversations.	FODDC, GYCG, Wyldwood Arts, Candi, Inclusion Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Community Builders team, Cinderford Grows, Lydney Exchange, Gloucestershire Libraries, Canopy Arts, Green Pledge Project, Gloucestershire Archives, Dean Heritage Centre, village halls, parish councils, Biodiversity/climate action groups, Wye Valley River Festival	Venue, films etc, storytellers **2**	**3**	Fosters low-carbon cultural engagement by shifting behaviours, enhancing climate literacy, and reducing reliance on high-carbon learning formats (e.g. travel-intensive conferences)	Builds intergenerational and cross-political understanding, encourages participation from seldom-heard voices, nurtures empathy, and creates welcoming spaces for civic dialogue

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
3. Protect Nature: Ensure Access is Protected					
Co-create Public Nature Charters: Develop community-led commitments outlining values and protections for local green spaces, an inclusive, bottom-up mandate. To include: reopening old paths and ensuring access.	FODDC, GYCG, Wyldwood Arts, Candi, Inclusion Gloucestershire, GWT - Karmen Orr, Community Builders team, Cinderford Grows, Lydney Exchange, Gloucestershire Libraries, Extinction Rebellion, Canopy Arts, Worcester Walk, Save the Wye, Forestry Commission, Beki Hoyland, Active Travel	Venue, equipment, materials, staff 3	3	Deter deforestation and habitat degradation. This helps preserve woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands—major absorbers of CO_2.	Co-defending and co-enjoying green space fosters trust, shared identity, and intergenerational connection. It builds a sense of we, not me.
Host Nature Literacy Workshops: Use zines, visual storytelling, and arts-based education to teach the public about land rights, ecological stewardship, and accessibility.				Collective resistance to commercialisation (like paving over fields for retail parks) prevents new carbon-heavy infrastructures from being built.	Mobilisation offers platforms for underrepresented communities to shape narratives around land use, accessibility, and equity—especially when campaigns use inclusive methods like zines or visual storytelling.
Set Up Citizen Monitoring Groups: Form volunteer teams to observe, document, and report misuse, threats, or development pressures on shared spaces.For example, fire watch, fresh water monitoring, fly tipping reporting.				Citizen-led stewardship often leads to more biodiverse, resilient ecosystems—such as rewilding projects or community permaculture—offering longer-term carbon sequestration.	Increased access to nature is linked to lower stress, improved mood, and better physical outcomes. Community-led access fights ensure these benefits are more evenly distributed.

Priority 2: Physical and mental health

The second priority focuses on strengthening physical and mental health across the Forest of Dean, with a particular emphasis on inclusive, accessible care for LGBTQIA+ residents. It calls for systemic improvements to healthcare delivery, equitable support services, and the empowerment of individuals to advocate for their wellbeing.

Core actions include:

- **Inclusive Healthcare Training**: Partnering with local organisations, such as the Forest Youth Project, NHS providers, and counselling networks, to improve knowledge among practitioners and foster respectful, affirming care.
- **Self-Advocacy and Resources**: Creating practical mental health toolkits, clear information about local services, and pathways to gender-affirming healthcare. Risk reduction strategies include targeted signposting and community support.
- **Creative Public Engagement**:
  - Launching **social media campaigns** to raise awareness and ensure visibility across digital platforms.
  - Distributing **printed community zines** to break down complex topics into engaging, digestible formats, accessible to all literacy levels and energy capacities.
- **Inclusive Participation Models**: Recognising that energy levels and access vary, activism efforts will include options such as education, storytelling, hands-on projects, and resource sharing to meet people where they are.
- **Legislative Advocacy**:
  - Facilitating community-led campaigns that target local and national policy change, including petitions, MP letters, and issue-based awareness drives.
  - Holding **public accountability sessions** where elected officials are called to respond to community concerns, ensuring transparency, representation, and actionable dialogue.

This priority affirms the community's commitment to health equity, mental wellbeing, and inclusive care, making space for every voice and every need.

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits

1. Physical and mental wellbeing: Equal access to healthcare

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
Develop action group to lobby for inclusive healthcare. This would inlcude: creating a toolkit to support trans people in the area, make letter templates/MP engagement + GP directories of 'safe' GP's and hold accountability through MP sessions and petitions	Pride in Gloucestershire, local communities, Diversity Trust, Hope House, Forest Greens, LGBT+ Partnership, youth networks, Matt Bishop, First Light	Venue, committee members 2	1	Empowers civic action with low footprint ⟋ Improved systemic sustainability outcomes	Civic inclusion, systems pressure ⟋ Policy transformation, greater equity

