

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 460-469-581) of the CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Thursday 24 September 2020 at 11.00am.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Will Austin (Town Clerk), David Dixon (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer) and Alan Heeks.

PUBLIC FORUM

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the committee held on 30 July 2020 be agreed, signed by the Chairman at the earliest practicable opportunity.

4. FOOD SECURITY

Alan Heeks, Candida Blaker and Raja Jarrah presented on behalf of Seeding the Future. Mr Heeks provided background to the group, a non-profit project started about four years previously. Its aim was to enable communities to deal with climate change issues and ways of increasing resilience. He expressed his appreciation for the Town Council's support and efforts in relation to the climate emergency.

Candida Blaker introduced herself as an environmentalist, farmer and food grower.

Raja Jarrah introduced himself as a climate campaigner who had been involved in the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan and the Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Ms Blaker explained the producer/retailer/ consumer triangle, and work on research, communication, consultation and engagement to date. She outlined research into food security, and engagement including liaison with local allotment growers, producers, farmers and retailers, and with other organisations across a wider geographical area. Two online engagement events had also taken place. A collaborative funding bid was being considered.

Mr Heeks invited the Council to engage on issues of education, funding and premises.

Mr Jarrah stressed the need for land for local food production. He sought Town Council support for the release of rural and urban land.

Ms Baker considered means of mapping food security in Bridport, possibly through a map and website, in conjunction with the Bridport Local Food Group.

Members considered:

- The national reduction in domestic food production.
- The need to work on educating growers.
- A more traditional/seasonal diet.
- Funding for food security initiatives.
- Education and engagement opportunities, including a possible open gardens event focusing on growing.
- Releasing county farms land for growing. Cllr Clayton undertook to pursue this with Dorset Council.
- A market stall to provide information on food security.
- Organic apprenticeships.
- Local groups working on food poverty, and opportunities for collaboration, particularly on education.
- The opportunities presented by the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown, with an increase in local growing by residents.
- Procurement opportunities and obstacles for local food producers.

RESOLVED: that a further meeting with Seeding Our Future be arranged once the group has prepared a written proposal.

The Chair thanked Mr Heeks, Ms Blaker and Mr Jarrah for their presentations.

5. **SOLAR PV CAR PORT INSTALLATION**

Consideration was given to a report, ENCL: 3538.

The Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer reported on five indicative quotes received for a solar car port. He invited questions and discussion, and guidance on:

- Appetite to proceed and timescales.
- An acceptable level of overall costs.
- Agreement to the submission of a grant request to Low Carbon Dorset Councils Partnership.

Members discussed:

- The respective merits of the five quotes, and differences in approach.
- The complexities of incorporating EV charging in addition to feeding into the grid.
- The need to demonstrate innovation and best value in applying for grant funding.
- Formal tendering requirements.
- An indicative overall cost of £50,000 to £60,000 as the basis for developing the project and grant application.

- Use of local suppliers, particularly for the car port structure which could be of timber manufacture.
- Public perception, particularly if the project focused heavily on EV charging over feeding into the grid.
- Engagement with Energy Local Bridport.
- The process for taking the project forward.
- A desire to move the Council to electric vehicles, with charging facilities at the depot.
- Whether this project represented an effective use of funds in addressing the climate emergency and reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

RESOLVED: that a final specification, grant application and proposal be developed by the Chairman and the Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer for consideration by the sub committee, with a feed into the local grid, no requirement for EV charging, and a preference for a steel structure.

6. BUDGET

The Town Clerk reported that there had been no allocated expenditure against the reserve created for the action plan, and that some climate-related operating costs had been absorbed into general revenue expenditure. He considered it unlikely that the reserve would be affected by the financial needs of the Council arising from COVID-19. There would be a need to develop plans to build capacity for further expenditure, and future priorities.

The Chairman highlighted borrowing as an option should this be needed.

Members considered:

- The need for the budget-setting process to have the climate emergency at the heart of its approach.
- Divestment, in relation to the pension fund investment.
- Moving energy contracts to fully renewable sources.
- Forward planning of priorities and consideration of new initiatives not currently in the action plan.
- Developing plans to make Mountfield more energy efficient.
- Guidance on the climate aspects to be considered when commenting on planning applications, and ensuring that Neighbourhood Plan policies are adhered to.
- The need to change from a reactive to a proactive planning system.

7. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES

No matters were raised.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Sub Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 29 October at 11am.

The meeting closed at 12.58pm.