



ST CUTHBERT (OUT) PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP ON MONDAY 18th November 2024

PRESENT: Cllrs G Pettitt; M Cooke; T Hathway; J Joseph; I

Humphreys. **IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Reece Coulson (Assistant Clerk)

01. Discussion of Environment Working Group Converting to a Committee

Opportunity for EWG to discuss potential for the Working Group to convert into a Committee.

NOTES: The EWG discussed the potential to convert the EWG into a Committee. Cllr Pettitt stated that the EWG is not operating under legal definitions of a Working Group as it is not Task-and-Finish along with its involvement with a wide range of projects within the Council. Cllr Pettitt also pointed out that it was functionally impossible to make the Environment Working Group fit into guidelines due to the persistent nature of the environment. In addition to this, Cllr Pettitt stated that the inclusion of a formal budget would lead to less bureaucratic pro-forma in the long run.

Cllr Cooke opposed the idea on the grounds that non-councillor members of the group would be denied an official say in projects. Cllr Humphreys suggested the formation of a committee and subsequent immediate formation of a sub-committee which would allow the group to meet remotely and involve non-councillor members more consistently. The committee would then meet semi-annually to ratify decisions.

ACTIONS:

- **Assistant Clerk is to pursue the drafting of a Terms of Reference for the Environment Working Group in the case of it becoming a committee.**

02. Biodiversity Policy

To discuss further actions for Biodiversity Policy and provide feedback, improvements, and additions to the Biodiversity Plan circulated by the Assistant Clerk.

NOTES: The EWG provided feedback on the in-progress biodiversity spreadsheet created by the Parish Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Discussion on potential sites of interest for the document led to the suggestion of various new sites to log.

ACTIONS:

- **Assistant Clerk to add the Allotments and the Council owned portion of the Wells Cemetery to the spreadsheet. Identification of, and inclusion of, portions of field near Wookey Hole Village Hall into the spreadsheet is also required.**
- **Assistant Clerk to continue adding categories and information as it becomes relevant.**

03. Rural Mobility Pilot Schemes

To discuss applications and potential sites for improvement for the Rural Mobility Pilot Scheme to benefit areas of the Parish.

NOTES: The EWG voiced doubt that the Rural Mobility Pilot Schemes would be a good fit for any parish projects. Both Cllr Cooke and Cllr Hathway suggested the LCN meetings as an appropriate forum for discussion into the scheme.

ACTIONS:

- **Due to the limited timeframe for applications, Cllrs Cooke and Hathway have agreed to discuss with members of the LCN before the application deadline passes.**

04. Strawberry Line

Discuss handover to Strawberry Line Association regarding the Strawberry Line Biodiversity Pond and conditions for matched funding.

NOTES: Discussion of potential signage or biodiversity plaques near the proposed Strawberry Line Pond was deferred until the Environment Working Group has a clearer understanding of when/how responsibility will be handed over to the Strawberry Line Association.

ACTIONS:

- **Cllr Pettitt has offered to pursue further discussion with Ros Wyke and the Strawberry Line Association to clarify details on responsibilities and funding.**

05. AFFF Update

Cllr Joseph to give an update on Avalon Food and Farming Forum.

NOTES: Cllr Joseph provided an update into the AFFF and their upcoming presentations at the Land Alive forum at the Bath and West Showground on Friday 22

ACTIONS:

No action required.

06. Dark Skies

To review advice given from Exmoor National Park and discuss first steps for restarting Dark Skies project for SCO.

NOTES: Cllr Humphreys discussed potential ways to restart the Dark Skies project in St. Cuthbert (Out) Parish. Further distribution of opinion surveys and discussion with Somerset Council was suggested. Discussion of potential ways to further increase lighting efficiency and environmental sympathy were discussed. Methods of congratulating residents who engage in Dark-Skies sympathetic lighting to be pursued.

ACTIONS:

- **Assistant Clerk to pursue identification of unnecessarily lit areas and non-lit areas. In addition, the switch to yellow light as opposed to white LED is to be considered and discussed with Somerset Council.**
- **Discussion with Somerset Council regarding potential savings by turning lights off in Core Nighttime hours to be pursued.**

07. Facebook Environment Post Update

Assistant Clerk to give a short update on the environment posts on Facebook.

NOTES: The Assistant Clerk passed on an update to the EWG regarding the currently ongoing environmental posts via the Council Facebook page. Cllr Pettitt suggested the setup of an Instagram account to potentially increase the Councils social media presence.

ACTIONS:

- **The Assistant Clerk is to continue weekly posts on Facebook.**

- **Potential for creation and population of an Instagram account to be discussed and potentially actioned.**

- **Members of the EWG are to send any environmentally pertinent news to the Assistant Clerk as content for social media environmental posts**

08. Any Other News

Discuss any additional issues that members may wish to raise.

NOTES: Discussion of the Act to Adapt measures circulated by the Assistant clerk is to be deferred until the next meeting. Cllr Hathway suggested posting the news of tree planting in the Coxley Playing Field onto Facebook.

ACTIONS:

- **The Assistant Clerk is to research aspects of the Act to Adapt document that have the potential to be acted upon by the Parish Council.**
- **The Assistant Clerk will parcel news of the tree planting within Coxley with the next Facebook Environment Post which will be published on Tuesday the 19th of November 2024.**

Date of next meeting: 23rd December 2024 at 7pm via

Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82879022797?pwd=NU4zZTIkMmNHNzhDdi9S T3UyeTJGUT09>