

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

NOTES OF THE CLIMATE ACTION WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 12 MARCH 2021 AT 2PM AT 'VIRTUAL' LOCATIONS USING VIDEO AND AUDIO LINK

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs Amanda Wheeler (Chairman), Councillor Shaun Ford (Vice Chairman), Councillor Gloria Johnson (Deputy Mayor), Councillor David Taylor, Patricia Stuart-Mogg (Town Clerk)

ALSO PRESENT Gareth Davies (Stamford MP), Kelham Cooke (Leader of SKDC), Val Harvey (Vice Chairman), Paddy Jelen (Urban Group), Jane Bateman (Sustainable Stamford), Deanne Donovan (Sustainable Stamford), John Polkinhorne (Sustainable Stamford), Simon Batty (Resident), Jane Bateman (Sustainable Stamford), Jim Irvine (Zero Emission Vehicles), Chris French (River Welland Trust).

1. WELCOME

The Chairman Councillor Amanda Wheeler welcomed all to the meeting, especially Stamford's Member of Parliament Gareth Davies. All present introduced themselves and their association with the Climate Action Working Group.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor D Dorson and Kayleigh Nicolaou (Extinction Rebellion) submitted their apologies.

3. TO CONFIRM THE NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 03 February 2021, which had been circulated, were reviewed. There were no matters raised and the content was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

4. UPDATES:

- a. *Wildflower Project* – The Chairman confirmed that the wildflower project is moving at pace. Three trial spots for wildflower verge planting had been identified along North Street, instead of the large verge near the Morrisons Supermarket roundabout. The locations were all on the north side of North Street - (i) verge at the corner of Recreation Ground Road by the former Darby and Joan building, (ii) verges at both corners of Cliff Road, (iii) verges on both corners of Radcliffe Road. The group is receiving professional advice and support from Team Stamford and Stamford Endowed Schools who all have extensive experience in wildflower planting. Signs are in the process of being designed to inform the public of this activity. It is understood that Frank Newbon will produce the signs free of charge. The wildflower seeds have been identified following recommendation by Dr. Philip Sterling. A band of volunteers have been recruited to assist in the preparation of the ground and sowing the seed. Permission is awaited from Lincolnshire County Council to ensure all arrangements meet their requirements. A meeting is also arranged with Stamford in Bloom to ensure that this project works in tandem with that organisation. It is anticipated that a press release can be prepared to broadcast the commencement of this project within the next month to the wider public.
- b. *Water-refill Station Project* – Aled Pattinson provided feedback on this project. All the quotes and information has been gathered. The project has come in slightly above budget, which was anticipated at £6k and is more likely to be about £9K. Additional fund raising is to be undertaken to bridge the difference. The image of the location and the style of the unit was viewed by all present at the meeting. There was concern expressed over the additional £3K, but it was recognised that this is a specialised task which needs to be undertaken by approved Anglian Water contractors. It was also noted that Sustainable

Stamford already has arrangements in place with retail units to refill water bottles free of charge. However, following research and in light of the current Covid restrictions, it is inconvenient for members of the public to access the shops and this project was considered a valuable initiative of the Town Council.

- c. *Plastic Free Stamford Project* – The Chairman informed the meeting that this is another project supported by Stamford Town Council, which is being led by Aled Pattinson. Unfortunately, due to the Covid restrictions not much progress has been able to be made. However, ten independent businesses have signed up to the scheme and have already started to reduce their single use plastic practice. The aim is to initially obtain twelve businesses to sign-up and will be approaching associations such as Church Groups, Scouts, to take the plastic free pledge. It was noted that this was a National Scheme to reduce single use plastics. It is appreciated that it will be impossible to avoid all plastics, but the objective of the National Campaign is to significantly reduce single use plastics.
- d. *School Tree Planting* – The Chairman confirm that Kayleigh Nicolaou has approached several local schools to engage in a Tree Planting project. It is understood currently Stamford Endowed Schools is participating.
- e. *Cycling Provision* – Councillor David Taylor informed the meeting that the aspiration of Connect Stamford, a Community Interest Company, is to make Stamford the most cycle and pedestrian friendly Market Town in the UK. To achieve this goal work is progressing on (i) Infrastructure of footpaths and cycle ways to create a Green Wheel which circumnavigates Stamford; (ii) Link the Green Wheel to areas which could become traffic free zones; (iii) additional bike racks in the Town. But there is strong opposition to the proposed rack being suggested by LCC. There is also discussion with Stamford in Bloom to provide planters which will make the locations where bike racks are to be located more attractive. It is important that these bike rack locations are advertised to ensure that they are used.

