

Climate Change & Biodiversity Working Group Meeting
Thursday 22nd February 2024 at 7pm
Meeting Notes

In Attendance

Cllr Pat Osborne
Cllr Hugo Miéville
Cllr Roger Carter
Cllr John Dallison

Nicci Brown
Janet Tyson
Yvonne Miéville
Julie Wigg

1. Apologies

Frank Stocks – Bryanston PC

Cllr A Cross

2. Update on 'Plastic Free Community' status

Yvonne said that groups and organisations have expressed interest but have not actually signed up to the dashboard so she feels a more concerted effort is required to support them to do this. She said that once Hugo's Mayoral duties are finished, she will have more time to visit groups and support them through the process. Janet offered to help when she is back in the UK in April. Nicci will speak to the Information Centre and Hugo will speak to his charities to encourage them to sign up. Yvonne said the emails and social media have been useful, so Julie agreed to continue marketing via social media in the meantime.

Yvonne confirmed that we need six businesses and 20 community allies. The group agreed this is not out of their reach. Pat suggested that as a condition of the Service Level Agreements (SLA) organisations must sign up – the group agreed this was an excellent idea.

ACTION: Julie to ask Linda if this can be included in the SLA conditions.

UPDATE: This will be considered at the F & S meeting in December.

Yvonne said she is considering becoming a Trustee of both the Youth Centre and TREADS.

3. Cllr R Carter - Climate Change and The Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan

The group are pleased that both the NP group and Climate group will be working more closely together in the future. Pat said he feels this is an area that we can be influential, and it is the next logical step.

Roger updated the group following the NP meeting which was attended by Graham Stanley, Dorset Rangers. Graham confirmed the Rangers priorities are as follows: -

- Increasing public rights of way links into the town. Identifying good links (that don't flood!).
- Support for the wider trailway. Eventually they would like to extend it into Poole but for now support in Spetisbury/Sturminster Marshall.
- Extending the Milldown Nature Reserve. Roger was pleased to hear this as rewilding is an important aspect of the neighbourhood plan.
- The Rangers have a vision of expanding public open spaces including extending the Marsh & Ham.

Graham also said he would like to obtain more land around the Eastern side of the town so large parts can be rewilded. He said that incorporating properly managed meadows within developments is important.

Along with the NP's priorities of tree (canopy) cover and green infrastructure we're pleased to agree on priorities. Roger said the Design Code is great for ensuring that there is less housing density and more green spaces and how it is now giving enormous strength to planning applications as the code came from national policies which have been interpreted at local level. Pat said that locking into policies is important, but we have to keep refreshing them.

Roger told the group that the revised NPPF emphasises green agriculture and that intensive farming methods are being replaced by more environmentally friendly processes. However, Roger is not sure how much as a group we can influence this, and the group agreed – it is up to the farmers to get involved in this.

Julie updated the group following her contact with the Senior Planning Control Officer at Dorset Council who has agreed to address the group and speak about Council priorities for future proofing new developments. It was suggested a meeting be arranged in the Autumn when the group have a better understanding of future priorities.

4. To receive any other updates

Blandford War on Waste/Clean up Blandford Campaign - Yvonne said the litter picks start next month and that they are going to start from various places rather than starting from the river as it's a good way to blitz each area.

Yvonne said she has been approached about the bypass but that she would have to complete Health & Safety training to be allowed to do this (which she is willing to do). She asked the group if they should include the bypass or concentrate on Blandford. The group felt there was enough work in Blandford, so it was agreed to concentrate efforts here.

Roger asked if litter picking takes place in Blandford St Mary. John confirmed that the council and volunteers cover general areas around BSM.

5. Succession Planning

Pat said that as there are a number of councillors that aren't standing for re-election we need to have an open discussion about the future of this forum.

It was agreed that as you don't need to be a councillor to be on this group Pat could continue (if he wants to). Pat said as it is his passion he would like to continue as long as no one else comes forward after elections. Roger confirmed he has already put himself forward to be co-opted on to the NP group.

6. To agree next steps

- √ Once Hugo's mayoral term has finished a more concerted effort will be made to encourage organisations to sign up to 'Plastic Free'
- √ Julie will reach out to Bryanston PC to ask if they have a rep that could join the Climate group.

7. Date of next meeting - Thursday 11th April 2024 at 7pm via TEAMS