

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the CLIMATE ACTION SUB-COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Thursday 28 September 2023 at 11.00am.

PRESENT Cllr Ian Bark (Chairman)

Rose Allwork Dave Rickard
Kelvin Clayton

ALSO PRESENT: Will Austin (Town Clerk), David Dixon (Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer) and Caroline Pearce (Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer).

PUBLIC FORUM

Penny Hughes addressed members, commenting on a review of the Town Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, and raising the following points:

- The plan needed a greater connection to nature to address poisons in water, clothes, and the air. Government stipulations needed to be questioned.
- More thought should be given to electric vehicles: their ingredients, origins, and poisons.
- Penny expressed surprise that people went along with a pharmaceutically inspired event, and that more natural substances were needed.
- A holistic approach was required, connecting body and soul.
- The £2 bus fare should be more widely promoted and a horse and cart should be considered for travel to/from events such as the Melplash Show.
- Facilities should be shared, and it was extraordinary that the launderette had closed.
- More shelters were needed and there was no youth hostel.
- If the climate was changing, this was not necessarily man-made, but it meant a need to return to nature.
- A school in Haifa installed a wired communications system in 2016, and the EMF had caused a bee collapse.
- Window boxes would help, and the Gardening Club could advise.
- It was pleasing that a lot of things were already happening.

Members thanked Penny for her address and discussed the merits of a return to nature, the importance of good public transport and low fares, and the difficulties the Council had experienced in attempting to attract a car club to Bridport. The Chairman gave a general summary of support, actions and partnerships already in place, stemming from the Council's climate emergency work to date.

9. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Karen Hunt, who was in attendance via Zoom. Due to the government's refusal to extend previous provisions for virtual attendance, this could not be accepted as formal attendance.

10. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

11. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the committee held on 25 May 2023 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

12. **CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN REVIEW 2023**

Consideration was given to a paper on the proposed review of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, ENCL: 3837, together with proposed new actions for 2023-25, ENCL: 3838. The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer summarised the report.

Members considered:

- Measures to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.
 - A need for media and social media activity to highlight progress to date.
 - A need for engagement and leadership.
 - The importance of ecology and the dangers to nature.
 - The ability to influence a circular economy, and the importance of promoting this concept.
 - The need to include 'reduce' as a principle, in addition to 'reuse' and 'recycle'.
 - A recognition that the Town Council is a small 'cog' in the wider climate engagement 'wheel'.
 - In respect of the draft plan tabled:
 - A need for clarification of the term 'support' used in the draft.
- ****Penny Hughes left at this point (12.05pm)****
- The importance of regenerative ecological work.
 - The inclusion of ethical investment matters.
 - An additional column in the action plan to highlight enabling actions.

RESOLVED: that the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan be further amended to take account of the sub-committee discussion, and a revised draft be tabled for consideration by the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee and Full Council, following informal engagement with sub-committee members.

13. **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk reported that the Council's committee structure was in review as part of preparations for changes arising from the Community Governance Review. He reminded members that the sub-committee had been created to drive forward actions from the Climate Emergency Action Plan, and asked whether sufficient progress had been made so as to warrant dissolution of the sub-committee.

Members discussed:

- Whether a task and finish group could be convened as and when needed, as an alternative to a standing sub-committee.
- The inclusion of a standing agenda item for the Climate Emergency Action Plan, on the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee agenda.
- The success of the sub-committee in engaging people and organisations in the Council's climate work.
- The importance of information being presented to councillors and not concentrated with officers.
- Whether the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee should be renamed to better explain its remit, including community resilience.

RECOMMENDED: that the Climate Action Sub-Committee be dissolved, provided provision is made for a standing Climate Action agenda item to be included in the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee agenda, and a task and finish group be convened for a periodic review of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

14. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES 2022/23

This item had been the subject of discussion at minute 12.

15. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES

Cllr Kelvin Clayton reported that the Dorset COP had taken place and was the first of its kind in the country. It had been a positive event and was well-attended.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: that the next meeting take place on 23 November 2023, subject to the decision of the Environment & Social Wellbeing Committee in respect of minute 13.

The meeting closed at 12.39pm.

The next Sub-Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 23 November 2023 at 11:00am, unless the body is dissolved by its parent committee before that date.