

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE
COMMITTEE HELD AT UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON
WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillor M McGuffie (Chairman)
Councillors C Booth, C Govier, and K Wheatley

In attendance: David Farrow (Town Clerk)
Councillor J Lloyd
Councillor J Thorne
Stephen Tate -Climate Change project Officer
One member of the press

443 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor M Lithgow

444 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

445 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023.

446 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

447 HERITAGE UPDATE

Amy Kemmish was unable to attend the meeting. Her report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted.

The Town Clerk reported that he had been advised that funding for the Heritage at Risk Team would in future be covered by the Levelling Up Funding that Somerset Council had received for Tonedale Mill and Toneworks. On that basis there would no longer be support available from the team for matters like the Rockwell Green water Towers and the Conservation Area. Councillor Lloyd suggested the Town Council make stronger links with Historic England.

Councillor Wheatley said that the Town Council should be seeking to engage more with the Levelling Up Fund work to help shape the outcome possibly through a working group. The Town Clerk reminded the meeting that the Town Council had agreed that it would set up a group to fill some of the gap left by the Wellington Mills CiC ceasing to operate and that he would convene a meeting in relation to that as soon as possible.

448 FOOTPATH UPDATE

Steve Saunders was unable to attend the meeting so there was no update provided.

449 GREEN CORRIDOPR ADVISORY BOARD

The notes of the meeting had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Town Clerk outlined the key elements of the meeting relating to the completion of the Biodiversity Audit which opens up the possibility of being able to utilise biodiversity net gain credits from developers to invest in the land, along with the developments taking place in the Community Farm.

He also referenced concerns from the Community Farm regarding dog walkers on the land and the detrimental impact that could have on the quality of the soil but also the health and safety of people working on the farm and visitors including school children.

Councillor Wheatley said he understood the concerns about dogs on the land the farm was on but was concerned that an email he had seen from the Community Farm seemed to suggest trying to restrict dog walking on other parts of the Green Corridor which would not be appropriate. Councillor Thorne agreed with Councillor Wheatley saying that any suggestion there should be wider restrictions should be nipped in the bud.

450 ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that progress was being made in relation to the Longforth Farm allotments in that whilst the transfer of land had not yet been completed Bloor Homes had given permission for the Town Council to fence the allotment area.

It was **RESOLVED**

- (i) To authorise the further expenditure of £460 for the hiring of skips for the Basins Allotments.
- (ii) To recommend to Full Council that, as officers had been advised by Somerset Council that the S106 funding that they had been hoped could be utilised to fund the set up costs of the Longforth Farm allotment site had already been allocated to the development of the Longforth Farm Junior Sports pitch development, The Community Infrastructure Levy funding received in relation to the Lidl development should be used.
- (iii) That potential developer funding should be utilised to explore options for the establishment of allotments on the south side of the town and/or the extension of The Basins Allotments
- (iv) To recommend to Full Council that within the Basins Allotments budget a £2,500 reactive maintenance budget be identified which the Town Clerk can utilise without seeking committee or Council approval.

451 WELLINGTON TO TAUNTON CYCLE ROUTE UPDATE

Councillor J Lloyd provided an update. The STANTEC Feasibility Study commissioned by Somerset Council had been completed and concerns had been raised about underscoring of the proposed Greenway route. Discussions had been taking place to address those concerns. The consensus of the meeting was that the Greenway route should be the preferred option.

452 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Town Clerk introduced Stephen Tate who had joined the Council on a temporary basis to develop an action plan to deliver the Councils Climate Change Strategy.

After some discussion it was agreed that a baseline carbon output for the town should be established based on residential and transport factors. Officers will seek quotes for carrying out that work.

453 BRIDGE BETWEEN WEAVERS REACH AND FOX'S FIELD

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quote of £1,650 from Gown Engineering to carry out a survey of the bridge to inform a decision about whether to seek to purchase it from The Crown Estate.

454 TONEDALE/RICHARDS CLOSE PLAY AREA

- (i) Footpath – officers were asked to obtain further quotes for installing a footpath as far as possible without affecting the tree roots
- (ii) It was agreed to place on hold the provision of any artwork whilst options were explored with local schools to provide artwork for the site.

455 RED PHONE BOX – TONEDALE

It was noted that this year was the centenary of the introduction of the red phone box and that the example in Tonedale was the last remaining one in Wellington. It was noted that it was sited on private land.

The Committee agreed that officers should explore how the Council could take responsibility for the phone box to restore it and bring it into some use.

456 TOWN CENTRE RAILING PLANTERS

It was **RESOLVED** to give the Town Clerk delegated spending power up to £1,000 to cover the cost of maintenance work required. To be funded from the 2023/24 Town Centre Projects budget line.

