

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE
OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 11 APRIL 2022 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Sub-Committee members present:

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

Others present: J Harvey (part) – Sustainable Wantage

Clerk: W P Falkenau

A. Apologies for absence

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

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 21 February 2022

The minutes were approved and signed.

E. Matters arising from the Sub-committee meeting held on 21 February 2022

a) Feedback from District Council Climate Emergency Committee

There had recently been a committee meeting. The proposal relating to a local reservoir, which the District Council was opposing, had been discussed. Changes to planning rules were being proposed to promote greater biodiversity.

J Harvey arrived.

The County Council was giving priority to climate change and pursuing a number of policies relating to preserving and planting trees.

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

Prior to the previous meeting, Councillor Johnson had circulated a spreadsheet that sought to measure the Council's carbon footprint based upon his own rough estimates. He had not yet received any feedback.

Members and the Clerk were to review and advise of areas requiring adjustment. **Action: All/Clerk**

Councillor Johnson had not yet updated the spreadsheet to make it ready to be published on the Council's website. **Action: Johnson**

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c) Update from Mr Wilkin of HARBURG

The Active Travel Group continues to meet regularly. Three priorities had been identified – Willow Walk, the Eastern Link Road opportunities and links to the Kingsgrove development. A forum was to be set up for users of the Science Vale cycle routes.

Pot holes were becoming a problem again. It was noted that the County Council's arrangements for dealing with them were unsatisfactory. There was a need for these to be attended to on the route for the Women's Cycle Tour in June.

d) Update from Sustainable Wantage

Ms Harvey reported on recent activities of the Wild Wantage project. A limit is to be introduced on the numbers using the community larder. More information was required on the electric vehicle event that was due to take place on 23 April. Solar Streets has launched, with eighty five people signing up. It was noted that whilst the Town Council supported the concept of solar energy. It did not give its specific support to Solar Streets. It sought to encourage potential buyers to seek competitive quotes. In discussion, the difficulty of achieving comparable quotes from suppliers, due to their complexity, was noted. There was also discussion about what links should be on the Council's website to other websites promoting energy saving initiatives. The Clerk was to refer this to Councillor Sibbald with a view to making recommendations to the Promotion, Communications and Events Committee and Council. **Action: Clerk**

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

The electric vehicle event was to be held on the Kingsgrove Community space on Saturday 23 April.

The Chairman was to invite a representative from the waste disposal service and Zero Oxfordshire to give talks at future meetings. **Action: Dunford**

g) Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree Canopy project

There was nothing further to report. The District Council had launched a grant scheme to fund tree planting projects. The deadline for application was 28 April. It was agreed that an application should be made to fund the project at the Manor Road Memorial Park. There was a need for updated financial figures from Wild Wantage. Ms Harvey agreed to obtain these and refer them to the Clerk, for him to make the application. **Action: Harvey/Clerk**

H. Review of progress on Action Plan and prioritization

Work had been progressed on the Town Council's carbon footprint. Councillor Duveen agreed to check whether the District Council was securing electricity/gas from a green source. **Action: Duveen**

Consideration had been given to the Christmas lighting. The lights were already low power LEDs. There was the option of reducing the number of lights, but this was not favoured. It had been confirmed that the floral displays were bee friendly. There was discussion regarding use of weedkillers to protect pavements and roadways. There was a balance to be struck between over use of chemical versus allowing weeds to damage the surfaces.

Further consideration was to be given to events eg repair clinic.

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Consideration was to be given to what changes might be required to the Neighbourhood Plan after the current Plan had been accepted.

A government grant had been secured to get a changing places facility in the toilet block in the Portway car park

It was noted that the benches being installed by the Town Council were from recycled material. The Clerk was to enquire about the source of the recycled material. **Action: Clerk**

Eco friendly developments were to be promoted through the planning processes.

There was a need to provide signposts for cycle routes to encourage greater use of cycles.

Mark Bradfield had produced a map identifying areas for tree and general planting around the town. J Harvey agreed to pass a copy to the Clerk. **Action: Harvey**

It was agreed to pursue the provision of trees in the Market Place. There was a need to identify suitable species and locations. This was to be progressed through the Leisure and Amenities Committee.

Trees in the old sewer beds area in Grove Road require attention and could be cleared for planting of new trees.

The community energy initiative was also to be considered.

I. Other Business

- a) Drivers leaving their engines running. As well as an issue in the town centre, there was a need to discourage this in the vicinity of schools.

J. Dates of future meetings

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

The meeting closed at 9.03 pm.
