

KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Virtual Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting held on
Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors C Buxton, C Brennan, D Cooper, A Greenfield (Chair) and B Simmons. Ward Councillor H MacFie

Jon Parker (Oldland Parish Council), Clarice Corfield (Churches Together) and Erica Davies (Keynsham Wombles) and Philippa Paget (Independent Traders Group)

IN ATTENDANCE: Dawn Drury – Deputy Town Clerk (DTC)

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr A. Wait.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

95. DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

96. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2021 be confirmed as a true record by the Chairman and were signed by the Chairman (hard copy supplied in advance to the Chair for signing).

97. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr. Jon Parker Oldland Common Parish Council.

98. SPEAKER FROM THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD TRUST

Erica gave a brief introduction to the Sustainable Food Trust and explained their mission as being 'a global voice for sustainable food and health.' Their aim is to inspire others and not to duplicate the work of others. The organisation is small with about 14 employees, most part-time. There are 6 practicing farmers within the group.

The organisation began in 2010, and the first project that they worked on was 'True Cost Accounting.' This is where the organics standards came from. It was realised that this was creating a niche that organic was good, better and more expensive and there was no meeting in the middle for cheaper produce. There was not a level playing field. Trust Cost Accounting is now used worldwide and give costs to where things go wrong in agriculture, cause harm and that is not being paid for at the source. This should change policy so that sustainable food can actually become easier for people to buy and this is starting to happen.

Brexit has meant that farmers are no longer getting subsidies from the EU, and DEFRA are having to come up with another way to recompense farmers and keep them equal with farmers from other parts of the world. It is a good opportunity to look at how we as taxpayers subsidise our famers. A member of the Sustainable Food Trust in the past had been working with DEFRA on a project of harmonised sustainability metrics, that also included farmers such as the Duchy of Cornwall, Dyson etc. These farmers were struggling because the use of nitrogen fertiliser used on their lands for years and years was destroying the soil. Currently, farmers have to undergo multiple assessments and they have to pay for these numerous assessments. This project however, allows the farmer to be assessed once and the other organisation's wishing assessment data can obtain the information from this one assessment. It is hoped that this method is a real learning process for all. Ultimately, the farmer carries out the assessment and then there is a sliding scale that scores how close they are to being sustainable and in what areas of their practices has the higher percentage scores. The creates a way that all farmers can increase their sustainability without having barriers in the way and having to only do one assessment per year. This is still a trial that is under way and it has been taken on very well in Wales, Canada, etc., England is taking steps a bit slower.

It is hoped that eventually an app will be produced that every farmer can use. Natwest are on board and Morrison and Tesco are showing interests in the project in respect of running trials. It is hoped that a design will come forward in the future for an app for the consumer, who would use the app to scan a product in a food store and information about the farm that the food has come from.

Another project is a desk top study (linking diet to farms) to look at how much food can be produced through a land sharing approach, applying sustainable farming methods across the whole area. There may be lower yields in some parts of the land, but the biodiversity will be greater, and farmers will not be harming the watercourses, etc.

They are also looking at a local network of good abattoirs and even a mobile abattoir. Currently, good abattoirs are becoming rare and not local. This will reduce driving long distances to abattoirs which also distresses the animals en route. The Sustainable Food Trust will be making MPs aware of this issue.

Another project is an educational project called Harmony – connecting the teaching of subjects so that they relate to each other. Erica will send though the link to the project.

Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions and Erica was thanked for her presentation.

99. CONNECTING CYCLE AND FOOTPATHS (CROSS COUNTY BORDERS)

Councillor Simmons reported that he had written to B&NES to ask what the state of the s106 agreements were on the Somerdale site, because they are not complying with their s106 agreement and the footpath/cycle path should run from the main road through the site to the new bridge. There is no mention of this in the latest documentation. To date there has been no reply.

Councillor Wait is still working on trying to find ways to remove clutter to allow an easier footpath/cycle route to the station. He has communicated with the B&NES Officers in the hope that, without very much investment, we can make some quite impressive advances in terms of connectivity with S. Glos, Bristol and the station. There has been no concrete response to date.

Jon Parker (Oldland Parish Council) reported that the key matters to report were relating to the Keynsham Road link. At the last Bristol East Fringe cycling and walking group meeting it was agreed that we need to seek high level support and overall study for improving that road. A written request has been sent to Toby Savage (Leader of the Council) and also Steve Reed (Cabinet member for Strategic Infrastructure). He also reported that he presented to the S.Glos cabinet that submission and as a result of that Steve Reed confirmed that he is supportive of the aim to put a study together. There is also money in the budget to fund that investigation. Steve Reed fully acknowledged that it needed to be a cross border collaboration which ties in with what is intended. He also confirmed that he is in ongoing discussions with B&NES about the B&NES aims in terms of their improvements on their side of the river. He acknowledged that the projected north Keynsham development would indeed create greater demand for these active travel routes so therefore improvements do need to be found. The next step is that he is speaking with S. Glos officers to progress this. Jon now has their contact details and will stay in touch with them to make sure that we can engage with that process and support them to produce that investigation plan. Another important matter raised was that although some of this would relate to longer term improvements, Steve Reed was also very supportive of investigating short term improvements on that road and he will explore that element as well.

A question was raised in respect of the allocating and siting of bins along these cycle and walking routes. Recently a bin that was originally installed by the Canal and River Trust has been removed and the reason for doing has not been ascertained, and a request to S.Glos for a replacement bin has not been responded too. A lot of the waste is bagged dog pooch waste which is now just being dropped on the paths. The only bin in the area now is the one near Matthews. Jon confirmed that he would raise this issue and that bins and benches would be incorporated and strategically placed on some of the routes.

