

KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Notes of the Virtual Environment and Sustainability Consultation held on
Tuesday 29th March 2022 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Cllrs D Biddleston, C Buxton (Chair), H MacFie, B. Simmons and A Wait
Councillor Cooper joined the meeting late.
Philippa Paget.

IN ATTENDANCE: Dawn Drury – Town Clerk (TC), Andrew and Paul Pearce.

In accordance with the Schedule of Delegation approved by Town Council on April 22nd 2021, the Town Clerk is required to exercise delegated power (in consultation with the members of the cttee) to make decisions on the following items:

Any matters relating to Keynsham Town Council Environment and Sustainability Project Plan, seed giveaway and tree planting.

1. PREVIOUS MINUTES/NOTES

Previous minutes and notes will be carried forward to the next physical meeting.

2. HAVE YOUR SAY TO HELP INFORM A PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO KEYNSHAM MEMORIAL PARK.

A presentation was given by Andrew & Paul Pearce in respect of the consultation open to the public on 'Have Your Say to help inform a plan for improvements to Keynsham Memorial Park'.

They report that B&NES are still in the understand and discovery stage. There is a live survey at the moment and to date they have received about 450 responses which is good. They are also trying to find the relevant stakeholders to engage with. A meeting has been arranged with KMFA Limited members later this week. They will be meeting with various other bodies, hence this engagement with the Environment and Sustainability Committee of the Town Council.

One of the aims is to agree a masterplan for the park, and we have got about £230,000 allocated to the park to produce the evidence required and undertake some improvements. The intention is that once the masterplan is agreed and we have gathered all the evidence from the consultations this will be collated and used to grow the monies by formulating a bid to submit to the Lottery fund. In addition to this we will also probably need letters of support from the Town Council as they will need to know that the bid has the community on board. In addition, at the end of this project when agreeing the Masterplan, we will be looking to a body such as this Committee to make a

recommendation to full Council to agree the plan, of course, we will work together towards this end. This is why B&NES will continue to consult with this Committee.

From the Committee's capacity in respect of Environment and Sustainability, those present were asked to join in a discussion and answer some questions about how the group see the park meeting of the Town Council's ambitions.

Andrew and Paul know that the River Chew is a strategic nature corridor running through the park which is a huge benefit. Initial indications from the survey are that there is great support for improving nature in the park. However, B&NES have gaps in their knowledge about some of the things that this group may be part of where we can help the climate and other aspirations.

The Committee members suggested some other organisations that may be worth approaching including Transition Keynsham in respect of the Community Vegetable Plot in the park. Andrew and Paul have already met with Erica of the Wombles and walked around the park. It was suggested that they also speak with In Bloom, who are assisting Transition with the vegetable plot, and also working on the Pocket Park and the Jubilee Crown. It was mentioned that the criteria for In Bloom judging has changed recently awarding 40% for Horticulture, 30% for Environment and 30% for Community Engagement. Paul and Andrew would be grateful to know how In Bloom intend to achieve the latter 60% and how park activities can assist to achieve good scores.

It was reported that from a Town Council point of view one thing that is planned is a tree planting project in the main park, which includes the installation of a living Community Christmas tree, not a tree that will be decorated with bright lights but a tree that will be decorate with homemade decorations that are in memory of members of the community no longer with us. The Town Council have met with Denise Hart and Jane Robson and a location has been decided and the tree will be planted in early Autumn ready for this year's Winter Festival.

Andrew asked if anyone had engaged with the Town Council to talk about active travel. It was confirmed that the Town Council have not had any involvement in this area to date.

Plastic Free Keynsham was mentioned, and it was suggested that they speak with Cllr Lisa O'Brien who has had a lot to do with this organisation. This group may not have met during the Covid period. Philippa suggested Plastic Reaction, another group that were strong in Keynsham, who group out of a Keynsham Wildlife Trust project. Details were given of the Keynsham Branch of the Avon Wildlife Trust. The main aim of this group is educating and enthusing the community. The Town Council recently gave this group some funds to put up bird and bat boxes in different locations in the town, which were decided by bids put in to home one of the boxes. The group also got involved with Keynsham In Bloom Cemetery project and undertook a nature diversity survey in this location of town. They have also done moth counts as part of the Festival of Nature in the main Memorial Park, plus some BioBlitz surveys around the main park which interestingly showed that the worst area was near the duck pond. The actual pond had zero in it.

