In support of Notice of Motion to Ruthin Town Council: Declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency

We, Ruthin Friends of the Earth, are writing to ask Ruthin Town Council to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency forthwith and to develop all its policies and procedures to meet its responsibilities to the town and community through the lens of this Emergency. The following points provide background, rationale and context to this request.

- When the UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October–13 November 2021, it achieved agreement to accelerate action towards the goals addressing climate change, under the categories of Mitigation, Adaptation, Finance and Collaboration.

- The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill was presented to the UK Parliament as a Private Member's Bill in September 2020.

- On 29th April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in Wales. Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, said, "We hope that the declaration by Welsh Government today can help to trigger a wave of action at home and internationally. From our own communities, businesses and organisations to parliaments and governments around the world."

- On the 2 July 2019 Denbighshire County Council passed a motion that it will:

  - *Immediately declare a climate and ecological emergency*
  - *Commit to making the authority net carbon zero by 2030 at the latest*
  - *Set up a task and finish group to draw up a clear plan within 6 months to achieve the above, including ways to enhance biodiversity in Denbighshire*
  - *Call on the Welsh Government and UK Government to provide assistance and resources to enable us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance biodiversity*
  - *Work with partners across the public, private and third sector to help solve this climate and ecological emergency.*

- According to Ruthin's *City, Town and Community Councils Charter (September 2020),* DCC and Town Councils must work closely together in partnership for the benefit of local residents. Therefore, in support of the Climate & Ecological emergency motion passed by DCC, it is important that Ruthin Town Council (RTC) does its part in supporting this motion at a local level. According to *The Good Councillor's Guide for Community and Town Councillors* (Welsh Government, 2016), "Community and town councils play an active role in representing the interests of the community in any partnership set up to manage local action to improve the quality of life and the environment."

Ruthin Friends of the Earth acknowledge that RTC has already demonstrated its consistent commitment as a forward-looking council in regards environmental issues. Whereas much decision-making power often lies elsewhere (e.g. with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, or Denbighshire County Council), RTC has been pro-active in advocating the needs of the local community and environment. This is evidenced historically by the *Ruthin Future* (now '*Transforming Towns'*) initiative, and currently in the bid for funding for Ruthin and surrounding areas under the Levelling Up Fund. A formal declaration of Climate and Ecological Emergency would spotlight Ruthin in a leadership

position, demonstrating its commitment to take seriously the arguments put forward in these major policies and funding initiatives.

Ruthin Friends of the Earth consider that it is important that RTC formally declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) to prioritise these issues in its normal business. This would support the requirements of the Future Generations Act, and would empower local people under the principal of "think globally, act locally". The practical implications of RTC's declaration of a CEE would include fulfilling its obligations under its City, Town and Community Councils Charter (September 2020), confirming much that it is already doing, such as:

- Participating in the DCC task and finish group to help draw up a clear plan to achieve the aspirations of the CEE declaration, including local ways to enhance biodiversity in Denbighshire (e.g. supporting tree and wildflower planting, re-wilding initiatives, and advocating for sustainable agriculture)

- Ensuring the community voice is heard through endorsement of opportunities for participation (e.g. endorsing initiatives by local groups such as Plastic Free Ruthin; the Repair Café; Incredible Edible Ruthin; ReSource)

- Working with DCC to seek mutually acceptable solutions to contentious issues (e.g. Ruthin residents' concerns about industrial air pollution and emissions across residential areas; chemical spray reduction; planning permissions and flood control)

- Engaging and consulting directly with Ruthin residents to improve both quality of life and the local environment (e.g. supporting and promoting initiatives such as electric taxis, charging points, walking and cycle paths)

- Helping to organise and promote 'Celebrating Green Ruthin' events, such as took place in conjunction with COP 26 in St Peter's Church on 6th November 2021

- Requiring that the Climate and Ecological Emergency is a regular agenda item for Ruthin Town Council ordinary and annual meetings, to ensure that any relevant actions and decisions by members take into account their climate and ecological impact.

Ruthin Friends of the Earth
8 February 2022