

**STRATFORD- UPON- AVON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY REMOTE MEETING**

**25 June 2020**

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**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Coles	J Fradgley
Curtis	Lee
Cleeve	C Warren Howles
Dyer	

Clerk: J Mayes

Apologies: None received

2. Approval of Notes from Meeting held on 8 April 2020

Noted.

3 Review of Terms of Reference under proposed new committee structure

Cllr Fradgley referred to the Terms of Reference, which have been amended to reflect the new proposed committee structure discussed at the last Town Council meeting. There are two main changes to note; firstly under the new structure the group would report directly to the Town Council and secondly the change of name to Environmental Strategy. This would reflect the work of the group in considering wider environmental issues and bio diversity. The Terms of Reference for all committees are being reviewed and will include sustainability responsibilities. It is suggested that a member of group sitting on one of the other standing committees could be nominated as the link person, highlighting and reporting back on sustainability issues. Under the current membership of the working group all standing committees have a member of the working group in their membership.

All members of the working group were happy with the terms of reference and had no changes to make.

4 Urban Tree Planting Project

4.1 Update on College Street Tree Planting

Cllr Fradgley reported that there was no information to report. Residents are keen to plant trees but there is still a need to establish how this can happen and COVID 19 has delayed this.

#### 4.2 Update on mapping land

Cllr Lee confirmed that he has the capability to produce maps showing green spaces with landowner information layered on if this information could be provided. Cllr Fradgley noted that landowner information from WCC is not forthcoming at the moment but discussions around bio diversity may provide more clarity.

#### 4.3 Review of Tree Planting Policy Document

Cllr Warren Howles confirmed that she had added additional information into the tree planting policy document. There were further areas such as tree inspections and falling leaves for example that require more specialised information. She asked if the group were happy for her to continue working on the document as a policy document for managing future tree planting. Councillors thanked Cllr Warren Howles and were happy for her to continue working on the document.

Cllr Dyer asked if any training would be given to check trees. It was felt that monitoring trees would need to be undertaken by a tree specialist.

#### 4.4 Agreeing work to be done to identify targets for tree planting and management

Councillors agreed to defer item 4.4.

### 5 Update on Bio Diversity offsetting meetings

Cllr Fradgley reported on a series of Bio Diversity offsetting meetings which had started as a result of a conversation with Jonathan Thompson, a land consultant involved with a local planning application. Mr Thompson had asked about the county plan about bio diversity offsetting. Cllr Fradgley explained the idea of bio diversity offsetting, which monetises the biodiversity loss on land being developed. Areas of land are identified as biodiversity offsetting sites, assessed by an ecologist and given a credit rating based on its current state and future state following implementation of a biodiversity management plan. A Developer may wish to develop a piece of land that will result in a loss of biodiversity. This loss is determined in credits. The Developer will pay money for the number of credits lost to a biodiversity offsetting site with that number of credits available. Mr Thompson is working with the Alscott estate on a biodiversity offsetting project and the Town Trust have registered Rowley Fields as a biodiversity offsetting site.

Cllr Fradgley explained that the first stage to registering biodiversity offsetting sites is to identify land owned by the Town Council that may be suitable or establish partnerships with other landowners who are willing to register land

as a biodiversity offsetting site with a view to creating a biodiversity area throughout the town.

Cllr Lee noted that a need for more understanding of the scheme and asked how much money would come from the credits. He acknowledged that it was potentially a good idea but that the panel would need to understand the scale of the credits available.

Cllr Fradgley explained that WCC are leading this developing market, having been involved in a pilot scheme since 2012.

Cllr Coles noted that need to be careful in identifying the land and that where possible money to replace lost biodiversity should be used on land near to the site of the lost biodiversity rather than in another area of the County.

Cllr Fradgley noted that the Town Council do not own land that would be suitable so it will need to look at other areas of land and work in partnership with the landowners.

Cllr Lee asked if the Town Trust were looking for any help with the Rowley Fields' site, which would be a good pilot site for understanding how the process works.

Cllr Coles also suggested approaching the Municipal Charity in Stratford, which has gardens at the rear.

Cllr Dyer asked about the ownership of the Welcombe Hills and whether they could be involved. It was suggested that the group that maintains the Welcombe Hills could be invited to attend the meeting to discuss their work. Councillors also discussed the land on Warwick Road, which had shared land ownership. Councillors agreed that the next step is to survey the wards to identify any reasonable size pieces of land that are green spaces, which could be joined together around the town.

Cllr Fradgley referred to the projects in the NDP which relate to biodiversity and give the Council authority to turn them into an action plan. There was a further discussion on the NDP on developing a more specific climate change policy within it when it is reviewed.

Cllr Lee agreed to work on the mapping of the green space for each ward and suggested that Councillors should set a target for each ward of green spaces. This was agreed as 5. Cllr Lee will send the maps to rest of group within three weeks. He noted that he would not include the open countryside in Hathaway ward. Councillors agreed that that another area of work to consider is protecting the remaining green areas in Hathaway ward in the next NDP. There was a discussion about the need to work with the Developer of the business park on Alcester Road on ways to ensure biodiversity enhancement within the site.

The clerk will circulate the notes from the latest biodiversity offsetting meeting held on 22 June to the rest of the committee.

## 6 Grass cuttings from verges to be made as bio fuel

Cllr Warren Howles reported on a scheme being run by Lincolnshire County Council to use grass cuttings from verges to make biofuel by selling it to the National Grid and asked the group for their thoughts on whether this was something worth investigating. Cllr Lee noted that it was a good idea but probably something to be considered at County Council level as biomass technology uses a lot of feedstock to make it viable. It was noted that residents have different views on whether grass verges should be cut. Councillor Fradgley agreed to raise the matter at the climate change group at WCC, which is due to hold its first meeting soon. There was a discussion about lobbying other landowners to reduce the amount of time they cut grass on their land. It was noted that a Utilities Company may cut grass to avoid having claims raised against them.

Cllr Cleeve noted that it is important to educate residents about the benefits of keeping the grass long and the Town Council could take the lead in educating the public on green initiatives.

There was a further discussion on the type of leaflet that could be produced to give to residents. Cllr Warren Howles reported that the Website, Social Media Committee had discussed the possibility of a green Advent calendar, possibly on the website with different green initiatives that the public could do to reduce carbon footprint. It was also suggested that there should be a separate page on the website giving details on green initiatives.

## 7 Any other business

Councillors briefly discussed the problem of rats and Cllr Fradgley advised that Cllrs should contact Cllr Rolfe about this matter.

There was also a brief discussion about hedges that encroach on the pavement and what guidelines are available to deal with this problem. Cllr Fradgley confirmed that this issue should be referred to WCC localities officer who will write to the owner of the hedge informing them it needs to be cut because of encroachment. If the hedge is not trimmed WCC will cut it and give the owner the bill. If the matter relates to a problem maintaining social distancing on the pavement under the current COVID 19 guidelines it should be referred to the COVID officer at SDC.

Cllr Fradgley noted that the further work on reducing the footprint of the Town Council had been delayed because of COVID restrictions.

*The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.00pm.*