

Climate Change & Biodiversity

Working Group Meeting

Friday 24th February 2023 at 11:30am

Woodhouse Gardens Pavilion

NOTES

In Attendance

Cllr Pat Osborne
Cllr Roger Carter
Linda Scott-Giles

Simon Hoare MP
Cllr Alan Cross
Yvonne Mieville

Cllr Colin Stevens
Cllr Hugo Mieville

1. Apologies

Janet Tyson

Simon Hoare MP thanked Pat for inviting him to the meeting and said he would be happy to attend future meetings, as well as organised litter pick events.

2. Lobbying Items

The following lobbying items were raised by Pat with Simon:

a. Motion for the Ocean

- i. Pat explained that, as an inland council, we took on the Motion for the Ocean based on our marine citizenship and desire to protect the Stour.
- ii. Yvonne mentioned the litter picks and the items found in the Stour where an enormous amount of rubbish is dumped (beds, bath, washing machine, trolleys, etc.). Yvonne feels it is necessary to encourage the town to look after the river and make sure nothing is put in the river that isn't naturally there.
- iii. Pat queried if Simon could help with ocean literacy as part of environmental education to ensure children are aware of the importance of taking care of our waterways and having a sense of pride.
- iv. Yvonne has been looking at the [Rivers Trust website](#) updates on where discharge is coming through the rivers and was concerned about Milborne St Andrew receiving a large amount of sewage. Simon confirmed that this did not happen and reassured attendees that he was on site with a number of organisations and the problem was the stream overtopped. Part of the problem were the springs coming up under the road, the water table was 20m higher than that time of year, but it was clean stream water overtopping and where the gardens are bisected the residents have been installing bridges over the stream, which collects matter there and has been contributing to the problem. Simon confirmed that the water he saw did not contain any sewage or sanitary waste. He added that, in 2010, 15% of points of water discharge had monitors which informed the Environment Agency when there was a discharge and now it is 92%, which is far more efficient.

- v. A discussion was held on the mentality of people who choose to litter, whatever size of the item. This extended to much larger quantities of waste being disposed in the sea and how is that going to be policed.
- vi. Roger spoke about how teachers at The Blandford School are already guiding pupils in the appropriate way and Yvonne offered to visit schools to speak about the motion for the ocean.

b. Climate Change & Biodiversity Action Plan

- i. Bus Routes – A discussion was held on how we level and equalise the bus routes so the more profitable routes can support the other, more rural, routes. Simon spoke about the demand v cost of providing these services and the difficulties pupils are faced with in attending colleges in Weymouth, Salisbury or Dorchester without a private vehicle. Fewer people want to use buses, which is why systems like Nordcat are more sustainable because they are smaller and more cost effective. People's habits, such as online shopping and avoiding contact with others since the pandemic, are changing which impacts on demand for bus services. Simon explained the process for government funding and said he will ask if there is going to be a third round of bidding. Unfortunately, the Dorset Council was unsuccessful for the first two bidding rounds. Roger talked about the difficulties of providing bus services and attempting to source the key statistics required for the provision of timetables/routes that will be used.

3. To receive an update on:

- a. Motion for the Ocean – Gillingham Town Council is keen to adopt the Motion for the Ocean and Linda has put them in touch with Dr Pam Buchan who advised the Town Council.
- b. Only Rain down the Drain – not discussed at the meeting, but the artist – Annabelle Valentine – is planning on working on the project once the weather improves.

4. To receive feedback from organisations/groups/individuals on recent activity

Clean-Up Blandford Campaign – Yvonne spoke about the Sustainability Fairs coming up this year, the merge with the Museum – as they all have the same aims – and the group's desire for Blandford Forum to become a plastic-free town.

5. To agree next steps

Linda will send the Motion for the Ocean lobbying letter to Simon for consideration.

6. Date of next meeting – March/April 2023

To be confirmed.

Pat thanked all in attendance, and particularly thanked Simon for his time and contribution.

The meeting finished at 1pm.