100. ENVIRONMENT CELEBRATION DAY

Clarice reported that their event planning group met on 27th February, and B&NES have now decided that use of Market Walk will be permitted so she has almost completed the full events management plan. She is waiting to hear from B&NES as to how many stalls can be accommodated on Market Walk.

Liz Barling has found four speakers for the Friday evening part of the event and none of the speakers require a fee. The speakers include.

Joe Lewis – The Head of the Soil and Farming Association.

Ian Barrett – The CEO from the Avon Wildlife Trust.

Peter Capener – from the Bath and West Community Energy Group.

Richard O'Brien – Fund Manager from the Triodos Bank.

Vicky Youdan is collecting names of groups and business that are to be invited to take up stalls.

Alastair Singleton will be approaching the main sponsors.

They would like to produce a prospective on what is happening in the developing countries because global warming is not so much an issue for Keynsham and the UK but a global problem for all, plus some sort of spiritual aspect to the event.

They are currently trying to sort the positioning of a place where lost children can be taken to and collected from. It is hoped that this can be in The Space, but the Baptist church will be used as a back up location. The next meeting is planned for the 18th March and before then subgroups will be formed to work on different aspects of the event e.g. publicity, funding, etc.

It was confirmed that the Wombles will collect litter on the day. A request to borrow the PA system was made. Cllr Biddleston was asked and agreed to undertake Facebook interviews with exhibitors to stream on Facebook.

101. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT PLAN

Councillor Greenfield ran through the layout of the Keynsham Town Council Climate Action Planning Spreadsheet, and the assigning of projects was mentioned as an action to be undertaken. It is intended that the plan will not be a Town Council plan but a wider plan to involve lots of other community organisations and businesses. This plan is not a final plan and it will change and develop with time, some items may even be removed, and other new ideas added. A lot of the actions are already being undertaken by community groups. Keynsham Town Council cannot deliver this on their own, they have to be a facilitator to help other groups hit their targets of being carbon neutral by 2030. It has to be for the community, groups and individuals together to make this work. To date we have identified areas that we want to get involved in and help change to meet our target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

It is appreciated that the spreadsheets are quite cumbersome, and as Cllr Cooper pointed out there are some gaps in some areas. Councillors were encouraged to send in any thoughts on bits that are missing, but it was made clear that we should not get held up by the fact that the plan is not complete or completely right.

To start putting the plan into action it was agreed that tasks need to be prioritised and put into order of when they may be undertaken. With this put in place it will simplify what needs to be done and when. So, to clarify, currently a decision has been made in respect of the first few tree planting projects we are involved in, the cycle and footpath improvements, plus communicating information on energy, wildlife and wildlife flowers (through the Cemetery project), together with events such as the past showcase event and the up-and-coming Climate Celebration Day, so we are already making progress.

The plan now needs looking at to draw out easy wins, what can be achieved with limited expenditure, and promotion of the environmental grant scheme funds to encourage works on areas of the plan or even funds to help new environmental groups to be set up.

Cllr Cooper explained that this currently looks like a programme of lots of different projects, and that it may be worth just pulling out a few projects to concentrate on and work on just one at a time. These projects could be decided in terms of time e.g. what are we going to do this year and what are we going to do next year and so on. Alternatively, divide into projects of type e.g. trees and plants in one area and waste in another area. It was agreed that each project would have to have an impact assessment in respect of the implications on the Town Council and whether it would be achievable.

It was agreed that any projects identified would need to be led on by smaller subgroups of the E & S Committee to ensure that they are successful. This would not necessarily mean the Town Council actually undertaken the project, but may mean the subgroup working to support other local organisations on the project. It was agreed that it would be much better to wait until these subgroups could actually get around a table and meet physically to get some of the projects underway.

It was suggested that Cllrs Cooper, Greenfield, MacFie, Buxton and Simmons get together to look at the plan and draw out a few projects and create some work packages. Projects to be measured on achievability and time scale with ideas being brought back to the main Committee in Powerpoint presentations (each work package following the same

framework) so that it could be communicated easily to the rest of the members. It was suggested that once the projects are developed into Powerpoints these are presented to full Council for resolution that the project may go ahead. It was agreed that Councillors Greenfield and Cooper will look at the diaries to try to get together some dates for some future sub-committee meetings. **ACTION CLLRS GREENFIELD AND COOPER.**

The point that the list of topics for future agendas does not seem to be included in the plan. It is difficult when you have speakers at the meeting then trying to fit in all the reported back items within the time scale for the meetings, and this list is only a reminder for items that could be discussed in the future. It was agreed that this list could be looked at and possibly incorporated into the plan.

102. WOODLAND TRUST TREE ORDERS

The Town Council approved the application to the Woodland Trust for two packs of whips.

103. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL BILL

The Town Council have requested more clarity in respect of this matter and what is actually meant to declare an Ecological Emergency, and has been referred back to Environment and Sustainability Committee for the production of a Climate and Ecological Policy Statement for submission to Town Council. The task of production of a draft Policy was delegated to Cllr Buxton and she will bring this back to this Committee for review in April 2021. **ACTION CLLR BUXTON.**

104. FUTURE MEETINGS/ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Noted and carried forward to the next agenda.

105. PROPOSED SPEAKERS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That no speaker should be arranged for the next meeting. A request for a speaker on community transport was noted.

106. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next virtual meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 6th April 2021 at 6.00 p.m. via virtual Zoom Video conferencing.**

The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.

Signed:
(Chairman)

Date: