

NAILSWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
 Minutes of a meeting held on 3 May 2016

Present	Cllr SM Reed (Chair) Cllr SK Millett Cllr DL Powell
In attendance for part of the meeting	Cllr JL Duckworth Mr Richard Erskine – Nailsworth Climate Action Town Group
Apologies	Cllr EF Bonner Cllr JL Dennis Cllr MP Robinson

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or applications for dispensations.

PRESENTATION ON BICESTER ECO TOWN BY MR RICHARD ERSKINE

The Chair welcomed Mr Erskine of the recently formed Nailsworth Climate Action Group to the meeting. Mr Erskine explained that he was a local resident with a scientific background and a strong interest in exploring ways to address the problems of climate change at a local level.

Mr Erskine gave a Powerpoint presentation on Bicester 'Eco-Town' in Oxfordshire, based on information gained from a recent fact-finding visit to the town with fellow members of the Nailsworth Climate Action Group, including Cllrs Reed and Thorpe. Members were impressed with the range of practical measures taken by the Bicester community to combat climate change and move towards becoming genuinely carbon-neutral. These measures included combined heat and power systems, solar panels, cycleways and water management on all new housing developments in the town and Mr Erskine had been very impressed by the pragmatic, rigorous and 'future-proofing' approach taken by the local councils and community groups.

In response to questions, Mr Erskine explained that funding for the various eco-projects had been obtained initially from the district and town councils and supplemented by various grants from other bodies. Much of the research had been undertaken by local university students. He had noted that local developers had been supportive of high environmental criteria that went beyond statutory requirements.

Cllr Reed thanked Mr Erskine for his interesting and informative presentation and suggested that the Bicester model might be adaptable for Nailsworth. Members felt that it could be useful to work with other town and parish council in the Stroud District in an effort to persuade SDC to insist on the highest possible eco-standards for new build. After discussion, it was **agreed to recommend to Council** that the new Environment Committee should seek to produce a paper outlining ways in which both existing buildings and new-build in the parish could be made carbon-neutral, with particular focus on the proposed new Civic Centre and groundsman's store.

Mr Erskine agreed to forward his presentation to the Clerk for circulation to councillors and Cllr Duckworth undertook to post it on the NTC website.

COMMEMORATIVE POLICY FOR NAILSWORTH

The Clerk had previously circulated an updated draft of the proposed commemorative policy for the parish. This was discussed in detail and some minor amendments and additions made. Cllr Reed undertook to update the draft to include these amendments and forward it to the Clerk for circulation prior to consideration by full Council.

ALLOCATION OF CLLRS TO INVESTIGATE AND COST POSSIBLE S.106 WISHLIST PROJECTS

In view of the forthcoming elections it was agreed to defer consideration of this matter to the July meeting of the new Environment Committee.

REVIEW OF POSSIBLE PROJECT FOR GRANT APPLICATION TO COTSWOLDS AONB

Cllr Reed explained that she was hoping to make a grant application to the AONB fund and had earmarked 2 potential projects for funding, namely the installation of a handrail by the steps from Bunting Hill into Bunting Way and repair to the stonework of the spring near Glendower. Photographs of the two locations were circulated for consideration.

Cllr Reed explained that the spring was not owned by NTC and it had not been possible to establish who did actually own it. She did not anticipate any problems with including its restoration as part of a NTC bid.

After discussion it was **agreed** to seek 2 quotations for each project following which Cllr Reed would liaise with the Clerk to complete the grant application to the AONB.

BEE GARDEN COMPETITION

Cllr Reed reported that plans were in hand for the Nailsworth bee garden competition and circulated draft certificates to be posted through the letterboxes of qualifying dwellings. Members approved the black on white version of the flyer, with font to be slightly enlarged, with laminated copies to be produced to a maximum budget of £300.

It was **agreed** that the judging would take place during the first 2 weeks in July by a team of volunteers from NTC, to be determined in due course, and that an article with photos of some of the successful Bee Gardens would be submitted to Nailsworth News.

