

## **Hutton Rudby and Osmotherley by-election 28 September 2023**

### **Climate and environment statement by Green Party candidate Allan Mortimer to Climate Action Stokesley and Villages (CASaV)**

"Climate and biodiversity impacts and improvement actions should be like a golden thread running through council thinking on every issue. It is too important to be treated as an optional afterthought. This is something we have been trying to put into practice at Rudby Parish Council, and I would carry this thinking forward to my work at North Yorkshire Council if elected. These are just a few of the things I have been involved in as a Parish Councillor:

- I helped draft the Council's Climate Action Plan
- I supported the adoption of no mow May as a biodiversity improvement action
- I supported habitat improvements from our tree planting project "Trees for Tomorrow"
- I routinely include commentary on biodiversity and net nutrient neutrality issues when relevant to the application in the Parish Council's planning consultation responses.
- I supported the Parish Council providing seed funding for CASaV.

I am aware that other Parish Councils in the ward have taken similar types of local actions to Rudby Parish Council, proportionate in scale to what is realistically achievable with the funding and powers available to them. Coming with a Parish Council background, I hugely value the work done by Parish Councillors and am all too aware of the challenges they face in delivering projects.

If elected as the North Yorkshire Councillor for the ward, I would seek to support Parish Councils in delivering biodiversity improvement in their own areas and implementing their own Climate Action Plans. I would also look to encourage and support voluntary groups such as CASaV which help share knowledge and best practices between councils. Just like habitats and green corridors CASaV transcends the arbitrary administrative boundaries of individual councils.

You are probably aware that each ward councillor has a small annual "Make a Difference" budget for funding projects within their ward. This budget is under their direct control. Climate action and biodiversity improvement projects would be high on my priorities for allocation of my "Make a Difference" budget. As ward councillor I would also help Parish Councils and voluntary groups like CASaV to identify and access other sources of funding and support for their projects.

With regards to North Yorkshire Council itself, as a Green Councillor I would work with my Green Party colleagues and other members of the council to influence council policy across a whole range of issues with a view to improving the council's performance with regards to biodiversity and climate action. The list of opportunities is lengthy, but I will give a couple of examples where there is clearly room for improvement:

1. The council owns or controls significant areas of land. Without incurring extra expense land management contracts when renewed can specify better practices than those used at present (phasing out harmful weed killers and pesticides, creation of green corridors etc) if the will to do so is there.

2. The council procures large quantities of goods and services but does not appear to have an effective source local policy. Local sourcing is good for the climate by reducing travel and transport, but it is also good for the local economy by supporting local businesses.

Unfortunately it appears that the current Conservative administration is not particularly interested in addressing these and many other biodiversity and climate action opportunities which is why it is so important to have another Green councillor in the room advocating the case for change at North Yorkshire Council.

If elected, I look forward to supporting your important work."

Allan Mortimer, Green Party