457 LANCER COURT FLOWER BEDS

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that it takes responsibility for the planting and maintenance of the flower beds at Lancer Court subject to reaching agreement with the landowner

458 TREE PLANTERS FOR TOWN CENTRE

A paper prepared by Councillor McGuffie was circulated at the meeting. After some discussion it was agreed that proposal would not be taken forward.

459 UPDATES FOR NOTING

The updates on the path at Weavers Reach, Gay Close Play Area and Tonedale/Richards Close Play area were noted.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00 pm

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Councillor M McGuffie
Chairman



SC HAR team Report to Wellington Town Council Environment and Heritage committee

13th March 2024

Heritage at Risk in Wellington

Author(s): Amy Kemmish

LUF Round 3 – A Vision for Tonedale

Somerset Council have been successful in receiving a provisional offer from the Levelling Up Fund Round 3. This offer was made at the end of 2023 based on our Round 2 application from 2022. We have provided further information around how our projects will require some amendments from Round 2, and have been in discussions with the central LUF team. We hope we will be formally awarded the £19.98m soon and can get started on the project properly over the next few months, though we have already completed lots of preparation works behind the scenes. The projects retain the same core focus to improve the condition of the Industrial Heritage of Tonedale. This large project will demand the full focus of the HAR team.

Toneworks – WTC Tours

Preparations are progressing well between the WTC staff team and SC and we hope to be in a position where WTC are able to make an exciting announcement of the upcoming tour dates very soon, with the first tours expected to start in April.

Toneworks – New repairs grant

We have been fortunate to be awarded a further repair grant for the Toneworks site from Historic England to be focused on Area R of the site (which if you have visited we would have referred to as the 'theatre space' due to the stage like floor inside. The relatively modest grant will be match funded by the LUF, should this be confirmed, and will help form part of that programme of works once up and running. In the meantime, it has allowed us to engage with a professional team and start designs for the re-roofing and structural stabilisation of this part of the site. We have also been able to commission some surveys and recording which will allow us to gain a better understanding of the roof and walls in this part of the site.

Toneworks – Bridgwater and Taunton College

We have been growing our relationship with Bridgwater and Taunton college through a series of meetings, including one with the Assistant Principal on site. The college are really enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by the site for a whole range of their students both in construction related courses and beyond. Initial discussion with our design team and Historic England, has raised many potential opportunities for the students to work on site, and possibly even some grant funding to assist the supervision and support required for the students. This would be a great achievement for a number of reasons but especially to be encouraging heritage sector experience and the development of trade skills needed in the heritage conservation sector.



Toneworks – Arts opportunities

We have also been hosting the creation of some artwork at Toneworks over the past few months. Sue, from Strode College, who is currently studying for a master's degree, has been using our site to create artwork using strips of cloth to 'soak up' and 'take on' the characteristics, colours and textures of the site at Toneworks. She has been back to check on her pieces recently and is pleased with their progress, some pieces have been taken away for her to use when creating her next work, whilst a few remain on site to continue to develop. We are really looking forward to seeing the finished pieces and hope there will be an opportunity for them to be displayed on site during the summer.

We have also been approached by another professional artist interested in photographing the spaces at Toneworks. We are currently exploring how we can manage these exciting requests going forwards.

Tonedale Mill, Grade II*, private ownership

We continue to meet regularly with the owner of the site and his team to discuss the urgent works required on site and its future. The time allowed for the owner to appeal / undertake the works stated in the S215 notice that we served on part of the site in August has elapsed. The owner has complied with various sections of the notices, however there are some works left to be completed. We are currently weighing our options and preparing to take further action. We have been in regular contact with the police and fire service following incidents at the site, and provide updates to the police when we receive relevant information.

In late February we served a Section 54 Urgent Works Notice at the site after securing some grant funding from Historic England. The notice requires the urgent repair of a large hole in the roof of Block B, located in the lower part of the site. We are in discussions with the owner about how they can undertake the works themselves. However, should they not start, and then carry on to complete, the works within a reasonable period, the Council are preparing to step in to undertake the works in default.

Historic Waterways

Historic England have now nearly finished their report to understand the historic significance of its features. We are just awaiting a final copy after the author has retired and will advise the Town Council when the published copy becomes available.

Wellington Waterways Feasibility Study

The project part funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority grant secured by the HAR team is progressing successfully, our consultants ARUP have now completed the baseline study information and options appraisal activities and have started work on the end product of the study, a feasibility report.



