

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held at 10.30am, 27th February 2023

MINUTES

Present: Cllr C Munsey, Cllr D Dunkley, Cllr J Haycock, Cllr I Draper and Clerk S Hosking

1. Apologies for absence - None received.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting – Minutes were approved.
3. Matters arising

Soft Plastic recycling. First Mile provide soft plastic recycling facilities.

Action: CM to check WNCs comment that soft plastics can go in recycling bins.

Action: SH to get a quote from First Mile.

Examination of WNC Local Plan - too much to go through as also need to look at policies. Difficult for untrained eye to understand implications of certain policies.

Action: SH to contact Sustainable West Northants to ask them to find out what the WNC Local Plan already covers in respect to the points the committee have agreed to lobby WMC on.

WNC have signed up to UK 100 pledge. A net zero pledge.

Net zero by 2030 for Council

Net Zero by 2045 for residents and businesses.

EV Car Charging Points - Check with Sustainable West Northants what the situation is for new builds.

Grand Union Housing mention on their website they are committed to sustainability.

Action: CM to ask GUH if they would consider installing EV points in The Pound along with planting to improve biodiversity. If GUH would consider this then the CCEC will call a meeting with residents of The Pound and GUH to discuss options and details.

CA-WN equipment to measure thermal resilience of housing.

Action: CM to contact CA-WN to ask about equipment and to ask them to the next Climate Change Fair.

Check conditions of development relating to solar panels and wind turbines on businesses and warehousing with Sustainable West Northants.

Suggest double page spread for Climate Change news to the ST editor.

ABILITY transport. Promotion of ABILITY minibus.

Action: SH to find ABILITY leaflets and check that they are up to date. We need enough leaflets for the whole village approx. 400 A5 flyers, **SH** to ask Lynn Hinch.

4. Rewilding trial and consideration of suggested sites

Action: CM get contact details for Brian Webster (rewilding expert) from CA-WN, so Clerk can book a site visit.

The CCEC needs to consider whether verges should be rewilded or be seeded with wildflowers.

The bank along Broad Street has already been seeded with wildflowers by a resident. It does look attractive.

If the PC rewilds verges, based on previous experience of some mowing being missed, it is likely that it will receive complaints about weeds and their seeds encroaching into their gardens. If rewilded, the Abbey Road verge under the trees would become a mess of brambles and residents are again likely to complain. Many verges are not mown by the PC or WNC but by residents.

People seem to be less averse to areas planted with wildflowers.

The CCEC decided it would consider two types of verge trialing.

Wildflower trial

Action: Swingfield we need to get someone out immediately to advise on wildflower planting. Village children can be asked to assist, through Brownies/Scouts and the School as area is fenced off and less danger from passing vehicles.

Action: CM get contact details for Brian Webster (rewilding expert) from CA-WN, so Clerk can book a site visit.

Rewilding trial

Main Road verge between village gates (nr VH) and junction with High St (opposite side to Village Hall only) will be left wild, except for 1m strip from edge of the road.

Action: On approval of PC. **SH** to contact mowing contractor to inform him of trial areas. **SH** to contact Helen Howard to inform Highways not to cut this area.

Committee will need to carry out an audit of verges - which are already wild/wildflower/mown. Action to be confirmed at next meeting.

5. Update on plan of action.

- As discussed under matters arising.
- Climate Change Fair and Climate Emergency topics will be discussed later in this meeting.

6. 2023 Climate Change Fair

- Initially contact people last year who were unable to attend due to other commitments.
- ID will arrange EV cars and make more of a display this year.
- We need to see more businesses offering solar panels, draft proofing, EV charging installation etc.
- Someone who can advise on wood burners best practice.
- Volunteer bureau, can provide advice on energy saving/insulation grants etc
- Secondary Schools, get in touch before school summer holidays as they needed more time to get proper permissions for students to be off school site.
- Presentations.

ALL Councillors really need to be in attendance, so teams can be relieved rather than staying there all day.

Action: ALL CCEC members. Contacting organisations needs to start now, as invitees needed more time.

Larger environmental organisations did not have the staff/volunteers to come out to parish events, so focus on local organisations and businesses.

7. Consideration of declaring a Climate Emergency

It is important to understand that it is not just declaring a Climate Emergency but must at the same time also be supported with a plan of what the Parish Council will commit to doing to tackle the Climate Emergency.

The CCEC will take this back to full Parish Council with an explanation of what is involved so a decision can be taken by full Council when all the implications have been considered.

Action: SH to add to the next PC agenda and write a full report on what the declaration means and what it would entail by way of commitments.

Action: If the PC accepts the recommendation, the CCEC will make a pledge on the WNC Sustainable West Northants website.

8. No Mow May

This has been raised by residents before and WNC has recently emailed encouraging the PC to consider joining the scheme.

There are certain areas the CCEC feels should not be left unmown:

- Swingfield (apart from Wildflower bank)
- Cemetery
- Abbey Road

But that all other areas should be left as a No Mow May trial.

Action: The CCEC will recommend to full Council that a No Mow May trial with some restrictions is approved.

Action: SH to add to the next PC agenda.

Residents would need to be informed of the PCs intention and to invite them to join in with No Mow May via village website, Facebook, in the ST (which comes out early May) and by posters around the village.

N.B. It is important to note that the mowing contractor is contracted to mow in May and so either the PC will need to accept it needs to continue paying for not mowing or ask him if he would consider doing other vegetation management instead.

9. Invitation to members of public to join committee

The CCEC minutes were reviewed and there was no agreement to request to the PC that members of the public are invited to join the committee.

There was a resolution of the full Council minutes from 28th January 2022 (item 24):
“**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Council’s Climate Change and Environment Committee can create a working group of up to four non-voting members of the public with relative expertise to advise the committee. That the advisory working party can include experts from inside and outside of the parish.”

Action: SH. Consideration to be included in the next CCEC agenda to discuss whether a working party is necessary.

10. Engagement with the village and dedicated area for CCEC on the parish website.

A CCEC communications leaflet will be sent out as soon as possible to include ideas of small steps everyone can take. CM designed a mock-up of the leaflet.

Action: SH will digitise and prepare a leaflet as soon as possible ready for delivery.

Action: SH. A dedicated area of the website will be created, so any CCEC news (links to environmental organisations, residents’ ideas etc, can be included in one place for all residents to access.

11. Any other business – None.

12. Date of next meeting – Monday 3rd April 10.30am in the Village Hall meeting room