



## Blockley Parish Council Environmental Sustainability Working Group Meeting

Minutes - Thursday 22nd July 2021 7.30pm, Paxford Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs - Clare Turner, Paul Baines, Jon Bryan, Kirsty Derson  
Cotswold National Landscape representatives Nik Sandars and Jerry Gould  
17 members of the public

Apologies: Charlie Mackinnon-Little, Rob Harrison, Emma Harrison, Andrew Goodrich-Clarke, Dana Delap, Jenny Lidsey  
Sarah Longbottom (Clerk)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received and excepted from Charlie Mackinnon-Little, Rob Harrison, Emma Harrison, Andrew Goodrich-Clarke, Dana Delap and Jenny Lidsey.

Cllr Clare Turner introduced the councillors, Nik Sandars and Jerry Gould.

2. Items for Any Other Business

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust update

3. Presentation from Parish Warden (Cotswolds National Landscape) Nik Sandars and Jerry

Gould

A 30-minute presentation was given detailing the work of the 330 volunteers at Cotswolds National Landscape across 50,000 hours a year. The organisation is split across 5 districts covering the area of national beauty area from Chipping Campden down to Bath. The parish of Blockley is in the 'North District'.

The work includes 'work parties', guided walks, educational activities delivered to primary schools, funding for warden proposed projects and the wardens working across the districts. The wardens work includes patrols and surveying of paths, removing simple obstructions, liaising with the parish councils and landowners/tenants and when required arrange work parties for large jobs such as walling, hedge laying, coppicing and the installation of gates, steps and bridges. Funding is mainly raised by the guided walks and donations and is spent with the objection of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Cotswold landscape.

Within the Blockley parish, there are 75 public rights of way covering approximately 34 miles. The new warden is Nik Sandars and members of the public are encouraged to report any matters regarding the footpaths to him directly to [blockleypw@gmail.com](mailto:blockleypw@gmail.com), the matter will be assessed and appropriate action whether by the wardens or referred to Highways department will be taken.



#### 4. Q & A for Parish Warden

Q: How much responsibility do the landowners have for the footpath?

A: The landowners are responsible for the infrastructure, the county council are responsible for the paths not to be overgrown and will contact the wardens to clear the paths. The wardens need the landowner's permission. County Council are to sort overgrown footpaths who will contact Wardens; the Wardens with the landowners and need permission. The route of the paths is sacrosanct and obstructions are illegal; gates must not be locked.

Q: Are there any initiatives for new footpaths?

A: There are 45,000 footpaths that are not on the definitive map, ramblers are regularly registering more paths. There is a current parliamentary petition to extend the existing deadline of 1st January 2026 to record historic paths onto Definitive Maps (as required by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) for a further 10 years until 2036. Recording a single path can take years, more time is needed to record them all, or there is a risk that they will be lost forever.

Q: When a new landowner blocks of an informal walk that has been walked for years, is there anything that can be done?

A: If you can provide evidence that the route has been walked for 20 years you can submit the route to the Definitive Map for registration.

Q: Is there anything that the councillors and wardens can do to reduce inconsiderate walkers who widen the footpaths and leave dog waste which causes sheep to abort pregnancies?

A: The wardens visit schools to educate primary aged children, the parish council website could hold more information for visitors to the area including the countryside code.

#### 5. ESG aspirations and discussion of local landowner's environmental objectives

Cllr Turner notified all present that BPC had in February 2021, declared a climate and ecological emergency and made commitments to review all work areas and decision-making processes. A strategic plan is to be compiled by the working group to list required actions, key performance indicators and time targets. The strategy will be presented to full council in September with a view to publishing the action plan week commencing the 20th September to coincide with 'The Great Big Green Week' and consult with the parish residents.

Landowners and residents were asked to think about any ideas that they have as by working together it will facilitate better funding opportunities and enhancement of biodiversity.

#### 6. Discuss opportunities to enhance biodiversity across the parish

Ecological consultant Mike Sharp spoke about initiatives that can be done to improve biodiversity in the parish. Examples given were, the pollinator strips of Mickleton parish, the belt of trees in Northleach to offset the carbon footprint and bat box opportunities. Further ideas were discussed such as perches for Kingfishers and effective management of roadside verges.



If residents or farmers have unproductive areas of land, Mr Sharp can advise them on maximising wildlife usage.

7. Parish biodiversity mapping

To maximise biodiversity, understanding and logging where the animals and insects are is required via an interactive map. A landowner shared his positive experience of the Stewardship Scheme which has promoted wildlife such as leverets which had been in decline on his farm. Another resident believed that the primary school could do butterfly counts and the secondary school may be able to develop the interactive map itself.

8. Green infrastructure consultation – update

CDC have a consultation closing on the 16th August, it has three key areas: well-being, water and wildlife. The parish council have agreed a response, all those attending were advised of the consultation for if they wished to submit a response too.

9. Suggested items for next meeting

- Speed limits in Paxford village.
- Improvement of footpaths to link the parish villages together and reduce the need for cars.

10. Any other business

- A visit from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is being planned.
- The long grass at Churchill Close due to the ground's contractor missing a fortnightly cut, whilst it proved how quickly flora grows it demonstrated the access problems that quickly occur and that and revised mowing regime needs to be effectively managed.

08.55pm Closed with applause.