**Environment Committee**

**7 December 2021**

**6.30pm - 8.00pm**

**Minutes**

**Attendees: M Cox, S Cox, Elsmore, & Getgood**

**Ms F Herniman, and Ms S Cheese**

**Chris Haine, Town Clerk**

**Public: Paul Rutter (invited Speaker)**

**In absence of Chair, Cllr. M Cox it was unanimously agreed that Cllr. M Cox took the Chair**

1. Apologies were noted from Cllr. Simister, Mr W Williams, Debbie Sturgess, and Deb Cook

**2.** There were no declarations of interest

1. There were no dispensation requests
2. The minutes of 3 November 2021 were unanimously agreed

**Cllr. M Cox signed a copy of the minutes as a true record**

1. **Matters arising from the minutes of 5 October 2021**

Cllr. M Cox updated on a number of items under Item 10, page 4: re Action Plan, and these were captured more fully under Item 12 of this meeting.

1. **Public Forum**

**There were no members of the Public present**

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| 1. **To receive comment, and professional advice from Guest Speaker:**   **Dr. Paul Rutter** | Plant life, Woodland  Give guidance on tree work  MC: Issues with our trees – Ash dieback. TPOs had to come down. Lots of storm damage in Lawdley Road, Bells and the Cemetery. Significant cost involved with tree removal. We’ve got four trees to replace. All were Ash within TPOs. Conifers and a Hornbeam in the Cemetery.  PR: Ash dieback. Lots on info on how the disease is spreading. Guidance from Forestry England, Woodland trust and the tree council all advise to please leave it unless it has to be removed because it may not die.  Some trees can recover in the second season. Time increment. If losing 50% of canopy – generally needs to be felled. Open growth trees have less of a threat and are under less stress so are surviving better and recovering. Younger woodland trees are highest risk. Fungus in dense damp atmosphere spread quickly.  Focus on these and less on the open. NB: The other Ash tree a Lawdley Vale that we have been advised to keep an eye on. On the side of the road. By footpath. Not far from play area, but not in play area. Could reach the Suds manholes if it fell. Has potential to reach the footpath. Honey fungus can speed up degradation. So higher risk of failure. Look at the base of the tree and check for fungal growth that may affect the integrity of the tree.  Recommended to use machinery not someone with a chain saw in case it is brittle.  If you can remove the leaf fall from around the base of the tree to reduce the fungal load. Realistically this is only possible in open areas anyway.  If a tree has to be felled. Try and retain 6-7ft stem. It could pollard and grow a lower crown.  Keep trees that are already on a pollarding cycle. Regrowth has shown to slow down fungal growth. Keep the pollarding going.  MC: Poolway Road. Notice from a number of people who had cut them back (reduced the crown by 20%) rather than cut them down. It looks like all those trees will have to go  New growth can fast track disease if the tree is not already in a pollarding cycle (10 years history of pollarding).  Affected trees seem to be dropping their leaves green…before they change colour. Keep an eye out for this. The longer they keep their leaves – the better health they are in. Generally changed colour, but don’t drop.  MC: What replacements should we be looking at?  PR: Silver birch – light canopy, grow fast, wind firm. Mountain Ash. Rowan. Field Maple (supports nature. Resilient). Lime (needs space. Good for bees). Forest is known for Small Leafed Lime – be lovely to keep this going. Not common in other parts of the country. Oak – we do need more but space is a worry.  Encourage Wych Elm – don’t plant near other Elms. Forestry England encourage replanting of Wych Elm. It’s a very good alternative to Ash.  Crab Apple – tidy, wind firm, nectar, tidy and small. Not a cultivar. Go for a Sawbus Domestica or Wild Pear. Wild Cherry. Hawthorn has a great value in natural eco-systems.  Hornbeam is okay – but not particularly native to this side of the country. Can be a bit thuggish and cast a lot of shade. Beech is similar to Hornbeam, but smaller. They like a lot of light.  Can build resilience by looking at different providence. Trees are weakened at the moment by land use and land management…soil damage.  MC: Looking a veteran and future veteran trees in the locality. We have TPO information. We need to find 5 or 6 before looking at more. Alongside NDP review. Blanket TPO not well received.  P: A veteran tree can be 100 years (Birch) 120 (plum), 2050-300 (Beech), 300+ (Oak). Bigger girth than others – stands out. Usually a Beech, Chestnut or a Horse Chestnut. Might show deadwood, hollow, corky bark or fungus. Valuable biodiversity. The older the tree (crustier), supports more microhabitats.  Look to Veternise trees (force ‘decay’ and aging process)  Recognise a tree and its potential and get the TPO before it’s too late.  **Recommendations proposed, and unanimously agreed**  **Recommendation:**   1. **Collect specific data seasonally on half a dozen trees then look at location, girth, canopy. Take pictures through the year. Contact landowners. Take those through TPO process. Then meet with the people responsible for trees and receive their input. Then open it to consultation in NDP review.** 2. **A long term element to the above (set up Tree specific working group)** | **Summary and Actions**  Keep an eye on this season and revisit next season If it has a good canopy cover – healthy this summer and a few signs of life. Is it high risk? (Dwellings etc)  Take photographs in May to see the impact on the tree.  Go back and compare alter in the summer.  Check the deeds. Who owns the tree in question?  League table for biodiversity. Paul Rutter to forward to Chris.  Set up working group to look into whole tree consideration. |
