



Blockley Parish Council Environmental Sustainability Working Group Meeting

Minutes – Wednesday 24th November 2021, 7.30pm, Paxford Village Hall, Blockley.

Present: Cllr Clare Turner, Cllr Kirsty Derson, Cllr Paul Baines, Mike Sharpe, Rob Harrison, Emma Harrison, Diane McCaul, Lucy Dale, Angela Aylemore and Freya Aylemore.
Sarah Longbottom (Clerk)

Apologies: Jon Bryan,

1. Welcome and apologies for absence were accepted from Jon Bryan.
2. The minutes of the meeting held on the 28th October 2021 were agreed to be an accurate account of the meeting.

Matters arising – (5 mins)

1. Road-side verge cutting is being pursued with the county council - OUTSTANDING
2. Thames Water are to be contacted regarding the management of the green space they own to discuss any environmental goals and opportunities to maximise the land management to generate improved biodiversity - OUTSTANDING
3. Electric Vehicle Charging Point consultation report

CT delivered an overview of the 89 responses to the consultation which closed on 21st November 2021. The full report is to be published on the Environmental Sustainability website page. The consultation has shown that there is an interest in the parish for electric charging point and that residents believe that it is important that the parish council addresses the issue. The working group are to arrange meetings with suppliers of charging points to establish feasibility and next steps to report back to full council.

4. Local, organic farmers to share their initiatives and tree planting scheme

Rob and Emma Harrison of Greystoke Farm described the location and history of the farm, they listed other sites that they farm in the parish as well as another family farm in Sedgeberrow.

The regenerative farming practices were shared with the aim to improve soil conditions and

biodiversity. Greystoke Farm has been fully registered as organic and is taking part in a pilot scheme with Arla Dairy to collect data from 9,000 farms across northern Europe; the scheme is also being ran in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands. The scheme is to improve the roots of the soil, no longer use synthetic nitrogen and generate environmental and economical benefits. New planting schemes are being done mixing crops such as barley oats and peas together. Water retention is also a consideration.

The global issue of climate change was discussed and the Harrison's views on the impact that farming has and solutions that farming can provide.

A Farming Protected Landscape grant has been received and has allowed for a 12-acre field on the farm to be planted with rows of 200 to 250 mixed species trees including, apple and nut varieties. The Harrisons discussed working with the parish council to promote the tree planting on the 15th January 2022 and generating a community event. CT is to discuss the direct marketing of the event and promotion to the wider community groups.

An open discussion included:

- methods to demonstrate any future improvement in biodiversity on the farm using surveys of bats and bees,
- the impractical scale of the Governments pledge to plant 30 million trees - every year by the end of the next Parliament in 2025 due to the lack of land and limited tree availability,
- the global momentum from the ground upwards that the farming industry is experiencing and the belief that Governmental conditions will be determined in the future by nature,
- the changes in consumer habits and purchasing of higher quality, locally sourced products.

5. Upcoming events

- COP26 What does it mean for the Cotswolds? 25th November 2021, virtual, 1:30-2pm (CT is presenting about the BPC climate and ecological action plan)
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group hedge planting workshops

6. Suggestions for future considerations of the working group

- Coordination of other environmental council groups and initiatives, CT to follow up with Vale of Evesham.
- CT has submitted an article to The Voice parish magazine to publicise the work of the ESWG.
- 10 Bat boxes are being donated by Swift Ecology Ltd, grant applications to support this offer are to be researched.

7. Next meeting: 27th January 2022

Meeting closed at 20:40pm