

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3RD JULY 2023 AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Stevens (Chair), Kilbride (Deputy Chair), Fuchshuber, Joyce, Meredith, Soan and Tarasiewicz

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs J Thorneycroft (Assistant Town Clerk) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr Nalder and Ms Lee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Mr S Carter (Town Clerk)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – THE COMMITTEE WILL TAKE QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair explained the applicants from CGS1 were in attendance and may wish to address the Environmental Services Committee. Mr Nalder and Ms Lee introduced themselves to the Committee as representatives of South Court Environmental Ltd.

4. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 2ND APRIL 2023

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd April 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – BUDGET UPDATE

The Chair explained that a budget update would be a reoccurring item to ensure members were up-to-date and could ask any question in relation to this Committee's budget.

In response to a question about the surplus within the Bloom Budget, the Assistant Town Clerk explained we are currently awaiting an invoice for the watering costs from Idverde and part of the funds are maintained to order plants and planters for Bloom 2024.

In response to another question, the Town Clerk explained that Bloom had changed throughout the years under the former Northampton Borough Council as business' were previously charged £30 for Bloom baskets for the summer and the Northampton BID were not involved with the planning or funding of Bloom.

In response to a question, the Chair explained the expenditure under 4400 Repairs and Maintenance was for water bills incurred on the sites within our wards. A Councillor added that allotments were owned by the Town Council however, they were managed and maintained by Idverde in exchange for fees from the allotment holders. The Chair explained allotments require a strategy as it requires more oversight and engagement.

6. DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY ON 12/04/21

The Chair explained that the Town Council declared a Climate Emergency on 12th April 2021 just after our inception. He continued, the Climate Change Forum hosted every month with three Councillors and six community volunteers who have been active in developing ideas and some of those projects have been implemented with the assistance of the Event and Project Officers.

The Chair stated that he believed more of an impact could be made regarding the Climate Emergency due to lack of Officer resources and volunteers of the Climate Change Forum may not be feasible currently and proposed a debate on the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer or two who job-share to focus on and assist with the Town Council's work on Climate Change.

The Chair stated he sees the aims of the role to assist in raising awareness of Climate Change and supporting the Event and Project Officers on events and engaging and educating the public. A Councillor raised that £40,000 was a large amount of residents' Council Tax precept especially, with the high salary budget expenditure currently and the amount does not reflect pension and National Insurance contributions.

A Councillor posed whether the Environmental Services Committee reviews and works on this up-to budget setting in November 2023 and we work on creating an Environmental Services Officer rather than a Climate Change Officer, who could liaise and work with the Climate Change Forum and allotments. A Councillor raised the role could be part-time and also would be pertinent to the strategy on allotments especially if it was decided to move toward self-management they would require a point of contact.

A Councillor stated they believed the role of a Climate Change Officer was the responsibility of West Northamptonshire Council to undertake as the Unitary Authority.

A Councillor echoed that an Environmental Services Officer would be required with the trajectory of Climate Change.

A Councillor stated they would be hesitant of funding a potential Climate Change Officer role be funded via the Climate Change Emergency Reserve as it projects the wrong message and requires adequate costing, business plan and budget it not from reserves.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that any roles to be recruited would need to undergo benchmarking for the market value in line with other Town and Parish Council roles. The Democratic Services Officer stated that if the Committee wished to discuss and move this further the next meeting was scheduled for 4th September 2023 and the following meeting on 13th November 2023 would fall within budget principles and setting.

AGREED: That a discuss of a Climate Change Officer or Environmental Services Officer be discussed at a future Environmental Services Committee meeting as a formal agenda item.

ACTION: To consult with other Town or Parish Councils on whether a Climate Change Officer could work on behalf on two or more organisations.

7. BLOOM REPORT

The Assistant Town Clerk explained all the floral planters have been installed around the Town. A Councillor stated there seems to be a reduction in the number of planters within Castle Ward specifically on Barack Road and the Racecourse. The Assistant Town Clerk suggested the Councillor gets in touch directly to provide the feedback for next year.

A Councillor provided thanks to the Assistant Town Clerk and Mrs Hanam-Jones (Events and Project Officer) on their work on Northampton in Bloom and how beautiful the installations look this year.

A Councillor raised that on Landcross Drive has two large planters. The Ward Councillor explained in response that no planters could be installed on lamp posts therefore it was decided two large planters would be better suited.

NOTED

8. ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS - NB SOUTH COURT ENVIRONMENTAL

The Chair explained that Climate Change Grant Scheme applications would now be reviewed by the Grants Sub-Committee in line with other Grant Schemes the Town Council Offers. He continued that moving forward Climate Change Grant Schemes applications would be reviewed by Grants Sub-Committee

In response to a question posed by a Councillor, it was explained by Mr Nalder that South Court Environmental Ltd had no affiliations with any political groups. Mr Nalder explained they have sites near Billing Road East, Wellingborough Road, Kings Heath, towards Moulton and two small enclosed gardens. In response to a question posed, Mr Nalder explained all of South Court Environmental Ltd sites were mostly open to the public. In response to a question posed by a Councillor, Mr Nalder explained that the Billing Road East site was named Wilson Road and has been owned by South Court Environmental Ltd and open to the public for use.

In response to another question, Mr Nalder explained South Court Environmental Ltd hoped to expand their reach therefore, it was difficult to predict the amount would be spent on each site. In response to a question, Mr Nalder explained they plan to plant enough hedgerows that there would be a higher ratio of hedgerows and this being a variety of hedgerows to entice a variety of wildlife.

A Councillor suggested that South Court Environmental consult an Environmental Officer of West Northamptonshire Council who has specialist knowledge of trees and their benefit to wildlife.

A Councillor stated he had visited the Wellingborough Road site and thanked South Court Environmental Ltd for their work.

RESOLVED: That application CCGS1 be **approved** to the sum of £5,000.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM REPORT

The Chair circulated a written report regarding the Climate Change Forum that requested funding for a series of Climate Change Forum stalls.

The Chair explained there has not been not much Officer support in the previous months due to those who had assisted previously now have a higher workload. He encouraged that if any Councillors or volunteers were aware of any people or organisations who would like to participate in the Climate Change Forum to make them aware of the initiatives on offer.

The Chair explained the Climate Change Forum wished to host some stalls within the Grovesnor Centre and other sites and provided some rough estimations. In response to a question, the Chair explained he wished to place banners on the railings outside of schools to encourage waiting parents to turn off their vehicles. Ms Lee stated it may be more cost efficient to send the image to be placed on the banner via school mailing lists.

In response to a question, the Chair explained the quotation provided by Tangerine Red was very reasonable compared to an alternative supplier however, benchmarking could be done again and the publications would be circulated at the stalls hosted at Weston Favell Shopping Centre and the Grovesnor Centre that feature a QR Code to our website.

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that the Town Council host stalls at many of the events that we support and suggested whether the Climate Change Forum could assist in manning the stall to boost engagement.

A Councillor raised that the Weston Favell Centre has a higher footfall compared to the Grovesnor Centre and posed that the installation be placed there once disassemble and placed there especially, as it would be the shopping centre's 50th year.

RESOLVED: The Climate Change be authorised a budget of £2,000 to host Climate Change Awareness Stalls.

10. WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL PARKS VISITORS SURVEY

[Survey to be share for information only](#)

11. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

It was raised the allotment strategy and Climate Change/Environmental Services Officer be discussed at the next meeting.

MEETING CONCLUDED 19:37