

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

31st October 2023 via Teams

Attendees: Cllrs John Turner (JT), (Chair), Hugh Cleaver (HC), and Domenico Tarricone (DT) with Alan Ford (AF), Ed Langridge (EL) and Lizzie Pannell (LP)

In Attendance: Catherine Barrett (CB), Assistant Clerk

Members of Public: There were none.

Apologies: Kay Dooley (prior commitment), Rebecca Leach (family commitments), Ken Howes (prior commitment), and Dave Pate (prior commitment).

1. To ask members for their consent to record the meeting to aid the production of meeting notes

Members consented to the meeting being recorded by CB using the Teams recording function for accuracy of the minutes. She would delete the recording once the minutes had been signed off at the next EWG meeting.

2. To give an overview of action points and updates from the previous meeting on 6th September

The action points are listed below. Points 04/23, 09/23, 11/23, 14/23 and 16/23 were marked as complete. 05/23, 10/23, 12/23, 13/23 and 15/23 were marked as in progress, and 16/23, 17/23, 18/23, 19/23 and 20/23 were marked as to be actioned (TBA).

3. Financial Review

A summary had been shared by CB. Of a total of £2300.00, £1418.00 had been spent, leaving a balance of £882.00. CB anticipated costs of approximately £90.00 for bird and bat boxes.

4. Consider pledging support for the Zero Hour Campaign

JT referred to an email from the Zero Hour Campaign, which was seeking Speldhurst Parish Council's support for the Climate and Ecology Bill. This was due for its second reading in parliament on 24th November. If passed the bill would give the Secretary of State a duty to implement a strategy to achieve nature and climate targets. 168 councils across the UK had already signed up to support this initiative. It was agreed that JT would ask Full Council to agree to formally support Zero Hour's campaign to get the Climate and Ecology Bill passed. **An action point** was set for him to prepare a presentation for the next Full Council meeting on 6th November.

5. To give an update on electric vehicle (EV) chargers at Langton Green village hall carpark

JT reported that the EV chargers in Langton Green Village Hall Car Park had now been successfully installed and commissioned.

Customers would pay to charge their vehicles using the Connected Kerb app. JT confirmed that Kent County Council (KCC) would bear all maintenance costs and receive the income from charging.

The chargers would not show up on Google Maps, but they would show up on an app called [Zapmap](#), which was widely used by EV drivers.

It had been agreed with KCC that extra signage on the A264 directing drivers towards the village hall car park was advisable. AS KCC were known to be reluctant to let the parish council produce their own signs, they had agreed to look into financing and providing signs themselves. **An action point** was set for CB to

follow up on progress with her contact at KCC. **Another action point** was set for CB to submit a piece about the chargers in the parish magazines and share it on the website and social media.

JT had put together a proposal on how to monitor the use of the EV charging bays, in which he recommended that the parish council should not try to police parking until at least March 2024. During this trial period, they should loosely monitor how many non-EVs were parking in the bays for long periods. If councillors happened to be present, they could give offenders a gentle reminder about the purpose of the parking bays, and office staff would make a note of complaints from anyone who had been prevented from using the bays for charging. An assessment of the trial period could then be made in March. **An action point** was set for JT to present this proposal to Full Council for approval.

6. To give an update on re-wilding activities at Pocket Park, Speldhurst, including:

- **The completed application to Sussex Lund**

JT reported that he and CB had completed and submitted an application for £2000 worth of funding to Sussex Lund. A decision will be given in January, and if successful, the funding would cover the removal of the remaining Laurel and planting replacement trees, together with the planting of new hedging and some coppicing.

- **An updated schedule of works**

JT and CB had put together a spreadsheet highlighting the planned work. Some work had been done at the beginning of the 2023 growing season, and the remainder was planned for March 2024, depending on the outcome of the Sussex Lund funding application. The tree surgeon who had removed the first phase of Laurel had submitted a quote for removing the remaining Laurel, coppicing holly, and mulching underneath the brambles to give the ongoing biodiversity programme the best chance of success.

AF said that any holly trees carrying berries should be left for the birds. It was agreed that JT would meet with AF to look at the Holly Trees before any coppicing work was done, to ensure that it was safe to cut them.

- **An update on the noticeboard and bird/bat boxes**

The noticeboard and bird/bat boxes were on order. JT and AF would put up the bird/bat boxes once they arrived.

7. To discuss points of focus for the EWG in 2024

- **Consider members' suggestions and agree on which points to prioritise**

Members' suggestions are summarized as follows:

- JT thanked members for all their suggestions. After some discussion, it was agreed that the following points should take priority moving into 2024:
 1. Tree planting and awareness
 2. Recycling
 3. Energy saving
 4. Sewage discharge in parish rivers and streams

It was also agreed that it was important for members to continue to raise awareness of environmental issues in other committees such as planning and amenities.

An action point was set for LP to produce a guide to household recycling, which could be shared on the parish council's media channels.

Another action point was set for JT to look at the energy-saving graphics he had produced some time ago. These had been shared before and could be tweaked and shared again.

8. Any other Business

JT reminded members of the meeting dates for 2024 which are Tuesday 23/01, Wednesday 01/05, Tuesday 27/08 and Tuesday 26/11.

With nothing further to discuss, the meeting ended at 8.34 pm.

Summary of Action Points

No.	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
04/23	Meet to work on an application to Sussex Lund	JT/AF/EL	25/04	Complete
09/23	Liaise with CB about a piece for Langton Life on Glyphosate-free trial at LGRG	EL	25/04	Complete
11/23	Draft recommendation on further glyphosate-free weed control trial in 2024	JT	06/09	Complete
14/23	Request mowing contractor to mow re-wilded area and Groundsman to tidy up brambles at Pocket Park	CB	06/09	Complete
16/23	Bring two ideas about what you would like the EWG to address in 2024 to the next meeting	All	06/09	Complete
05/23	Purchase Lectern Noticeboard	CB	25/04	In progress
10/23	Draft recommendation on EVC Bay enforcement for Full Council	JT	06/09	In progress
12/23	Develop an approach to primary schools to get them involved with Pocket Park, Speldhurst	RL & LP	06/09	In progress
13/23	Order and install birdboxes	CB/AF/JT	06/09	In progress
15/23	Contact Greg Clark to request a conversation about water quality in parish rivers. DP to send DT anecdotal evidence to include in his email.	DT/DP	06/09	In progress
16/23	Prepare a proposal asking Full Council to formally support the Zero Hour Climate and Ecology Bill	JT	31/10	TBA
17/23	Follow up with KCC about extra EV Charger signage – are they willing to design, install and finance?	CB	31/10	TBA
18/23	Submit articles about EV Chargers to parish magazines and share them on social media/website	CB	31/10	TBA
19/23	Produce a guide to household recycling for sharing in parish magazines and on social media	LP	31/10	TBA

20/23	Look for the energy-saving graphics shared previously with the purpose of publishing them again.	JT	31/10	TBA
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