

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Sub-Committee members present:

Councillor A Dunford (Chairman)
Councillors A Duveen A Crawford, E L Johnson and C Walters, and G Wilkin

Others present:

J Harvey – Sustainable Wantage
T Page – Wild Wantage
Councillor A Macdonald. Chair of Didcot Town Council Environment
and Climate Committee (up to item E)

Clerk:

W P Falkenau

A. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I R Cameron, J T Hannaby,
A Przybysz and C H Wills-Wright.

It was noted that Sustainable Wantage had put forward J Harvey to represent it at meetings, but not as a member of the sub-committee.

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

The Chairman had not yet received a response from Dr Wright.

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

None.

E. Briefing by Councillor A Macdonald. the Chair from Didcot Town Council Environment and Climate Committee

Councillor Macdonald was welcomed to the meeting. He advised that Didcot Town Council had given its support to the Solar Streets initiative, but did not endorse it. Buyers were encouraged to get competitive quotes. He reported on his personal experience, having had a system supplied by Solar Streets installed in his own property. He answered questions from members. He also reported on the Town Council's work relating to the 'Green Canopy'. There was discussion about the lack of suitable cycle routes. He was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

F. To approve the minutes of the Sub-committee meeting held on 10 January 2022

The minutes were approved and signed.

G. Matters arising from the Sub-committee meeting held on 10 January 2022

a) Feedback from District Council Climate Emergency Committee

The District Council had allocated £ 50k in its budgets for Climate Emergency projects for this year and the coming five years. There were also other projects in the budgets that would have positive impacts.

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Members were to look through the Action Plan to see if funding could be sought from the District Council. There was a possibility of applying for funds for the planting scheme at the Manor Road Memorial Park. T Page agreed to consider.

There was discussion about upgrading the heating system at Wantage Leisure Centre. There appeared to be too many obstacles to make this viable.

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

Councillor Johnson had circulated a spreadsheet that sought to measure the Council's carbon footprint based upon his own rough estimates. He asked members and the Clerk to review and advise of areas requiring adjustment.

Action: All/Clerk

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Walters
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies

IT WAS RESOLVED that, when the spreadsheet had been updated, it be published on the Council's website, with an invitation for the public to comment.

Action: Johnson/Clerk

c) Update from Mr Wilkin of HARBUG

The Active Travel Group continues to meet monthly. It was seeking to come up with a list of projects and prioritise these. The western end of the Crab Hill relief road was being redesigned to accommodate a cycling route. The County Council were consulting on the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Meetings of Active Travel Groups across Oxfordshire were being held monthly with each meeting focusing on different topics. Sustainable Wantage were holding an Active Travel meeting on the Wednesday. Mr Wilkin agreed to provide details of this to the Clerk for distribution to others.

Action: Wilkin/Clerk

It was noted that the Town Council had submitted its request for 20 mph speed limits. A survey seeking the public's views was active.

There was discussion about the availability of S106 funding to provide a cycle route link between Crab Hill and Limborough Road. There was also discussion about Market Place pedestrianisation. It was viewed that the western end pedestrianisation could be the precursor to a longer term project to pedestrianise a wider area.

d) Update from Sustainable Wantage

Mr Page, the Wild Wantage project officer, was welcomed to the meeting. He reported that the planting scheme at the Manor Road Memorial Park had not yet proceeded. He was involved in outreach work with Stockham Primary School and he hoped to also work with other schools. The Oxfordshire Treescapes Project had produced a report on tree planting opportunities in Wantage Parish. Mr Page agreed to consider this.

Ms Harvey reported that Sustainable Wantage had been holding workshops with allotment holders regarding cultivating without the use of chemicals. Sustainable Wantage had been given an Oxfordshire High Sheriff's Award for its work. Solar Streets Wantage was due to launch in April. They were seeking to work with Vale Community Impact on a draught busting initiative for those affected by fuel poverty. Sustainable Wantage had been asked to nominate a community building for a free energy audit. It was suggested by members that the October Club might be suitable.

Ms Harvey advised that Sustainable Wantage was receiving many requests to volunteer which was more than it could handle, and ideas for many projects, which was also more than it could handle. It was suggested that she put in a donation request to the Town Council and also the District Council to fund extra administration support.

Action: Harvey

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It was suggested that consideration be given to planting trees on open spaces owned by the District Council. Councillor Crawford was to work with Mr Page to identify suitable areas. **Action: Crawford**

e) 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**

f) Events

An electric vehicle event was to be held on the Kingsgove Community space on Saturday 23 April. Sustainable Wantage hoped to participate in this, but needed to check with its insurers about whether the public could ride on its electric bicycle.

g) Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree Canopy project

The project was due to last a year through to February 2023, with planting generally taking place between October and February.

h) Oxfordshire 'climate action heroes' award scheme

The Clerk had only been able to nominate two organisations in the time available. Sustainable Wantage had received an award.

H. Review of progress on Action Plan

The Chairman agreed to arrange an online Zoom meeting to review the Plan and agree priorities. **Action: Dunford**

I. Other Business

a) Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

The Chairman urged members to respond to the Plan consultation. **Action: All**

b) Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill

The Town Council had given its support, in principle, to the Bill. There was a need to monitor the Bill as it progressed through Parliament, to determine whether any changes would affect the support.

c) Grove Railway Station

The County Council had included in its budgets an amount to investigate the practicality and viability of reopening the station.

H. Dates of future meetings

11 April, 27 June, 12 September, 24 October 2022 and 9 January and 20 February 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.03 pm.
