

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

11th January 2023, 7.30pm

The Guildhall

Present:

Cllr Williams

Cllr Henderson

(until Minute Item 56)

Cllr Perkin

Matthew Hatchwell

(until Minute Item 50)

Martin Collins

In Attendance:

Louise Bareham (Town Clerk)

046. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Hook, Cllr Jackson, Cllr Reynolds, Cllr Thomas, Ali Corbel and Grace Couch.

047. Declarations of Interest

None

048. Minutes and Matters Arising

Cllr Perkin proposed, seconded by Cllr Williams and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Environment Committee dated 9th November 2022.**

The feedback from SBC regarding recycling was noted. The Town Clerk advised she had met with the contractor on site at the bus shelter in Stone Street. The contractor had agreed to add additional drainage and had requested the outstanding invoice be paid. This was noted.

The Town Clerk provided an update on the tree giveaway. Although there had been half the number of trees ordered compared to previous years, it had been a struggle to give all the trees away. A discussion took place on ideas for 2023 including giving away seed pods.

049. Development Updates

Stonebridge Pond – Terms of Reference had been drafted following the Working Group's discussions with Graeme Tuff. This would be put forward to the next SBC Environment Committee in February.

European Eels – Matthew Hatchwell advised he was carrying out an Eel counting course on behalf of Kent Wildlife Trust at Standard Quay on 29th March.

Nutrient Neutrality – Matthew Hatchwell advised a reply needed to be sent to SBC asking for evidence for the conclusions reached in the Habitat

Regulations Assessment. It was agreed he would draft a reply to be sent on behalf of the Mayor and addressed to Mike Baldock as SBC Leader.

Water/Wastewater – Matthew Hatchwell reported water quality monitoring was now being carried out in a more co-ordinated way with various organisations working together. It had been noted that the consented levels within the Creek were abnormally high. The level of Ammonia, in particular, was high. Matthew Hatchwell agreed to look into consent levels in more detail for the next meeting.

It was reported that Friends of the Westbrook had received a grant of £10,000 from the Environment Agency. Some of the funding was for the Westbrook and Cooksditch and several other chalk streams to be placed onto the national registry.

Biodiversity – Cllr Williams advised he would provide an update on Ospringe at the next meeting.

Pesticide Free Town – Cllr Perkin advised she had contacted Bristol City Council for information as they had carried out a similar scheme, and SBC's Environment Team for advice. There were issues with the transportation and storage of pesticides that would need to be addressed. Cllr Perkin would look into producing a leaflet giving information on alternatives to pesticides.

There were no further updates under Policy and Community Gardening.

050 Green Roof for the Town Hall

It was proposed by Cllr Henderson, seconded by Cllr Perkin it was ***RESOLVED to go forward with having the green roof installed but to delegate the decision on the quotes to the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chair.***

051. Plastic Grass

Cllr Williams referred to the paper submitted by Plastic Free Faversham.

Cllr Williams advised he would be happy to liaise with the group and Cllr Perkin offered to produce a leaflet detailing the damage to biodiversity through installing plastic grass. It was agreed to invite representatives to the next meeting to discuss a possible information campaign.

052. Thermal Imaging Scheme

Martin Collins provided a report on progress. The volunteers had completed a thermal imaging course and meetings had been held regarding the process. The first visit to carry out thermal imaging on a local property had been organised for the following day. Martin Collins thanked Rob Gibbs for his help with setting up the process.

The Town Clerk reported that Walmer Town Council's thermal imaging work had featured on the local TV/radio news recently and it was important that

FTC's Scheme was equally well promoted. The Town Clerk referred to the documentation drafted to give to residents participating in the Scheme. Cllr Perkin thanked Rob Gibbs for putting together the documentation and felt the process was clearly set out.

The Town Clerk expressed the importance of feedback from residents during the pilot process to see what information they would find most helpful, and it was agreed a survey should be developed for this.

053. Benches

The Town Clerk reported the base had been installed for the bench in Flood Lane and installation work would be completed within the next week. A request had been received for a bench in Abbey Street. There was an existing bench outside The Phoenix pub but another could be installed, perhaps in Abbey Place.

Cllr Perkin advised she would contact The Abbey Street Residents Association, who could liaise with residents on their views.

Cllr Perkin advised residents in Millfield had requested two benches, one by the path and one that backs onto the play park. Cllr Perkin would contact them to seek their views on the preferred location. The Town Clerk referred to the standard letter used for bench requests, and she would forward this to Cllr Perkin.

054. Allotments

The Town Clerk reported the process for the transfer of Perry Court Allotments was underway. At St Nicholas Allotments it had been planned for the removal of the back fence which backed onto the boundary with the developer but following a number of break-ins, the allotment holders had requested the fence remained in place. A letter had been sent to the developer stating the fence would remain in place. It was noted the allotment fence was lower than the one installed by the developer. Additionally, a draft management agreement had been developed and it was hoped this would be presented in draft at the next meeting with it signed by 1st April 2023.

055. Events and Activities

Martin Collins referred to a two-day Friends of the Earth event in June called "Lovely Day" highlighting a day in 2040 if all the best decisions for the environment had been made.

Cllr Williams referred to a grant made by Friends of the Earth for the campaign for the event. Cllr Perkin believed it may have been made to SBC. It had not been on the Community Grants list, but it would be considered by the Committee for the next meeting.

The Town Clerk referred to a fashion upcycling event being held by the Repair Café in The Guildhall on 18th March.

Cllr Perkin referred to the Climate Surgery held before Covid and suggested holding a similar event in early June at the Town Hall.

056. **Items for Report**
None.