



WIVENHOE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of Environment Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 February 2023 at 7.30pm
Chair Approved

Present: Cllr Evans (Chair), Cllr Maltby, Cllr Boughton, Cllr Aldis, Cllr Wenaden, J Beighton-Emms (Town Clerk) and five members of the public

Public questions; None.

PART A

E/02/23/01 Apologies for absence: Cllr Andrew

E/02.23/02 Declarations of interest: None

E/02.23/03 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022; The minutes of this meeting were proposed by Cllr Wenaden, seconded by Cllr Maltby, and approved by all as an accurate record of proceedings.

E/02.23/04 Update from the Chair:

Cllr Maltby introduced Jo Wheatley and Ellisif Wasmuth to the committee. They gave a presentation on their ideas for climate mitigation, adaption and community resilience in Wivenhoe. Their notes are attached as **Appendix A**.

The councillors considered the number of project ideas and Cllr Evans said that he hoped a group could be formed to work collaboratively together and that Jo and Ellisif were welcome to join future committee meetings. The committee welcomed their positive input. Mark Halladay commented that the support of WTC to local projects was influential and gave projects a stamp of approval. This was a reassurance to members of the public. A further meeting to be arranged.

Cllr Evans reported that:

- 1) The MOD were keen to reform their conservation committee,
- 2) The educational information board to be located at the Sailing Club is with the printers,
- 3) An article will be going into the next WTC newsletter giving information on the Involve/ECC workshop. A date is yet to be agreed,
- 4) A meeting was held with John Little of the Green Roof Company to discuss having a living roof on the new office extension,
- 5) A session took place with a local BBC camera man to submit an article about Wivenhoe to Springwatch,
- 6) A virtual meeting took place with tarmac regarding the contamination issue at Glebelands. Sir Bernard Jenkin MP attended. A further meeting has been arranged,
- 7) Locations are being considered for the swift boxes,
- 8) The Funding Officer, Graham has successfully applied for a grant of £1k towards the bee accreditation project and the reprint of the wildflower booklets,
- 9) A meeting is being held on 28 February with Anglian Water and a panel of experts at the WLH.

E/02.23/05 Biodiversity Working Group Annual Report

- Bee Accreditation: Proposal by Cllr Evans for artwork celebrating the accreditation to be installed on the green space at the William Loveless Hall

The councillors considered the previously circulated Biodiversity Annual Report 2022, which is attached as **Appendix B**. The Green Spaces and the No Mow May projects will be repeated in 2023. Mark Halladay will discuss these projects with the ground staff.

The wildflower booklets have been recreated for under 7's and will be printed by the end of February. The group hopes to launch the booklet on the Wivenhoe Open Gardens weekend being 20/21 May. 20 May is also International Bee Day. The book will be sold for £4 to cover costs. On the back of the booklet is a QR code which takes you to the Bee Friendly Organisation. The group would like to link up with others in Wivenhoe.

The committee discussed applying to the Bee Friendly Trust as Wivenhoe meets most of the criteria. There is a prize of a piece of artwork to be installed in the town and the front of the William Loveless Hall was suggested. It was agreed that would be a meeting with the artist on site. This was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Aldis with all in favour.

The group are also looking to run a 'plant exchange' and will be discussing this with WAGA to perhaps use the allotments as the location.

A contact at Taylor Wimpey was suggested as well as involvement with local schools in the Involve event.

E/02.23/06 Environment Scoping Meeting- An update from Cllr Maltby
Cllr Aldis reported that this event will be held before the election period of purdah which starts on 27 March. The aim of the event is to hear from residents about their ideas for local environment projects and how WTC can work with them. Date to be set.

E/02.23/07 Date and time of the next meeting: The next Environment Committee will be held on Wednesday 29 March 2023 at 7.30pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.20pm.

Appendix A

Wivenhoe: Climate Mitigation, Adaptation and Community Resilience

Background Impacts of the climate and ecological crisis are happening faster and more severely than predicted.¹ It is easy to think the crisis only affects people far away, or in the future, but it is already impacting our community.

Local challenges include

- increased frequency/severity of flooding, threatening homes, businesses, the railway, especially in lower Wivenhoe but also in areas with poor drainage.
- more frequent extreme weather and heavy rainfall causing e.g.
- Damage to infrastructure and the railway.
- Power cuts - stress on essential services, food storage etc.
- Heat waves, dangerous especially for elderly/vulnerable.
- Drought and water shortages

World-wide changes will also have an impact eg:

- Unstable food supplies & higher prices
- Increased fuel/energy prices and shortages.
- Increasing migration – climate refugees.
- Unstable governments, greater need for self-reliance/self-sufficiency.
- Greater risk of pandemics and new diseases.

So far, the response to the crisis has mostly focused on mitigation - efforts to prevent escalating by reducing Green House Gas emissions and while this remains crucial, we also need to focus on adaptation. **Even if GHG emissions stopped tomorrow, we're locked into several decades of warming.**

Investing in climate adaptation is a win-win

The **good news** is that by starting a bold process of adaptation now, we'll be more prepared for the future *and* make Wivenhoe a healthier, more attractive place to live and do business. People increasingly factor in climate resilience when deciding where to invest and settle.

Effort and money invested now will be recouped through cleaner air, more green space, cheaper transport options, better food security and a stronger sense of community. **So we have a choice between investing now in making Wivenhoe more resilient or footing a much greater bill when the crises hit us in full.**

This gives the Environment Cttee a huge responsibility but also an exciting opportunity to make a critical difference. In this context, remember:

1. The climate/nature crisis isn't a single or special issue. It must guide EVERY decision made across WTC.
2. So the responsibility to plan & take action must be shared equally by all councillors.¹
3. You have the power and the mandate to be bold. Many residents are deeply worried about the future, but don't know where to start when it comes to taking action or feel disillusioned

¹<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jan/30/climate-crisis-global-heating-artificial-intelligence>

about taking action individually when any solutions have to be community-based. By taking the initiative, WTC can mobilise residents to take action collectively. Don't underestimate the power of the council's stamp of approval!

Suggestions for actions and initiatives * Easy initial actions **Most impactful actions

1. * Establish procedure for embedding emissions reductions and biodiversity enhancement into all WTC planning and decisions.
2. * Reduce estate and procurement emissions & set an example through:
 1. ** requiring majority (80%) plant based food offer at WLH and KGV events.
 2. going plastic-free, ditching single use plastics.
 3. putting up solar panels on council owned buildings (preferably as part of our new community energy scheme!).
 4. ensure any staff pensions are divested from fossil fuels.
3. Set up a tool library/library of things. Use the William Loveless hall or the council building where you loan out equipment like sewing machines, lawn mowers, ladders, saws etc. Send out a call to Wivenhoe residents to donate items. Need someone to make sure the equipment is safe and monitor the ledger. Could make it £donation based to ensure it's inclusive/accessible. Here's an example <https://edinburghtoolibrary.org.uk/>
4. * Set up regular volunteer run swap shops and repair cafes in the WLH either storing surplus items until the next event or donating to charity.
5. ** Set up a community energy scheme. Use flyers and the newsletter to ask for people interested in taking part. We can start small (with just solar) and then grow (perhaps even looking into wind). Having locally owned energy provision will make us more self-sufficient in cases of power cuts/price hikes. The people in this London street have made a film about their journey to set up a community energy station. Perhaps we could show the film at the William Loveless Hall to get people excited about taking part?
Article <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/dec/18/power-to-the-people-the-neighbours-turning-their-london-street-into-a-solar-power-station>
Film released here: <https://www.power.film/about>
6. * build on existing advice/small retrofitting initiatives. Set up energy efficiency advice service for residents.

7. * and ** Encourage resident-led car share schemes. Could promote the idea with leaflets to a few streets initially saying the council wants to encourage car sharing trials locally. Hold a meeting for interested residents to find out more and decide how to progress. (Ellisif happy to help organise an initial meeting)

Some resources

- <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/apr/30/car-sharing-is-now-the-time-to-give-up-owning-a-vehicle>
- <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/saving-money/car-sharing-a-useful-guide-to-help-you-save-money/>
- <https://www.parkers.co.uk/car-advice/car-sharing/>
- <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/2019/everyday-walking-and-cycling/car-clubs-and-car-sharing>
- <https://walletgenius.com/finance/how-car-sharing-and-ride-splitting-are-saving-people-money/>

8. Run a campaign to make pavement parking an Anti Social Behaviour.

9. Lobby ECC hard for widespread 20mph, making safer cycling, walking, cleaner air.

10. Support schools to create and sustain Walking Buses to reduce the school run. (build on the Walking Bus idea – local retirees could support parent volunteers)

- 11.* Create community fruit/nut orchards & gardens. Families/anyone could harvest fruit, use TTW's press if it still exists, children can learn the flavour of real juice!

- 12.* (help TTW?) Set up a garden share scheme through <https://www.allotme.co.uk/> or our own; people lend space to others wanting to grow fruit and veg and share the harvest in return. Could match garden offers with allotment waiting list. Consider perennial veg in town's planted beds (with Wiv in Bloom?) for public consumption (like Incredible Edible)

13. Work with WAGA to assess feasibility of community composting schemes.

14. Buy farm land from Mr Gooch (between Wiv & the Uni) and set up/rent out to an organic market garden/social enterprise or Community Supported Agriculture.

- 15.* Set up rainwater harvesting/water butts public network to provide help in future droughts.
17. Lobby others eg Essex university, CBC and ECC to be bolder in their own climate and biodiversity actions esp around transport solutions inc future-proofing our railway.
18. As a statutory planning consultee WTC can influence planning applications, e.g. stop the paving over of front gardens, push for low carbon homes (passivhaus standards including for retrofits/extensions) and no car developments; push for bicycle storage to be included in all dwellings.

How to engage the whole community

Wivenhoe is already fairly vibrant in some respects. But to prepare for a more challenging future, we need everyone on board. Moreover, we need to ensure that change is inclusive, fair and includes marginalised voices (children, elderly?). Some ideas on how to achieve this:

1. People are more likely to work FOR than against something. We need new stories and a shared vision of how we can become and thrive as active citizens and producers rather than passive subjects and consumers.

One suggestion would be to convene a regular platform for residents to come together eg via an Open Space meet or People's Assembly (anyone can just turn up) or a Citizens' Assembly (where a representative section of the community is invited) or mix of approaches.

A People's Assembly would meet regularly and could help develop a vision for the town

A citizens assembly (CA) is more inclusive than a survey, poll or people's assembly, but would need an experienced facilitator. A CA usually involves input from experts, providing assembly members with robust evidence & information to help them deliberate and make proposals.

2. Setting ourselves inspiring goals could also be galvanising. For instance:

1. We could become a plastic-free village by 2026
2. reduce our town's emissions by 50% within the next 5 years. Community calculator, see Wivenhoe's emissions: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>

Or we could create 'climate competitions' and ask residents to monitor their emission reductions (using ideas from <https://takethejump.org/> and calculate emission reductions by using e.g. <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>) We could aim to get 25% of households to take part, and see how much we could collectively reduce by 1st January 2025.

3. Education and knowledge is also key!
 1. Organise a community meeting on the climate emergency and how it is likely to impact Wivenhoe. You can invite members of Extinction Rebellion who are experienced at giving such talks, or members of the University (e.g. Dr Jane Hindley or Ellisif Wasmuth).
 2. Could approach the uni's 'Impact Acceleration team' for help creating a report on the specific challenges faced by Wivenhoe
 3. Organise a regular climate reading group - perhaps in collaboration with the Wivenhoe Bookshop.

4. Promote the work done by others, e.g. the Climate Cafe organised by Clare Conell and others.

5. Organising activities like tree planting (done properly, with a plan to follow up the planting), litter picking etc. (Whitehouse beach was continuously littered last summer).

About us

Dr Ellisif Wasmuth, lecturer in Philosophy at the UoE. Works, among other things, on environmental ethics and climate justice. Is a long-standing member and activist for the Green Party and Extinction Rebellion and has given numerous talks and workshops on the climate emergency and effective activism.

Jo Wheatley works for charity Groundwork East. A climate activist/campaigner for 35 yrs. In 2022 was a co claimant with Good Law Project & others taking Government to court over inadequacy of Net Zero strategy, we won at High Court. <https://goodlawproject.org/we-won-net-zero/>

Appendix B

Wivenhoe Town Council Environment Committee
1st February 2023

Wivenhoe Biodiversity Partnership annual report

This item reports on those biodiversity activities in 2022 undertaken as part of the new Partnership Agreement between the Council and the Wivenhoe Biodiversity Group. It also outlines plans for 2023.

Committee members are asked to comment on, note and approve issues as described below.

The Biodiversity Group:

Objective	To involve people in improving biodiversity in the town.
2022 results	17 active supporters; 2 new members joined in the autumn; 3 meetings (December cancelled due to ill health); partnership agreement made with WTC; new chair structure adopted.
2023 plans	Grow membership; maintain and develop projects as described; develop partnerships with WTC and other Wivenhoe groups. Dates for 2023 meetings: March 6 th , June 12 th , Sept 11 th , Dec 11 th .
Status	😊 Good progress

A brief account of each of the Town's main biodiversity projects follows.

