

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – 12TH FEBRUARY 2024

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Stevens (Chair), Kilbride (Vice Chair), Ashraf, Fuchshuber, Haque, Meredith, Miah, Joyce and Tarasiewicz.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Soan submitted his apologies.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Meredith and Stevens declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 40 & 41 as they have an allotment plot(s) within Town Council's ownership.

34. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th November 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

35. TO REVIEW AND PROVIDE A DECISION ON THE FOLLOWING CLIMATE CHANGE GRANT APPLICATIONS

a. C2C SOCIAL ACTION – CCGS3

The Chair explained that this project focused on horticulture and the other holistic benefits it would provide to their service users. He added that C2C Social Action also run the Good Loaf. In response to a question, it was explained by the Chair that the allotment utilised was the allotment situated opposite Thornton Park that falls within our boundary.

A Councillor asked how would the benefits of this project be quantified. The Democratic Services Officer explained as part of the Climate Change Policy that evaluation forms must be returned that requests details on how the project went, the beneficiaries and how much was spent etc. The Town Clerk added, the Community Engagement Officer would be able to visit the project and provide reports back to the Committee. A Councillor suggested the application be approved with the provision the Community Engagement Officer attends some of the sessions and provides a report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: Climate Change Grant Application CCGS3 be approved to the sum of £5,000 on the condition with that the Community Engagement Officer attends and provides feedback.

b. ROWEN AND CLARENCE AVEENUE TREE PLANTING PROJECT – CCGS4

The Chair highlighted this project was undertaken with collaboration with Councillors, Idverde, West Northamptonshire Council and Veolia. A Councillor commented on the benefit of the street trees being replaced that had been previously removed as it contributes to bio-diversity, assist with the reduction of carbon-dioxide emissions and enhance the street scene.

RESOLVED: Climate Change Grant Application CCGS4 be approved to the sum of £5,000

ACTION: Stuart to check the watering of Mayoral Trees planted with Idverde.

36. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON NORTHAMPTON IN BLOOM 2024

A Councillor requested a list of the organisations and groups that had been contacted regarding the 'It's Your Neighbourhood Awards'. In response to a question, the Democratic Services Officer explained there had been some uptake with the Bloom Grants that were deducted from Councillors' Community Funding allocation. A Councillor commended the work of Mrs Hanam-Jones (Events and Projects Officer) and how Northampton in Bloom benefits the community. He continued that Bloom should be acknowledged by the Local Area Partnerships.

In response to a question, the Town Clerk explained the mini-Christmas-Trees were part of a trial however, Balfour Beatty requested it be removed due to the requirement of wind tests.

NOTED

ACTION: What Community Groups had been contacted for the Neighbourhood Awards.

ACTION: Request Louise to provide report on planting locations.

37. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S POSITION ON BIODIVERSITY

The Chair stated that NCALC provided clarification on the 'Bio-Diversity Duty of Local Councils' under the Environment Act 2021 with Parish Councils were required to consider conservation, agree policies aligning with these objectives and act to deliver these policies.

The Chair added that Northampton in Bloom installations utilised flowers and bedding plants that can be highly genetically modified for aesthetics and longevity therefore, not beneficial for bio-diversity. He added last year the planters based within the outer-wards had two species of pollinator-friendly flowers. In response to a question, the Chair explained that Mrs Hanam-Jones had been negotiating with the supplier to include more pollinator-friendly species. A Councillor commented next year it could be an objective to roll-out more variety of pollinator-friendly flowers within installations in the Town Centre and outer-wards.

38. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM'S ACTIVITY INCLUDING A REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR THE PROJECTS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT

The Chair highlighted the report contained within the agenda outlined projects the Climate Change Forum wished to endeavour. The Chair suggested any underspent funds from the Environmental Projects budget code be earmarked within reserves for tree-planting projects.

A Councillor commented the projects outlined would be beneficial to the Town Council's environmental footprint and promoting green initiatives. In response to a point raised, a Councillor commented that water butts should be funded by the allotment holder.

In response to a question in relation to the 'Walk to School Week' packs were issued to five schools within the ward boundary however, feedback was received from two.

A Councillor commented bikes for people in disadvantaged groups would require a well constituted and reliable organisation to facilitate and complete the repairs. The Councillor welcomed 'Square Metres for Bee-feasters' however, queried whether purchasing wild flower seeds in bulk rather than individual would be better value for money. The Town Clerk explained the Town Council had purchased wildflower seeds in bulk however, Officer had to portion these by hand therefore incurs a hidden cost.

A Councillor queried whether it would any beneficial engagement from the 'Carbon Literacy Training'. The Chair explained it was to highlight peoples' carbon footprint and how this could be reduced.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair be delegated authority to approve expenditure up-to £17,400 for the projects outlined within the relevant report and any unspent funds be earmarked in reserves for the purpose of tree planting.

39. TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON'S SUSTAINABILITY, LOCAL INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP AGENDA HUB (SLIPAH)

DEFERRED: The discussion and consideration of participating in SLIPAH this item be deferred to the next meeting.

40. TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S EIGHT ALLOTMENT SITES

The Chair explained the importance of considering the future management options of the Town Council's allotments. A Councillor commented that if self-management were to be agreed then the Town Council should have some involvement in the Annual Governance Meetings of the allotments to prevent any mismanagement.

DEFERRED: The consideration of future management option of Town Council allotments be deferred to the following meeting.

41. GENERAL ALLOTMENTS UPDATE

The Town Clerk explained an allotment site that borders Tollgate Close has been stipulated to be within the town council's ownership however, it was not included within the original Vesting Day Document. The Town Clerk consulted solicitors and West Northamptonshire Council Officers and it was determined our asset as legally the land falls within our boundary area. In response to a question, the Town Clerk explained that Tollgate Close falls under Kingsthorpe Parish Council.

The Town Clerk highlighted there has been minimal maintenance requests currently however, within time the responsibility would fall to the Town Council to resolve. He continued there was a water leak at the Billing Road East site that has been identified and temporarily mitigated however, requires repair. A Councillor suggested whether insurance could be sourced to cover the allotments.

MEETING CONCLUDED: 19:40PM