



# BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

## Climate, Biodiversity & Nature Working Group Meeting

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7pm

[Held online via Teams](#)

## NOTES

### In Attendance

Neil Smith, Planet Wimborne  
Cllr Y Miéville (chair)  
Cllr T Clarkson  
Cllr S Chapman  
Linda Scott-Giles

Sarah Wise, Wimborne War on Waste  
Cllr H Miéville  
Cllr M Putt  
Nicci Brown  
Becci Brady

### 1. Apologies

Cllr S Hitchings  
Cllr B Quayle

Cllr R Holmes

### 2. Neil Smith, Planet Wimborne

Planet Wimborne is a business that was created in 2021 and is headed by three Directors, one of which is Neil Smith. Wimborne has a long history of being a very eco-friendly town, gaining the award of becoming a Fairtrade Community in 2017. Planet Wimborne was originally a small organisation but as interest grew so did they and in 2023 it became a community interest company as they wanted to give more structure and attract more funding. It acts as an umbrella organisation to feed out into other groups, of which they currently have 35 community groups. The groups range from Bunting and Bags to Trees for Wimborne. Birds of Dorset and Dorset Cycling Network has recently joined them. Their main aim is engagement and awareness raising within the community and their mission is to provide a 'way in' for people who are interested in the environment but not sure where to start. Wimborne War on Waste is described as being their steering group and is headed up by Sarah Wise who was also present in the meeting. Sarah's contribution and description of this group is summarised under item No. 4 in these notes.

Neil expressed that the organisation would like to explore other parish and town councils in the area and to work other businesses to explore, enhance and learn from their green strategies. They would like to engage more with educational settings to encourage children to engage with their work.

### 3. Update from Blandford War on Waste/Clean up Blandford

Litter picking will be re-starting in February or March with the help of the Dorset Council Rangers. They have noticed a reduction of litter recently. The Yuletide Festival litter pick had some great helpers which made it much easier and there was noticeably less litter, perhaps because of the bigger bins. People were being very proactive at disposing of their litter, which was good to see.

#### **4. Sarah Wise, Wimborne War on Waste**

Sarah heads up the steering group Wimborne War on Waste (WWoW).

In 2017 Sarah and some of her friends were very concerned by the amount of litter in and around their town of Wimborne Minster and decided to form Wimborne War on Waste as a voluntary organisation to focus on encouraging people to rethink their behaviours and promote reuse and repairing as an alternative to throwing away. Back in 2018 there was a huge amount of media coverage about climate change, much of that was down to the popularity of the TV show 'Blue Planet' and this resulted in their group gaining many new volunteers.

Sarah spoke about the school initiative that they have undertaken. They spoke with a cross-section number of schools across Wimborne both independent and state schools, primary and secondary and asked them to nominate three representatives from each school which would then make up a committee and attend meetings to discuss environmental issues and what they feel most passionately about. The committee convenes in the town chamber after school time, usually 2.30pm – 4.00pm. They have found it very enlightening, and the children now have a voice to take back to their school and encourage action from their peers.

Wimborne War on Waste has been awarded Plastic Free status by the Surfers against Sewage organisation. Sarah explained that being signed up to this gives them access to a toolkit that can be used to help encourage local businesses to sign up to the plastic free initiative that we in Blandford are keen to implement. It gives suggestions to speak with owners and get them to think about 3 simple swaps to start them taking ownership. It has examples such as swapping cable ties for string, ballons for reusable pom poms or sauce sachets for glass bottles that customers use on the premises.

They have a fairtrade shop in the town centre and 'reduce reuse recycle' is their mantra. The Bunting and Bags group make boomerang bags which are recycled shopping bags they give to shops in the town and shoppers can use them and drop off at another venue to be used again. They also get together to make bunting which people in the town can use and return. It was suggested by group members that we in Blandford could speak to the WI and repair café about something similar and have a display for this in the tourist information centre.

The chair thanked Neil and Sarah for giving up their time to speak to us and share their experiences.

#### **5. Update on 'Plastic Free Community' status**

It was agreed that to get more people involved in signing up to Plastic Free with the group having to be proactive and go to visit these businesses, groups, organisations and speak with them directly. Yvonne will create a list with all of the possible allies that we intend to target, and members can allocate their name to the ones they will speak with.

#### **6. Update from Blandford + NP group**

No Updates

#### **7. Any other updates**

Cllr Terry Clarkson attended the climate and nature support meeting on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 that the Town Council was invited to. Cllr Nick Ireland, the leader of Dorset Council spoke about DC's plans for environment and nature.

He reported back a few key points:

- The DC is resetting and working its local plan which they intend to have published in 2027 (this could have some impact on our local plan).
- There was some concern amongst rural councillors about how the targets for new houses will affect their neighbourhood.
- In February and June 2025 the nature recovery guide will be published for councils and individuals to comment on.
- The Nature Recovery Dorset network is open to anyone to join, it's aim is to protect land and enhance our environment and nature.

#### **8. To agree next steps**

Yvonne to share the proposed organisations/businesses list for signing up to Plastic Free Communities so that working group members can approach different ones and share the load.

#### **9. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.00pm on Teams.