We have been working with Dave to ensure that WTC and groups in Wellington will be properly represented in our Steering Group and Community Forum which have now met a number of times at the Rugby Club. We have also undertaken a month-long public consultation which came to a close last week, the engagement of the community has been great and during some of our consultation sessions in the library we have had excellent conversations with members of the community. The feedback is now being collated and fed back to ARUP who will use it to help shape the feasibility study which will outline the opportunities for flood management and reducing flood risk at the mill sites as well as the local area.

The study is a holistic one, and therefore has gone beyond just looking at flood management to talk about wider opportunities in the local area including in placemaking, accessibility and ecology to name a few.

Enforcement cases

Rockwell Green Water Towers, Grade II, Private ownership

The outstanding costs of the clearance works completed under the previous notice by the council have now been fully recovered. The owner has also recently complied with the last S215 notice served in 2023.

Teare's Newsagents, Grade II and CA, Private ownership

This case is with the Enforcement Team at Somerset Council for progression.

Price	Support included	
£760 + VAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three hour-long online meetings with CSE. • Detailed walkthrough of Wellington town's carbon footprint, using CSE's Community Carbon Calculator. • Initial support from CSE to start identifying areas to take practical action, with CSE sharing relevant resources to begin planning the actions. This includes a simple action planning template. 	
£1140 + VAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three hour-long online meetings with CSE. • Detailed walkthrough of Wellington town's carbon footprint, using CSE's Community Carbon Calculator. • Initial support from CSE to start identifying areas to take practical action, with CSE sharing relevant resources to begin planning the actions. This includes a simple action planning template. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSE provide simple methodology to calculate the town council's own carbon footprint. This would include utility bills from any buildings owned/used, paper use, use of technology like laptops. CSE support with using the methodology. • CSE support with identifying achievable actions to go in a climate action plan and work with town council to start progressing some of these. • CSE support engaging the local community in climate action, sharing relevant tools and resources to do this and galvanise community action and conversations. • Three further hour-long online meetings to support with this.

Price	Support included		
£1520 + VAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three hour-long online meetings with CSE. • Detailed walkthrough of Wellington town's carbon footprint, using CSE's Community Carbon Calculator. • Initial support from CSE to start identifying areas to take practical action, with CSE sharing relevant resources to begin planning the actions. This includes a simple action planning template. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSE provide simple methodology to calculate the town council's own carbon footprint. This would include utility bills from any buildings owned/used, paper use, use of technology like laptops. CSE support with using the methodology. • CSE support with identifying achievable actions to go in a climate action plan and work with town council to start progressing some of these. • CSE support engaging the local community in climate action, sharing relevant tools and resources to do this and galvanise community action and conversations. • Three further hour-long online meetings to support with this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar/online workshop with town council staff and local councillors on climate change and its impacts, and inspiration for taking action. • CSE facilitating conversations with Somerset Council and Wellington Town Council, where this would help progress actions. • One to two online meetings to support with the planning/delivery of a workshop/meeting.



Hedgehogs R Us

Agenda item 10

Linda Cook
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YO433EX

HedgehogsRus@mail.com

Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this letter!

I am writing to all Councils, Parishes, Towns and Wards in the UK to ask them to take part in this amazing project!

Hedgehogs R Us Highway Project

With Hedgehog numbers in decline and Hedgehog awareness on the rise, there has never been a better time to get involved in Hedgehog conservation.

A Hedgehog Highway is a 5 inch gap in a fence and is essential in the battle to prevent the extinction of our endangered spiky friends. This gap allows them access to forage for food and meet mates.

Hedgehog shaped fence surrounds raise awareness to the plight of Hedgehogs, create a talking point and encourage others to take part in the project. Fence surrounds are made from recycled plastic and can themselves be recycled.

I am asking for each area of the UK to use a small portion of their assigned funds to purchase a box of hedgehog highway surrounds and make them available for their residents.

Each box of 50 is £150 and includes:

- * 50 Hedgehog Highway surrounds & 50 information leaflets
- * A display box & window sticker showing you are part of the project.

Ideas of how to benefit your community include:

- * Donate the Highways and leaflets to your local school to educate in wildlife conservation
- * Swap the Highways for a donation of Hedgehog food which can then be given to your local Hedgehog Rescue Centre



The project will be receiving a lot of publicity in the coming months via Social Media and I really hope that you choose to take part.

My dream is to make the whole of the UK one giant Hedgehog Highway and for that dream to come true, it needs EVERYONE to take part.

Money is donated to Hedgehog Conservation for every box sold too!

If you would like to order or have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch and thank you for caring.

Linda Cook, Founder of Hedgehogs R Us