UPDATE ON BEE GUARDIAN TOWNS

Cllr Reed reported that the 'Bee Guardian Towns' designation was no longer available. However, she was keen to promote the concept of Nailsworth as a 'bee friendly community' and was in the process of inviting Dr Adam Hart, head of biosciences at the University of Gloucestershire, to address a meeting of local bee-keepers and others with an interest in bees which she hoped to organise. This she planned to publicise in Nailsworth News along with a 'bee questionnaire' for readers to complete and return.

The Clerk observed that Bristol and Bath Universities had been working on a 'beelines' project to create bee 'superhighways' between different locations.

PROPOSAL FOR AN ELECTRIC BIKE SHARING SCHEME IN NAILSWORTH

Cllr Reed noted that an electric bike sharing scheme was on the Council's S106 wishlist. No funds were available for such a scheme at present but she understood that grants were available for both bike- and car- sharing schemes. It was **agreed to recommend to Council** that a representative from a local electric bike retailing business be invited to attend a future Environment Committee meeting.

POSSIBLE PROJECTS FOR POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S (PCC) FUNDING

The Clerk read out a letter from the current PCC outlining plans for a Safe and Social driving funding initiative, to be financed from penalties imposed for speeding in the local M5 roadworks area. Applications from this fund could be made for appropriate projects in local areas. It was **agreed** to forward the letter to the Nailsworth 20mph Road Safely group for its consideration.

REFURBISHMENT OF TOWN SIGNS

Cllr Reed reminded members that there was some money in the Committee's budget available for the cleaning of the 5 Nailsworth town signs. She explained that the signs would need to be sent away for cleaning and re-lettering where necessary. It was **agreed to recommend** that the new Environment Committee delegate one or more of its members to liaise with the Clerk to organising the work.

UPDATE ON MAINTENANCE OF FOREST GREEN GREEN AND NORTON WOOD

The Clerk had been monitoring the issue of inappropriate parking of vehicles on Forest Green green and reported that this remained a problem. It was **agreed** to proceed with the installation of posts to prevent this practice. The Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) had completed the 'bee bank' at the edge of the green.

The Clerk reported that the new noticeboard for the entrance to Norton Wood near the old orchard had been ordered. Cllr Millett agreed to follow up on the quotations received for the new directional signs in this location. The Clerk reported that TCV was investigating options for a new gate into the wood and the provision of a handrail at the entrance from Burfords Ground was in hand. However the TVC members did not have the muscle power to repair the steps.

The Clerk had received a verbal update from Mr Will Wilkinson of Charlton Abbots Forestry on maintenance work in Norton Wood. Various work was to be carried out in August/September after the nesting season had ended, including scrub clearance in the orchard area and thinning of trees in Compartment 3 to improve the vista. The Clerk undertook to seek costings from Mr Wilkinson for work to some trees behind Star Cottage. Squirrel control operations in the wood were due to commence shortly.

It was noted that the current 5-year Management Plan would expire in 2017. After discussion, it was **recommended** that the new Environment Committee organise a public consultation meeting in the autumn as part of the process of planning the next phase of the Norton Wood management programme (2018-2023).

ALLOCATION OF MEMBER TO CO-ORDINATE PROJECTS IN NAILSWORTH FOR LEYHILL PRISON WORK-GROUP

In view of the upcoming NTC election, it was agreed to defer consideration of this matter to the next meeting of the Environment Committee. In the meantime, the Clerk was asked to inform SDC that the Council was interested in principle in having the Leyhill Prison work-group provide labour for suitable projects in the parish.

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Chair

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Date

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RATIFICATION BY FULL COUNCIL

RECOMMENDED that the new Environment Committee should seek to produce a paper outlining ways in which both existing buildings and new-build in the parish could be made carbon-neutral, with particular focus on the proposed new Civic Centre and groundsman's store.

RECOMMENDED that a representative from a local electric bike retailing business be invited to attend a future Environment Committee meeting.