

REPORT of the Meeting of the
Environment Committee held on 3 September 2019

- Present: Cllr Matt Stringer (Chairman)
Cllr Clare Fardell
Cllr Guy Rawlinson
Cllr Angela Symonds
Cllr Jayne Stansfield
Cllr Martin Trueman (arrived late)
Cllr Pam Shipp
- Felicity Harrison (Sustainable Thornbury)
Brett Harrison (Composting Site, Filnore Allotments and Woods)
Judith Hurford (Tree Warden)
Chris Hurford (On behalf of Tree Warden)
Cllr Bob Griffin (as member of the public)
Cllr Clive Parkinson (as member of the public-arrived late)
Jeff Pead (Thornbury Ramblers)
- Wendy Sydenham (Deputy Clerk)
Hannah Cornford (Minutes)
- Absent: Cllr Eva Fielding
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1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public addressed the committee to bring to their attention work that had been done by a neighbour to the trees on a piece of land owned by Thornbury Town Council which he felt was not of a good enough standard. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would write to the neighbour to ask them to stop any cutting back of the trees and the tree warden would visit the area to assess the work done to the trees.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. TO DISCUSS ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2019 INCLUDING

(e) Issue relating to land adjacent to Ashgrove (taken out of order)

The Deputy Clerk is continuing to look into granting a license between the resident and Thornbury Town Council.

(a) Fairtrade – Update

Cllr Fardell had checked the businesses in the leaflet and it was agreed that it was important to check the information provided was accurate. Cllr Fardell explained there had been difficulties with maintaining consistency in Fairtrade work at South Glos Council as a number of people had stepped down. Action was now being taken and Cllr Fardell would help to progress matters.

(b) Seating in the Town

(i) Seating along Streamside Walk – update

The Deputy Clerk reported to the committee that two possible locations had been identified, both with good visibility from the road, which the police had felt was important to deter anti-social behaviour. The Deputy Clerk would continue to liaise with South Glos Council to obtain a license for a seat.

(ii) Moving of seat at junction of Oakleaze and Gillingstool - Update

The deputy clerk reported that all utility checks had been carried out successfully and work was ready to commence. This will happen when the ground softens up and is easier to dig, dependent on staffing capacity but hopefully in October.

(c) Walks Booklet

Jeff Pead reported he had followed three of the walks and the booklet needs updating. He was making notes on how to rewrite the text.

(d) Solar Panels on Pavilion - Update

The deputy clerk updated the committee that we are now fully registered. It was agreed this item could be taken off the agenda.

5. TO CONSIDER MATTERS IN PROGRESS AND NEW ISSUES

(d) Rights of Way Liaison Group (taken out of order)

Cllr Guy Rawlinson volunteered, as Footpath Warden, to represent the Committee. Cllr Stansfield proposed this, with it being seconded by Cllr Stringer and it was unanimously agreed.

(a) Zero Carbon Town

A representative from Carbon Action Thornbury (CAT) presented to the committee their plan for action to tackle climate change. They were looking for the council's support with the initiative, which they were planning to launch on the 2nd November 2019. Their vision was that Thornbury should have zero carbon emissions by 2030 and wanted homes and businesses to be ready for the change. They highlighted the role that Planning would have in this, for housing, electric charging points and energy.

Cllr Griffin asked that copies of the presentation were circulated to the council and Cllr Fardell offered use of the Council Chamber for meetings. Cllr Harrison asked that when a paper is produced for Council to consider, that they includes examples of any other Councils that have taken this initiative and the first steps they took.

(b) Poulterbrook environmental area

A paper was presented and to accompany it, the Deputy Clerk explained she'd met with the biodiversity officer from South Glos Council. She had explained the difference between native wildflowers, which would require less work but also be less colourful than non-native flowers which would require frequent re-seeding. It was noted that the outdoor area would need a clear understanding of what maintenance would be necessary and that they would be able to accommodate this additional work. It was noted that they had already cleared an area to be seeded. He also requested that the trees planted should all be indigenous. The Deputy Clerk will speak further with South Glos Council to ensure we understand the details of what we need to do to allow us to make decisions on what to purchase and maintenance requirements. Cllr Rawlinson proposed that the committee take the proposal with agreed amendments to full Council, which was seconded by Cllr Stansfield and unanimously agreed.

(Cllr Martin Trueman arrived during this item)

(c) Perennial planting in Pullins Green raised beds

The Deputy Clerk had received a letter some time ago from residents wanting to hand back the maintenance of the large beds opposite the car park. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should contact South Glos Council to enquire about perennial planting and Judith Hurford, Tree Warden should be allowed to plant a tree donated by local residents. Cllr Trueman queried the detail of the contract we have in place with South Glos for what they are currently paid to do. It was agreed that we should review the contract and clarify.

(e) Chat benches

The police had wanted to trial this scheme where a sign is placed upon a bench that invites people to sit there if they are happy for people to sit and start a conversation with them. The police wanted to use the bench outside Prezzo. Cllr Bob Griffin felt it should be trialled and there was support around the table. It was agreed this would go ahead.

(f) Draft Plan for Medieval Fishponds

The Deputy Clerk summarised the situation and requested that one person should represent the committee as a non-voting member on the Community Interest Company and feed back comments on the draft plan. The fishponds being within his ward, Cllr Rawlinson proposed that he be the nominated person. Cllr Stansfield seconded this and it was unanimously agreed. Cllr Rawlinson requested that if councillors should have any feedback on the draft plan, they should pass it to him.

(g) Consultation on South Gloucestershire Council's Resource and Waste Strategy for 2020-2013

It was agreed that the Committee felt strongly about this issue and that the Deputy Clerk would fill in the questionnaire on behalf of the committee, with the chair to support as necessary.

(h) Request for dog bin in Tyndale View green space

The Deputy Clerk reported she'd received an email from South Glos to say they had received feedback that residents wanted a dog bin in this area. If the committee buy a bin from them, they will charge to empty them along with our others. The cost of a bin was £380 or for a joint litter and dog bin, it would be £480. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would request the installation of a dog bin only.

(Cllr Parkinson arrived)

(i) Donation to fund for replacement tree

Cllr Stringer proposed that the committee donate £25 towards the cost of a replacement tree for Grovesend Roundabout, where one had recently been destroyed in a traffic incident. Cllr Martin Trueman seconded this and all were in agreement, although Cllr Trueman also queried whether the cost could be claimed back if the individual responsible is prosecuted. Cllr Rawlinson supported claiming back the cost and asked the Deputy Clerk to investigate this.

(j) Schedule of Tree Works

The schedule of tree works had been circulated and the Deputy Clerk updated the committee that works would start during the week commencing 16.09.19. There would be a further update at the next meeting, by which time works would be underway. Cllr Rawlinson queried whether the schedule contained all of our trees to which the Deputy Clerk responded that it only contained the ones that need work. She would check whether the tree which had previously been complained about overhanging Thicket Walk could be added.

(k) Schedule of minor matters

There were updates on some of the items in the table. The blocked drain had been passed to the drainage team at South Glos Council. The dried up stream had been inspected and the water level had now risen. The fish were not thought to be affected. The overzealous clearing of pathways was now with the tree team.

Cllr Parkinson requested another item be reported; the drain at the bottom of Quaker Lane by the zebra crossing is full of silt. It will overflow when we next have bad weather. The Deputy Clerk would report this.

6. TO RECEIVE UPDATES ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

(a) Operational matters (Heritage Open Doors/hanging baskets)

The Open Doors Event needed more volunteers. Cllr Stringer offered to cover the 12-4pm slot if there were no other volunteers. The hanging basket watering would finish at the end of this week. The Deputy Clerk reported that despite staffing and van issues, the watering team had done an excellent job under the circumstances, which was echoed around the table. Cllr Rawlinson requested a public thank you from the committee.

(b) Community Composting Site Report

Brett Harrison reported that they currently had a keen group who had recently undertaken a comprehensive survey of users. They were pleased with the level of donations received in their on-site cash box.

(c) Filnore Allotments Report

Brett Harrison was pleased that the biodiversity board had recognised the value of the site. A new member who is a woodworker had made them a new gate.

(d) Filnore Woods Report

Brett Harrison referred the committee to the online blog for recent news.

(e) Tree Warden's Report

Judith Hurford had spent time with the biodiversity officer from South Glos to determine where to plant another 1,500 trees. The planting would commence in December 2019 and further details would be tabled at the next committee meeting.

(f) Sustainable Thornbury Report

Felicity Harrison stated they were helping with the Neighbourhood Plan and all was progressing well.

(g) Footpath Warden's Report

Cllr Rawlinson explained issues with a noisy gate in Lockridge Lane. He had taken action to try and get the gate deadened or removed until such time it is needed for containment. This was ongoing. He noted there had been a number of minor diversions which was routine.

(h) Thornbury Rambler's Report

The group now had around 110 members and their AGM was approaching.

8. AT END OF MEETING/7.50PM APPROX.

PRESENTATION BY THE TREE WARDEN ON THE TREE STRATEGY GROUP DATABASE

On behalf of the Tree Warden and the Tree Strategy Group, there was a demonstration of a new tool that had been created which mapped the location and details of all their planted trees on a Google Map database. Trees were signified by different coloured markers to denote their species. The Committee agreed that this was a very useful tool and source of information.