



Minutes of a Virtual meeting held by Bradford on Avon Town Council
Environment & Planning Committee

On

Wednesday 11th November 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Cllr A Kay (Chairman)
Cllr D Newton
Cllr E Franklin
Cllr J Parker
Cllr T Lomax
Val Baker (Clerk)
Lydia Booth – Comms Manager

Members of the Public:

Tim Trimble, Jes Wire, John Pearce, Gina Adams and 1 other.

48. Apologies:

There were none

49. Declarations of interests

There were none

50. Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Newton seconded by Cllr Parker and with all in favour **RESOLVED:** to approve the E & P minutes for the virtual minutes of meeting for 7th October and the delegated minutes of meeting for 21st October.

51. Planning applications

- (i) It was proposed by Cllr Parker seconded by Cllr Kay and with all in favour it was **RESOLVED:** to send the planning recommendations to Wiltshire Council.
- (ii) There were no delegated decisions to be made.

52. Correspondence relating to planning applications to be considered at this meeting – there was none.

The Chair deferred reporting the Chairman's report until after items 8 and 9 of the agenda.

53. The People's Charter for Democracy in Planning.

The Chair reported that this was an organisation that was very much but not entirely set up as a direct response to the White Paper published in August 2020, setting out the Government's proposal for a 'once in a lifetime reform of England's planning system.

The White paper had caused much controversy and strips away what little control communities have. It challenges our right to be heard and the decisions that affect us and is the corner stone of Democracy. Cllr Newton added that the charter sat squarely with the Neighbourhood plan that reviews local housing mix and urban development with Green spaces being central

to all of it. It was proposed by Cllr Kay seconded by Cllr Franklin and with all in favour **RESOLVED:** that the Chairman sign the Charter on behalf of the Town Council E & P committee to support to the Charter.

54. Wildlife Protection Policy Statement

Cllr Kay welcomed Gina Adams who gave a direct response to the BOATC Ecological Declaration Emergency (June 2020) which highlights the Town Council's policy on Biodiversity. She explained her concerns about UK wildlife and biodiversity being under threat specifically referring to the protection of badgers in this area. She reported that recent anti-culling protest/awareness signs had been located, in Woodland Trust land near Freshford and was not aware that Wiltshire Council had given permission and were averse to the culling. She further reported that South Somerset Council are now actively supporting DEFRA's decision to phase out the cull, and were encouraging other local councils to do so, she asked if BOATC could raise the awareness of the need to protect our local badgers on land owned by them. A full report as attached to the minutes.

Cllr Newton read out the Wildlife Protection Policy Statement in full as follows:

Proposed Wildlife Protection Policy Statement:

In consideration of our declaration of an ecological emergency in June 2020, and in furtherance of the agreed Town Council Policy on Biodiversity, this Council notes the following:

- That areas within the town boundary and other lands controlled by the Town Council, are home to a biodiverse range of wildlife, ranging from microscopic through to larger mammals, and acknowledging the importance of ALL of these species, including species such as badgers, otters, bats and foxes;
- That UK wildlife and biodiversity is under increasing threat with 1 in 4 species of mammals in England at risk of extinction (see appendix 1), and 13% of species overall
- That around 40% of indicator species have shown a decline in the last 10 years (see appendix 2)
- That human activity is both directly and indirectly responsible for a significant proportion of this change

In noting the above, the following motion was put forward to the Town Council to **RESOLVED:** that:

- It will do all in its powers to protect wildlife within the town boundary, and on other lands that the Town Council controls (by ownership or management)
- It will, as far as the law allows, deny access to those engaged in, and otherwise prohibit, culling or hunting and other types of animal destruction on lands that it controls or manages, or on which it has tenants, and will refuse consent to, and access to or across Town Council lands for those purposes; where necessary, this will include deployment of non-lethal methods of rodent control on Town Council lands;
- As part of our Ecological Emergency action plan, to provide access to information encouraging the reduction the harmful impact of human behaviours on wildlife; and work with the public, Town Council tenants, and other local landowners to support appropriate management of animal populations through alternative methods, including, but not limited to:
- Reducing as far as possible the use of pesticides (something that is known to affect not only pollinators, but through impacts on the food chain, a wide range of other species such as birds, bats, and plants)

