

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 18.00 on 27th June 2022 in the Town Council Committee Room at Northampton Guildhall

PRESENT: Councillors Stevens (Chair), Joyce, Miah, Soan and Tarasiewicz

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs C Robertson-Marriott from the Climate Change Forum

OFFICERS PRESENT: S Carter (Town Clerk), J Thorneycroft (Assistant Town Clerk) and J Haines (Events and Projects Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been submitted by Cllrs Alwahabi, Ashraf, Choudary, Haque and Meredith

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 4TH APRIL 2022

RESOLVED: That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting.

4. NORTHAMPTON IN BLOOM

Mrs Robertson-Marriott from the Climate Change Forum gave a brief presentation about the installation of a renewable planter. The Assistant Town Clerk then gave a broad update on bloom.

Mrs Robertson-Marriott explained that the Climate Change Forum had been discussing the idea of a renewable planter made from recycled wood, to be planted with sustainable plants, perennials with a shrub centrepiece with compost from allotments. The flowers would last around five years. The idea was to trial it and see how it worked. Mrs Robertson-Marriott explained that Workbridge had been approached about building a planter and had agreed to at a cost of approximate £50. Subject to permissions it was planned to put the planter on Abington Street at the junction with St Giles. The Council planned to enter Britain in Bloom in the coming years and the partnership working and sustainability of this planter would be a benefit. The committee supported the idea and asked that some sort of information board be included to give information about the project.

RESOLVED: That the Council pay for the planter, plants and associated costs from the Climate Emergency Budget.

The Assistant Town Clerk gave a brief update on the broader bloom project. She explained that the contract the town council had inherited was still being unravelled, but that plants were in place and the feedback had been very good. The plan was to plot the planters etc. on a GIS map so officers had a record of all their locations. IT was further noted that officers and councillors would be promoting the bloom project at the upcoming Town Show.

Cllr Joyce stated the feedback from Eastfield Ward residents had been very positive and he thanked the officers for their work.

The Clerk stated how difficult it had been for officers to sort out the bloom project. The complexity of the different contracts, the planting, the permissions etc. meant that this project was extremely intensive. The Clerk praised and thanked the Assistant Town Clerk for the great work she had done on this. The Committee echoed this view.

5. ENCOURAGING BLOOM COMMUNITY GROUPS

It was reported that a recent Bloom Sub-Committee had recommended encouraging community groups to approach their local councillor about funding for bloom related projects through the councillor grant scheme. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that as a result the Town Council had produced a leaflet encouraging community groups to apply to councillors for councillor grant of £200 for bloom projects, i.e. planters, plants etc. Councillors could choose whether they wanted to support it.

NOTED

Cllr Joyce left the meeting as he had to attend another meeting.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM AND ZERO CARBON PLAN

Circulated with the agenda was a zero carbon plan intended to act as a starting point for discussion. The plan is attached at appendix A.

The Chair, who had drafted the plan, stated that a plan was needed to inform the Town Council's decision making going forward. For example, it would be referenced in the Council's procurement process.

The consumption footprint tables for Northampton were of particular interest to the committee. The tables calculated average emission for a specific geographic location, the ones included were for Northampton.

Members agreed that the document was a great start and would require further scrutiny at a future meeting.

NOTED

7. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES GRANTS SCHEME

Circulated with the agenda was a draft protocol for Environmental Grants. It was explained that that at the last meeting, the committee agreed to look at establishing an Environmental Grants Scheme.

The Chair had taken this and developed a scheme as detailed below for your consideration.

Environmental Grants Scheme

Northampton Town Council, via its Climate Change Forum, which is a sub-group of the Environmental Services Committee, wants to encourage, support and promote volunteer and other organisations such as community groups, charities, faith groups, friends' groups, & schools within its area to apply to a specific Climate Change Grants Scheme.

This Scheme is part of the Town Council's commitment to reduce emissions locally, due to the widespread challenges and increasing threats posed by Climate Change to the town's residents.

Small or large, your green ideas can have a big impact.

Any decision to award a Climate Change Grant following an application being submitted will be decided by the Climate Change Forum at its regular meeting, and the policy below is designed to act as guidance for both applicants and Councillors who may wish to support such an application.

There are 3 levels of funding available up to a maximum of £5,000 for 'practical green ideas' in these areas:

- *Climate Emissions – Reduce carbon emissions and other climate warming gases, reduce households' carbon footprint*
- *Energy – Reduce consumption of energy, install low carbon or renewable forms of energy*
- *Transport – Reduce the amount of miles travelled by fossil fuelled personal transport, increase cycling, walking and use of public transport*
- *Biodiversity – Increase, restore or enhance local biodiversity and wildlife*
- *Climate Change Mitigation – Reduce urban heat levels & water consumption, and reduce threats from flooding, increase local sustainable production of food or goods*
- *Waste – Minimise waste, enhance reuse and recycling*

Other key considerations for the Forum in deciding on which applications to support include:

- *Will the project increase awareness & education on climate change, and support behaviour change towards cleaner, greener ways of living?*
- *Is the project aimed at encouraging the local community to use renewable sources of energy, to reduce their energy use in homes, businesses, modes of travel and elsewhere?*
- *Does the project promote a wider community involvement and active engagement in environmentally aware behaviour change?*
- *Does the project have other spin-off benefits such as air pollution reductions, improved personal physical health and/or psychological well-being?*
- *Is there potential for longer term, environmental benefits from the project?*
- *We will not accept applications from individuals, or commercial organisations which aim to generate a profit*
- *Organisations may only apply once per calendar year for this grant*
- *Due to budget limitations a smaller amount than that applied for may be offered as a grant*
- *Grants will not be awarded to cover costs that have already been incurred.*

What levels of funding are available?

- *up to £1,000 (for small projects that are 'ready to go' and which fit the criterion of being most definitely a 'practical green idea with likely benefits to the community')*
- *up to £2,500 (more detailed information about the likely amount of emissions reduction or specific diversity gain is required from the applicant)*
- *up to £5,000 (in this category, we require applicants to contribute an equal amount of match funding to enable support for larger projects).*

The Scheme is a new venture for the Town Council, and we want to keep it flexible to encourage potential applicants. However, as a prompt for local groups and organisations to use their imagination, below are some projects that other Councils have awarded grants for:

- *Schools working towards the development of cycling and walking activities.*
- *Organising carbon footprint training for community groups.*
- *School and community groups developing food waste composting projects.*
- *Organising active travel events to encourage more low emissions travel, such as E-bike events.*
- *Friends of open spaces such as parks, or street residents associations implementing a community project.*
- *A school becoming a single use drinks bottle plastic free school.*
- *Solar PV systems installed at community facilities.*
- *Local community food sustainable growing and distribution schemes.*
- *A Community Centre replacing existing lighting with LED.*

- *Tree, hedgerow or perennial wildflower planting, especially in areas that are now concrete and tarmac 'deserts'.*

How To Apply

Please complete the application form – Climate Change Grant Application FORM (LINK required)

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, until the annual budget has all been allocated (that is, there is no date deadline by which to submit).

PLEASE NOTE that the Northampton Town Council area does not include these areas of the town that have their own Parish Councils:

Billing, Duston, Collingtree, East Hunsbury, Far Cotton and Delapre, Great Houghton, Hardingstone, Hunsbury Meadows, Kingsthorpe, Upton, West Hunsbury, Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor.

The Clerk stated that it would need to be managed in parallel to the existing Community Grants Scheme and that it was advisable that any recommendations come to this committee for approval. It was suggested that the Climate Change Forum consider an applications and make a recommendation but that the Environmental Services Committee formally makes the decision.

RESOLVED: To adopt the Environmental Grants Scheme as detailed above.

RESOLVED: That applications are considered by the Climate Change Forum who in turn make a recommendation on each application to this committee.

8. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE

The Town Clerk briefly updated members on the allotments situation. He explained that the allotments were still being managed as part of the contract between WNC and IdVerde. No formal agreement between the Town Council and WNC had been concluded and WNC had not pursued it.

Costs with regards to utilities etc. were not consistent and it was unclear what WNC were paying for and what was being passed on. The Town Council were getting water bills for some sites but not all. Repairs continued to be carried out by IdVerde though no cost had been passed onto the town council.

The committee agreed to continue to monitor the situation.

NOTED

THERE BEING NO MORE BUSINESS THE MEETING ENDED AT 19.25 HOURS.

Signed.....Chair