

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 360-703-989) of the CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Thursday 30 July 2020 at 11.00am.

PRESENT Cllr Rose Allwork Karen Hunt
 Ian Bark Dave Rickard
 Kelvin Clayton

ALSO PRESENT: Will Austin (Town Clerk) and one member of the public.

PUBLIC FORUM

Joe Burlington addressed the Public Forum on the subject of the climate crisis. He quoted Greta Thunberg on concerns about public understanding of the crisis, and engagement with the need for changes. Planting trees was important, but wood burning was damaging environmentally. The obsession with gardening was counter-productive and it would be better to allow wild growth. He also called for pension fund divestment which had previously been rejected by the Council. One of the biggest pension funds had recently divested. The value of Council pensions would diminish if they did not now follow suit.

Members commented that:

- The Council had decided not to proceed with installation of a wood burning boiler.
- Support for divestment by the pension fund would be discussed later in the meeting.

Joe further commented that it was better to cut emissions rather than generate more energy.

The Chair thanks Joe for his address.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received, although Cllr Ian Bark had advised that he would be late arriving.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ian Bark arrived at the meeting at this point.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the committee held on 25 February 2020 be agreed, signed by the Chairman at the earliest practicable opportunity.

4. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Town Clerk advised that there was no updated information.

Members considered the need for further research into Council energy suppliers.

RESOLVED: that energy suppliers be reviewed under delegation, by the Leader, Chair of the Sub Committee and Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee, this review to include establishing whether Energy Local Bridport could supply the Council.

5. SOLAR CANOPIES/GROUND LEVEL SOLAR ARRAY

The Town Clerk reported that four potential providers had been asked to give quotes for installation of solar canopies including car and motorcycle charging facilities, and one had been received and circulated to Sub Committee members. Installation did not look complex, but a formal tender process would be required.

Members discussed:

- The possible inclusion of cycle charging
- Whether to proceed to tender under delegation.
- The need to understand the market more fully.
- Serving 'hard to reach' communities.
- The value of this project as a visible sign of progress with the Climate Action Plan.
- Whether sufficient parking spaces were available at Plottingham.
- Cost effectiveness and the public perception of cost.
- The option to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board.
- The future of the energy/solar market, and concerns that energy costs would not reduce if people did not invest in the technology.

RESOLVED: that a recommendation for next steps be developed through informal consultation with members, to be considered by the Sub Committee in September.

6. INTERNAL CAPACITY/RESOURCES

The Town Clerk reported that discussions had taken place regarding the establishment of a dedicated climate action resource in the Outdoor Team. This would need cover and supervision. An administrative apprentice was also being considered, which could provide support to the delivery of the action plan, albeit that the role would have other duties not related to the Sub Committee remit. Technical work would be met through external contracts.

RESOLVED: that the report of the Town Clerk be noted.

7. POST-COVID-19 TRANSPORT

The Chair invited members to engage in a general discussion on the future of transport.

The Town Clerk reported on progress in discussion with Dorset Community Transport who had been identified to provide the Service 7 community bus.

Members discussed:

- The possibility of a bike/car hire scheme for Bridport.
- The need to develop creative ideas quickly.
- WATAG's engagement in and lobbying on planning initiatives in the South West.
- A possible stakeholder working group to develop ideas.
- Related research being carried out by Cllr Julian Jones and the possibility of engaging him in the Sub Committee's work.
- The challenges of constraints on powers available to the Council, and the A35 trunk road cutting the town in half.
- The need for a transport vision.
- Links with the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The possible need for transport to be prioritised over food security, which would be led by other groups in the town.
- The need to engage with Bridport Business Chamber and the Town Centre Working Group.

RESOLVED: that further discussion of this issue be deferred pending the production of an access and movement study and the ideas being brought forward by Cllr Julian Jones, and to seek engagement with WATAG, Bridport Business Chamber and the Neighbourhood Plan JCC..

8. BUDGET

No report was tabled for consideration.

9. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES

Cllr Dave Rickard advised that he would produce a paper on pensions for consideration at a future meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Sub Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 24 September at 11am.

The meeting closed at 1.13pm.