



Battle Town Council



Minutes of the CLIMATE & ECOLOGY SUB-COMMITTEE
held WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2023 at The Almonry, High Street, Battle at 12.30pm

Present: Cllrs S Burton (Chairman), A Burton, D Silk and D Wheeler, A Koop, L Bolton (Rother District Council (RDC) Environment Strategy Officer)

In attendance: Dr Feltwell, five members of the public, B Rieu (Deputy Town Clerk),

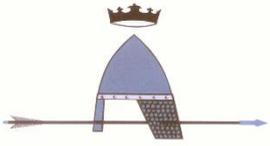
Public Question Time

A member of the public, informed the meeting that a group 'Battle Residents Against Pollution' have made a formal request to RDC to monitor air pollution on the High Street throughout 2024. It is hoped that emissions of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides levels will be shared with Council and subsequent measures taken to address what might be a serious issue. The last data on record for air pollution in Battle was recorded in 2019.

A member of the public and of the group 'Dark Skies', informed the Sub-Committee (S-C) that light meter readings for Battle will take place from January to March. Volunteers are sought to undertake meter readings at the Cemetery, Amenity Field, the Recreation Ground, and the High Street, alongside RDC assets. **The Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) was asked to receive email addresses from volunteers so that the Dark Skies group can circulate a doodle poll to find suitable dates.**

A member of the public and 'Battle Area Green Drinks', informed the S-C that the group will be running events in early 2024 to help residents calculate their carbon footprints. The Council is requested to support this initiative and promote events in relevant marketing material and on digital channels.

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1. **Apologies for absence** – none.
 2. **Disclosure of Interest** – none.
 3. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 September 2023** were agreed and duly signed by Cllr Burton.
 4. **Committee Membership** – A Austen and D Wilson expressed interest in joining the S-C. Digital Communication consent forms will be sent and **membership will be considered at the next meeting.**
 5. **Deputy Town Clerk's Report**
 - The DTC attended a zoom meeting with RDC's Projects Officer (Environment), Elize Manning, regarding methodology to establish the Council's **carbon emissions** using the Local Government Association's Carbon Emissions Calculation Tool. **It was agreed that the baseline year is April 2022 - March 2023.** Data from all Council buildings will be collated: the Almonry; the Cemetery including the Chapel, Ceremonies Room and Workshop; the Recreation Ground including the Pavilion and North Trade Road Workshop; and the Station Masters House in due course. **The baseline for 2022-23 will be provided at the next meeting.**
 - Following the provision of supplementary information requested by **Sussex Lund**, the result of the Council's **application for funding** is expected in January 2024.
 - **Climate Literacy Training is organised for 29 January 2024** - an invitation to attend is extended to all members of this Sub-Committee.



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Item: 10 – was brought forward due to a time constraint

10. Update from L Bolton, RDC Environment Strategy Officer, on RDC Biodiversity Audits – this will be given at the next meeting as the full report has been delayed. **Funding has been received from DEFRA** for two projects:

- 1) **'Micro Woods'** including the establishment and three years of maintenance. Coronation Gardens has been identified as a potential site;
- 2) **'Community Orchards'** across Rother with land owner permission. An orchard is defined as a minimum of five trees (fruit or nut) and planting is planned for Autumn/Winter 2024.

6. An update from the Estates Committee Meeting of 5 December 2023 was received.

- a) It was noted that the Estates Committee had agreed a process following any **tree felling**. Tree stumps at different lengths would be created to **increase habitat for vertebrates and invertebrates**. (Report attached for ease).
- b) The **Amenity Field Biodiversity Audit** was noted. Of particular interest: biodiversity was found mainly around the edges of the site; clearance of brambles will be required; ways to link Mansers Shaw to the Amenity Field, alongside the opening up of the waterway along the east edge of the field, allowing for light, flowers and butterflies, would be of benefit to walkers and the community. An audit in the spring/summer would provide a greater species list of flora and fauna. Suggestions by the Surveyor for further development of the area included its promotion as a community space, possibly with the provision of picnic benches, signposts to the 1066 Country Walk from the car park would encourage use by visitors to Battle. L Bolton will send information regarding **RDC rural grants for enhancements**. Cllr Burton to **analyse outcome responsibilities** for this S-C and for Estates and refer back to both.
- c) This S-C will take forward a **Hedgerow Audit** via <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> which provides authoritative geographic information about the natural environment and uses various mapping tools to measure the length and depth of hedgerows. No timescale was agreed.

L Bolton left the meeting.

7. Comments from Dr John Feltwell on BTC's Green Infrastructure Report were received.

Members to consider at the next meeting the following recommendations:

- a) Linkage of habitats and the identification of target areas to fill gaps.
- b) Use of <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> to identify priority habitats.
- c) Identify and compile a comprehensive list of Tree Protection Orders.
- d) Consistency of terminology within the Green Infrastructure report i.e. **'conserve and enhance' rather than 'preserve'**. **The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to carry out this task.**
- e) Need Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT) and appoint a Tree Warden
- f) Future proof for protection of Council's estate via communication with RDC and a statement outlining the work undertaken and being undertaken in these areas, and highlight that Council is expecting RDC to never allow planning in any of the areas Council is trying to protect i.e. via AONB status, areas identified as priority habitats and land with Tree Preservation Orders.
- g) Further work and audits are required for Ponds, Hedgerows, Ancient Woodland, all council buildings (as ecological units supporting bats and birds).
- h) Creation of parish map including RDC holdings for clarity and future strategy to protect against future developments on 'protected' land.
- i) Biodiversity audit of Parish to sit alongside the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Two members of the public left the meeting.



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8. Climate and Ecological Declaration Statement

Wording for the Statement with Policies was agreed for recommendation to Full Council as attached.

9. C&E S-C Action Plan

Members agreed to use the Climate and Ecological Declaration Statement with Policies, as agreed at item 8, as the basis for the 2023-2027 Action Plan. The Plan will include specific objectives and milestones. Cllr Barton will coordinate with input from community members, A Austen and D Wilson, for consideration at the next meeting for recommendation to Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Two members of the public left the meeting.

11. Waste and Recycling Audit

This was reviewed. Cllrs Silk and Wheeler agreed to research options of labelling for dual-purpose re-cycling bins, including from English Heritage, and funding options from RDC. The report will be discussed at the next meeting prior to recommendation to the Estates Committee.

12. Matters for information / future agenda items

- Catering for 2024 events
- Publicity on BTC website
- Four Community Focus Areas
- Draft C&E S-C Action Plan including objectives and timeline
- BTC's Green Infrastructure Report – recommendations from feedback
- Waste and Re-cycling dual-bin labelling
- Hedgerow Audit – update
- RDC Biodiversity, and Micro Woods and Community Orchards project updates

13. Time and date of next meeting – Wednesday, 27 March at 2pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 1:41pm.

Cllr S Burton
Chairman