

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM,
ON MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Sub-Committee members present:

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

Others present:

Councillor Major J Sibbald
G. Wilkin – HARBUG
M Bradfield, J Harvey and N Leahy - Sustainable Wantage
Two members of the public

Clerk:

W P Falkenau

A. Apologies for absence

None.

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 4 January 2021

The minutes were approved.

E. Matters arising from the Sub-committee meeting held on 4 January 2021

a) Article in newsletter regarding District Council taking maintenance of open areas and verges in house

It was reported that the County Council pays for two cuts of verges each year. In some cases verges were being cut more frequently due to a contractor's equipment being unable to cope with cutting longer grass. Having brought their maintenance work in house, the District Council were in the process of sorting out their equipment requirements for the coming season. The public were to be forewarned of a reduced cutting of roadside verges.

Action: Dunford

Committee members were invited to identify other areas where fewer grass cuts might be appropriate.

Action: All

b) Feedback from District Council Climate Emergency Committee

There was nothing further to report.

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

Councillor Johnson had produced a specific measure of the Council's footprint. The cost of offsetting this was estimated at £35 for 2019. The calculation assumed provision of energy from a standard supplier. It would be

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less if a green energy supplier was used. The Clerk was to contact the District Council to ascertain whether it was using a green energy supplier. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that the calculation only covered the direct activities of the council. It was likely that the indirect activities (those of contractors and traders) would generate a much larger figure. It was agreed that a calculation of the Council's indirect carbon footprint be made. **Action: Johnson**

It was agreed to engage with providers of carbon offset schemes with a view to confirming the direct carbon footprint figure and to then make an annual payment to a provider to offset this. **Action: Johnson**

d) Update re Sustainable Wantage projects, including tree planting and Carbon Reduction Community Survey results

Mr Leahy gave a briefing on the outcome of the Carbon Reduction Community Survey. Reports had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. Key findings were:

Transport

- 84% car ownership and frequent use of cars
- Only 4% use of public transport
- Requirement for more parking space, enforcements to reduce speeding and illegal parking, and more walking and cycling routes

Energy in the home

- Only 44% indicated that their home insulation was of a high standard
- 50% of those with poor insulation expressed an interest to improve it
- 50% were not using renewal energy suppliers and half of those expressed a willingness to change

Waste Recycling

- Strong support for recycling and for repairing rather than replacing

Food and shopping

- 50% are regularly shopping locally,
- Wish for greater variety of what offered locally

General

- The Mix being well used
- Protection of green spaces

In summary Mr Leahy advised that there were lots of opportunities to achieve carbon reduction in areas of domestic energy, car use and other areas. A future vision for the town would help.

Jo Harvey reported that the re-use and repair map was almost complete. It would be reviewed and published when the lockdown was lifted.

Mark Bradfield gave a briefing on proposals to improve bio-diversity at the Manor Road Memorial Park. This was to be taken forward by the Leisure and Amenities Committee. Mr Bradfield was thanked for his work.

A nature recovery network map, produced by Mr Bradfield, was to be distributed with the minutes.

Action: Clerk

Items e) and f) deferred for consideration later in the meeting.

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g) Update from Mr Wilkin of HARBUG

Improvements to the surface of the cycle route to Harwell were ongoing. There was engagement with the County Council about the lack of a crossing on the A417 at the roundabout to be installed at the junction with the new eastern link road. A meeting was to be held on 17 February with a view to establishing a working group to produce a cycling and walking plan. The Clerk was to distribute the invite to members.

Action: Clerk

h) Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

It was reported that the District Council's Corporate Energy Officer was actively looking at carbon reduction opportunities across all District Council buildings.

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

The Clerk had not yet contacted the District Council about rerunning the "Turn it off!" campaign. It was agreed to include it as an item in the newsletter.

Action: Clerk

F. Oxfordshire COP26 Climate Alliance

Oxford Friends of the Earth was setting up an alliance and were inviting interested organisations to join to ensure that Oxfordshire makes the strongest possible contribution to the success of the COP26 conference.

It was agreed that members should familiarise themselves with the details and that this be referred to the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting for a decision.

Action: All

G. To consider a Solar Streets initiative for Wantage

Support was being sought from councils or community organisations for a scheme which provided solar panels at a significantly reduced cost. If the Town Council did not support there was a possibility that Sustainable Wantage could support.

It was agreed that members should familiarise themselves with the details and that this be referred to the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting for further consideration.

Action: All

H. To consider declaring support for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Committee members were to familiarise themselves with the details. This was to be referred back to the next meeting for consideration.

Action: All

E. Matters arising from the Sub-committee meeting held on 4 January 2021 (continued)

e) & f) Update re Arrangements for events and Update re Action Plan

The Action Plan was noted. The Chairman agreed to distribute an up to date version to all members.

Action: Dunford

It was agreed that the Chairman should present the Action Plan at the Annual Town Electorate Meeting on 12 April 2021.

Action: Dunford

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I. Other business.

Carbon Reduction Community Survey

It was agreed that the survey results be published on the Town Council's website subject to GDPR being met.

Action: Clerk

J. Dates of future meetings

26 April, 28 June, 6 September and 18 October 2021.

The meeting closed at 9.43 pm.