5. **CHRIS FRENCH, WELLAND RIVERS TRUST PRESENTATION**

The Welland Rivers Trust was founded in 2010 by local people interested in improving the quality of the River Welland and its tributaries. The umbrella organisation founded in 2001 was the Association of Rivers Trusts with the broad aims of protecting, promoting, and enhancing freshwater ecosystems for people and wildlife. The Trust's work is important as 40% of rivers in England and Wales are polluted with sewage; 99% of rivers in Great Britain are impeded by artificial barriers. Globally, freshwater and wetland species have declined by 83% since 1970 and 25% are now at risk of extinction. With Climate change rivers need to be able to adapt to extremes for people, wildlife and is important for people's health and wellbeing. The river systems are being damaged and without intervention it will be impossible to repair the damage. Collaborative working is essential to achieve the objective to improve the landscape. The work undertaken in the Welland catchment is being used as a model that has now been replicated across other river catchments in England.

The current project of Stamford Millstream is a collaborative community effort to restore flow, increase biodiversity and improve amenity. There are visible improvements made to the channel at Melancholy Walk and Bath Row. It is hoped that with further community involvement on Habitat Management Days to clear the channels. Future projects planned - (i) To create a publicly accessible wetland area in old floodplain features near Hudd's Mill. In partnership with Burghley Estates, modifications will be made to the River Gwash to encourage water to spill into the floodplain and improve the Gwash confluence. (ii) Torpel Way Woodland a project for which fundraising is in progress to access improvements to river Welland and woodland east of Stamford. In partnership with Burghley Estates and the Langdyke Countryside Trust public access is being improved. (iii) Welland Memories Project is an initiative to gather folk stories, pictures, art and memories for an online and physical exhibition. Everyone is invited to participate and share their experiences with the river!

Councillor D Taylor highlighted one of the community aspirations of the Stamford Neighbourhood Plan is to seek an extension to the Priory Wildlife Site to include the land to the Southside of the River Welland and adjacent to Hudds Mill. Chris French is familiar with the location and is working with a Community Group to also protect the East Meadows which Burghley are supporting, however there are other landowners in that location who are less so, but it is hoped that collectively with other authorities lending support of this campaign to retain this vital green asset for the Town.

6. TRAFFIC

- a. *Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN)*– Councillor S Ford outlined issues that the traffic through Stamford is a problem as the ancient roads layout and designs are not able to cope with the modern level of traffic and HGVs. During the recent Covid Lockdown when St. George’s Street was closed to facilitate the refurbishment of the Mark & Spencer outlet, enabled residents to experience the benefits of a low traffic location. The restrictions did not appear to impact on other traffic movement in Town and prevented vehicles rat-running and speeding. As a result, it is hoped that an LTN could be implemented in the Town centre as it appears that such an initiative is supported by the Police as it reduces crime. However, due to the forthcoming elections there appears no way forward at present. It was noted that Connect Stamford are also lobbying appropriate bodies to drive this forward.
- b. *Car Free Days* – The Chairman suggested that this could be reviewed as the Covid lockdown is gradually being lifted. Councillor D Taylor believed that there are practical and physical constraints to consider. Developing LTNs should be a first step.
- c. *HGVs* – It is recognised that this is a growing problem in Stamford and causing considerable air pollution and reducing air quality. This is a Police issue and collaboration with both the Police and LCC Highways to implement a Community Speed Watch Scheme and introducing a number recognition system to identify the offending HGV companies. Following discussion, it was important to explore this matter further with Insp. Garry Stewart. Councillor Amanda Wheeler was willing to meet with the Inspector with the Town Clerk.
- d. *Electric Charging Points* – It was noted that the District Council has recently installed electric charging points in North Street Car Park and is currently rolling out the programme further.

7. GARETH DAVIES - MP

Gareth Davies appreciated the invitation to attend the meeting and expressed an interest in the initiatives being pursued. The Plastic Free initiative is one which he is willing to lend his weight in support to progress this further. The Water- Refill station and the Tree Planting are both very important projects and Gareth Davies would be willing to facilitate with introductions to contacts to move this forward. The presentation by Chris French highlighted issues relating to the River Welland of which the MP is aware and expressed a willingness to be involved with local projects. In respect of the LTN initiative is worthwhile but the correct balance must be achieved, however, he is willing to assist in helping to unblock an impasse. Electric Charging points is being rolled out in Stamford, but it is important that there is sufficient power on the Grid to support the need. Councillor Kelham Cooke also expressed support in respect of the initiatives being progressed and suggested applying to the SKDC Community Fund for the Water-Refill Station. The Chairman Councillor Amanda Wheeler thanked Gareth Davies and Kelham Cooke for their time and support.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 07 April 2021 at 6pm

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

(The meeting closed at 3.30pm.)