- It will support and actively promote projects that encourage biodiversity and help species, particularly those at risk, to thrive in balance with our natural environment, including, but not limited to
- Developing a lighting strategy for Bradford on Avon and sharing information that will help people to understand how to minimise light pollution from their homes, industrial sites, and community facilities such as sports pitches
- Facilitating the natural regeneration of habitats good for wildlife, including tall hedgerows, areas of scrub and tall grassland
- It will identify, protect, and if necessary, create a 'green infrastructure' across Bradford on Avon Green. This will provide improved habitat within the town, and also deliver vital connectivity for wildlife with the wider landscape

Appendix

1<https://www.mammal.org.uk/2020/07/one-quarter-of-native-mammals-now-at-risk-of-extinction-in-britain/>

2<https://nbn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/State-of-Nature-2019-England-summary.pdf>

It was proposed by Cllr Newton seconded by Cllr Lomax and with all in favour **RESOLVED:** to accept the recommendations as above.

Finally, Cllr Newton reported that BOATC would be co-hosting a Climate Emergency Action Day with BANES Council on 26th November which is open to surrounding Parish Councils, and Town Council Officers where Biodiversity plays a massive part in this and would encourage them to actively be involved.

55. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI)

Cllr Kay has been working with BWCE towards their feasibility study concerning EVC points in Bradford on Avon and the surrounding area as part of their commitment to the Climate Emergency Declaration and improving air quality, and believe that the BOATC should support and invest as appropriate in the promotion of EV's and the installation of EV's within the town. BOATC therefore urge Wiltshire Council to repair or replace the defunct charging points in the Station Car Park.

A motion was put to the committee:

'Subject to the feasibility study recommendations, the Town Council will assist and support the siting of electric vehicle charging points around the town, and will look to ensure that, where feasible and as opportunity arises through development work, EV charging points are integrated into the Town Council owned and operated premises'.

It was proposed by Cllr Newton seconded by Cllr Kay and with all in favour **RESOLVED:** to accept the recommendations as above.

Cllr Newton reported that BOATC already own a number of sites in Bradford on Avon and that this would increase once the WC Asset was completed giving the Council further opportunities to install more EV renewable charging points in and around the town. There would also be the opportunity to add in our own infrastructure using renewable energy from St Margaret's Hall Solar Panels, and using ecological infrastructure proposed at Culver Close pavilion.

56. Chairman's Report & Environment update (Chairman's report attached to these minutes). Cllr Kay reported that the asset completion date now over a year late was still awaited. Delays due to legal details.

The final Ecosulis biodiversity report (10th) was expected next week.

A Climate Friendly Soil event was held on 10th November and was well attended with over 70 participants and was very informative.

A request for pinecones and canes had been set up in the Phoney Box in Whitehill this replaced the Grow station set up earlier this year and she requested that people stop leaving plant pots and other litter there; Cllr Newton asked that the Grow Station be decommissioned. An Eco Youth Workshop had been organised on 12th November specifically open to anyone aged under 25 and living in Wiltshire, it provides young people with the opportunity to have their voice heard and to directly influence the direction of Wiltshire Council with Climate an ecological emergency issues.

The Chair reported that she had attended two more zoom meetings with Wiltshire Area Localism & Planning Alliance (WALPA) concerning updates about WC's 5-year land supply and the Neighbourhood Plan. Ongoing discussions with Wiltshire Council had also taken place and a meeting was scheduled for the 27th November when the 5-year land supply will be finalised.

57. Correspondence for Action – There was none.

58. Correspondence to note

The latest October edition of the Wiltshire Voice was available from the office.

