

Minutes of the ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE of  
Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 10 January 2024  
at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Kelvin Clayton (Chairman)  
  
Ian Bark                      Anne Rickard  
Sarah Carney                Dave Rickard  
Karen Hunt                  Steve Williams  
Ros Kayes

ALSO PRESENT: Ele Saltmarsh (Food Security Plan author),  
Theo Langdon (resilience consultant to Beaminster  
Town Council), Will Austin (Town Clerk), David Dixon  
(Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer),  
Caroline Pearce (Project Manager & Community  
Initiatives Officer), and 14 members of the public.

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Lewis Harris addressed the meeting on the subject of the climate emergency. He said that there was no climate emergency, and outlined concerns that the notion was being used to introduce global governance and to re-engineer human society. Mr Harris considered that the United Nations and the Club of Rome were spreading false information and manipulating behaviour under the guise of sustainable development and climate change, to achieve top-down global governance. He highlighted evidence he had obtained to show that recent patterns of climate change were no different from the rest of the earth's history, and were caused by solar activity, the jet stream, cosmic rays, the sun's cycles, and an approaching Grand Solar Minimum. Mr Lewis said that a claimed link between CO2 and global temperatures was misleading, that the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was a political body masquerading as a scientific body.

Kit Glaisyer spoke on the subject of the Dorset Town of Culture initiative. He said that the proposal from Bridport was exciting, especially for the visual arts in Bridport. Mr Glaisyer was devising an arts map, and he hoped the visual arts would be at the centre of the Town of Culture project.

Candida Dunford-Wood spoke on behalf of Bridport Food Matters, about the Bridport Food Security Plan. She said that the report tabled for the meeting was excellent, and would be good for both health and the climate. It recognised barriers to supply of, and access to healthy food. A whole system approach envisaged by the plan would be important in balancing supply, distribution, and demand. The plan had incorporated extensive feedback from stakeholders. Ms Dunford-Wood suggested inclusion of citation of other relevant local studies. She also outlined the role of Bridport Food Matters in food security, including previous work on a funding bid, partnership work with other organisations and stakeholders. She stressed the importance of consultation, engagement, and a 'whole system' approach. Ms Dunford-Wood outlined possible further actions and potential roles for Bridport Food Matters in delivering them.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their addresses.

**33. APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

**34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**35. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that, subject to amendment to show that Cllr Karen Hunt was not in attendance and had submitted apologies, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**36. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Food Security Plan, ENCL: 3862.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer summarised the report and introduced the author of the plan, Ele Saltmarsh, who in turn offered further detail, including:

- Gratitude to the Town Council for its support for the plan, which she hoped would be an example to others in addressing aspects of the climate emergency, biodiversity, ecology, health food, and the cost of living.
- The food demands and needs of the community and visitors.
- A potential for local production of 95% of food needs, with a focus on relatively minor shifts needed in cereals, dairy and poultry.
- The importance of integration of farms, nutrient management, and integration of trees into farms.
- Recommendations to incentivise growing of legumes and potatoes, and increase beef and fish production.
- Development of good quality growing land, potentially in collaboration with Kingston Maurward and others.
- A community food hub, to educate in adaptation and solutions.
- Short and long-term actions aimed at achieving a localised agro-ecological food system, including a steering group to direct efforts.

Members welcomed the report and plan, and discussed:

- The importance of community groups as consultees, in addition to those listed in the report;
- The Town Council's role as an enabler for the plan, and how this might be achieved;
- The potential impact of the forthcoming Town Council elections;
- The importance of engagement with all external stakeholders, and external funders including government, to facilitate the proposed actions; and
- A potential role for the Town Council in developing a register of available growing land.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that

- (i) Ele Saltmarsh be thanked for her work in producing the draft plan;
- (ii) Support from the Dorset National Landscape for this piece of work be recognised;
- (iii) The final draft of the Food Security Plan, including the actions and conclusions contained therein, be approved; and
- (iv) Further consultation be undertaken with local farmers, growers and local businesses to produce a detailed action plan that can be incorporated into the Councils Climate Emergency Action Plan 2024/2025.

