

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Climate Emergency Committee Meeting held 23rd September 2021 at 6pm

Present: Cllrs Hames (Chairman), Hodson, Newman-McKie and Shelley
Ms P Gibb – co-opted member

In attendance: Cllr K Davis
Guy Langton - Deputy Town Clerk

- 2109/567 Apologies**
Apologies were received from Cllr Laws.
- 2109/568 Chairman's announcements**
The Chairman reported that his resolution that a Biodiversity Officer be appointed at Torridge District Council had been unsuccessful but that the District Council had voted to support the Biosphere Nature Recovery Plan and Pledge.
- 2109/569 Declarations of interest:**
Members were reminded that all interests should be declared prior to the item being discussed.
- 2109/570 To agree the agenda as published**
It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.
Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Hames (all in favour)
- 2109/571 To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2021**
It was **resolved** to agree the minutes as recorded.
Proposed: Cllr Shelley, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (majority in favour, one abstention due to absence)
- 2109/572 To consider Action Points**
The Committee heard updates on the action points as follows:
- Action point 2.* Cllr Hames to contact a botanist regarding suitable planting and identification of plant species currently growing in the non-visibility verges listed in the Deputy Clerk's report.
Cllr Hames reported that he had contacted the botanist, who was keen to assist and would be in touch again in the right season to conduct such a survey.
- Action point 3.* Deputy Town Clerk to ascertain the availability of 'Life on the Verge' signs from Devon County Council to help publicise the project.
It was **resolved** to request Cllr McGeough ask at a meeting of HATOC why the County Council did not have appropriate signage. Councillor Hames to enquire with County Ecologist.
Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Shelley (all in favour)
- Action point 13.* Cllr Hames to discuss further with Officers at Torridge District Council the plans for installing an EV charging network in car-parks across the Town area. Councillor Hames reported information from TDC Estates Officer. He had been told that there remained a street light at Bone Hill car park and thus EV points may be viable and that TDC had arranged an EV charge point for the car park on Pebbleridge Road, but it had not as yet been installed. The Estates Officer is pursuing.
Action point: Cllr Hames to request consideration at a future meeting of the Full Council.

Action point 14. Deputy Town Clerk to seek quotes to insulate Northam Hall, roof and wall cavities.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that he had been informed that the wall cavities were too narrow to provide benefit from insulation. The Committee noted that a report with costs of insulation would be brought to the October meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that there was a need to look at projects that related to the Town's buildings together, rather than consider each action individually.

The remainder of the action points were noted.

2109/573 Public Participation

No members of the public attended the meeting.

2109/574 To receive an update on 'Life on the Verge'.

The Committee heard that the Golf Club had responded positively to the request from the Committee via Cllr Laws to manage the verge by the entrance (on the left). The type of management, whether for wild flowers or simply to be left untrimmed was discussed and it was agreed to discuss the matter further with the Club.

Action Point: Cllr Laws to ask the Club if they were willing for the verge to be sown for a wildflower meadow

Other areas that would be suitable for managing for wildflowers were discussed, including the verges north of the Heywood Road roundabout. The Committee considered it would be well served by seeking advice from experts, including the gardeners at RHS Rosemoor.

Action point: Cllr Newman-McKie and Ms Gibb to communicate with RHS Rosemoor regarding the establishment and maintenance of wild flower areas.

The Committee discussed the areas that had been left uncut for a season or more, including areas that were beginning to overgrow the highway or pavement and those becoming predominantly one species, e.g. bramble. It was considered that the areas could be managed for safety and appearance, without diminishing the benefit to wildlife.

Action point: Cllr Hames to discuss with the County Ecologist the bramble growth on the bank below Windmill Lane which is a Devon County Special Verge.

Action point: Deputy Town Clerk to discuss the maintenance of overgrown areas with the Maintenance Team and report back.

2109/575 To consider the nomination of a member of the Committee and a member of staff to represent the Council on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Steering Group.

The Committee heard that the LCWIP coordinator had drafted suggested representatives from the member Councils, which included an elected and staff member from each.

It was **resolved** to nominate Cllr Hames and Guy Langton (the Deputy Town Clerk) to represent Northam Town Council on the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) steering group.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Shelley (all in favour).

- 2109/576 To receive an update on the appropriateness of installing Solar PV cells and associated infrastructure at Northam Hall.**
The Deputy Clerk reported that the Surveyor had confirmed that the roof would be suitable for the installation of up to 40 solar panels.
The Committee discussed the possible benefit of combining all roof works at the Hall into one project, which could include full roof removal, insulation and replacement including in-set solar PV cells, noting that much of this work would be overseen by the Town Projects and Asset Management Committee.
It was **resolved** to request an item to consider the works on Northam Hall roof be added to the next agenda of the Town Projects and Asset Management Committee.
Proposed Cllr Hames, Seconded Cllr Hodson (all in favour).
Action point: Deputy Town Clerk to request the inclusion of an item to consider how to coordinate the roof works at Northam Hall on the next Town Projects and Asset Management agenda.
- 2109/577 To receive an update on the Northam Climate Sustainability App.**
Due to the absence of Annabel Hill this item was deferred to a future meeting.
- 2109/578 To consider the date for the agreed informal meeting with residents regarding the redefining of Chircombe Lane as a mixed use path.**
It was **resolved** to invite residents to a meeting on the 21st October 2021, starting at 7pm, to be held at Muddy Boots preschool or the Town Hall, depending on location availability.
Proposed Cllr Newman-McKie, Seconded Cllr Hames (all in favour)
Action point: Deputy Town Clerk to advise residents and confirm the location.
- 2109/579 To receive an update on a footpaths guide for the Town Area.**
The Committee heard that no further work had been undertaken.
Action point: Cllr Hames to review the project.
- 2109/580 To consider a proposed amendment to the Weed Control Policy for recommendation to the Review Committee**
The Committee considered both an amendment to the weed control policy and the need for a biodiversity policy or strategy for the Council.
It was **resolved** to put the proposed revision to the weed control policy to the next appropriate meeting of the Review Committee, which read:

3.4 The use of Herbicides to Control Weeds

3.4.1 Herbicides can be an effective method of controlling weeds in most cases but given their adverse effects on wildlife, human health and the environment, will only be used in specific situations, for example:

3.4.1.1 In controlling invasive weeds

3.4.1.2 In controlling injurious weeds

3.4.1.3 In clearing growth adjacent to pavement kerbs or in areas of tarmac and paving identified as unable to be effectively controlled by other means.

3.4.2 Accordingly Northam Town Council will carry out a targeted application of appropriate herbicides. Normally this will be carried out twice each year.

3.4.3 Where herbicides are used to control weeds only those deemed to be effective, with the minimum negative impact on the environment shall be specified. Treatment of weeds using herbicides shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant procedure.

3.4.4 Northam Town Council will research all alternative methods and aim to ban the use of herbicides as soon as other control methods are agreed.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Newman-McKie (all in favour)

2109/581 To consider support for the Plastic Free Torridge campaign to curtail the use of expanded polystyrene take away food packaging.

Cllr Hodson reported that the matter would be considered by Full Council on the 29th September 2021.

It was **resolved** to pledge the Committee's support for the campaign and to recommend support to Full Council.

Proposed Cllr Hames, Seconded Cllr Hodson (all in favour)

There being no further business the meeting finished at 8pm.

Signed..... Dated.....

DRAFT