



**Bradford on Avon
Town Council**



**LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
QUALITY GOLD**

Minutes of the Environment & Green Spaces Committee meeting of
BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN COUNCIL held
on Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in St. Margaret's Hall

Attendance – Town Council

Cllr K Bessant
Cllr E Franklin
Cllr A Kay (Chairman)
Cllr A Potter
Cllr T Trimble

I Brown (Chief Executive & Town Clerk)
C Stringer (Deputy Town Clerk)
C Hogg (Green Spaces Officer)
S Howe (Committee Clerk)
M McLaughlin (Communications Officer)

Number of Members of the Public: 5
See Appendix 1 for public comments and questions.

Apologies- Cllr S Gibson (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Parker, Cllr K Vigar, Cllr J Vittles

38. Declarations of interest- None

39. Minutes

The Minutes were proposed by Councillor Franklin and seconded by Councillor Bessant and with all those present in favour. **RESOLVED:** to accept the Environment & Green Space committee minutes held on 17th January 2023 as a true record.

40. Matters arising - none

41. Chairman's Report

Cllr. Kay outlined the main points from her report which were supplied with the agenda. March 2023 marks the 4-year anniversary of the Town Council (TC) declaring a Climate Emergency subsequently updated in early 2021 to include the Ecological Emergency. The Chair's report listed many of the projects and events undertaken in support of these commitments. Highlights include:-

- the community action and engagement around these projects,
- installation of solar panels on St Margaret's Hall roof and the Domestic Heat project sponsored by the TC with several residents winning a competition to have their homes surveyed for heat loss,
- 2 years of the community fridge, the contents mostly supplied by the Co-op,
- a pilot community composting project,
- installation of drinking fountains around town,
- new litter bins including recycling bins around town, Terracycle centre at the Youth Centre with plans to include makeup and dental waste recycling,
- community grants for biodiversity projects including projects involving children projects,
- the installation of the living green wall in Lambs Yard

The next events will be over the coming weekend 18th March 2023 with a river-side litter pick organised by Climate Friendly BoA starting at 10am at Barton bridge. There is a repair café event on the 18th March between 10am and 1pm at Wallington Hall and the Rewilding Event at St Margaret's Hall also on the 18th March with doors opening at 2pm and talk at 3pm by Neil Hulme with Fairtrade refreshments to be served.

Councillor Trimble added that on the energy saving side of things the government's Boiler Up Scheme, where grants are available to the tune of £5,000 towards the cost of installing a heat pump, is still running. However, the press has reported that very few grants have been issued and plenty of money is still available. The Chair speculated that the set up for such an installation is quite involved financially and the heat pump itself consumes a substantial amount of electricity which may make the running of it financially prohibitive for some so that very careful screening is required.

The Chair concluded the item by reminding the committee and audience that the Sustainable Travel Committee has also been set up as part of the climate response.

42. Spring Tree Planting – an update on the planned Spring tree planting focusing on Poulton Park. Poulton Park is undergoing major investment to provide a recreational and ecological centre for the town over the long term and to provide a lovely space for all ages and members of the community. The Green Spaces Officer began his presentation by stating that the tree planting programme for the town, funded by the Local Authority Treescape Fund (from the Forestry commission via Wiltshire Council), is underway including Guelder Rose trees planted in Westbury Gardens, donated by the Ukrainian community as a thank you, and 3 new trees planted in Huntingdon Rise requested many years ago by residents of the road. The work to be done in Poulton Park became a key part of the funding application to the Forestry Commission with Wiltshire Council as there is lower tree cover there than many other areas in the town. A public consultation for Poulton Park took place 15-16 months ago with a skatepark, improved play area, tree planting and improved ecological habitats all requested for the area, including improving the meadow management. The Skatepark project is well underway with funds raised and Maverick Skateparks now commissioned to build by the TC, the play area is also to be improved in the first round of investments in play areas by the TC as a consequence of the asset transfer from WC. Landscape architects have been engaged to landscape the rest of Poulton Park harmoniously alongside these and other facilities.

Features will include:

- A light canopy of trees forming an avenue along a path through the park
- Use of parkland style native trees planted to form additional ecological habitats including use of the Miyawaki method for creating dense areas of tree planting forming 'tiny forests'.
- Planting of nut trees for foraging by people and wildlife such as walnut and hazel.

The planting is starting and a 'Plant Poulton Park' community event is being organised for 25th March 2023.

The Chair was pleased to hear of the plans and reiterated the request for volunteers from the community to help with the tree planting and the upkeep of the town's green spaces in general. Councillors Trimble and Bessant both asked about the use of water loving trees to help with any drainage in the park. The Green Spaces Officer stated that experts have been asked to select the correct trees for various conditions within the park, and trees such as Alder and Birch will absorb surface water where they are planted. Councillor Franklin asked about the use of the path and whether there would be an increase in footfall along Kennet Gardens as a result. The Green Spaces Officer confirmed that the path from Kennet Gardens was already a public footpath. There is no funding identified for new paths.

