**Environment Committee**

**5 October 2021**

**6.30pm - 8.00pm**

**Minutes**

**Attendees: Cllrs J Simister, C Elsmore, M Cox, S Cox, and Getgood**

**Ms F Herniman and Ms S Cheese**

**Invited Guest Speakers: Gareth Parry, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust**

**Stuart Paine, Assistant Tree & Countryside Officer​, FoDDC**

1. Apologies were noted from Mr W Williams, Ms. Debbie Sturgess

**Note:** Cllr. Simister reported that Cllr. Beard had requested to step down

1. There were no declarations of interest
2. There were no dispensation requests
3. The minutes of 7 September 2021 were unanimously agreed, as a true record

**Cllr. Simister signed a copy of the minutes as a true record**

1. Matters arising from the minutes of 7 September 2021
2. There were no members of the public present, and Guest Speakers spoke at Item 11

**Note: the attendance, of Paul Rutter was still seen as useful, to benefit from his expertise, and would be scheduled accordingly, with invitation**

1. **To discuss, and make recommendations, as necessary, re: rodent infestation at Bells Field**
2. **To discuss the impacts of Town Council activity on the environment e.g. vermin**

Cllr. Simister summarised issues, and the Town Clerk further reported on a concern that had been raised, by a resident adjoining Bells Field, which FoDDC had reported, as well. After further some discussion, and the Town Clerk further adding that following investigation of Bells Field, there was mitigation, in that there were no litter bins in the vicinity of the water areas, and that this issue would need to be monitored.

It was further noted that an activity, within the Environment Action Plan, should recognise the wider implications, of issues such as vermin, and take mitigation actions accordingly

1. **To discuss, and make recommendations (if necessary) re: Grant Funding**

This Item was discussed, although no ‘live’ funding matters. It was acknowledged, and recognised, that funding should actively be sought, where possible, and identified, as available.

1. **To discuss and consider FoDDC Climate Emergency Strategy / Action Plan 2022-25, re: alignment with CTC Environment Action Plan**

Cllr. Simister summarised, and it was agreed that this Item should be a standing agenda item; amongst other matters, to keep track on Aurora developments.

1. **To receive comment, and professional advice from invited Guest Speakers**

Cllr. Simister welcomed Stuart Paine, and Gareth Parry, and both gave helpful, insightful summaries of their work, and activity; which identified a number of issues that this Committee could work more closely with them on; including TPO applications, and for this Town Council to submit some applications, for Stuart Paine, and FoDDC to consider formally. Also noting overall views on Ash-Die back.

In respect of Garth Parry, and the Wildlife Trust, a range of collaborative/partnering opportunities were identified; including services, e.g. environmental audits.

**Note: A Summary Note of both Speakers wider comments, and topics, is being prepared separately.**

1. **To receive updates, discuss, and make recommendations re the updated Environmental Action Plan**

Cllr John Simister presented the updated action plan and led discussions accordingly, highlighting to members the key changes and additional tabs for tracking activities undertaken After a full discussion, and Cllr. Simister taking note, to update the action plan, it was unanimously agreed that:

**Recommendation:**

**the Action Plan is formally updated, with identified tasks, from this meeting, and actions to be taken forward, accordingly and, as necessary, with key actions proposed, and agreed unanimously, as follows:**

1. **that the Wildlife Trust are commissioned to undertake an Environmental Audit, based on the data already collected by this Committee, in the first instance seeking an indicative cost for this work.**
2. **that Forest Youth Association are approached, to discuss opportunities for young people, within the area, to become more engaged with environmental issues, and possible activity taking an active role with specified, designated green spaces.**
3. **that this Committee identify some primary TPO applications, to submit to Stuart Paine, FoDDC, and to be taken forward by the Town Council’s Planning Committee**
4. **that this Committee prepare some environment articles, to inform the Community, and promote Environmental awareness; to also have ready to populate the Town Council’s new Website, when available.**

**7.45pm Cllr. Getgood left the meeting**

1. **To receive an update from the Working Group looking at considering Environment actions, and implications, re: maintenance contracts, ready for Spring 2022**

Cllr. M. Cox summarised, and her summary note was discussed, and this draft Document to be considered further by Finance & Asset Management Committee, and to inform Contractor Review meetings

**8.30pm: An 10 minute extension was proposed, and unanimously agreed**

1. **To receive an update re: Forest of Dean District Council public consultation on its new draft. (Note:**

This Item already discussed, and noted)

1. **To receive updates re: wider FoD Environment meetings, forums and activities, and to take forward actions into Plan, and make recommendations, as required**

Cllr. S Cox reported on a number of meetings, and Forums that he had attended; including the Forest Enterprise Forum, with its focus on Aurora and Biosphere reserves.

1. **To discuss possibilities, and barriers, to moving towards a paperless office, and more environmentally efficient Council**

The Town Clerk reported improvements with paperless invoicing, and Sales ledger invoices being sent direct to customers.

It was also noted that the Town Council’s new Website, with the development stage now formally commissioned, would reduce paper, with minutes, agendas, and other documents to be available on this new site.

**Meeting ended: 8.37pm**