

Notes of the Climate Emergency Working Party Meeting held on Tuesday, 13th October 2020 at 6.00pm via Zoom

Present: Cllr I Capon, Cllr I Crawford, R Manning, J Gristwood, M Sosnowski and P Smith and Mrs K Graddock (Clerk)

Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Welcome to Mr Manning on his attendance at the first CEWP meeting. Everyone introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Cllr Lou Goodger.

Rewilding of Verges

Roundswell - Roundswell Residents Association has been contacted re: identifying areas for possible rewilding.

Steve Jarvis is looking at west end of Bickington with Cllr Lou Goodger.

Robert Manning volunteered to look at Fremington Village.

Joan to contact Cllr Bell re: Yelland rewilding.

M Sosnowski asked whether anything is happening with an area on the Riverside Park that could be a natural area?

ACTION: That the Deputy Executive Officer to identify what is happening with the areas. Give Cllrs until 6th November 2020 to identify any areas in their ward and work with the CEWP.

The Working Party mentioned that they would like to see Cllrs more involved. The Council has set up a CEWP and declared a Climate Emergency but with little interest or involvement by Fremington Parish Councillors.

Electric Car Charging point and Solar Panels on The Beechfield Centre

Electric Car Charging Points – Cllr Capon said that there are companies out there that you can have free charging points/solar panels, but they take the unused energy. Other option could be to raise funds to install them, but you would gain funding from unused energy.

The Deputy Executive Officer read out advice from the Architect in relation to viability of placing solar panels/car charging point on The Beechfield Centre and that they were not needed for the SBEM and the roof is the incorrect way so would be less effective and there could be issues with vandalism. Members felt that it needed to be explored and were disappointed with the response.

ACTION: That the Deputy Executive Officer investigate and contact companies that could provide free solar panels to come and audit The Beechfield Centre for potential provision of solar panels and she contact Sainsburys to enquire whether they have any plans for the future to install a car charging point.

The Beechfield Centre Gas

The Deputy Executive Officer mentioned that the Council had now changed gas suppliers for The Beechfield Centre to a renewable energy company.

Working with Other Local Authority Climate Groups

Cllr Crawford mentioned that he felt councils should be communicating to other town and parish councils about what initiatives they are doing. Mr Smith mentioned that

he would like to be informed of the Carbon Emissions Reductions Programmes for North Devon Council and Devon County Council, especially given concerns about the Neighbourhood Plan and the lack of vision and they are the same writers of the Local Plan. It does not inspire and has a severe lack of acknowledgement and consideration for the climate and environment.

Martin asked whether consideration could be given to replacing the weekly recycling bins as they do not have lids and items can be blown all around.

The Deputy Executive Officer reminded members that North Devon Council have lead members for the Climate Emergency, but she has received limited communication and information on any other town and parish councils or from the Climate Team at North Devon Council. Cllr Crawford said they did a great event at the beginning of the year, but it was felt that they needed to be reminded about how important their communication is and their role as leadership.

ACTION: That the Deputy Executive Officer writes to North Devon Council to ascertain what the role of the Climate Emergency Team is, whether there is to be any further events and remind them of how important their role is in communicating and informing town and parish councils of projects and initiatives in the community.

ACTION: That the Deputy Executive Officer invite Cllr Lofthouse re: Severn Brethren Housing and about Carbon Emissions Reductions Programmes

Action Plan

Members were informed that consideration should be given to compiling an Action Plan for the Council. Peter Smith felt that the Climate Emergency needs to be addressed properly in the Neighbourhood Plan as it does not reflect the CEWP's comments despite the group taking a considerable amount of time to read and suggest valid and important points that should be included.

ACTION: That the CEWP write to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to express their disappointment and concern at the lack of consideration towards the Climate Emergency and the comments submitted by the CEWP that have not been included.

ACTION: That the CEWP members consider items to be included within the Action Plan and email them to the Deputy Executive Officer, who will compile a draft plan to be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Gas Appliances – 2030

Joan Gristwood raised concerns over informing the Parishioners about the cut off date of 2030 for gas appliances and whether the Council had any plans for cascading the information. Cllr Crawford mentioned that he thought it would depend on what communication comes from Government. Peter Smith said that he wasn't aware of anyone cutting the gas off by 2030 but it may be that the appliances are used with a different method of gas.

Any other Matters

Torrige District Council have sent out communication re: bulk buy of solar panels etc.

Members were informed about communication that has been in the local paper. This was shared with the CEWP for information. Concerns were raised about the impact it has on potential new members joining and those that give up their time to attend the meetings and the Agenda states that 'everyone is welcome to attend' but the communication is now undervaluing Fremington Parish Council and the work that the CEWP are doing.

The Clerk suggested inviting the writers to a meeting to discuss their concerns regarding the group. Some members were not happy with this course of action and were disappointed with comments in the press particularly those that are from parish councillors. A concern regarding the Tarka Trail access was a focus of one article, however, both North Devon and Devon County Councillors agreed with the CEWP comments. Members stated that they have upmost respect for their rewilding initiatives but hoped that they could encourage people to get involved in the local environment. Roundswell residents are unhappy about being slated in the press given the amount of time and effort they put in for the community.

Members felt that writing a press release regarding the Climate Emergency Working Party and the good work it is doing would be beneficial and hopefully encourage individuals to attend and get involved. It was mentioned that other councils are getting front page headlines. CEWP need to focus on publicity and the good things that the Council do, and to stop councillors arguing amongst themselves.

ACTION: That the Deputy Executive Officer compile a Press Release on the CEWP and the outcomes and projects to date.

Meeting ended at 19.57pm.