2. Physical and mental wellbeing: Access and inclusion to natural landscapes and nature

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
Develop inclusive nature wellbeing sessions for groups who are traditionally excluded or marginalised from rural spaces. For example, bushcraft sessions, dance classes, walks, swimming.	Queering the Wye, Court Farm Lake, Noxon Farm Gloucestrshire Wildlife Trust, Coleford Walkers, Vincent Wildlife Trust, Andrew Embling, Active Gloucestershire, Canopy, Sports England, You Can Move	Staff costs, venue, promotion, materials and equipment 2	2	Connects people with ecology, supports stewardship, Equity in environmental access	Improved mental health and cultural belonging, Improve physical health, health equity, reduced exclusion, strengthens belonging, reduces isolation, and fosters reciprocal relationships

3. Physical and mental wellbeing: Better targeted support for people who are struggling with their mental health

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
Develop self-advocacy/mental health toolkit (inc. gender-affirming care access) with a good awareness campaign (social media/zines). For example, a 'Know Your Rights' guide, advice on gender affirming care. Kits will differ depending on audience	NHS, TIC+, Forest Youth Project, ZigZag Zines, LGBT+ Partnership, Basecamp, Mycelium Network, Gay Glos, Rainbow Mind, Where Art?	Materials, equipment, venue 2	2	Reduces medical waste, supports preventative care, Minimal physical output, big reach	Confidence, navigation, inclusive health pathways, Democratic access to tools and support

Priority 3: Strengthening Communities

This priority focuses on cultivating safe, welcoming spaces across the Forest of Dean where every individual is recognised, valued, and empowered. It seeks to deepen resilience, foster belonging, and build the foundations for long-term wellbeing through inclusive systems and place-based collaboration.

Core actions include:

- **Inclusive Infrastructure**:
  Create and promote a curated database of LGBTQIA+–friendly venues, zero-waste shops, safe traders, and community spaces, developed in partnership with councils, libraries, food hubs, and environmental charities.

- **Community-Led Support**:
  Bolster mutual aid networks and informal support systems that centre dignity and connection, with tailored outreach to newly settled, disabled, and marginalised residents.

- **Accessible Public Resources**:
  Develop printed materials, community zines, and resource guides that translate complex themes into visually engaging, easy-to-understand formats. Partner with local artists and writers to

ensure these reflect regional character and lived experience.

- **Communication & Safety Training**:
  Offer workshops in non-confrontational communication and restorative practice to help residents navigate differences and resolve conflict. Promote positive role models and community gatekeepers to lead with empathy and credibility.

- **Visibility & Representation**:
  Advocate for inclusive hiring, workplace protections, and visible signs of allyship across businesses and public institutions. Encourage the normalisation of accessibility and inclusion as essential, not optional.

- **Educational Integration**:
  Publicise initiatives like sustainable travel maps and work with schools, libraries, and community groups to embed social justice and sustainability into everyday learning.

- **Accountability & Policy Action**:
  Support grassroots resilience-building through projects that give people agency over their surroundings. Encourage organisations to adopt clear policies for inclusive and safer spaces.

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
1. Stronger communities: Develop an Forest based intersectional safer spaces directory – to ensure welcoming, secure environments where all individuals feel protected, valued, and able to thrive.					
Create a LGBTQIA+ friendly and intersectional orgs/volunteering database to enable inclusion in events/opportunities already happening	The Diversity Trust, Town Councils, FVAF, Your Circle - Gloucestershie County Council, Libraries, local food hubs, community spaces, local buisnesses. FODDC, Town Councils in FOD, FVAF, Inclusion Gloucestershire, Active Gloucestershire, Artspace, Music Works, Artshop, We Can Move, Access to Nature, Queering the Wye, Pride in Gloucestershire, LGBT+ Partnership	Website fees, printing costs, staff costs, consultation, design fees, social media costs 3	2	Encourages local connections, low-carbon access routes	Safer, visible, better-represented communities,
Explore ways of distributing information that moves away from social media. For example: newsletters, zines. Hold public constulation events and workshops exploring content and distribution				Low-impact comms, supports offline inclusion	Cultural identity, accessibility, skills building
				Reduces confusion, minimal resource output	Navigation ease, community empowerment
				Wide reach, low material needs	Voice amplification, improved allyship
2. Stronger communities: Create community resource libraries offering free-to-borrow books, toolkits, and guides on activism, inclusion, and sustainability.					
Develop a LGBTQ+ Forest based website including blogs, podcasts and safe trader and services listings	FODDC Comms, Wyldwood Arts, Canopy, WVRF, Jackie Dale, Artspace, Asha Centre Libraries, Inclusion Glos Wyedean Wellbeing, Inclusion Gloucestershire, Creative Health Consortium, Art Lift	Website fees, printing costs, staff costs, consultation, design fees, social media costs 3	2	Shifts consumption behaviour, decentralised info	Education, engagement, digital inclusion
Design and distribute printed materials (zines, guides) about social justice that can be made into a community resource library. Visually engaging, simplified resources for schools and surgeries etc				Collective access, low-consumption	Empowered learning, skill-sharing
Develop training opportunities in non-confrontational communication, active hope, level 2 counselling				Social sustainability, reduces conflict footprint	Safer conversations, allyship confidence