43. Parks and Green Spaces update - from the Green Spaces Officer.

Due to the asset transfer from WC, the TC including the team of town wardens are now responsible for hedge and grass cutting within the town limits. Initially the plan is to continue with the previous regime employed by Id Verde however some hedge cuts will appear quite harsh to ensure no further cuts are needed during the nesting session. The same with grass cutting, a more ecologically friendly plan is being adopted gradually. New mowers have been ordered and are arriving within the next few days. Electric kit and vehicles of a good quality have been ordered where possible, including a vehicle which can help with general maintenance and green care.

The Chair asked about the updating of the town's tennis courts approved a couple of years ago. The Town Clerk confirmed that due to the plans for a new pavilion at Culver Close the tennis courts are now being considered as part of that overarching development.

44. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging – a report from the Facilities manager. The Chair took some questions from the public on EV points in town which are in Appendix 1. The charging points at the Youth Centre in town have been in place since September 2021 with over 500 visits since their installation and equating to 176 uses. Income generated to offset the installation expenditure is currently not available.

45. Solar Panels on St Margaret's Hall – a report from the Facilities manager. The Solar panels were installed 4 years ago and 98 Megawatt hours of electricity have been generated in that time, over 30 tonnes of CO2 has been saved and the TC has saved over £8,500. Some electricity has been exported to the National Grid with a favourable tariff deal. Councillor Franklin asked how much the panels cost, the Chair confirmed it was ca. £28,000. The cleaning schedule for the solar panels was discussed and the Chair confirmed that they are primarily self-cleaning with a 20-year guarantee.

46. Working with Wiltshire Digital Drive - a decision for the Town Council to become a donation point where people can donate unused and unwanted technology. Wiltshire Digital Drive take old technology, refurbish it and offer it either as a gift or for sale to those who cannot afford new equipment. Technology which cannot be refurbish is recycled. Schools, Charitable organisations and families across Wiltshire have all benefitted. It was proposed by Councillor Franklin and seconded by Councillor Potter and with all in favour. **RESOLVED:** to agree that Town Council's Kingston House Office become a donation point for unused and unwanted technology to be passed onto Wiltshire Digital Drive.

47. Healthy Rivers – a discussion on potential funding and education. The Chair went to a Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (BACP) workshop recently attended by many local community and national bodies such as Wessex Water, parish councils, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART). BART have set up the 'River Detectives' scheme with pilots running already. It was suggested that it would cost BoA £1500-2000 to start a similar project and link in to the BART network. The scheme trains people to sample their local river on a monthly basis and the results are entered into a regional database. The project has been funded by Wessex Water, Bristol Water, BaNES and BACP. Councillor Bessant asked if the £1500-2000 gives 1 year's membership of the pilot scheme? The Chair believed the money would be for training the samplers and putting the database together in our area, which is the major attraction of this project, as the results can be collated for large stretches of the Avon. Councillor Franklin suggested that at this stage perhaps the council could agree to ringfence the money required for the pilot scheme and all agreed this was the best way forward at this stage whilst the Chair explores the project further. It was proposed by Councillor Franklin and seconded by Councillor Bessant and with all in favour. **RESOLVED:** to ringfence £2000 for the BACP 'River Detectives' pilot scheme (to train volunteers to sample local river water and set up a database for the results) whilst the Chair explores the town council's participation in the scheme more fully.

48. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is potentially arranged for 25th April 2023.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Appendix 1

Public questions at the Environment & Green Spaces Committee on the 14th March 2023

1. Agenda item 9. EV chargers:

Will they be rapid(50kw+) or destination chargers (7kw)?

The Chair confirmed the chargers are 7kw.

How will the council be servicing those who can't have (or afford; £1k each) a home charging point?

.. And any terrace houses with narrow streets?

The Chair confirmed the TC are not in a position to help those stated in the question beyond supplying the public charging points.

Does he intend to provide community charging points and if so how will he manage usage?

We have community charging points in the Station carpark and Youth and Community Centre.

If contracting out, what percentage of the charging fee will be for the council?

TC cannot answer that question.

Is the Council willing to have conversations about this, with WCA and/or Wessex Community Energy Network stakeholders, to see if it can be run as a community led service?

Councillor Trimble stated that he is happy to try and find out what is involved around this issue.

2. The resident congratulated the council on its commitment to tree planting and EV points, is there equal commitment to E-bikes?

Councillor Trimble stated that E-bikes are great, that he is awaiting a proposal from Co-Cars about an E-bike scheme in the town and the Chair directed the resident to the Sustainable Travel Committee meetings for more information on E-bikes and Co-Cars.