

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

NOTES OF THE CLIMATE ACTION WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2022 AT 6PM AT 'VIRTUAL' LOCATIONS USING VIDEO AND AUDIO LINK

PRESENT

Councillor Amanda Wheeler (Chair), Councillor Lisa Brewin, Patricia Stuart-Mogg (Town Clerk)

ALSO PRESENT Bruce Durham (Harborough Woodland Community Volunteers Natural Flood Management), John Polkinghorne (Sustainable Stamford), Ruth Butler (Rivers Trust), Nima Julius (Natural England), Simon Batty (Resident)

311. WELCOME

Councillor Amanda Wheeler welcomed all to the meeting and observed that this Working Group had not met for sometime due to people being away during the school holiday period, which was sadly followed by the mourning period for the death of our Sovereign.

312. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor David Taylor (Town Mayor), Councillor Joanna Winterbourne, Jane Bateman (Sustainable Stamford), Deanna Donovan (Sustainable Stamford), Michael Temple (Sustainable Stamford), Jenny Hall (Resident), Jim Irvine (Resident), Jane Rutherford (Resident), Kayleigh Nicolaou (Extinction Rebellion), Lauren Bennett (Langdyke Trust) had submitted their apologies. These were noted and accepted.

313. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15 June 2022 had been circulated and reviewed. There were no matters raised and the content was confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

It was noted that the Mercury monthly articles have altered and will be addressed later in the agenda.

314. TREE PLAN

Bruce Durham's background is climate change and water resource management for a company the UK and EU in Brussels. Mr Durham is co-founder of Harborough Woodland which is interested on increasing woodland cover in Harborough and improving measures to prevent flooding. It was noted that in general the country's rivers and waterways are in poor condition. Bruce advised that he had been involved for three years in increasing the population of trees in the East Leicestershire as the prevalence of flooding in the area is due to poorly maintained river catchment. Unfortunately, the latter is given low priority and together with the east of England is the poorest region for tree cover. East Mercia Rivers Trust is trying to assist and encourage voluntary groups to put in measures to address the extreme weather phenomena the country is currently experiencing. These include heat domes where the atmosphere traps hot ocean air like a lid or cap creating heat wave; and super cells, a type of thunderstorm, with a high propensity to produce severe weather, including damaging winds, very large hailstones, and sometimes weak to violent tornadoes. The increase in height of rivers is another issue. The Environment Agency expect the river Welland potentially to rise by 50% above the current level. Also, supporting larger organisations such as the Environment Agency, Rivers Trust and Anglian Water to identify elements which they need addressing. The local volunteers then create network connections with landowners or farmers on an informal basis to establish opportunities to help them to directly meet their needs by creating a bridge with the larger agencies. Building trust with landowners and farmers is very important. Creating a relationship takes time and should not be rushed. Recruiting local skills and professionals to support the work is most important.

Planting variety of native trees such as oak and beech as well as hedgerows with fruit and nuts all support biodiversity. Midlands Forest Network is a network partnership of the National Forest Company, Woodland Trust and Midlands's Engine that will under engage with local community groups to support their efforts in providing guidance to increase woodland cover. It was recognised that funding is a challenge and developing small pockets of community planting is a step forward. Councillor Wheeler confirmed that the Burghley Estate is in the process of planting a significant number of trees and the Stamford Orchard Group has also been recently gifted an acre of land for planting fruit trees. Planting hedgerows is a priority, for instance between the Town Meadows and the Freeman's Meadows and around the boundary of Stamford Cemetery. The urgency of Climate Change is yet to be considered a priority at all Council levels and it is important to engage with the community to energise activity. Flood management requires trees to be planted and working with the water authorities will support this measure. Nima Julius is a landscape architect dealing with Rural England and local councils and businesses, to identify pockets in small rural areas where planting can be successfully achieved. Following discussion, it was considered important to prioritise some projects and identify the key elements being addressed. Planting trees is of benefit, but not the sole solution and a variety of activities are required to tackle the climate problem.

315. UPDATE FROM SKDC CLIMATE ACTION GROUP

Councillor Wheeler outlined the results of the climate consultation. The feedback indicated that informed individuals were aware of the climate issue and how it had impacted their behaviour. Some households had introduced, solar panels, LED light bulbs and improved insulation. The feedback also raised issues of the volume of plastic packaging, reducing the use of cars, encouraging local public transport schemes, avoiding food waste, shopping locally and eating seasonal food. However, a large number were unaware of the Council's Climate Action Group, and it may be important to hold a public meeting to raise this subject. It is important to build a network with Ketton, Rutland and Peterborough. Simon Batty and Ruth Butler agreed to brainstorm and identify some joint activities which could be driven forward.

316. STAMFORD MERCURY MONTHLY COLUMN

The following schedule was reviewed for the Stamford Mercury monthly column on Climate issues:

- *October – Results of the Climate Consultation (Amanda Wheeler)*
- *November – Millstream (Lisa Brewin)*
- *December – Trees (Nima Julius)*

It was questioned whether Burghley could produce an article on their planting scheme. Councillor Wheeler agreed to take this forward.

317. OTHER FORTHCOMING INITIATIVES / PROJECTS / IDEAS?

John Polkinghorne observed that although there has been recognition that climate is a priority issue by both SKDC and the Town Council, there appears no public announcement of this fact. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council is in the process of changing all its lighting to LED, reducing plastic waste and sourcing supplies locally in order to reduce its carbon footprint.

318. ANY OTHER BUSINESS - None

319. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 09 November 2022 at 6pm

The Chairman
Closed the meeting at 7.30pm.