

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM,
ON MONDAY, 4 JANUARY 2021 AT 8.00 P.M.**

Sub-Committee members present:

Councillor A Dunford (Chairman)
Councillors I R Cameron, A Crawford, A Duveen, J T Hannaby,
E L Johnson and C H Wills-Wright, and M. Landy

Others present:

Councillor Major J Sibbald
G. Wilkin – HARBUG
M Bradfield and J Harvey - Sustainable Wantage
One member of the public

Clerk:

W P Falkenau

A. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Walters.

B. To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

None. A number of councillors were members of Sustainable Wantage, but these were not pecuniary interests.

C. Statements and Questions from the Public, and discussion involving members of public

None.

D. To approve the minutes of the Sub-committee meeting held on 19 October 2020

The minutes were approved.

E. Matters arising from the Sub-committee meeting held on 19 October 2020

e) Update re Sustainable Wantage projects (item taken out of order)

The article regarding the District Council taking maintenance in-house for verges and open spaces had not gone into the recent newsletter. Further information was awaited from the District Council on the new arrangements. An article was to be placed in the next newsletter. **Action: Dunford**

a) Feedback from District Council Climate Emergency Committee

The District Council had received a report from consultants regarding its carbon footprint. This was not yet available for the public to view. The District Council was supporting the county wide strategy for the installation of electric vehicle charging points, and Oxfordshire Greentech. The planning design guide was being updated to reflect carbon reduction needs. This will be consulted upon in late summer, with final adoption by the end of the year.

b) Updates re initiatives for Town Council to reduce its own carbon footprint

The Clerk had completed the questionnaire regarding the Council's carbon footprint and passed this to Councillor Johnson and Mr Landy. The Clerk was to pass copies to other members. **Action: Clerk**

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The carbon footprint of the Council itself was very small and the opportunity for reduction was most likely with actions by its contactors. It was noted that there might be the opportunity to reduce the footprint relating to the annual twinning visits. Payment for carbon offset might be an option. Councillor Johnson was working on calculating a specific measure of the Council's footprint. He agreed to present this to the next meeting.

Action: Johnson

c) Update re Sustainable Wantage projects (continued)

Mr Bradfield gave an update on the initiatives and opportunities he was pursuing. Finding spaces for planting trees was proving difficult. The District Council had yet to adopt a tree policy which could assist. Mr Bradfield was preparing a map that would highlight areas where opportunities might exist. He agreed to publish this before the next meeting.

Action: Bradfield

Allotment sites were a possibility for tree and hedge planting. It was agreed that this be referred to the next Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting. Mr Bradfield agreed to provide a briefing. **Action: Bradfield**

Encouraging residents to plant trees in their private gardens was put forward as an option. It was suggested that a public survey be conducted of what eco-friendly features residents had in their gardens.

There was a need to consider whether planned hedge planting initiatives could proceed during the Covid-19 lockdown. **Action: Bradfield**

Ms Harvey reported that a re-use and repair map had been prepared and was awaiting printing. It would also be available online. The carbon reduction survey had recently closed with 500 respondents. The analysis was being worked upon. The outcomes were due to be published by the end of the month. This was likely to lead to new projects. For funding, Ms Harvey was to submit donation requests in the same form as had been done in the past. **Action: Harvey**

d) Update re Arrangements for events

The Chairman hoped to work on arrangements for some online events over the coming days.

Action: Dunford

e) Update re Action Plan

The Action Plan had been updated to indicate priorities using a colour code. There was a question about who should be specified to be responsible for leading each action. Where this was uncertain, the box for the person responsible was to be left blank or question marks inserted. The latest version of the Action Plan was to be distributed to all members. **Action: Clerk**

Comments on the Action Plan were to be submitted to the Chairman by email in advance of the next meeting.

Action: All

f) Update from Mr Wilkin of HARBUG

Mr Wilkin reported that the County Council were consulting on a street design guide with a closure date of 17 January. New cycle route directional signs had been installed on the Charlton Road at the bottom of Lark Hill. The surface of the cycle track towards Harwell Campus had been improved and there were plans, subject to funding, to improve the surface of the section between Lark Hill and Lockinge. Mr Wilkin had called an introductory meeting on 21 January with a view to establishing a working group to take projects forward.

County Councillor Hannaby was thanked for arranging for the directional signs to be installed. She was asked to consider getting the County Council to instal other signs elsewhere in Charlton Road and on the A417 at West and East Hendred directing cyclists to the Lark Hill to Harwell Campus cycle track. It was noted that

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there was S106 funding due from the Crab Hill development to improve this cycle route. It was suggested that the County Council might draw upon its own resources to deal with the track surface from Lark Hill to Lockinge, in anticipation of the receipt of these funds. Councillor Hannaby agreed to refer these matters to a locality meeting she was due to participate in with County Council officers. **Action: Hannaby**

f) Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

The scheme had been heavily oversubscribed. Due to the short timescales for submission involved, the District Council had decided to only apply for funding to replace the boilers at the Faringdon Leisure Centre. There was a possibility that the government might reopen the scheme and it was suggested that a project be prepared for The Beacon in anticipation of this. This was to be referred to the District Council. **Action: Clerk**

F. **Other Business**

a) Drivers leaving their engines running whilst parked in Wantage town centre

It was noted that this continued to be a problem. The District Council had conducted a campaign concerning this in the recent past. It was agreed to ask the District Council to conduct the campaign again.

Action: Clerk

b) Suggestion for a scheme to plant trees in an area the size of a tennis court

Mr Bradfield was seeking to proceed with a number of tree and hedge planting schemes, as part of the Wild Wantage initiative. He felt the promotion of schemes to plant an area the size of a tennis court was more of a gimmick than a practical option. He advised that there were a number of areas in the town where trees could be planted.

In the discussion that followed the following points were raised:

- Social media could be more actively used to enthuse the public in tree planting initiatives
- The Town Council could consider purchasing land specifically for the purpose of tree planting.
- A group tree purchasing scheme be negotiated with a supplier to provide a discount for local residents
- There was a possibility that the District Council would be purchasing in the next financial year a state of the art air quality monitoring device. This would be useful in measuring air quality in the town centre,
- Councillor Crawford agreed to obtain a map of all land maintained by the District Council. This was to be in a format that could be utilised by systems used by Councillor Sibbald, **Action: Crawford**
- Councillor Sibbald agreed to produce a map bringing together details of land owned by the Town, District and County Councils. **Action: Sibbald**
- Sustainable Wantage had recently secured a large number of new volunteers and would be happy to contact them with details of any projects the sub-committee might wish to pursue.
- There was a County Council initiative to introduce 20 mph speed limits in various locations. Suggestions for areas to be covered were to be passed to Councillor Hannaby. **Action: All**

G. **Dates of future meetings**

15 February & 26 April 2021

The meeting closed at 9.34 pm.
