

MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 24th June 2019

Present

Cllr D Knights
Cllr E Thomas
Cllr C Williams

Cllr T Martin
Cllr B J Martin

Cllr J Saunders
Cllr H Perkin

In Attendance

Louise Bareham – Town Clerk

Absent

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1. Apologies for Absence

The Mayor Cllr A Reynolds, Cllrs K Barker, S Blair, A Hook

2. Election of a Chair

It was proposed by Cllr B Martin, seconded by Cllr Perkin and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to elect Cllr Williams as Chair**

3. Election of a Vice Chair

It was proposed by Cllr Perkin, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to elect Cllr Perkin as Vice Chair**

4. Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Cllr Thomas is Deputy Cabinet Member for the Environment at SBC and Cllr Perkin is Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

5. Terms of Reference

Cllr B J Martin proposed, Cllr T Martin seconded and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED that all references to Task and Finish should be amended to Committee**

Cllr Saunders proposed, Cllr T Martin seconded and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to add 'Encouraging people to get out of cars and make it easier to walk, cycle or use public transport' to the Terms of Reference.**

It was confirmed that the Council's Standing Orders did not allow community members of committees to have a vote.

It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr B J Martin and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to adopt the Terms of Reference as amended.***

6. Action Plan

Walking routes should be identified and highlighted, perhaps on a map or by signage. This would be helpful to tourists and children going to school. Faversham Footpaths Group had suggested signage which included walking times. It was agreed to look at SBC's Walking and Cycling Plan. This was considered to be a quick win improvement, which could be delivered across committees and the town and borough councils.

Grass verges should be replaced with wild flowers. It was agreed to identify areas in local authority ownership. Concerns regarding dogs were noted, but it was agreed that plants which were best for the environment and biodiversity should be sown and decide on a few trial areas. The areas taken over by community groups were noted.

Single use plastic should continue to be supported and their existing initiatives with local businesses enhanced. It was noted that Plastic Free Faversham had limited resources themselves.

Additional recycling bins at the Rec were required and other areas should be considered.

Tree planting, although a long-term project this would involve the community. The Woodland Trust has free trees available for planting projects. It was agreed that schools should be a priority, it was noted that the Abbey School had plenty of land. It was agreed to engage with the Woodlands Trust and consider how to communicate with landowners effectively. If community trees were planted this would help offset some carbon. Fruit trees would provide an additional source of food.

Working with Faversham residents to increase biodiversity in their back gardens. This would be encouraged through working with Open Gardens, Faversham in Bloom and other groups. The newsletter would be used to engage residents.

Identify best practise from other councils such as Bishops Stortford and Frome.

Engage generally with young people in society, particularly with regard to the recent air quality youth strikes. Asking them what they would like to see, engage with activities which are already taking place.

Engage with the Local Plan and future developments regarding different sources of energy generation ie solar panels.

The Action Plan will be a flexible, working document that can be added to when required.

It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Thomas and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to agree the Action Plan**

7. Covenant of Mayors

The Covenant of Mayors is free to join and monitors the development of a climate action plan, which the Town Clerk signs up for on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that the Council will remain committed to this even after the UK leaves the EU.

It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr B Martin and on being put to the meeting it was agreed to **RECOMMEND the Town Council signs up to the Covenant of Mayors**

8. Community Groups

It was agreed it would be helpful to liaise with local groups such as Plastic Free, Open Gardens, Faversham in Bloom and Faversham Footpaths, as and when appropriate. By engaging with them as part of the Action Plan would help identify experts.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Perkin and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to engage with local groups and formulate an application procedure.**

9. Any Other Business

It was proposed by Cllr B Martin, seconded by Cllr Thomas and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to change the Task and Finish Group to a Committee of the Council.**

10. Public Session

A Member of Swale Friends of the Earth congratulated the Committee on its proposals and provided information on the Woodlands Trust. He further noted that the conservation areas in Faversham did not allow properties to have solar panels on the forward facing roofs.

Cllr B Martin confirmed that the conservation areas were due to be reviewed by SBC.

Sally from Plastic Free Faversham would like to work with the council to provide guidelines to festivals to reduce waste. They also noted that there was not much recycling taking place at schools and PFF had recently sent an online survey to head teachers.

Cllr Perkin agreed that there would be no buy in from young people if they were not being taught recycling from an early age.

A Member of the Swale Green Party thanked the Committee she noted that, together with planting new trees, we needed to ensure that current trees and hedges were not cut, particularly during the nesting season as it was illegal and felt education was required. She also raised concerns when crossing Preston Street and Newton Road and asked for yellow lines where the footpaths were to give a good sightline.

Robert Lamoon asked about cycling racks, but a number of new racks have been installed around the town recently. He also pointed out that Abbey School's hedges were being cut. Cllr T Martin confirmed that he would look into this as he was a Governor of the school. Mr Lamoon suggested setting up a voluntary local fund to pay contributions to offset carbon.

Findlay McDonald thought the committee was good and asked about electric charging points. He suggested that BMW, Ford etc would provide grants and offered to look into it further.

Ruth Jones suggested that local businesses offered refilling of water bottles, but Plastic Free had already started this initiative and it was agreed it needed more publicity. The Town Council had looked into providing a water fountain.

Lyn Newton, SBC Officer for the Environment was encouraged to hear the committee wanted to engage with groups. Items raised this evening are on the agenda for the Green Grid meeting which Cllr Williams is the Town Council's representative. She thought it would be good to have a dialogue between the councils and share best practise. Lyn is also lead officer in the walking and cycling plan. She recommended influencing the Borough Council's contract management not just grounds maintenance, but the market co-operative.