| **8. To receive and update: FoDDC Emergency Strategy / Action Plan** | * Cllr. Simister absent, with apologies, and to be deferred to next Committee meeting, in January |  |
| **9. To receive an update on the commissioning of the Environment Audit by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust(GWT)** | * Town Clerk has spoken to Gareth Parry. There’s no way this financial year. We could pay in advance if we need to spend this financial year * Could complete a representative audit. We need a specifically commissioned thing. We need detail of what he can do by March if possible – will also tie into NDP preparation   Town Clerk to go back to Gareth to ask, with this data what can be undertaken, and by when?  Looking for broad brush and quick wins.   * Are there any obvious gaps in the data we already have? * With regard to local green spaces and their locations – is there wild life corridor enhancement we could do? * What are our gaps and leakages? * Are there different sorts of bio diversity we should be looking at or different sorts of biodiversity we should be focussing on? What is the very valued we need to be looking after? * List of species they have records of in Coleford |  |
| 1**0. To receive an Update from the FoDDC Climate Action Group** | * Cllr. Simister absent, with apologies, and to be deferred to next Committee meeting, in January |  |
| **11. To discuss, and consider, Ash Dieback across the Parish, and tree work generally; to make recommendations, as necessary** | * Covered under Item 7 |  |
| **12. To receive updates, discuss, and make recommendations re: the updated Environmental Action Plan** | * Volunteer policy – copy so far * We really need to get going on this * TIC, Resilience volunteers. Logical to put forward general volunteer policy * Feeds into contract management * We need a risk assessment. Volunteers will have to inform Chris – brief risk assessment * We need to distinguish between contractor job – identification. Card on lanyard. Can we issue when volunteers   Aim for Feb – meeting of volunteer group. Lawdley road people. Volunteer policy in place in January.   * F1 – Active travel. Trying to encourage new cycle ways. Land owners have been spoken to. Need further discussions with more landowners. * Forestry – is this in principle ok? No report yet. Happening and waiting to hear. * GCC Highways. Big report on linkage on existing cycle path up crucible close to spirit of the forest and on from traffic lights to Perrygrove/puzzle wood (Bridge over road an issue). Then other side of Perrygrove up to Milkwall and perhaps Scar Bandstand. * They didn’t do what we asked for in breaking in down into sections. Total is 2.5mil (plus). We’ve asked for a meeting with the people who did it because it’s not what we asked for * We need to look at bus improvement plan for Gloucestershire. GCC – we need to know whether we’re on it or not | All members to look at volunteer policy. Email responses and thought to Marilyn  FH to go back to Deb Cook – does she have any risk assessments and policies. Can she email prior to next meeting so we can have a draft ready to go. Invite her to the next…4th Jan  Check in with John  Chris to look into insurance |
| **13. To receive an update from the Working Group looking at Environment actions, and implications re: maintenance contracts ready for Spring 2022** | * Councillor volunteers are required, as cannot just be undertake by members of the public |  |
| **14. To receive an update re: GCC Waste Local for Gloucestershire: Duty to Co-operate Scoping Paper: Consultation 2021** | * To be considered by Full Council, at December 21 meeting, to meet deadline | FH to circulate ASAP  Chris to get an extension |
| **15. To receive updates re: wider FoD Environment meetings, forums, Member’s activities, and to take forward actions into Plan, and make recommendations, as necessary.** | * SC: Forest Climate Group * Martin Brocklehurst (Kempley) – organising a meeting to explain about heat pumps to include local suppliers and firms who could do the work, people who have had positive and negative experiences in having it done, retro fitting, energy experts etc. * Do other councils want to get involved and send people? May have to think about moving it if the take up is too great. Use the Main Place? Cautious of cost involved in hiring the main place and who would fund this. Drop-in Day * Looking at Feb 22. Use our budget to facilitate events. 120 people for the whole day?   It was proposed, and unanimously agreed to progress event, through discussion with M Brocklehurst, as above   * Also on the main stage for Aurora Project. Hopefully people are geared up for it to start in December. Not heard much since * MB also happy to facilitate a meeting at Javelin Park incinerator. Have a look where our black bin waste is going. Waste leaders from both county and district councils. Would other councils be interested? Yes – Coleford would like to be represented |  |

**Meeting ended at 8.30pm**