

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 10 JANUARY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Sub-Committee members present:

Councillor A Dunford (Chairman)
Councillors I R Cameron, A Crawford, E L Johnson and C Walters

Others present:

Councillor S Third (part)
P Kirby-Harris (part)
J Harvey – Sustainable Wantage

Clerk:

W P Falkenau

A. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Duveen, J T Hannaby, A Przybysz and C H Wills-Wright, and Mr G Wilkin.

It was reported that Mr Landy had resigned from the sub-committee with immediate effect. He had been nominated by Sustainable Wantage. It was agreed to ask Sustainable Wantage to put someone else forward as a member of the sub-committee. **Action: Clerk**

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. To consider co-option of Dr V Wright to this sub-committee

It was agreed to confirm with Dr Wright that she met the sub-committee's criteria for co-option and that consideration of her co-option be referred to the next meeting. **Action: Dunford**

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

Mr Kirby-Harris advised that he was interested in working with the sub-committee on its Action Plan item 13 "Engage schools in the local area". This was an area he already worked in and he felt he could facilitate the sub-committee's engagement. He reported on the current climate emergency activities he was engaged in.

Councillor Third arrived.

He hoped to hold a meeting with teachers of KAs Academy on the Friday in the following week. Members expressed an interest in attending the meeting. Mr Kirby-Harris agreed to advise details to the Clerk. It was noted that as well as briefing students on the climate emergency, it would be helpful to receive their views and ideas concerning it, and on the Council's Action Plan. After Mr Kirby-Harris had answered questions, he was thanked for the briefing and he left the meeting.

E. To approve the minutes of the Sub-committee meeting held on 18 October 2021

The date on the header of the minutes was incorrect. The header was corrected, and the minutes approved and signed.

F. Matters arising from the Sub-committee meeting held on 18 October 2021

a) Feedback from District Council Climate Emergency Committee

Elizabeth Kingdom, the District Council's Climate Action Lead, had left the District Council's employment. Further engagement with the District Council was to await the appointment of her replacement.

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

Payment to a carbon offset project, for the previous year, had not yet been paid. The Clerk awaited details of who to pay from Councillor Johnson. Councillor Johnson agreed to provide this. **Action: Johnson**

c) Update from Mr Wilkin of HARBUG

Mr Wilkin had apologised for not being able to attend this meeting. An email from him dated 22 December 2021 had given a full update on the Active Travel Working Group meetings, and was forwarded to members of this sub-committee. Future meetings of the group were to be held on the third Thursday in each month.

d) Update from Sustainable Wantage

Ms Harvey gave the following update:

“Wild Wantage - 1,400 trees were planted in the back fields of Ham Mill in November, working with The Conservation Volunteers and Letcombe Brook. A further 200 hedge and tree whips were planted in December along the top edge of the cemetery and the top edge of Manor Road Park. These help link up the existing corridor of Letcombe Brook with green areas beyond.”

The Chairman had requested a tree map produced by the County Council. It was noted that the planting scheme at the Manor Road Park awaited the approval of the District Council.

“Sustainable Wantage Strategy planning and National Lottery update - We are preparing 3 year strategy plans in 5 areas: Waste, Food, Energy, Community resilient / engagement and Biodiversity. We met with a National Lottery fund advisor and have submitted a proposal for a 3 year sustainability coordinator role. The purpose of this role is to expand our current activities beyond The Mix and take action on a larger scale, engaging with schools, businesses and organisations.”

“Wantage Community Larder - now has 111 members, of which 22 are currently funded by Food Bank (covering their joining fee and first 3 months). Vale DC have given us another 3 months free use of room. We're also setting up a cooking course for larder families to develop confidence in the kitchen cooking with surplus food; 5 week programme leading up to cooking at a Climate Cafe (if any councillor would like to come to the cafe it's Fri 5th March)”

“Laptop rescue and repair cafe - we received £1,500 from Jane Hanna's councillor priority fund and £2,500 from WTC for Jan21-Feb 22. Repair Cafe lost a few volunteers over lockdowns but we've recently got some new recruits and are now moving to twice a month. Repair Cafe volunteers have worked on 75 items since starting back in person events in July, with a success rate of 69%. The Laptop Rescue crew have fixed up and rehomed 369 laptops, 37 tablets and 10 desktops since Jan 21. 192 of these devices went to school children, we worked with all Wantage and Grove schools and also Primaries in Challow, Hanney, Stanford, Uffington, and Hendred. Additionally devices went to clients in Adult Social Care, church goers struggling to access online services during lockdowns, families supported by Asylum Welcome, 5 Community Learning hubs across the

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county (where they'll be keep as a bank to loan to people needing to access courses and services such as family support) people job hunting, someone doing an apprenticeship and many others.”

“One of our Repair Cafe volunteers has been working on bikes; 16 rehomed so far, mostly going to families / individuals where the cost of a new bike is prohibitive, we have made a funding application to Low Carbon Hub building on this finding.”

“Bike project application - with Guy and John Tranter of Cycling UK Wantage we have submitted a proposal to gather, fix and supply bikes to Year 6 Pupil Premium children undertaking Bikeability training Summer term 22. We should know by April if this is successful.”

“Bigger premises - We are looking for bigger premises to give a permanent home to the Community Larder (which would allow us to run fridges and offer chilled food items) house a Library of Things, and expand the Repair Cafe into a drop-in workshop space. Makespace /Meanwhile project are working on getting a 5 year lease on the former Day Centre in Stirlings Road, we're waiting to hear back from them.”

e) Solar Streets initiative

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford

IT WAS RESOLVED that a statement be made, supporting solar energy and renewable energy schemes, but advising consumers to seek quotations from a number of suppliers. An article from Sustainable Wantage was to be included in the next Council newsletter, encouraging residents to install solar energy panels.

Councillor Dunford agreed to write the statement.

Action: Dunford

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

The Clerk had not yet referred production of posters to the Town Project Coordinator.

Action: Clerk

g) Events

Arrangements for an electric vehicle event had not yet been progressed. It was hoped that representatives of Sustainable Wantage could be involved in this. The Chairman agreed to refer this to an Events Sub-committee meeting that was being held that Thursday.

Action: Dunford

G. Review of progress on Action Plan

The Chairman intended to invite a speaker to the next meeting to brief members on a matter of interest.

Action: Dunford

It was noted that the District Council was planning to offer grants towards projects that helped address the climate emergency. The timescales for applying would be short.

Councillor Johnson advised that he was struggling to identify a method for reasonably measuring the carbon footprint for contractors and others that were engaged in activities associated with the Town

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Council. It was agreed that the sub-committee should focus on activities where it could influence the carbon footprint.

Action: Johnson

H. Other Business

a) Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree Canopy project

It was agreed to register any tree projects the Town Council had supported.

Action: Clerk

Reference to the "Plant a tree for the jubilee" initiative was to be included in the article for the newsletter.

Action: Dunford

b) Oxfordshire 'climate action heroes' award scheme

The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire had established the award scheme with a deadline for nominations was Friday 14 January. It was agreed to nominate Sustainable Wantage and the Letcombe Brook Project.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk was to also consider putting forward HARBUG.

Action: Clerk

c) District Council Climate Emergency Committee

It was noted that the minutes of the committee were available on the District Council's website.

d) Action Plan

It was agreed that there was a need to further prioritise actions and consider how to get others to pursue actions. The Chairman agreed to engage with members with a view to putting forward proposals to the next meeting.

Action: Dunford

e) Community Allotment

It was agreed that the proposal from Sustainable Wantage for a community allotment be referred to the agenda of the Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting agenda.

Action: Clerk

Sustainable Wantage wanted to distribute a note to all allotment holders. It was agreed that the note be passed to the Clerk for forwarding.

H. Dates of future meetings

21 February and 11 April 2022.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm.
