**Environment Committee**

**Tuesday, 7 November 2023**

**6:30pm – 8:30pm**

**Council Chamber**

**Minutes**

**Attendees: Cllr M Getgood, Cllr C Elsmore, Cllr H Lusty, Cllr S Cox, Sarah Cheese, Fliss Simister**

**Laura-Jade Schroeder (Town Clerk), Laura Jayne (Assistant Clerk)**

**Public: Alan Cornock, Nick Adams**

1. **No apologies were received**
2. **There were no interests declared in items on the agenda**
3. **There were no dispensations requests**
4. **To take comments from the Public Forum**

Alan Cornock: Year ago issues began, lost trees etc. Hedgerows

Background in town and country planning

Over manicured nature of hedgerows

Wavy hedge been cut earlier in month – was full of wildlife

How to build back ecology that we are lacking, destroying where don’t need to and costs

Original planning permission identified these areas should be left

MG wavy hedge, yes. Message didn’t get back to contractor. Can invite contractors to future meetings to ensure all on same page and want the public to know what we are doing too.

An apology from the Town Council

Ensure the correct information, next year, work on communication.

TC: Caught in middle, by residents, one want cutting, one doesn’t.

NA: Does have to be some maintenance of a hedge

Once a year is fine, it depends when. Once berries gone. After Christmas / Feb would be ideal

AC: supposed to be wild, left to grow – NA: Still needs maintenance

AC: What is the Town Council approach? If we have firm policy, this is our starting point, residents are clear and can understand and we have defensive argument.

Identified as hedgerow for wildlife.

MG: detailed map can be clearly marked.

Tree policy workshop to take place

Alan Cornock and Nick Adams offered to help and be involved in the policy workshop

1. **The minutes of 12 October 23 were proposed, and unanimously approved**

**Cllr. Getgood signed, as a true, and accurate record**

1. **To raise matters arising from the minutes of 12 October 23**

Re: Bells Pond liner – Office has made contact with Fenella, who stated pond liner information should be on the system – office can’t find this.

MG: Need to get more quotes and appoint contractor to put liner in.

SC: Need to check if liner there – NA: checked but couldn’t see one.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To continue to get further estimates and as part of quoting for relining pond, double check there is nothing there at present.**

Re: soft plastic bin request for Cemetery – Co-op not yet come back – to follow up

Soft plastics bin - for all to go in black bin, Fliss to provide stickers for bins, stating all green waste in here.

Clearer signage, something on website.

Re: Wildlife area grass cutting - Yellow rattle helps to keep grasses down – Nick Adams to provide.

Sarah Cheese used yellow rattle, will see how it goes and collect more next year

Re: Volunteering – this happened at Cemetery, not KGV.

1. **To hear from Guest Speaker – Nick Adams (Kilmaha Ltd)**

Nick Adams: Bells in general positive.

Too far out of contract – grass cutting. Can take half away and put other half in smaller piles dotted around.

Balance cost issue with what you want to achieve.

Sew yellow Rattle or cut more

Twice a year in contract, but could come to some agreement.

Controlling weed between March and Oct, now cutting in December

Coleford pretty good.

Disservice with land management plan at Bells, too vague and contradictory. Starting on back foot. Nick happy to help with what needs to go in the contract.

Fertilising – contract but has never done and isn’t needed

Don’t add anything you don’t need to have

Will work with office

More trees around basketball court – Miniature forest

replace trees which have been vandalised. 3 Rowan, 2 paper birch.

Vandalism of trees is biggest problem + dog waste

Replace when broken, accept it.

Hump behind basketball court, mini woodland.

Mini woodlands, to be forwarded.

Biodiverse wood on small scale.

Hump would be perfect size.

Woodland creation: most parishes have small areas not doing anything with, that they could establish woodlands in. grants for woodland creation. Kilmaha can organise it from grant application to planting and maintenance. National. Half hectare to hectare. Odd corners to fill. Smaller green spaces. Tree cover, hedges. An element of high ground, scrub.

NA to give a more detailed proposal.

Missing bushes at front, NA: had priced to fill them. NA to reprice outside of contract.

MG: Whether we need to change the types of shrubs/hedges. NA knows people with that knowledge.

CE: Coalway road, GCC Highways say no. What areas would NA like to use.

Right hand side of AV, Cemetery, KGV.

Filing in hedge at back, with hedge on pump track.

AC: Could woodland scheme be on private land – YES.

Cllr S Cox: Suds at AV.

Think about what it will look like in 30/40 years time.

