

Minutes of a meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT** Committee held on Thursday 3rd September 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT: Councillors Andy Long, David Powell, Richard Reading and Chris Wells.

Also present: Cllrs Roy Iremonger and Mike Smythe
Linda Butcher – to take the minutes in place of Parish Clerk
Twelve members of the public

ELECTION OF A TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN

Cllr Andy Long, Chairman of the Parish Council volunteered to chair this meeting as no other councillor had put themselves forward.

RESOLVED to elect Cllr Andy Long as temporary chairman of this meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

00155 Cllr Karen Cook – holiday
Jackie Cottrell – family bereavement

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee meeting held on 21st May 2020

00156 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2020.

Matters arising from these minutes – None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman suggested that those members of the public present for items 10-1 to 10-4 concerning requests from the Wild about Warbleton Group would perhaps like to speak during these items rather than during Public Participation and invited any other items to be spoken of now.

Janet McInnes asked about the footpath routes within the parish and surrounding parishes where five kissing gates and a number of ladder stiles had been installed. She said that Matthew Harper would like to meet with someone from Warbleton Parish Council so this work could be extended. The Chairman suggested that he email the Parish Clerk.

Jonathan Austin suggested that any wilding of the verges should be tempered with highway safety if verges and hedges are not being cut. He said the one metre strip should be cut more regularly to give more safety to pedestrians. He suggested that if you want wildflowers someone will have to do a hay cut once every year. With regard to Rushlake Green Village Green he said this needs to continue to be maintained for events to be held.

ENVIRONMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GUIDANCE

For the benefit of the public present Cllr Andy Long read out the details as per the Council's Delegation Arrangements for Standing Committees and Officers, Terms of Reference for Committees and Working Groups WPC9 document as adopted by the Council on 5th March 2020.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Andy Long **AGREED** to continue as Chairman on a temporary basis.

CHAIRMAN REPORT ON WEALDEN'S TOWN AND PARISH CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION DAY

The previous Chairman of the Environment, Cllr Chris Wells, had stood down as Chairman so did not attend this event [which was held virtually] but Cllr Roy Iremonger did attend [virtually] and had previously **AGREED** to report back on the day.

Cllr Iremonger reported that he had been quite inspired at the end of day and confirmed that there is a climate emergency. There is a need to plant more trees, wildflower meadows, compost more and ensure there is more dialogue to work with farmers. We need more appropriate public transport to encourage people to drive less and the environment should be on a main Council agenda.

One of the key issues is to persuade councillors that this is urgent. The biggest threat to the planet is that "someone else will save it".

The Chairman then invited Councillors to comment or ask questions and it was generally agreed that this should be discussed by full Council and Cllr Iremonger confirmed that there would be a full report on Wealden District Council's website and this should be included on the Parish Council website too.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Iremonger for attending this event and for reporting back to Council.

CLERK REPORT – this item was deferred as the Parish Clerk was not present for this meeting.

TO DISCUSS THE REQUESTS OF THE WILD ABOUT WARBLETON GROUP

The Chairman confirmed that this was the part of the meeting where the members of the public involved in the Wild About Warbleton Group would be permitted to speak.

To support the five proposed new routes for conservation adoption
WPC to submit the proposed new routes to ESCC before November 2020
To support the proposed exhibition at Bodle Street and Rushlake Green village halls

The Chairman advised that not all Councillors know where the five routes are and Julia Desch gave details:

1. Inter-parish route from A271, Joes Lane to Burwash
2. Transverse route starting at White Horse Road, Shrikes Lane, Summertree and Iwood
3. Iwood Lane to Trolilloes
4. South of Rushlake Green Village Green to Cowbeech Lane
5. Chapman's Town Lane

Julia Desch confirmed that this was a 'whole community proposal' and the following actions had already been carried out or investigated: 120 letters had been dropped along the routes, ESCC would not cut verges in mid-summer unless there were safety issues but the County Council would cut them at the end of season. James Newmarch, who is an ecologist, was the Officer who had been speaking to the Group about its proposals. Rushlake Green Village Green had not been included.

The Chairman stated it was his understanding that the Group would like the support of Warbleton Parish Council and advised that this could be discussed at the Council meeting on either 15th October or 19th November.

Julia Desch confirmed this was the case and that draft surveys had already been given to James Newmarch. Caroline Thompson is preparing a presentation to which the Group will add physical papers.

Julia Desch confirmed that with Covid restrictions the group would wish to do exhibitions in both village halls and they were asking the Council to join members of the Group and support it with James Newmarch.

There was then a discussion between Members of the Committee and it was **AGREED** Councillors need to see the exhibitions, preferably together so discussions could take place.

- 00157** **RESOLVED** that the Environment Committee supports Wild About Warbleton hosting Exhibitions in both village halls and that all Members of the Council should attend so the matter can be discussed at Full Council.

To arrange a site meeting to discuss Rushlake Green Village Green and surrounding verges at Rushlake Green

Julia Desch expressed concern about the condition of the Village Green and asked if mowing could be suspended to give it time to recover.

It was suggested that the Group should present evidence at the exhibition so the Environment committee could consider and then make a recommendation to Council, however, it was noted that the Council does have a contract for the mowing of Rushlake Green Village Green.

Julia Desch advised that they had already submitted photographs of the damaged caused.

- 00158** **RESOLVED** to defer this item until after the exhibition.

It was **AGREED** the Council would publicise the Exhibitions on the Council website and suggested that the Rushlake Green Village Leaf might also advertise it.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee needs to know the date of the Exhibitions before setting the date of the next Environment Committee meeting but it was likely to be late October or early November.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting and also Cllr Roy Iremonger.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm