

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY EMERGENCY COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY 6TH MAY 2021 AT 6.00PM VIA ZOOM

PRESENT ON ZOOM: Cllrs: S Briton (Vice-chair), R Humphreys, A l'Anson, P Welch (Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE ON ZOOM: WCC staff: S Bristow, A Westwood
SCC Cllr T Munt
M Gilson, WCC Climate Emergency Cycling Group
4 Members of the public

Cllr J Parker (Chair) has stepped down from the Committee, Sarah Briton (Vice-Chair) chaired the meeting in his absence.

21/01CBEC APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr S Cursley
Town Clerk: S Luck

21/02CBEC DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

21/03CBEC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH OCTOBER 2020

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded and approved and will be signed in due course.

21/04CBEC MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

One member of the public had requested to talk prior to the meeting but unfortunately the message had not reached the Vice Chair. They were invited to talk at the end of the meeting.

S Briton confirmed the resignation of Cllr Parker from this Committee.

21/05CBEC PRIORITY ITEMS (Please refer to Implementation Plan):

a. Resilience/Sustainability Officer update

This is slightly behind schedule however the issues which had delayed it are about to be resolved. S Briton and the Town Clerk, S Luck, will be meeting on 08 May 2021 to progress. A revised timeline should result in the advert going live by the end of May.

b. Biodiversity - Market Stall update

S Briton explained she was unable to provide an update on this as this was a piece of work Cllr Parker was leading and she has not yet received an update from him.

c. "Consume less, waste nothing" project update

Members of the Committee had received a draft leaflet which has also been shown to Sustainable Wells. They have provided suggestions to improve the leaflet. The design is the business standard of SCC Climate & Emergency Department. Committee commented that the leaflet was a good start but could be improved. Leaflet has WCC approval. Cllr Humphreys and S Briton will progress leaflet and email around to Committee members. S Briton reported that Andy Vallis has agreed a spot in Wells Voice for a monthly climate and diversity article; she will ask for an article from each committee member which will focus on climate emergency issues/events that volunteers can sign up for via the Let's Do It Wells website.

21/06CBEC NOMINATED COUNCILLORS FOR WCC COMMITTEES

The CEC is currently short of three members. However, local 6 May elections are expected to provide additional members. An item on the agenda at the (next) July meeting will be to choose a Chair for the CEC.

Each Committee member is appointed a 'link' to other WCC committee groups; a link member should ensure that the WCC's policy on climate emergency is considered as part of each of those other committees and report back to the CEC on the progress made. Cllr l'Anson volunteered to link to the Planning Committee, Mayor Welch to the Finance Committee, Cllr Humphreys to the Staffing Committee. Other links will be decided once the new members are in place.

21/07CBEC DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES

To delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to decide any urgent matters arising before the next meeting. This will include a decision regarding the subsequent printing of the "consume less, waste nothing" leaflet once the draft has been agreed. The Committee agreed.

21/08CBEC ANY OTHER MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

a. Domestic wind turbines (JP)

This agenda item was requested by Cllr Parker; in his absence, this item was put on hold.

b. Portway Annexe turbines (JP)

S Briton will write to Cllr Parker to ask him to update the Committee on this item.

c. Idling/local air quality

This has been raised previously, several times. MDC now has a policy on this. Mayor Welch has asked MDC to consider placing conditions within their policy to ensure vehicles which idle to keep on-board equipment working – such as ice-cream vans – are addressed. Mayor Welch will follow this up with MD Cllr Rogers. S Briton believes there are restrictions in place regarding the places such vehicles can park.

d. Review of SCC retrofit bid and SWT bid

The SCC retrofit bid and the SWT bid were unsuccessful. Bruton TC's retrofit bid was successful so it will be useful to observe their outcomes. SC Cllr Munt stated that SCC will be adding a £310,000 extension to their Climate Emergency Fund. SC Cllr Munt has asked for feedback on all successful and unsuccessful applications and understands that a carbon calculation was not taken on any application so the criteria for any subsequent applications may be amended. She suggested the Committee re-apply to the Fund and confirmed she had informed Somerset CAN of the extension, should SWT wish to re-apply.

e. Stop Ecocide (SB)

S Briton sent through the Stop Ecocide link to all WC Councillors for information and commitment if they wished. She proposed that WCC sign up to this and asked for a vote in favour. The Committee seconded and approved.

f. CEE bill (SB)

S Briton has put postcard in all WCC Councillors' pigeonholes drawing their attention to the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill. Over 100 MPs are already supporting this campaign. She proposed that she write to James Heapey asking him to support the Bill. The Committee seconded and approved.

g. WCC Climate Emergency Cycling Group (MG)

Matt Gilson (Wells Cycling Group) reported that although the Somerset Cycle path extension to Dulcote Quarry has planning permission, the landlord (SCC) is objecting on a number of grounds causing delays. It may well be next year before any progress on this will be made. Somerset Highways have confirmed they support the crossing of Priory Road from Lidl; however, he is still waiting to hear whether Lidl agree to this or not.

h. Neighbourhood Plan Update (AI'A)

Working with Simon Nash (former CE of SWT) looking at biodiversity in churchyards. The Diocese are in support of this and discussions are ongoing with David Magg (the Diocese Environmental Officer) and with St Cuthbert's, St Thomas's and Wells Cathedral about the re-wilding of their churchyards.

i. Groundworks at North End of Tor Hill Quarry (AI'A)

Cllr l'Anson and two residents met with Managing Director of Serious Stages on 6 May to discuss the works which are causing concern. Serious Stages have proposals to plant wildflowers, thorns and shrubs on the bund including the erection of a fence on the far side of the bund; they will provide Cllr l'Anson with a map and may provide an article in Wells Voice on their plans.

j. Improvement of Bus Services (AI'A)

Cllr l'Anson has spoken with Peter Travis, (Mendip rep for Bus Improvement Services) and raised two issues which he will raise with MD at First Bus. This is a unique opportunity to improve bus services under the Build Back Better initiative. SC Cllr L Oliver is very keen to promote better bus services too. Cllr l'Anson will maintain the link with Peter Travis.

Member of Public spoke:

A Wells resident explained her concerns with regard to traffic pollution as well as safety concerns. She often has to walk in the road to observe Covid social distancing and asked if the council would consider pedestrianising the High Street. S Briton confirmed she would raise her points with full council and the Town Clerk, and that this may be possible to look at again in more depth in the future and via public consultation. Cllr l'Anson stated that the re-routing of buses away from the High Street is on Peter Travis's agenda.

21/09CBEC DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday 29th July 2021

Minutes signed by The Chair: Date: