

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Thursday 25 November 2021 at 11:00am.

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

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Nigel and Cecil Amor addressed members on the potential for water power generation in Bridport. Nigel referred to an existing scheme in Somerset, and to mill wheels and other possible sites in Bridport and West Bay. Cecil, a chartered engineer, compared the possibilities to those of a turbine on a bicycle wheel. Nigel also referred to the potential use of power generated by the turbine at Salway Ash, and the possibilities for local water courses, such as the weir at West Bay.

Members discussed:

- Previous investigations into possible local energy generation via mill wheels, which had identified little, due to a lack of commercial viability and the limited generation capacity of most mill wheels.
- The sporadic nature of flood water flows, and whether a mill pond might assist in guaranteeing flows.
- The absence of working mill wheels in Bridport, including the wheel at Palmers Brewery, which was powered by a motor.
- The existing use of the Salway Ash wind turbine as a feed into the Energy Local Bridport scheme.
- How further information might be obtained to reassess the future potential.

Members thanked Nigel and Cecil for their address, and recommended they seek further information from Dorset Community Energy.

26. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the committee held on 30 September 2021 be confirmed as a true and correct record, and signed by the chairman.

29. UPDATE ON ENERGY CHAMPIONS PILOT

Consideration was given to a report of the Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer, ENCL: 3670. The pilot scheme had been launched in October 2021, with workshops held on 30 October 2021. Five volunteers had agreed to proceed to train as champions and their role would be developed, along with evaluation methods. Members were asked to consider whether to proceed with the five volunteers, or seek further volunteers with a possible partnership with other parishes; Lyme Regis and Charmouth had expressed interest and could be engaged in online aspects of the training.

Members discussed:

- The number of spaces available for training, which was said to be about 12;
- The management of the volunteer group, which would be by the Town Council and the Centre for Sustainable Energy;
- The need for feedback from those who expressed an interest and subsequently declined to proceed as champions;
- Opportunities to promote the scheme, including the use of a market stall, a presence at events and, at a later date, door knocking; and
- The potential for developing a relationship with Dorset Warmer Homes and Magna Housing to obtain referrals.

RESOLVED: that the scheme be further publicised including a timetable of sessions, bespoke social media material, with support from councillors.

RESOLVED: that the programme should commence in January, and that Lyme Regis Town Council and Charmouth Parish Council be invited to engage in the online training.

30. UPDATE ON CLIMATE FORUM

Alan Heeks of Seeding Our Future addressed members on face-to-face and virtual climate forum events held on 23 and 24 November 2021. He reported that they had been very successful, with good engagement and partnership working. A climate response initiative would be the next step. The forums had identified a strong sense that a communication programme was needed, using small interventions and brief messages. Social media would be crucial. Other suggestions were an umbrella approach, events, and engagement with young people. A press release would be issued, along with a follow-up report for participants and non-participants, and a forward visioning meeting would be held in December 2021.

Members considered:

- The current position regarding a grant of £2,000 to Seeding Our Future. Alan Heeks advised that some £1,200 had been spent on a website and leaflet and both were being updated. Events that formed part of the grant request had not proceeded due to Covid-19, and the balance of £800 would be retained for review;
- Whether there should be a wide-ranging scope of activities, or a targeted approach on individual issues such as food, transport or energy;
- The importance of teaching ecology; and
- Translating larger climate issues into everyday situations.

Alan Heeks was thanked for his address and it was

RESOLVED: that the report of Seeding Our Future be noted.

31. RESILIENCE CAPACITY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3671, setting out the potential for recruitment of a Resilience Officer, as previously considered by the sub committee, the role of such a position and the financial constraints on the Council, due to the impact of Covid-19. A possible approach was a fixed term contract, funded from the Climate Emergency reserve. The Town Clerk summarised the report and advised that a one-year fixed term post, based on 18.5 hours per week, was estimated to cost £20,000 including on-costs. Any recruitment would need to be sanctioned by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, or by the Chairman of that committee under delegation, if considered a matter of urgency.

Members considered:

- The possibility of a one-year fixed term, and whether success could be achieved and measured in that time;
- The role of the position, and the need to focus any such capacity solely on the climate emergency;
- The skills required; and
- Defining the breadth of the term 'resilience'.

RESOLVED: that funding for a Resilience Officer position be agreed in principle from the Climate Emergency reserve, and that a further report detailing the post be considered at the next meeting.

32. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES

Cllr Kelvin Clayton reported that Bridport Cohousing had joined the Co Cars scheme and there might be potential to extend this.

Cllr Ian Bark reported that additional groups had been recruited to Plastic Free Bridport, and the programme was proceeding.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer advised that the Council's carbon budget would be reported in December 2021.

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Sub Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 16 December 2021 at 11:00am.

The meeting closed at 12.39pm.