



Environment and Green Spaces committee minutes

Minutes

From the committee meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 21 January 2025

At Youth & Community Centre, Bradford on Avon

Decision making

The **decisions** made by the committee at this meeting are at minute [47](#).

Present

Councillors:

- Kate Bessant (Vice Chair)
- Alex Kay (Chair)
- Alison Potter
- Tim Trimble
- Katie Vigar
- Ian Brown – Town Clerk
- Chris Hogg – Green Spaces Officer

Meeting clerk:

- Sarah Howe – Committee Clerk
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Apologies

From Councillors unable to attend the meeting:

- Emma Franklin
- Sarah Gibson
- Jack Vittles



45. Presentation by Eunice Parker 'Bring your Own' container initiative

Eunice from the local Zero Waste Group provided a talk to councillors present regarding the 'Bring Your Own' initiative recently launched in town. Many of the local food shops are now displaying the mark which confirms their participation in the scheme. It is designed to encourage the minimal consumption of single use plastics and encourage residents and consumers to bring their own Tupperware, tiffin & bento style boxes, paper bags, bees wax wrap, water bottles, reusable mugs, plastic bags, Klippit clips, elastic bands etc to convey shopping and take way purchases home. Participating shops include Meat @ the Shambles, the Cheese Shop, Bloomfield Fruit and Veg and Christines Sustainable Supermarket.

Eunice concluded by stating if each household saved 4 pieces of single use plastic per week in Bradford on Avon, then over 1 million pieces of such plastic would be saved in a year.

The Chair thanked Eunice for attending and agreed that if councillors could spread the word, and the public get behind the scheme, it might just help create a snowball effect and ultimately a move towards seeing legislation introduced for reduction in the use of single use plastics.

46. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

47. Minutes from the previous meeting of the committee

Proposed by Councillor Katie Vigar

Seconded by Councillor Kate Bessant

And with **all in favour** it was **resolved**: that the Minutes of the last committee meeting held on 19 November 2024 be accepted as a true record of the meeting.

48. Matters arising

None.

49. Agenda item 7 - Chair's Update

The Chair referred to her report as supplied with the agenda and added:

- The testing strips for the Healthy Rivers project had not arrived this month but encouragingly the river has been testing 'fairly clean' recently.



- Great Big Green Week is 7-15th June 2025 and coincides with the locally organised Wild River festival.
- The Yellow Fish campaign is an initiative to remind individuals that as far as possible only water should be poured down drains. Yellow fish emblems can be placed or stuck near sinks and drains as a reminder.

50. Agenda item 8 – Draft Climate and Flooding Resilience Strategy.

The Chair referred to the report supplied with the agenda written by a local resident, Rachel Berger, and herself. Essentially the belief is that the town and its infrastructure, buildings, residents and accompanying green spaces need to be ready to adapt and develop resilience in the face of changing weather patterns and the knock-on consequences.

The Chair confirmed she was looking for support to develop the strategy and, once approved, incorporate it into the new Neighbourhood Plan. The Green Spaces Officer is interested in revising some elements, however all councillors present voted to support the principle of developing the draft climate and flooding resilience strategy to be brought to the next Environment and Green Spaces meeting for approval.

51. Agenda item 9 – Wild River Festival Update

- A forum is planned to look at nature-based flood solutions which was originally booked for St Margaret's Hall. Ironically, due to the flooding, a new venue may need to be sought.
- The Wiltshire Music Centre is offering to stage a mini Eco-fest event similar to the one previously staged in November 2023.
- The Chair is keen that a biodiversity fair is organised as part of the river festival and Great Big Green Week for 7th June in Westbury Gardens. It was agreed to approach relevant town council officers to investigate if there was time in the schedules to organise.
- The Chair is also looking for some financial, communications and marketing support from officers to promote the river festival. It was agreed help would be forthcoming where possible.



52. Agenda item 10 – Low Energy Appliance Initiative

The Chair referred to the report as supplied with the agenda. The initiative has had some impact and lending out the appliances has had both a positive and negative effect on borrowers who have been both keen to buy or convinced their lifestyle doesn't support such a purchase. The Chair reconciled that all experiences of borrowing the equipment are useful.

It was agreed to continue to promote the scheme at regular and appropriate intervals.

53. Agenda item 11 – Green Spaces Update

The Green Spaces Officer supplied a verbal update.

Town Wardens have been engaged in winter work: maintenance, street cleaning, pruning shrubs around town and up at the cemetery, reacting to storms/tree damage and helping with the clean up after the flooding at St Margaret's Hall. Councillors thanked the Wardens for all their support and hard work through the winter.

Hedgerows cuts are also underway as new legislation prevents cuts between 1 March and August from 2025 onwards.

CLUB (Clean up Bradford on Avon) have spent time tidying up Millie's Garden which is 25 years old this year.

There was a request not to put out the sack-like rubbish bins the night before collections if strong winds are forecast overnight. Huge amounts of plastic is blown about and often end up in the river and hedgerows.

Councillor Vigar asked about the tree in Westbury Gardens and damaged wall nearby. The Green Spaces Officer confirmed it is a London plane tree, and it is healthy, however its trunk has increased in size to the point where the nearby wall overlooking the river is experiencing some damage. 2 contractors have been consulted to see whether steps can be taken to improve the resilience of the wall. Additionally, there is a suggestion to bore drainage holes at points along the wall to help with water runoff from Westbury Gardens.

Finally, Barton Bridge renovations are underway. Wiltshire Council is responsible for the bridge and its maintenance. All the 'lost' stones have



been recovered from the river and fixed back in place. The railings have also been salvaged and will be reattached.

54. Agenda item 12 – Becky Addy Wood – Consequential Hearing 15 January 2025

The Chair read out the draft court order from the hearing which is summarised as follows:

The claim is dismissed

The injunction dated 10 February 2023 has been lifted and costs from the claim treated as costs in the case

The Claimants are to pay the Defendants 5/6th of its costs in the case

Costs of £101,000 should be paid by the Claimants to the Defendant by 12 February 2025

Interest at Base+1% is also payable from when invoices were first paid by the Defendant until the date of the order

The Claimants application for permission to appeal is refused.

The Chair summarised the background to the case as an opportunity for the town council to purchase the wood as a community project and amenity back in 2020. Particularly following the outbreak of Ash dieback disease, a management plan was introduced to manage affected trees which then led to the claimants obtaining an injunction in 2023 to stop all work. The dispute and resultant court case has had a huge impact on many officers and councillors and the council as a whole. The experience has been stressful and regrettable. The Chair concluded that she hoped the council can now draw a line under these events and move forward, building bridges with the community.

Councillor Vigar, who was Mayor through most of the dispute, also stated it has been an incredible two years, commended particularly the Town Clerk and Green Spaces Officer for the colossal amount of work involved in dealing with the dispute and resultant court case and confirmed it had been stressful and very expensive. She concluded that there was no pleasure in the result but only relief and hoped this is now an end to the matter.



Councillor Bessant added the whole situation was very sad, the council were trying to do their best by a local green space and thanked all those who had put in the hours to defend the council's position.

55. Next meeting

The next committee meeting is arranged for Tuesday 4 March 2025.

End of the meeting

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm

Appendix A: Comments and questions from the public

There was one question/comment from members of the public at the meeting. There were 6 members of the public in total.

[Q1] A local organic small holder and friends are asking for the Council's support for their project, linking green spaces in Bradford on Avon with locally operating medium/large businesses for wellbeing and connection to nature. The Chair thanked Jonathan and Jasmine for their time, all members showed their support and suggested a more detailed project proposal could be brought to the next meeting.