

Sandridge Parish Council DRAFT



COMMITTEE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Met at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre on Tuesday 23rd January 2024.

Present: Cllr Jenny Roberts (Chair)
Cllr Debbie Chachulski
Cllr James Lambert
Cllr June Reid
Cllr Maurice Wells
Cllr Mike White
David Kealey
Jim Watson (Friends of Jersey Lane)
Jill Watson (Sustainable St Albans)
Julian Thornton (HCC)

Officers: Simon Thwaites, Clerk
Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk

Absent: -

904 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mary Ternouth, Mark Carter and Rebecca Pannese (PACE Officer).

905 TO WELCOME NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr Roberts welcomed two new members to the Committee: Jim Watson from Friends of Jersey Lane and Jill Watson from Sustainable St Albans.

906 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There was none.

907 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17th OCT 2023

The minutes of the 17th October meeting, having been previously circulated, were taken as a correct record. It was, unanimously;

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Committee for Sustainability Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17th October 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

IMPROVING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR RESIDENTS

908 UPDATES FROM JULIAN THORNTON (HCC) ON FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

Julian Thornton (HCC) provided a verbal update on a number of footpath and other rights of way related matters as follows:

The request to make a formal diversion to FP 26 (Nashes Farm), as supported by the Parish Council at the last meeting, is close to receiving notice of approval from Herts County Council.

The ongoing issue of the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) notice at Oaklands College, which is due to expire at the end of March, is now being managed between the HCC Chief Executive and the Principal at the College. The delivery of a footpath from BW51 to Oaklands Grange, an obligation under the S106 agreement, is progressing, as too is the link path from Oaklands Grange to Beaumont School. An HCC site visit to Bentsley Spinney to consider surfacing works is due to be scheduled.

A meeting is scheduled with the HCC Highways Team to look at flooding along BOAT 3.

909 WRITTEN UPDATE FROM CLLR TERNOUTH ON RIGHTS OF WAY MODIFICATION APPLICATIONS

Members noted a written report from Cllr Mary Ternouth providing updates on Rights of Way modification applications, including the proposed diversion of Footpath 26 and the path through land off Highfield Road, Sandridge.

PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING NATURE

910 WILDFLOWER INITIATIVE

In her absence the PACE Officer provided briefing notes for Members on preparations for this year's wildflower planting. These include plans to dig new beds in Harness Way and St Leonard's, extending to William Bell if funds permit. An update on maintenance of existing beds, which have been strimmed and will be raked to distribute the dropped seeds. Signage will be put up to warn John O'Conner against mowing in these areas. A turf cutter will be hired in March to undertake these works and the Bee and Butterfly seed mix as recommended by Butterfly Conservation will be sowed on new areas and supplement existing beds as needed. Cllr White suggested keeping a diary of how well each of the beds are growing so that we can learn from successes or where plants fail to thrive.

911 COMMUNITY GARDEN INSTALLATION OF WATER BUTTS

At the last meeting of the Committee for Sustainability Members approved £100 towards the purchase of two water butts for the community garden. However, following further research, Cllr Wells made a proposal to increase that amount to cover the cost of two 1,000 Ltr IBC tanks, pumps and other accessories which would provide significantly increased capacity more suited to the needs of the garden as well as demonstrating a commitment to investing in repurposed equipment. Members noted that the appearance of each tank may differ from those in the photographs provided. The tanks will be situated adjacent to the power supply on the exterior wall of Marshalswick Community Centre. Following discussion Cllr Lambert made a further proposal to include an additional pump and hose to create two water access points from the tanks, which was seconded by Cllr Reid. It was, unanimously;

RESOLVED

To provide approximately £700 of funding to purchase two 1,000 Ltr IBC tanks including pumps and accessories from the 2023/4 Sustainability Projects budget (see minute 919)

RECYCLING, REUSING, REPURPOSING, REPAIRING

912 INSTALLATION OF MIXED RECYCLING BINS

Following a resolution at the last meeting, the Clerk has investigated the feasibility of installing dual bins (separated recyclables and general waste) at two of our parks.

The two District Council sites using this model rely on employed Park Rangers to remove the sacks and check for contamination of the recyclables. These are then taken to the John O'Conner depot to be stored and collected periodically by Veolia for recycling. It is unlikely the Parish Council could use this model for several reasons. The Clerk has twice contacted Veolia to ask the feasibility and cost of having recyclables collected directly from designated bins in the two parks (probably Spencer Meadow and Sherwood Park). It's hoped that, given the proximity of these sites to the Veolia depot, an arrangement is possible. Veolia has responded asking for further detail and will respond in due course with feasibility and costs. The Clerk will continue to update the Committee.

913 CLOTHING BANKS

A third clothing/shoe bank has been installed in the Spencer Meadow car park. This follows the success of the two banks in the Parish Office car park (1,470 kg collected in October and November). The income received to date from the provider, the Salvation Army, is £165 and this is expected to increase to £350 by year end. Sandridge Parish Council has resolved to use income from the banks towards sustainability projects and the Committee were asked to consider suitable uses. Following some discussion of ideas, it was;

RESOLVED

That the funds received from the Parish clothing banks are earmarked for use against a sustainability project but that they would be carried forward to accrue a larger fund for use against a project to be identified at a later date.

914 REPAIR WORKSHOP

An article in the Winter edition of Neighbourhood News invited residents to come forward with their practical skills to help establish a Repair Shop through the Parish Council. The Clerk reported that to date we have six interested volunteers and is hoping to seek further advice from a member of Sustainable St Albans (SSA) on how best to move this initiative forward. Jill Watson provided some background on past repair fairs in which SSA has been involved. A colleague with more experience in repair fairs will be available to give advice at the next meeting. In the meantime, further information can be found on the SSA website including dates of future fairs taking place in the district [Events from March 12 – November 17 – Sustainable St Albans](#)

915 PARISH EVENT

Members were informed of the plans to hold a Parish Council Community Event in June 2024. A budget of £15,000 has been set aside and a working party formed. Members were asked if they would like to consider ways of eliminating waste/pollution during the event and to promote the Council as an environmentally responsible organisation to members of the public attending. Suggestions to the working party could include;

- Only engaging food retailers serving food in paper-based containers.
- Purchasing purpose-built bins to encourage responsible disposal of general waste, tins, glass, paper. These would be reused at future events.
- Working with alcohol sellers to minimise the use of plastic glasses (e.g. bottles and cans only).
- Providing safe and easy storage facilities for bicycles to encourage cycling to the event.
- Using the occasion to promote sustainability through working with partner organisations, e.g. a St Albans Greenpeace stand, a HMWT stand (or a Repair Shop stand!)

The Committee agreed with the principle of engaging with the event working group to promote a sustainable approach to as many activities as possible on the day.

916 SPC INVOLVEMENT IN SUSTFEST

An email from Sustainable St Albans was forwarded to committee members on December 13th. The email asked if the Parish Council would consider taking part in one of the panel sessions at next year's SustFest Expo, sharing our experiences with a wider audience. One suggestion was to take part in a discussion about rewilding/nature projects or more generally in how to engage with local residents. Another was to exhibit as an information stall, sharing what we've done in the parish. The Committee agreed to some form of participation and will share ideas at the next meeting with a view to confirming involvement with SSA as soon as possible after that.

CARBON REDUCTION AND CAPTURE

917 ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Members received a report from the Clerk about retaining the Parish Council vehicle or moving to an electric model, and also a working paper from Councillor Twidell suggesting an alternative way forward. Following review of both papers and some discussion on the merits of switching to an electric vehicle versus the environmental impact of parting with the existing vehicle, it was unanimously;

RESOLVED

To recommend to Full Council that the existing vehicle is retained for two years, after which a further review is carried out. The Council may also wish to set aside funds annually for the eventual replacement.

918 SOLAR ENERGY BATTERY AT JERSEY FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE

Members were informed that the Centres Manager has been looking at the feasibility of purchasing a battery to store solar energy at the centre. Currently the Council sell the solar energy to a third party as it's generated and buy from a standard provider as required. The price paid is higher than the price received and therefore it would be more efficient, if feasible, to install a battery, store the solar energy generated and use that instead. The Centres manager has received a quote from the existing solar panel supplier but has found it difficult to acquire comparison quotes from other suppliers. Cllr Wells having some knowledge in this area agreed to work with the Centres Manager to better understand our current solar panel technology and the options available to us.

919 COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE 2023/24 AND BUDGET 2024/5

Members noted that the following budget was approved for the committee at Full Council last month.

Committee for Sustainability	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 spend to date	2024/25 Budget
	£	£	£
Sustainability Projects	2,000	872	6,000
Old PEAP Budget	4,010	2,025	0
Community Garden	N/A		1,500
Wildflower/Pollinator Initiative	N/A		2,750
Tree Planting	0	0	5,000
Total	6,010	2,897	15,250

920 MATTERS OF NOTE

- A number of timber posts have been cut from trees thinned on the Woodland Park. These were to replace rotten posts installed to prevent incursion. It was originally planned to purchase timber/recycled plastic posts and this is therefore seen as a more sustainable alternative.

- Three bird feeders have been purchased and installed in the community garden to help increase the diversity and number of wild birds.
- Following Councillor Chalkley's article in the Neighbourhood News inviting residents to sponsor a tree on or near their verge, six householders have expressed an interest with at least four able to proceed.
- Cllr Wells continues to wait on a decision from Marshalswick Library regarding permission to install a planter incorporating bike racks outside the building.
- Councillor Hale and the Clerk attended three course sessions entitled 'Carbon Literacy' in December. These are run by the Groundwork organisation and funded through the County Council.
- In November 2023 the Council formally pledged support for the draft Climate and Ecology Bill following a proposal by Councillors Lambert and Twidell. Both local MPs were written to, as was the local press.
- The Jersey Farm Woodland Park Committee is looking at updating the faded wooden information boards around the park. These pieces of artwork inform visitors of the landscape, bird life and other wildlife that may be seen there.

921 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Participation in the Sustfest Expo Event
 'Library of Things' (Cllr James Lambert)

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.03pm.

Chair

Date