It was further noted that the appeal made on planning application 20/00835/FUL & 17/00649 – Mr Compton Fairfield Piggeries Leigh Road BA15 2RQ will now be decided on the basis of representations procedure.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Appendix 1 - Members of Public comments

Tim Trimble reported that the BWCE EV charging points feasibility study involved a whole network of potential sites across the area including the parishes.

John Pearce commented that he welcomed that the Town Council was in support of EV charging but by saying it is 'subject to a feasibility study' would only involve more talking and delay the process. He said that it had been nearly 2 years now since the Climate Emergency motion had been passed and that we should arrange consultation and press on as the Ice Caps are melting and we are running out of time.

Cllr Newton responded by saying the delay in the Asset transfer had contributed to delay and we would work hard into accelerating installation of EV's where we can.

Supportive comments for Wildlife Protection Statement

Gina Adams

11/11/20

I strongly support the Wildlife Protection Statement.

The protection it offers is both necessary and timely. Badgers are a legally protected species. Despite this, the Badgers in and around Bradford on Avon are at imminent risk of local extinction. Bradford on Avon is in the middle of a Badger Cull Zone 42, which extends, approximately, North-South from the M4 to Salisbury Plain and East-West from the A350 into B&NES. The intensive Badger cull in this area is planned for 4 years, with likely 'supplementary' culling after that. It has just finished its second year, with a target to kill over 4,000 badgers this year alone. Over the first 4 years, it aims to kill 70-95% of the badger population. There is a significant risk that Badgers will become locally extinct, as evidence suggests has happened in parts of Cornwall which have now been culled for 4 or more years.

In addition to the threat from the Cull itself, the Badger Cull provides cover for other forms of badger persecution. Two sets in Bradford on Avon have been damaged in just the last year, leading to police investigation.

The protection offered by this statement provides our threatened badgers with a much-needed safe haven. It also offers the opportunity to raise awareness among local people about the persecution of badgers and other wildlife, including the knowledge to identify and report wildlife crime.

I would like to encourage the Council to consider promoting this wildlife protection to other Councils across Wiltshire. Additionally, I would be grateful if it would consider writing to Defra to report its objection to the Badger cull, as South Somerset Council have recently committed to doing.

Thank you
Gina Adams



Alex Kay, E&P Chairman's report 11/11/20

Environment

1. **Asset Transfer update:** ongoing (now over 1 year late!)
2. **Westbury Incinerator 20/06775/WCM** submission (recommending refusal) from BOATC (one of four parish/town councils listed under consultees) with over 2021 letters (mostly of objection) uploaded to WC Planning portal. Decision target 30 Nov.
3. **Biodiversity audit update:** Ecosulis have completed 9th Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, for review and implementation, with final, overarching report awaited.
4. **Request for 'bug hotel' materials (pine cones and canes);** collection point phoney box at top of Whitehill (please leave no plastic or litter).
5. CSE Conference: Climate Emergency workshop for Cllrs and Council Officers: full day on zoom: arr. by BOATC with BANES (26th Nov.) <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/parish-council-climate-emergency-workshop-tickets-125035182597>
6. Eco youth work shop 12th Nov:
<https://bradfordonavontowncouncil.gov.uk/events/event/youth-eco-workshop/>
7. **Living Green Wall in Lambs Yard project:** Fundraising commenced. Planning application to be submitted. Legal documents in preparation.
8. **Climate Friendly soil event:** A very well-attended, interesting event on 10 November www.facebook.com/events/260825845163302 Thankyou to the organisers and speakers.

Planning

1. **Wiltshire Area Localism and Planning Alliance. (WALPA)** further zoom meetings attended 7th & 9th October, and follow up with Sam Fox 4th Nov. Scheduled zoom update with WC's 5 year land supply, neighbourhood planning process for 27th Nov, for all 33 WALPA group and extended to all other town/parish councils across Wiltshire.
2. **Planning White Paper:** Debate in Parliament 8th Oct: indicated significant back-bencher dissent; WC have submitted strong representation, to be made available.