

Minutes of the Meeting of the Climate and Biodiversity Working Group

15th December 2021, 7pm

Present:

Cllr Williams
Matthew Hatchwell
Grace Couch

Cllr Perkin
Cllr Jackson

Cllr Reynolds
Martin Collins

In Attendance:

Louise Bareham (Town Clerk)

Public Question Time

Maria Newman asked for an update on the Country Park. Cllr Williams informed Maria that no update has been given by Cllr Henderson.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Thomas and Henderson.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The Town Clerk updated the meeting on the living bus shelters.

Cllr Williams updated the meeting on the St Nicholas' allotments and concerns from the last meeting regarding hemlock and fencing.

Cllr Perkin noted that the Sustainability Goals exhibition was very well attended and was organised by Sophie Willis and Bond CIC. In the minutes it says Bond CIC and Sophie Willis organised National Tree Week – **ACTION** – Town Clerk to correct the minutes.

Cllr Perkin also noted that the action regarding the discussion on housing development in the previous will require further discussions before a proposal is brought to this meeting.

Cllr Williams noted that the tree giveaway was a success, and all the trees were given new homes.

Cllr Perkin's jumper swap wasn't as busy as expected, possibly because they were unable to get a market stall, so the event was tucked away which would've had an impact on footfall.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Reynolds, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the previous meeting dated the 8th of November 2021.**

4. Development Updates

Cllr Perkin provided an update on Pesticide Free Towns.

There has been a meeting with the Pesticide Action Network Group where they looked at potential events such as a Pesticide Amnesty where people can easily dispose of their pesticides and to raise awareness of the harmful effects of pesticides and provide alternative suggestions.

Cllr Williams and Cllr Perkin have been asked to talk at a national event for councils regarding the pesticide initiatives in the town. **ACTION** – Use the poster provided by Cllr Perkin to promote the event.

Cllr Williams provided an update on behalf of Cllr Henderson on Policy and Biodiversity.

There has been discussion on the budget for next year and how the council can achieve becoming carbon neutral, for example the potential of an electric van.

Cllr Williams provided an update on Community Gardening.

There was some work done on the Age UK bed on Crescent Road which has now been cleared and crocus bulbs have been planted. A wildflower seed mix will be sprinkled there in the spring. There are more community gardening projects due to be launched in the new year.

Matthew Hatchwell updated the meeting on the meeting attended with Shan Pettman, who has started a biodiversity project in Canterbury, and Cllr Williams. It was agreed that they would stay in touch and look for opportunities for collaboration, potentially on the Brenley Corner roundabout.

Cllr Perkin updated the meeting on Plant-Based Diets. January is 'Veganuary', so it would be good to utilise this to promote plant-based diets, potentially through free recipes or infographics. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Perkin can go ahead with creating these resources.

5. Highway Verges

Cllr Williams informed the meeting that he has received an email from a KCC officer regarding areas of green spaces they are responsible for and how they could be managed differently to promote biodiversity. They have asked for ideas of places that they could survey.

ACTION – Councillors to prepare suggestions of potential verges or other pieces of land suitable for this project for the next meeting so that they can be handed over to KCC.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Reynolds, and on being put to the meeting it was **AGREED that Cllr Williams to contact the KCC officer and ask for the list of areas of land they own and potentially their current management plan, then if that is successful to consult the public as well as the council on areas they would like to see changed, potentially through the newsletter.**

ACTION – Cllr Williams to ask the KCC officer for the list of areas of land they own and potentially their current management plan.

6. Queen's Hall Car Park

Cllr Williams updated the meeting on this item. Renovation work on the car park's planters has been carried out, as well as two existing trees being clad and two new tree pits have been made – these are now ready for trees to be planted in.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Reynolds, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to delegate the purchase of the trees to Cllr Williams and the Town Clerk.**

7. Trees for Stonebridge Pond

Cllr Williams reminded the meeting that there have been some trees removed due to ash die-back, this means an opportunity for more trees.

ACTION – Cllr Williams to ask Iliffe & Iliffe whether they would be willing to assist in funding these trees.

Matthew Hatchwell noted that any tree that is planted there will need to be tolerant of wet ground.

ACTION – Cllr Williams to speak to Adam about specifications of what trees can be planted and how many.

8. Wilder Towns

Cllr Williams has heard from Kent Wildlife Trust, who are hoping to organise a presentation event in January in Faversham. They have invited representatives from the town council to talk about the award at their AGM to try and encourage other towns to aim for it. Cllr Williams also noted that Faversham Town Council has been mentioned in the KWT newsletter.

9. Hedgehog Signage

Gabby from the hedgehog rescue was unable to make the meeting, so this item will be deferred until January when she should be able to provide an update on this.

10. Allotment Update

There are several trees that are overhanging into people's residencies along the Brents, and the tree surgeons have recommended that some work needs to be done. A quote for this work to be done was received and it will cost £3000.

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Perkin, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to bring the recommendation to the next Full Council meeting to complete the work on the trees.**

Cllr Williams spoke to Adam Andrews, who is keen for the town council to develop a tree maintenance plan for the trees owned by the council. This is to be discussed in the next meeting.

11. Items for Next Agenda

Cllr Perkin suggested that St Mary's Churchyard is put on the agenda. A couple of community groups are keen to establish a 'God's Acre' project where they take responsibility for the garden areas there. Cllr Saunders is checking with SBC on this.

Matthew Hatchwell noted that there is a St Mary's community group that has looked to do this but found it difficult to be progressed because the vicar didn't support the initiative then.

ACTION – Cllr Williams to speak to Simon Rowlands to ask for some advice related to the churchyard.

Matthew Hatchwell suggested that what to do about the saltation at Stonebridge is discussed on the agenda for the next meeting, specifically to discuss how we come to a decision on what is to be done.

ACTION – Matthew Hatchwell to collate further information on this process to bring to the next meeting.

Minutes typed by Abi Rainbow (Business Apprentice)