Actions	Potential Collaborators / Stakeholders	Resources (cost)	Resources (people)	Impact: Carbon	Impact: Community Co-benefits
3. Stronger Communities: Strengthen mutual aid networks providing direct assistance to community from the community. Develop grassroots solidarity networks that enable direct community-led assistance and resource sharing.					
Organise and promote inclusive food and skills sharing events with buddy schemes. For example, foraging, bread making, jam making, food preserving and 'fast cooking' making healthy food with low energy and water efficient.	Natasha Nelson, Forest Food Network, FODCAP, Regen Ben, Community Policing The Grange, Oaklands, FVAF Harts Barn, Green Pledge Project, The Grange, FODDC, Active Gloucestershire, Acess to Nature Fund, Yorkley Community Garden, Cinderford and Coleford Grows, Credit Union, Ragmans Lane	Venue hire, staff costs, volunteer expenses, fundraising activities 3	2	Equitable access to civic and social space, local produce, sustainable cooking	Psychological safety, trust, participation
Develop an intersectional inclusive peer led mutual aid network including: buddy system, emergency support fund.				Efficient sharing, reduced material waste	Resilience, dignity, informal support
Develop intergenerational community gardening sessions on 'unused' land. Pull together the skills of communities before they are lost.				Efficient sharing, reduced material waste, converts underused land into carbon sinks, increasing local resilience	Cross-generational connection, joy, cost relief, empowers communities to steward land and food systems on their own terms. Connect to 'Foresters' and celebrate radical heritage of the Forest of Dean.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Next Steps

Tracking Progress & Measuring Impact

This plan includes clear evaluation metrics and ongoing monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability and effectiveness. Regular assessments allowed for adjustments based on community feedback, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Key Monitoring Methods:

Community-Led Review Sessions – Quarterly meetings to assess progress and refine actions.
Impact Data Collection – Tracking engagement, policy changes, and tangible outcomes.
Stakeholder Accountability Reviews – Ensuring commitments from councils, businesses, and advocacy groups.
Public Reporting & Transparency – Regular updates via reports, podcasts, and accessible digital resources.

Ongoing Community Engagement

Feedback Mechanisms – Open channels for community-led input, ensuring inclusivity in adjustments.
Visibility & Advocacy – Strengthening public campaigns to maintain engagement and pressure for systemic change.
Collaborative Partnerships – Expanding relationships with local and regional stakeholders for sustained impact.

Next Steps: Scaling Up & Evolving the Plan

To build on this momentum, the following steps will drive further impact:

Strengthening LGBTQIA+ Representation – Ensuring community voices remain central in climate action governance.
Policy Advocacy Expansion – Scaling efforts to regional and national levels, influencing broader sustainability initiatives.
Funding & Resource Development – Securing grants, partnerships, and grassroots funding to implement new projects.
Cross-Community Learning – Sharing this model with other LGBTQIA+ and marginalised communities beyond the Forest of Dean.

Emerging Legacy Outcomes

While the action plan charts a concrete course forward, its impact is also measured in quieter shifts: new alliances, restored trust, and the validation of lived experience. These emerging legacy outcomes reveal the beginnings of structural transformation—evidence that visibility leads to influence, and that deep engagement leaves a long-lasting imprint. What has surfaced here is more than a to-do list; it's a cultural shift in the making, rooted in joy, care, and collective strength.

These outcomes reflect the less visible yet deeply impactful shifts through the action plan process, signposting systemic, cultural, and relational changes beyond initial impact.

1. Strengthened body of evidence around LGBTQIA+ needs, incorporating intersectionality with disability, race, neurodivergence, and class.
2. Raised awareness among MPs and within the FODDC Inclusion Group of LGBTQIA+ community priorities.
3. Development of climate action project ideas that are now closer to being funding-ready.
4. Greater visibility and understanding of LGBTQIA+ experiences within FODDC and related institutions.
5. Growth in trust between LGBTQIA+ community members and local authorities.
6. The formation of a consultative LGBTQIA+ group that could support policy development and strategic planning.
7. Increased community cohesion and collective identity-building.
8. Cross-sector collaboration between grassroots organisers, local government, and cultural institutions.
9. Cultural normalisation of LGBTQIA+ presence and allyship in rural spaces through events, symbols, and storytelling.
10. Rise of community-led knowledge systems (zines, toolkits, podcasts) supporting decentralised education and collective empowerment.
11. Strengthened youth engagement pipelines through intergenerational initiatives and nature-based learning.
12. New avenues for participatory, justice-aligned funding that reflect lived experience and community-led priorities.