1. **To consider backing the Climate & Ecology Bill, and make recommendations as necessary**

**Recommendation: To support the Climate & Ecology Bill.**

TC: is everyone happy with wording? – Yes

CE: Planning to be involved. To be put on Agenda for Planning, to then go to Full Council

Planning - don’t want to cross over with Environment.

1. **To consider 2023/24 Budget, and make recommendations, as necessary**

£10k in previous years

Pond lining will come out of Bells Maintenance cost code, not Environment.

With biodiversity issues coming up, we may have to do more, which will cost more.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To request £10k to be added to the budget for the Environment Committee spend in the next financial year.**

1. **To review Cemetery matters, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

Volunteering working party has happened, another to be done.

Note: topple testing needs to be done

Graves with holes - Cllr S Cox to investigate.

1. **To review Bells Field Recreation Ground Environmental issues, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

Bells matters were discussed during item 7.

1. **To review KGV Environmental issues, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

It has been very wet, so volunteer working party haven’t been able to do what was hoped.

Need to clear behind club house.

Ash trees at top – need to be assessed.

TC: As part of tree audit, that is what will be included, but need tree mapping first.

Give Andrew various sections, as we have it, for him to get going on.

High traffic areas

Proposal concentrate on 3 bigger areas, can’t just be Cllr S Cox has to be others.

Fliss to help Cllr S Cox

Bells a good one to start with as we know more clearly what is ours,

KGV backs onto Scowles.

Need to be clear on boundaries, don’t need to count trees ourselves.

Andrew just needs to know the areas, gives a RAG rating. Gives us a plan to work with on each area.

**Recommendation: To commission tree audit to be done by the recommended contractor, at Bells, Cemetery and KGV first and later other CTC owned smaller areas.**

1. **To review smaller green areas, and to make recommendations as necessary**

Milkwall site, few trees by railway line – next area.

Once bigger areas complete, progress with smaller ones.

1. **To receive update on complaints received, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

There was nothing to report on.

1. **Update on Parish Tree activity, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

Tree Policy – MG: we don’t have a tree policy, looking at Monmouth County Council’s as template. Small working group of 3 or 4, to start looking at. A Cornock, S Cox, M Getgood, F Simister (if available), and Nick Adams happy to add knowledge to it.

Can be circulated and set up comments.

Meeting to be set within next month – email to be sent.

Also add hedgerow policy – AC

Lawdley Road, contractor will be involved in placement etc. Residents will take care of them.

Sylvan Close, Sarah Noons, form to be filled in, hedge from list. Hazel. 63ft length

Residents happy to look after hedge.

SC: Single species or multiple

Feathers – middle range.

Go for tallest else it will take too long.

AV Playground, limb snapped onto play area. Contractor has removed.

AV trees – contacted landowner, Jeff Wheeler (GCC) to visit them. Hoping to hear back this week.

1. **Update on Volunteer actions, and to make further recommendations, as necessary**

**Cemetery**

Already discussed.

1. **Updates on other Parish Issues with Environment implications, and make recommendations, as necessary**

Litter – making others accountable for problems they create through their trade. It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To support radical changes to make a litter legislation.**

1. **Updates re: wider FoD Environment meetings, forums, activities, and other environmental groups; to take forward actions into Plan, and make recommendations, as necessary**

Our Shared Forest – Forestry England

Informative, changes practices, diseased larch, putting in a wider range of species.

Pull brash onto muddy tracks, fertilises grass.

FOD CAP Cllr S Cox – 45 people, hopeful / inspiring. District council there.

Where does this Climate Action partnership go?

Spoke about actions should be exploring.

Communication is the biggest problem,

Cycle routes, S106 funding, because no definite policy things we cant do.

Facilitation and networking group.

Zoom tree warden meeting – free trees and do we need help with planting.

A lot about watering.

Tomorrow climate adaptation meeting.

Toolkit for parish and town council, in terms of actions.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the model Biodiversity policy issued by Andrew Maliphant**

Scrutiny meeting, CE, Nick Murray, organising lots, electric charging points.

A lot of plans but not much action.

Climate risk document issued by Marcus Perrin was discussed.

Local nature action plan was briefly mentioned. To go on next agenda for further discussion.

1. **To receive update on Environment Committee expenditure, and make recommendations, as necessary**

Monmouth Cut and Collect at Cemetery – c.£1k

Tree audit will come out of this.

1. **To receive update on Environment Tracker, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

Town Clerk updated.

**Meeting end: 20:07pm**