The Town Clerk summarised a report on the council's carbon budget, ENCL: 3863, which showed a reduction of 18% in the council's carbon footprint in 2022/23.

Cllr Dave Rickard noted that making the council's buildings energy efficient had been challenging.

Members discussed the further challenge of reducing diesel usage for the vehicle fleet and equipment.

RESOLVED: that the report on the Carbon Budget be noted.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer advised that a report on the clean rivers project would be tabled at the next meeting.

### **37. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

The Town Clerk advised that copies of a presentation, and Beaminster Town Council's Emergency Plan, had been circulated to members prior to the meeting at the request of Theo Langdon.

Mr Langdon summarised work he had been engaged in on behalf of Beaminster Town Council, as follows:

- Beaminster Town Council had agreed actions for all longer term resilience risks faced, including the economy, health, and the cost of living.
- Mr Langdon hoped to obtain support from other councils for the proposed actions of Beaminster Town Council, and his accompanying work.
- He would forward details of findings from his further work and from other agencies, if the Town Council supported this.

Members thanked Mr Langdon for his work and address, and considered:

- The challenges in delivering actions in the community, even after policies had been agreed;
- The important role of town councils in developing community resilience;
- Bridport Town Council's Emergency and Resilience Plan, which included actions for long-term resilience development;
- The limitations of town and parish council influence over larger statutory bodies, such as Dorset Council and central government; and
- Other work carried out by Bridport Town Council that aimed to improve resilience, including the Food Security Plan, Climate Emergency Action Plan, and the Investment Plan.

RESOLVED: that Bridport Town Council welcomes the work being undertaken by Theo Langdon and Beaminster Town Council, and requests that its findings be sent to the Town Clerk.

**38. SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN GUESTS**

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer reported on support provided to Ukrainian guests since the first arrival in April 2022, including engagement of a support worker to assist with interpretation and advice, and social support. These needs were ongoing and external funding had been agreed via a church hardship fund. Should there be any request for additional Town Council funding, this would be the subject of a further report.

Members considered signs that Ukrainian guests were becoming more self-sufficient in the community, the ongoing challenges faced, and the potential for community fundraising for further support needs.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted, and that the Town Council recognises the ongoing support needs of Ukrainian guests.

**39. DORSET TOWN OF CULTURE**

Consideration was given to the Town of Culture submission, ENCL: 3864.

The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer summarised the report and accompanying submission to establish Bridport as Dorset's first Town of Culture, which had been approved by the Arts Development Company. The formal announcement was embargoed until the end of January 2024. Further aspects were set out, including the Town Council's role as accountable body, the proposed establishment of an advisory group, and the production of a job brief for the Town of Culture Producer.

Members discussed arrangements for governance of the Town of Culture project, delivery of the project, and funding.

RESOLVED: that

- (i) The Town Council agrees to act as accountable body for the Town of Culture project, and as the engagement body for public feedback;
- (ii) Terms of reference for an advisory group be developed under delegation;
- (iii) The Town Council will consider election of a representative to the advisory group; and
- (iv) Authority to the Chairman and Town Clerk be granted for urgent decisions required to deliver the Town of Culture project.

**40. SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3865, setting out a proposal to sign a pledge supporting the Dorset Sustainable Palm Oil Community, and agreeing to remove one aspect of unsustainable palm oil from the Town Council's operation.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Council should sign the Dorset Sustainable Palm Oil Community pledge.

**41. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES**

The Chairman reported that Elaine Leader had approached him for help with advertising and signage for the Beach Wheelchair Scheme.

The Town Clerk reported that minor changes to the community bus timetable had been agreed and were set to be implemented in April 2024. He also alerted members to the publication of the Council's draft budget and precept report, and an associated press release.

The meeting closed at **8.37pm**.

**The next meeting of this committee will be held on 6 March 2024**