Green Spaces:

Objective	To increase biodiversity in public spaces.
2022 results	29 open spaces and residential verges included in the project; 113 species and 1.3x more wildflowers found in project sites; 97% approval rating for Open Spaces sites, 71% for residential sites; 9 other local councils attended open evening. A second guide for younger children has been produced. WTC led on No Mow May in four of its owned sites.
2023 plans	Repeat new management approach and surveys on the same sites; introduce Yellow Rattle trials to improve wildflower numbers on experimental sites; introduce insect survey with CNHS. Extend project to Colchester; repeat open evening for local councils. Repeat No Mow May and invite other public bodies to join in.
Status	😊 Good progress

Climate Focus Area/Biodiversity Action Plan (aka Local Nature Plan)

Objective	To pilot initiatives for the County Council's Climate Focus Area project and produce a model Local Nature Plan.
2022 results	Pilot status agreed with ECC, first planning discussions begun. Draft dates for community workshop in April and May 2023.
2023 plans	Run a one day workshop for a representative cross section of the Wivenhoe community. Produce a Local Nature Plan for Wivenhoe; contribute to a model plan process for Essex parishes; develop concrete plans to meet both the Wivenhoe community's ambitions for nature recovery and contribute to the overall Climate Focus Area targets.
Status	😐 Too early to comment

Gardening for Nature (G4N)

Objective	To encourage and support people to support nature in their gardens.
2022 results	38 participants took signs to advertise the scheme, 11 people took part in wildflower seeding in their gardens, we posted 27 posts on the dedicated Facebook page and have 297 followers.
2023 plans	Recruit more people to the scheme, Yellow Rattle trials to tie-in with Green Spaces; quarterly G4N advice column; G4N stall at WAGA show; block-paving plant-up idea; extend Facebook coverage.
Status	😊 Good progress. Thanks to Beth Chatto Educational Trust for their support.

Bee-friendly town accreditation

Objective	To gain accreditation as a bee-friendly town with the Bee-Friendly Trust.
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2022 results	Majority of criteria for accreditation met following discussion with relevant local volunteers/stakeholders; draft application written.
2023 plans	Meet remaining criteria; finalise application following feedback; submit by the deadline of 28 th April.
Status	😊 Good progress.

Swift nest boxes

Objective	To increase swift numbers (which have fallen by 50% in 20 years) by providing nest boxes in likely sites.
2022 results	New project, some planning undertaken, £300 allocated by WTC.
2023 plans	Action plan needed; project members and leadership needed.
Status	😞 Stuck – needs someone to get hold of it and make it happen.

Wildlife garden

Objective	To provide a model for a wildlife garden, and a place for people to enjoy wildlife.
2022 results	The new pond is now bedded in, with borders firm and well protected by vegetation. The Garden is in good condition, and frequently visited.
2023 plans	Planting perennials in 3 areas; better hedging along the western boundary.
Status	😊 Good; volunteer numbers sufficient at present.

Ferry Marsh

Objective	To improve the marsh as a nature reserve and for the people of Wivenhoe (supporting CCC)
2022 results	Plans drawn up and consultation underway.
2023 plans	Consultation completed Jan 31 st . CCC report good response from the community; decision to be made in March.
Status	😊 Good progress.

NEW FOR 2023!

Taylor Wimpey development. The Planning Inspector’s decision in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan provides a good opportunity to approach Taylor Wimpey to work with them in specifying how the Broad Lane development can support local wildlife.

Councillors are asked to support this idea and advise how best to proceed. Biodiversity Group members would be happy to be involved.

Green roofs. An idea emerging from the G4N group – green roofs on bus stops – has been discussed as appropriate for the youth Hub, the Town Hall extension as well as the town’s bus stops.

This needs organising if it is supported. Suggestions welcome...

Schools. Consistent engagement with schools has been difficult to achieve. Consideration will be given to how best to work with schools at the March Biodiversity Group.

How about doing an “Involve” process for school children? And for young people via the Hub?

My thanks to my Co-chairs of the Biodiversity Group, Clare Kendrick-Robinson, Stephen Novy and Mark Halladay, for their help in putting this report together and their management of the Group and the Partnership’s projects over 2022.

Councillor Glyn Evans

Chair WTC Environment Committee