

## **WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020 AT 6.00P.M.**

**Present:** Councillors J Lloyd, M Lithgow, V Stock-Williams, M McGuffie, C. Booth, J Thorne, S. Pringle Kosikowsky,

**Also present:** 2 representatives of Transition Town Wellington. 1 representative of Wellington Wheelers Cycling Club

#### **1. Election of Acting Chairman for the Meeting**

**RESOLVED** to elect Councillor McGuffie as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

#### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tom Borg (PPLO)

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

#### **4. To Receive any Representations from members of the Public**

Councillor Lithgow asked Anita Roy of Transition Town Wellington (TTW) to give an update on their current work/achievements. She reported that TTW have produced a wildlife map of the Town and are also working on wildlife pollination and creating Longacre wild flower meadow. She and Helen Gillingham would like to invite 4 Councillors (adhering to Covid-19 Social Distancing Guidance) to meet them at the meadow to show what the volunteers have achieved.

Mike Pollak also reported on the support for Street Trees within the Town

#### **5. Footpath Report**

Councillor McGuffie (Chair), in Tom Borg's (PPLO) absence, confirmed that a copy of the report on the work of the Footpath Volunteer team had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor McGuffie (Chair) reported to the committee that Tom will be retiring in his role as PPLO and Martin Cooper of Somerset County Council will be taking forward recruitment for this position.

Councillor Lithgow asked for an update on the new path between Heritage Mills Fields and Crosslands – he will look into surface improvements.

Councillor Thorne raised concerns over the path WG 17/36 including issues with the surface and unsafe structures. Town Council Office to investigate.

Councillor Thorne asked if Somerset County Council had put in place a footpath diversion from Mills Drive, Cades Farm to Charleston House Farm – Footpath WG14/06 – further investigation is required with SCC.

## 6. Somerset County Council – Climate Emergency Fund

Councillor McGuffie (chair) would like to see the Council to put an application in to obtain a grant for £75,000. The following documents from Somerset County Council were circulated with the agenda: Climate Emergency Community Fund – “Your Questions Answered”, Climate Emergency Community Fund Application, Climate Emergency Community Fund Guidance for Applicants and One Planet Principles. Councillor McGuffie also circulated prior to the meeting, further information supporting the climate grant and footpaths. Within this, discussions were had on the ideas received from the Councillors to date.

Councillor Lloyd suggested the idea of “Living Walls” in the promotional space could be included in the bid for the Town Centre Emergency £100K fund.

Councillor Stock-Williams supported Councillor Powell-Brace’s suggestion of planting beds/flower tower in the area outside the Old Post Office and in front of United Reform Church.

Councillor Pringle-Kosikowsky supported the idea of the “Living Wall” as it would be long lasting – he asked that consideration to be given to this using the money from the Environment Budget.

It was generally agreed that it could be made into an educational project e.g. sensory/herb garden.

Councillor Thorne felt the Council would get support from SCC for the Street Trees but it would be worth putting in an application for two or three projects together. Given the number of other Parishes and Organisations applying to the fund, it is unlikely that the full amount of £75,000 will be awarded.

Councillor Stock-Williams questioned the cost of £3,000 for each street tree and ongoing maintenance.

Other concerns regarding the street trees were raised as follows: where they be positioned in the town and the affect on the current street lights, maintenance etc.,

Michael Pollak (TTW) said further due diligence was needed. At least three estimates need to be obtained from suppliers for the street trees, this needs to include type of railings e.g. wood

Other suggestions:

- 1) Purchase a plot of land where it would be easier to plant trees
- 2) Purchase small parcels of land between Rockwell Green and the Basins to include a cycle path. Councillor Stock-Williams asked that the Basin Volunteers are included with any further negotiations. Anita Roy of TTW expressed how happy they would be if the Town Council could possibly purchase this land. TTW would be very happy to offer advice on what trees to buy.
- 3) Pollution Monitor
- 4) Solar Powered signs

- 5) New digital notice board with pollution monitor – Councillor Thorne advised that the office building is Listed therefore the monitor could not be put there.
- 6) Cycle Path from Leisure Centre/Basins to Rockwell Green. Councillor Lloyd raised her concern over the path condition at Rockwell Green.
- 7) Disabled access to the Basins – Councillor Thorne said this could not be included in this application
- 8) Water Bottle Refilling Facility in Wellington Park – inexpensive and simple to do. Concerns were raised over the age of the plumbing and Legionella risk
- 9) Planting Fruit Trees – purchase in bulk and provide on application
- 10) Planting Trees in hedgerows
- 11) Carbon offsetting for Council activities – Calculating carbon cost for council/other local organisations: i.e. (refuse/reduce/reuse/repair/recycle)
- 12) Water Butts – purchase in bulk and provide on application

At this juncture, Councillor Thorne gave his apologies and left the meeting

## **7. To Consider Cycling Provisions**

Consideration was given to the current cycling provision and steps that can be taken to encourage cycling (including a possible cycle path to Taunton): Charles Biscoe, “Wellington Wheelers”, presented to the Committee, many ways sustainable transport would enrich Wellington. The first is to get impetus behind the Wellington to Taunton Cycle Path, to be built on the south side of the A38. It was felt that upgrading the existing footpath will bring cyclists into conflict with users of the footpath, Piccadilly Garage, Rumwell Farm Shop, Blackbird Inn, The Old Rumwell Arms and around 30 residence driveways. Councillor Lloyd replied to say the Town Council had part funded a feasibility study but nothing had progressed. The committee agreed that they whole heartily support the project but understands the length of time it will take to come to fruition. Charles Biscoe confirmed that the majority of the land was owned by the County Council. Sheppy’s Cider are in support of the project. Councillor McGuffie (Chair) said it would be useful if all councillors could put pressure on the County Council.

Charles Biscoe also made a number of other suggestions to support the environment:

- 1) Remove on street parking in the Fore Street, High Street, North and South Streets to make room for cycling
- 2) Open the path across the basins to cycling and provide cycle access linking to Courtfields School
- 3) Remove all the No Cycling Signs on the paths around Wellington
- 4) Provision of a behind-the-hedge path between Wellington and Milverton
- 5) Improve the meagre path from the Thomas Fox Development at Tonedale and the town but a 13% hill at the start means it is unrealistic
- 6) Improve and increase cycle parking provision in the town and at the schools

## **8.To Consider Land Parcels**

Parcels of land at The Basins are currently owned by the Crown. Councillor Lithgow said he would dedicate the time to look into this. Sally Stark at SWT was suggested as a good contact to obtain information/material. It was decided that due to the Town

Council's current staffing resources, it would be best to move this forward to January 2021

## **9. Tree Planting**

Somerset West and Taunton is offering Parish and Town Councils across the district free trees as part of its commitment to work towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030. The Council can make a bid for free trees up to the value of £50.00 to include stake, tie and guard. The Council had previously voted in favour of the bid. Councillor Lithgow will arrange collection of trees, planting and tree care. It is expected that they will be planted near the railway line.

## **10. Town Walk**

Councillor McGuffie to arrange a date to walk the town.

**RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the Environment and Open Spaces move forward with the application to the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency Fund led by the Chairman, Councillor McGuffie.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 6pm

The meeting closed at 7.30 p.m.