The group tend to do a lot of evening talks with visiting speakers and field trips.

Cllr Wait highlighted the Friends of Manor Road Community Woodland, and asked whether Andrew and Paul's consultation was based solely around the main park as there are other green spaces such as Conway Green in Keynsham that could be utilised better in the future? It was confirmed that there is so much work to do in the park that it is currently the priority. However, there is money in the pipeline for other sites such as Teviot and Manor Road.

Fox and Hounds Conservation was mentioned as it abuts the Park area. The Town Council are currently looking at a possible asset transfer on this land. There is an active group working in this space. There is a lot of exciting work taking pace on this site and a rare plant has been discovered. B&NES have already undertaken tree works and wall repairs and the area now has tremendous potential to create a tranquil space. The site needs to be made safe for community members to visit and relax with nature. Also, a proper entrance needs to be created. A plan of this site (which is about a third of an acre) needs to be created to leave some area wild for nature whilst creating pathways. There is a natural pond at the bottom of the site with a couple of meadow areas both of which have been planted in the past years. The group are very active and would welcome any support. Cllr Wait said that he would be happy to take Andrew and Paul on a tour of the site if they wished.

Andrew suggested perhaps creating a roaming conservation group that could possibly be funded to work on various sites, including some in the main park.

Cllr Biddleston ask what B&NES thought the requirements to improve biodiversity and environment issues within the park. Paul explained that the outcomes of the surveys will indicate what is really needed whether it be enhancing meadows, biodiversity and access to nature.

B&NES are some way off identifying what infrastructure and facility improvements are required. As example there could be an extension to the café to include indoor seating and this would be done by using sustainable materials, renewable energy on site and improved technology.

The waterflow of the river to create electricity for the town was raised by Cllr Biddleston, and response that was offered was that it would be dependent on whether it would be technically feasible, if there is sufficient head of water to create a sufficient energy supply. He also commented that Bristol had been successful in their conversion of their weir to generate energy. It was pointed out that from a biodiversity point of view that the weir affects the quality of the river in that prohibits migrating Atlantic Salmon from taking this water route. It is known that this species of fish is found in the lower levels of River Chew. So, in respect of this matter there would be some trade off. Solar for the café was suggested. Cllr Simmons added that currently there is not sufficient head of water and turbo would have to be installed to allow energy to be sourced from waterpower at the weir. The flow of this river is very shallow and is a drain from the reservoir. Cllr MacFie suggested the concept of a glade and asked if this was something that would fit into the park. It was confirmed that plans would be included for creating new habitats.

Councillor Cooper joined the meeting at this point.

It was suggested to Andrew and Paul that they contact FishWish for information on the fish levels in the river.

Lots of conservation work has been undertaken at the Pocket Park by In Bloom and, if there are spare funds, repairs to stone walls, paths and the installation of a further ramp section to make the park fully accessible to wheelchair users would be great.

Philippa suggested that planting the park should be sustainable and insect friendly with every plant planted for a reason as this would give members of the community ideas for their own gardens. Lower bush and fruit bearing trees were suggested. Reference was made to the old community fruit orchard that was full of trees which was located behind the old Fox and Hounds public house which is now a car park. You can currently see the last apple tree, which was until recently bearing fruit, but is now dead. Planting apple trees in the area once more would be great as part of the heritage of Keynsham. The community of Keynsham is great at getting involved in projects such as growing on wildflower plug plants and In Bloom would be happy to lead on anything like this.

Cllr Biddleston suggested that Liz Barling of the Keynsham Community Energy group be contacted for this group's thoughts on the park's future plans, and they have experience of gaining funding for energy projects.

Once all the results from the survey are in and the stakeholders consulted, we will prioritise getting some concept plans in place. One of the areas could be the river corridor through the park which is important for both nature and recreation. This needs some work on bank erosion near the pond. Also, looking at the top of the park, round the park café and play area, and how this can be used as a better events space that would help organisations such as KMFA Limited. There is a need to improve our play area to discourage people from travelling to Bristol using their cars to get to better play facilities. There is definitely a need to expand the park, so it caters for all ages of children.

Anything that is great for the park will be great for the businesses, as people will then use the High Street. Liaising with the Music Festival Association is key so that the park plans do not impact on the set up for this very important event in the park.

3. PROPOSED ECO FESTIVAL – 14TH/15TH OCTOBER

More information on this event will be brought to a future meeting.

4. CONNECTING CYCLE AND FOOTPATHS (CROSS COUNTY BORDERS)

Cllr Wait reported that the Working Party had had a really good session yesterday. The group are working hard to improve quality of the S. Glos section of the cycle path.

Plans may be afoot to move the path behind a wall where the sections become very narrow, with a crossing point near the bend of the old Jarrett's Garden Centre taking the cycle path on to Avon Valley Railway station. These are all proposals going to WECA and S.Glos for a decision.

On the other side of the road the cycle path is only 50 – 60 cm wide and widening works are needed to make the path more useable.

James Boxall-Casby will be invited to the Town Council meeting to discuss the matter of some possible future cycle paths around Keynsham and if need be, this will be brought back to the Committee for further discussion.

5. KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT PLAN

Cllr Buxton is still in the process of simplifying the plan, A meeting is proposed between the Town Clerk and Cllr Buxton to discuss the project plan. Details will be brought back to the next meeting.

6. SEED GIVE AWAY

Cllr Greenfield had sent in a report in respect of this matter that was read out by the Town Clerk as follows: -

'A huge success! Really positive - not one negative comment. All 500 packets of seeds given away by 12.10. I was very pleased by the number of people who sought me out, the publicity had worked really well. I stopped passing members of the public to explain what I was doing and the response was more than I imagined it could have been. Many of these then took a packet! I made sure they knew it was a Keynsham Town Council initiative & the reasons why we were doing this. One lady took 30 packets for her Keynsham Brownie pack, which I was happy to agree to. I would like to see us do this again asap & am of course happy to attend, etc - it was a real pleasure.

Other points - organisation - great - seeds there were enough (almost spot on) for the 500 packets - printed labels for packets - leaflets - all spot on. Thank you KTC staff.

I took the decision that it was easier to 'spoon out' the seeds myself than trying to divvy up & drop off/collect etc

Putting the labels on the packets also took a couple of hours to do'.

7. WOODLAND TRUST TREE ORDERS

A tree planting project took place at Teviot where the soil was very good and 250 – 300 hedgerow trees were planted. They seem to be thriving.

Suggested areas for future planting include FHLAG conservation area, the Allotments and Holmoak.

Suggested future trees to plant included flowering redcurrant and goat willow which are good for wildlife.

A community project to plant primroses and snowdrops in hedgerows was suggested – plug plants may be purchased to give away for the residents to grow on.

The Woodland Trust website will soon be open for taking order so this matter will be on the next agenda. It was also suggested that obtaining different trees from other sources other than the Woodland Trust was made.

8. QUEEN'S JUBILEE CANOPY – PROPOSED COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE

Quotes still need to be sourced for the two varieties of trees recommended by B&NES Senior Arboriculturist.

Planting a tree for the Jubilee – Royal British Legion.

Information has been received from the Royal British Legion stating that:

'As part of their employment, our Veterans will be producing and fulfilling Corten Steel plaques, and in doing so, will learn vital metalwork skills that they can take with them when seeking further employment in their career.

As the nation prepares to honour Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, Councils are approached to join the hundreds of others across the country in planting a tree and displaying a veteran-made plaque to commemorate.

Council's will be supporting a fantastic green initiative, but every penny of the purchase of a plaque for a planted tree will fund the employment and support for veterans, their families and people with disabilities.

Cost size A5 with Stakes £144.99 or A4 with stakes £154.99 (£25.00 less without stakes) plus delivery.

It was suggested that this matter go on a future Town Council agenda.

9. REPLACEMENT WEEPING CHERRY TREE – LILAC COURT

It was suggested that the Acting Town Clerk take this as a recommendation to full Council at later date in the year when B&NES may be considering tree planting locations in Keynsham as they are at capacity for tree planting projects in the town for this year.

10. EVENTS AND SPEAKERS 2022

This matter will be added to future agendas.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting could possibly be held outside perhaps at the Bandstand on **Tuesday 24th May 2022 at 6.00 p.m.**

Signed: Date:

(Chairman)

Consultation finished at 7.15 p.m.

DRAFT