

NOTES ON A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP (EWG)

25th April 2022 via Zoom

Attendees: Cllr John Turner (JT), (Chair), Cllr Ed Langridge (EL), Ken Howes (KH) and Lizzie Pannell (LP)

In attendance: Catherine Barrett (CB) Assistant Clerk

Apologies for absence received from: Cllr Ben Scarbrough (work commitments) and Alan Ford (personal commitments).

1. Welcome from Chairman

JT advised that it had been necessary for Simon Norton to step down from the working group, as he was now a Parish Councillor and had been asked to join the Planning Committee. Cllr Dave Pate would join the working group and attend the next meeting.

2. Annual review of EWG Terms of Reference

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that no changes be made to the Terms of Reference.

3. Review of Pocket Park progress

- Communication with residents: Residents whose houses overlooked Pocket Park had responded positively to JT's letter informing them of plans to leave an area of grass to grow. One household had also offered to help. It was agreed that this was a positive outcome, compared to resident feedback in 2013 when the parish council had proposed to reduce mowing as a cost cutting initiative. CB advised that a notification of plans to reduce mowing would go out in the May Speldhurst News, so more residents would become aware in the next few weeks.
- Mowing schedule: It was agreed that CB would liaise with the Amenities Committee Clerk about the agreed mowing schedule.
- Next steps: Everyone agreed it was a good idea to purchase a noticeboard that could be regularly updated to inform passers-by about the next mow, any other works, and wildlife that had been spotted. LP suggested a wildlife quiz that could be shared with residents on social media. Low boards and pointers could be placed strategically, directing people where to look. CB would investigate costs.
KH said that residents should be encouraged to use the main footpath around Pocket Park instead of the footpaths that had been created by continuous footfall across the grass itself. JB would liaise with the Amenities Committee about filling the gap in the hedge to stop people from walking across the grass.

4. Review of progress with 'no mow' signs

- Finalised logo: The final logo was approved and would now be used on the 'no mow' sign and all other EWG communications.
- Wording: It was agreed to use "Reduced mowing to help our wildlife" as the wording. CB would ask the printer to produce 25 signs initially.

5. How do we engage with residents around helping biodiversity at home?

It was agreed to get pocket park up and running. Then, once there was more of an example of what could be done, JT and EL would engage with specific residents who were known to have some space for re-wilding. If this went well, the working group could then look at the idea of 're-wilding your square' for people with smaller patches.

CB would find out dates for forthcoming village flower/produce shows, with the aim of the EWG having a stall.

6. Contact with local groups

- Ed update on Brownies: It was agreed that EL and LP would enquire about running a session with the Guides/Brownies on building an insect hotel.
- Catherine update on local family: CB had spoken to one of the children's teachers, who was willing to collaborate with the working group in some way. CB would email some info to her in mid-May.
JT reminded everyone that they should feel free to ask any residents they thought would be interested to join the working group.

7. South-East Water draft 25-year plan

- Approve a working party to make a comment on behalf of the Parish Council if appropriate: KH agreed to work with JT on analysing the plan and making a comment if it was felt necessary to do so. CB would chase up South-East Water on the deadline of 6th May to see if an extension was possible. JT would email KH the link.

8. Any other business

JT reported that Sussex Lund had made funding available to local organisations to pay for biodiversity projects. It was agreed that EL should work with JT on a 'shopping list' of items for Pocket Park, before completing the application. The deadline for applications was July (date tbc).

CB said that the next meeting on Monday 11th July would be held on Teams instead of Zoom. She would send joining instructions nearer the time.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.