

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

19th October 2023, 7.30pm
The Town Hall, 12 Market Place

Cllr Williams (Chair)	Present	Cllr Perkin	Apology
Cllr Cook	Present	Cllr Thomas	Apology
Cllr Eyre	Present	Martin Collins	Apology
Cllr Golding	Present	Matthew Hatchwell	Apology
Cllr Newman	Present	Simone Stolton	Apology

In Attendance:

Louise Bareham (Town Clerk)

026. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Cllr Perkin, Cllr Thomas, Martin Collins, Matthew Hatchwell, and Simone Stolton.

027. Declarations of Interest

None.

028. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

Under Minute Item 019, Cllr Cook advised he had not agreed to produce an action plan for the North Preston estate with costings, but he had produced some sketches of his intentions.

Tree for Millfield Estate – KCC had confirmed that a new tree would be planted in the next round of tree planting.

Solar Panels within the Conservation Area – Cllr Williams advised he would write the letter to the Conservation Officer at SBC.

Subject to the minor amendment under Minute Item 019, it was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Cook, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Environment Committee dated 12th July 2023.***

029. Development Updates

Stonebridge Pond – The following statement was received from Matthew Hatchwell: “Still no reply from Graeme Tuff at SBC to draft TORs for consultant to look at problem of siltation at Stonebridge Pond. Request renewed by Friends of Westbrook ahead of their AGM next week (Oct 25th).”

Biodiversity – Nothing to report.

Pesticide Free Town – The following statement was received from Cllr Perkin:

“The Pesticide Amnesty still continues to be quite a challenge to organise between the authorities, KCC have said that they will pay for disposal which is great and have given the Council a list of potential companies that could support with collection. The difficulty that we have now is that storing any of the donated chemicals for any period of time would need a licence from Environmental Health and KCC have said that this could take up to a year!”

Community Gardening – Cllr Williams provided an update on Britain in Bloom and South East in Bloom. Cllr Williams advised he would liaise with Faversham in Bloom regarding the recent awards ceremony to see if the winners could be promoted on social media.

European Eels – Nothing to report.

Nutrient Neutrality – The following statement was received from Matthew Hatchwell: “FavWat group of volunteers carrying out regular water quality testing at locations in Faversham Creek and on the Westbrook. Unclear as yet how that will feed into broader monitoring by statutory bodies, in particular the Environment Agency. Group of EA staff coming to do a day’s voluntary work on the Westbrook on November 1st so discussion planned then as to how water quality monitoring by the local community (=citizen science) can best feed into EA monitoring systems.

In relation to the Swale more generally, good news last week that a consortium of organisations led by Zoological Society of London and including the Medway and Swale Estuary Partnership has received seed funding of \$100,000 from the Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme “to bring back the wildlife spectacle of the Thames by reconnecting the fragmented seascape through habitat restoration, pressure reduction, and protection. A coastal habitat restoration plan for the Greater Thames Estuary at a seascape scale, will be co-created with, and adopted by local communities across the estuary,” including Faversham.”

Water/Wastewater – The following statement was received from Matthew Hatchwell: “One of the recent findings of water quality monitoring by FavWat is a very high e-coli reading in the upstream of the West Street culvert. That confirms earlier test results of very high phosphate and nitrate readings. We’re trying to work out what the source could be. Algae in the stream (near the footbridge between Beech Close and the Knole) and Stonebridge Pond earlier in the year already indicated that there are problems. The Friends of Westbrook are trying to narrow down possible sources of pollution. The combined sewage outlet from the Southern Water sewage pumping station on Hazebrouck Road definitely needs investigating.”

030. Environmental Improvements for North Preston

It was noted that Cllr Cook had drawn up a plan for costing by officers. It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

031. Perry Court Land

It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Newman, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to adopt the area of land being offered by BDW Homes (excluding allotment site, which has already previously been approved).**

032. Climate & Ecology Bill Motion

It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Golding, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to:**

- 1) Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;**
- 2) Inform local residents, and local press/media of this decision;**
- 3) Write to Helen Whately MP to inform them that this motion has been passed, urging them to sign up to support the CE Bill, or thanking them for already doing so;**
- 4) Write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the CE Bill, expressing its support (campaign@zerohour.uk)**

033. Dog Poo Bags

It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Golding, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to relocate the dog poo bag dispenser from its existing site in South Road.**

Cllr Williams felt it would be useful to know the potential cost of new dispensers should it be requested to install one in a new location.

034. Street Cleaning

The Town Clerk reported on potential litter picks that the Town Ranger was planning to undertake. It was suggested that Councillors could report to the Town Ranger, problem areas for work to be carried out. The Town Ranger would be promoting his work through social media.

Cllr Cook highlighted the pedestrian alleys in the town and felt more pressure should be put onto Housing Associations, particularly on the North Preston estate, to clear rubbish.

035. Glass Bottle Recycling

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Newman, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to write to Swale Borough Council and the Supermarkets in the town to request bottle banks to be installed in their car parks.**

036. Allotments

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Newman, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to carry out a review of, and approve the latest Allotment Agreements by email.**

It was proposed by Cllr Newman, seconded by Cllr Williams, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the Allotments Report.**

Following a discussion on insurance cover and maintenance, it was proposed by Cllr Newman, seconded by Cllr Golding, and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to joint purchase with Stonebridge Allotments a chipper at £350 + VAT.***

037. Items for Report

The Town Clerk reported on a conversation with Victoria Dickenson of Faversham Trees Group regarding future tree giveaways.

Cllr Newman reported requests from Cllr Jackson for a bat box at Athol Place, a planter at the junction with Ospringe Road/Lower Road, which had been requested by local residents, and a bench at Horsford Walk. The Town Clerk advised she would liaise with Cllr Jackson on these requests.

Cllr Cook requested the issue of flooding be included on the next agenda plus Perry Court be kept on the agenda to ensure plans with costings were drawn up ready for Spring 2024.

Cllr Golding requested that Planters be added as a general agenda item for the next meeting.

Appendix One – Questions from Members of the Public

Cllr Rowlands strongly supported the proposed transfer of land at Perry Court to the Town Council, some of which could be used for local sports clubs.