

The Climate Emergency Working Party Notes of the Meeting of Tuesday, 2nd March 2021 at 6.00pm via Zoom.

Present: Mr S Jarvis, Chairman, Cllr J Bell, Cllr Lou Goodger, Mrs J Gristwood, Mr P Smith and Mr M Sosnowski.
Also, in attendance: Mrs V Woodhouse, Executive Officer

Apologies

Mr C Hassall.

Members were informed that Mr I Capon had resigned from the Working Party and Cllr I Crawford had resigned from the Council and his appointments including the Working Party due to family commitments.

Climate Action Plan

Mr Jarvis had circulated the updated draft action plan to members prior to the meeting which he reiterated would remain as a working document which would be kept under review and updated as required. Members considered the draft action plan.

Recommendation: That the Action Plan is submitted to the Parks and Playing Fields Committee for adoption.

Biodiversity Action Plan

Mr Jarvis circulated the associated documents, it was noted that the action plan mainly consisted of the wildflower initiative, details of which were discussed. Mr Jarvis explained that it would be too labour intensive to get contractors to undertake and therefore he was proposing that the group looks to residents to adopt a verge to re-wild and the Parish Council would keep a log for insurance purposes. It was felt that the main obstacle would be disseminating the information within the community. Ideas such as a stand in the shop/post office and advertising in the Church newsletter, it was agreed to do an illustration for the newsletter.

Mr Jarvis presented instructions on how to undertake the re-wilding which would be given to the volunteers along with packets of "Devon Mix" seeds. It was noted that any re-wilding on a verge is likely to have a pavement between the verge and the road and/or a minimum of 1m, so Chapter 8 or equivalent will not be necessary. Other locations within the parish were discussed above those identified in the draft action plan but it was noted that the Parks and Playing Fields had asked for three sites to be identified as pilots and a list could be collated for further areas in the future. Cllr Bell raised concerns about the difficulties in getting volunteers to take ownership and the labour and time in undertaking the project especially in collecting the grass cuttings which would be the responsibility of the volunteer once the area had been mowed off at the end of the season. It was acknowledged that the labour involved in the set up will be quite intensive.

Mr Sosnowski suggested that vertical gardens could be included, and he would circulate the information and some examples.

Recommendation: That the draft Biodiversity Action Plan is submitted to the Parks and Playing Fields Committee for adoption.

Publicity

The group discussed publicity opportunities, it was agreed to place an article in the Church newsletter and on the Parish Council's Facebook Page and Website to promote the re-wilding project if approved by the Parks and Playing Fields Committee. It was noted that Mr Jarvis had contacted the editor of the Gazette to ask if an Environmental section could be added to the newspaper, but a reply had not yet been received, it was agreed that the Parish Council could be asked to write in support of the request. It was also agreed to include articles in the Instow and West Yelland magazine and the contact magazine although it was noted that this is not being produced at the moment.

It was also agreed to place an article in the Parish Council's newsletter and produce a poster for the noticeboards.

Recommendation: That the Parish Council is requested to write to the Editor of the Gazette to support the request to add an Environmental section to the newspaper.

Re-Wilding

The pilot scheme would be submitted to the Parks and Playing Fields Committee for approval as part of the Action Plan and then once it has been piloted and is working well then, the group will start to look at other areas and leafleting properties and businesses to identify areas.

Mr Smith left the meeting.

Beavers

The group considered the information on the Devon Beaver's Project but could not identify anywhere within the parish that would be appropriate, it was felt that there is too much human disturbance and too many dogs for it to be a viable project for the parish.

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Mr Jarvis explained that this is a cross party bill which several Town and Parish Councils are now supporting, however, the local MPs have not supported the bill and the Town and Parish Councils are starting to put pressure on MPs to support the bill. The bill proposes legal framework to work within that would put climate change at the heart of Government decisions and set targets, however, it does not have much support in parliament with only 98 (at the time of looking) MPs supporting the bill. It was thought that the main reason for the lack of support was because the Government already has an Environment Bill going through parliament, but it was felt to be too little too late and therefore pressure should be placed on MPs to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.

Recommendation: That the Parish Council is asked to consider supporting the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and Mr Jarvis will speak at the Council meeting on behalf of the Working Party.

Any other matters

The issue of nets for the recycling bins was discussed, it was noted that this request had not been supported for cost and efficiency reasons most of the group felt that it was adequate to place boxes and bags on top of each other to secure in place although further issues were experienced on Riverside Park/Waters Edge.

Mr Sosnowski felt that there should be more litter bins throughout the parish and ideally one at every bus stop, it was noted that the North Devon Council is the responsible authority, and the issue is likely to be with the capacity to empty the bins, the group discussed the possibility of lobbying NDC for additional bins and whether these bins could be solar powered which reduces the frequency of collections.

It was agreed to place on the next Agenda and for meetings to continue to be held at 6pm on the first Tuesday of the month.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm