**Environment Committee**

**4 May 2021**

**7.00 pm - 9.00pm**

**(Via Zoom)**

**Minutes**

**Attendees: Cllrs. Simister, S Cox, Elsmore, Beard; Sarah Cheese, Felicity Herniman; and**

**Cllr. M Cox**

1. **Apologies** were received form Mr Walt Williams, and Debbie Sturgess.

Cllr. Simister also thanked both Kathy Sandles who has stepped down from membership of this Committee, and Cllr. Johnson who has resigned from the Council, for their commitment over the time they served on this committee.

1. There were no declarations of interest
2. There were no dispensation requests.
3. The minutes of 6 April were noted, and approved unanimously

**Cllr. Simister signed the minutes**

1. **To raise matters from the minutes of 6 April 2021**

There were no matters arising, other than items to be taken within this agenda

1. There were no members of the public present.
2. **To receive updates, and make recommendations re the updated Environmental Action Plan (see attached)**

Cllr. Simister presented the revised Action Plan, facilitating discussion focussing on priorities. The Plan was updated accordingly, and it was proposed, unanimously, that:

**Recommendation a)**

* **the agreed amended and updated Action Plan be adopted, and taken forward.**

**Note: It was noted that the revised Action Plan, accompanies these minutes, for accountability and ratification at Full Council.**

**7.51pm *Cllr. Simister had IT link issues, and Cllr. M Cox facilitated / chaired the rest of this meeting, including this discussion, further updating the presented Action Plan, as necessary, and accordingly.***

**Re: Green Spaces:** after discussion, it was also unanimously proposed that:

**Recommendations b) and c):**

* **b) this Committee, and Town Council, prioritise approaches within green spaces to protect and conserve their environment and biodiversity,** for example by establishing conservation zones in the Cemetery and Bells Field, reviewing mowing schemes.
* **C) This Committee should help set up voluntary working groups, to undertake practical environmental activities, not currently included in the Council’s maintenance contracts**. Examples of such actions might be: restricting brambles at the base of trees in the cemetery, planting/sowing to enhance wildflower range in Bells Field, address hedging gaps/care in Angel Vale. Where necessary, discussions with contractors would take place to agree plan of action.

**Re: Communications, and use of social media platforms,** after some discussion, it was unanimously the following **recommendation** was proposed that:

**Recommendation d):**

* **this Committee should explore, and broaden its means of promoting environmental issues and increasing awareness including via social media platforms such as Face Book, to further engage residents of the parish, and to gather views.**

1. **To make recommendations re Committee membership**

In light of the standing down of two members from this Committee and, after further discussion, Cllr. S Cox, proposed, and it was unanimously agreed that:

**Recommendation e): Cllr. M Cox, and Debbie Sturgess were invited to become members of this Committee.**

1. **To investigate Tree Preservation Orders, status, coverage and next steps**

Cllr. M Cox summarised, and reported that she felt there was an absence of data, across the parish, in respect of trees with TPOs. After further discussion, it was unanimously agreed that Committee members should suggest a small sample selection of significant trees across the parish, for investigation as to whether they had TPO status, and if not, check them against the criteria for TPOs.

1. **To report on information and advice from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and to make any recommendations deriving from that e.g. habimap, local wildlife sites, green strategies**

Gareth Parry’s Report was noted, and it was unanimously agreed to invite Gareth to a subsequent Committee meeting, to discuss his comments, and points raised, in more detail

**8.50pm: An extension of 20 minutes was proposed, and unanimously agreed.**

1. **To receive updates, and make recommendations re working group activities:**
   * 1. **Communications and Publicity**

Felicity Herniman updated on Newsletter draft, and this was to be finalised, following any further comments from Committee members,

* + 1. **Coleford Town Council Environmental Policy**

Cllr. S Cox updated on the draft two of the policy, and Committee members were asked to send in any additional comments at the earliest opportunity. SC will word the two amendments, agreed in principle, and all to be brought to June meeting.

* + 1. **Data collection re environmental audit**

Felicity Herniman reported on how wider groups, including in Stroud, were working, and also other research investigations including monitoring carbon footprint. This data collection was being brought together under the environmental audit information.

* + 1. **Volunteering**

Cllr. M Cox reported on possible opportunities, across the parish, for volunteer, neighbourhood groups being involved in allocated areas to enhance bio-diversity e.g. Bells Field (see recommendation c) above).

1. **To receive updates, and make recommendations (if necessary) re enhancing the town gateways**

Cllr. M Cox gave an update, reporting that she was still liaising with GCC Highways, before this work would be ready to be taken forward. The Spirit of the Forest had been installed.

1. **To receive updates re: wider FoD Environment meetings, forums and activity**

Cllr. S Cox updated on the Forest Food Growing Fair, and the Stroud meeting with CSE reporting on the work with Exeter University re: calculating parish carbon footprints (see 11iii above).

1. **To receive updates. and make recommendations (if necessary) re: implications of ash dieback across the parish**

Chris Haine reported that the ash dieback work needed at Lawdley Rd had now been commissioned.

**9.10pm Meeting ended**

**Appendix A**

**Revised Action Plan to be added**