

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP AT WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD 12TH JANUARY 2023 AT 6:30PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

PRESENT: - Councillors S. Ager, S Hicks, R Williams, J Williams

CO-OPTEES: - J. Palombi

Staff: H Andrews - Deputy Town Clerk
 S Puckey - Open Spaces Admin Assistant

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Cllr C Jay were received and approved.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record and subsequently signed by the Chairman.

The meeting was advised that in response to item 14a in the Minutes, Motts Lane footpath is now complete.

21. CLERKS REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk delivered a verbal report and informed the Members that the Council were in the process of completing the Carbon Calculator to work out their carbon emissions. Members were also advised that the Environmental Policy recommended by the Group had been approved and adopted by the Environment Committee.

The Members were also notified that Braintree District Council were having a Recycling Day on 9th February 2023 in Witham. Some Members requested more information and were interested in attending.

22. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman gave a verbal report and reiterated a desire to ask vendors at future events to use recyclable or reusable cups and cutlery. There was also a discussion about not allowing balloons at Witham events or instead using eco-friendly balloons, however there was acceptance that this might be an expensive alternative and therefore it should be advised rather than insisted upon.

The idea of Witham Town Council meetings being paperless was suggested, with all agendas and minutes being issued electronically. There was discussion around the legality of insisting on this approach and the potential to loan Councillors iPads / tablets at the start of their tenure like BDC with District Councillors. There was recognition that this would incur additional costs for the hardware and cloud usage and that this could be explored further.

The Chairman liked the idea of Litter Lotto but having considered it in more detail since the last meeting it was felt that this was not worth pursuing.

It was proposed that young people should have an input into the Council's climate change discussions and potentially a youth councillor could be invited to future meetings from local schools.

23. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The Climate Action Plan was discussed and the initial items on the plan agreed. Further ideas included:

- Investigating the feasibility of a rain-catching system on the Town Park toilets and the possibility of installing solar panels both on the Town Park toilets and on the Town Hall either at the back or in the period garden if planning permission was a concern.
- Bringing back wild flowers to the meadow on Mill Lane as this is currently being explored by the Open Spaces team.
- Reducing the frequency of renewing Town Council vehicles for the Open Spaces team.¹
- Requesting the use of recyclable materials by vendors at Town Council organised events.
- The Town Council's annual Seed Exchange programme in the Information Centre which allows residents to hand in unwanted seeds for use by others.

The Members felt it would be useful to review the Climate Action Plan document every two to three months.

The revised plan will be submitted to Environment Committee as a recommendation.

24. ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST WILDER TOWNS

Members felt that Witham Town Council undertake a lot of what the initiative encourages already but that advice and appropriate support could be beneficial in the future. It was **AGREED** that this suggestion could also be reviewed by the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee and recommended to the Environment Committee.

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members enquired whether the Information Centre were intending to carry on with the Seed Exchange in 2023.²

¹ The Fleet Review is part of the Environment Committee's corporate strategy and the frequency of renewing vehicles will be taken into consideration as a part of the review.

² It is confirmed that the Information Centre will hold another seed exchange during 2023, with plans to hold this annually.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Due to the council elections in May, it was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the end of May or early June with the new administration.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.15pm.

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Councillor S. Ager
Chairman

SSP/HA/17.01.2023

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