



## WIVENHOE TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of Environment Committee meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023 at 7.30pm **Chair Approved**

**Present:** Cllr Evans (Chair), Cllr Maltby, Cllr Boughton, Cllr Aldis, J Beighton-Emms (Town Clerk) and Mark Halladay (Biodiversity Working Group)

**Public questions;** None.

### PART A

E/03/23/01 Apologies for absence: Cllr Andrew and Cllr Wenaden

E/03.23/02 Declarations of interest: None

E/03.23/03 Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2023: The minutes of this meeting were proposed by Cllr Boughton, seconded by Cllr Aldis, and approved by all as an accurate record of proceedings.

E/03.23/04 An update from the Chair:

Cllr Evans reported that:

- a) He has made contact with someone that recommissions car batteries and will provide an update when he has further information.
  - b) He has been working with Chris Bromley on a community energy sharing initiative. Energy is sold back locally at a discount. He will ask Chris to attend a future meeting.
  - c) He has been working with the MOD and local landowners on nature recovery on Fingringhoe ranges and surrounding areas. They are hoping to create nature recovery zones following the success of projects in Wivenhoe. Col. Rankin (Colchester Barracks) will be visiting in the summer.
- I. Proposal by Cllr Evans to approve the process for developing a Local Nature Plan for Wivenhoe (Previously circulated and attached as **Appendix A**).

Cllr Aldis suggested that a check is made to ensure that this can be included as an addendum to the WNP and that the Biodiversity Group consider the NPPF. Cllr Aldis would like to work on this to create a policy and engage with ECC to get its endorsement.

The WNP is being strengthened by the LNP, enhancing and protecting the natural environment in line with the Localism Act 2011. The Town Clerk is working on a survey to gather views of residents on this. Questions will be based on the People's Plan for Nature- Mark Halladay will share details with her.

The proposal was made by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Boughton, with all in favour.

- II. Proposal by Cllr Evans to approve the Green Spaces Project for 2023 (Previously circulated and attached as **Appendix B**).

The proposal is for the same sites as in 2022 to be included, with a mid-season mow on some residential verges which may be a fire risk.

The proposal was made by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Maltby, with all in favour.

E/03.23/05 A Proposal from Cllr Maltby:

Wivenhoe Town Council strongly discourage use of single-use plastics products. Wivenhoe Town Council require that vendors selling food and beverage on its premises have the means to ensure customers have the option for their food and/or beverage to be served in re-usable food and beverage containers. This includes plates, cups, bowls, cutlery and drinks stirrers.

Cllr Maltby explained that she would like this included in WTC hire agreements for facilities. It was agreed that 'at WTC premises' would be included in the proposal and that the last line would be deleted. Cllr Aldis, as Chair of Estates, agreed with the change to the hire agreements.

The proposal was made by Cllr Maltby, seconded by Cllr Evans, with all in favour.

E/03.23/06 An update from the Biodiversity Group:

Mark Halladay reported that the group are establishing a relationship with Taylor Wimpey and working with Essex Wildlife to look at sites developed by TW.

The group are looking at biodiversity areas in St Mary's Churchyard and will meet with the WTC Open Spaces Manager.

The group has 3 new members.

Signs are now available for the Gardening 4 Nature and the No Mow May projects. WTC areas for No Mow May have been agreed with the Open Spaces Manager.

E/03.23/07 Climate Action Plan & Environment Community Meeting- An update from Cllr Maltby.

Cllr Maltby reported that the Environment Community Meeting on 23 March had gone well. Lots of ideas had been discussed and 5 actions point had been agreed. The group will consider:

- i. Water harvesting
- ii. A swap shop
- iii. Shrewsbury cups (resuable)

- iv. Community energy sharing
- v. Community engagement

A further meeting is being arranged. The group are looking to work with PACE, an environmental group based in Manningtree.

Cllr Maltby would like to secure a quote with Solar Together. The cost is £150 for a survey. Details will be provided to the Town Clerk.

Cllr Maltby reported that the recycling station needs to be cleaned and signage needs to be updated. The Town Clerk will arrange this with the staff. It was noted that there are still issues with collection of the recycling.

E/03.23/08 Date and time of the next meeting: It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 June 2023 at 7.30pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21.07.

## Appendix A

### Developing a Local Nature Plan

**The Committee is asked to approve the following process for developing a Local Nature Plan for Wivenhoe.**

#### Background

WTC has been invited by ECC to collaborate with County officers in producing its own Local Nature Plan (LNP) as part of the County's Climate Action Plan.

No format or guidance exists for an LNP. The nearest model is the very technical "Biodiversity Action Plan" typically produced at District or County level and for which parish councils are not resourced. Wivenhoe is therefore one of three local councils in Essex inventing and piloting a process for producing a more practical, parish-based Local Nature Plan.

The outcomes sought from Wivenhoe's LNP are:

1. A published Local Nature Plan, comprising specific actions to be pursued **to protect and enhance nature in and around the Town.**
2. More people involved in nature recovery in Wivenhoe.
3. A model process for producing a Local Nature Plan which other local councils can use to create their own.
4. A network of local councils in the Colne valley working together on nature recovery.

Key features of the LNP will be as follows:

- It will form an appendix to the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan, thereby forming part of the planning context for the Town.
- It will be informed by public participation and engagement.
- It will be action-orientated, having at its core an action plan to be enacted by the Council, the Biodiversity Group and the people of Wivenhoe, and monitored by the Town's Environment Committee.
- It will be reviewed and renewed every three years by the Environment Committee, Biodiversity Group and a panel of residents.

This paper describes how the LNP will be produced.

### Producing the LNP

Timescale: There is no set timescale for producing the LNP, no budget and most of the work of production will rely on volunteers and existing resources. In this context and as a trial process it might be better to aim for a **target adoption date of January 2024** rather than set a fixed date for completion.

Process: I propose a four part process to the production of the LNP:

1. Gather material and ideas for action.
2. Organise that material into a draft Plan.
3. Consult on the draft and improve on its content.
4. Formally approve the LNP.

Each stage is likely to change as we learn but taking each in turn:

**Gather material and ideas for action.** This will involve taking stock of Wivenhoe's existing nature assets and of opportunities for improvement. Three main processes for doing this will be:

- a) A workshop for residents on May 13<sup>th</sup> facilitated by *Involve*, a public participation consultancy. Involve will design and run a one-day workshop for a cross section of up to 35 residents to generate ideas for nature recovery in the Town.
- b) A survey of Wivenhoe residents asking for their views on nature recovery and their ideas and priorities for how to protect and enhance nature in and around the Town.
- c) A technical group consisting of local people who are professional ecologists and conservationists who will undertake some mapping of key nature assets and opportunities for enhancing nature.

Each of the three approaches will generate information for a stock take of the state of Wivenhoe's natural assets and ideas for improvement. The second stage is then to...

**Organise that material into a draft Plan.** Each of the preceding stages will report their findings as concisely as possible. The material will then be reviewed and incorporated into a draft document.

Once written the draft Plan will be subject to the final two stages of **consultation and approval.**

**Consultation** will involve sharing the draft with residents and getting their feedback.

**Approval** will be by adoption of the Plan by the Full Council.

Comments and ideas for these latter three stages are summarised in the Appendix attached.

### Managing the process

A steering group of myself, Jo, Mark Halladay and Stephen Novy (both co-Chairs of the Biodiversity Group) will manage the process. More details of each stage of the process will be shared with the Committee as they become clearer. An update on progress will be made at each Committee meeting.

### Proposal:

The Committee is asked to approve this process for developing a Local Nature Plan for Wivenhoe.

## **Appendix B**

### Proposal for the Green Spaces project 2023

#### **Background**

Since 2021, 13 open space areas of the town have been left unmown to aid nature recovery. In 2022, 16 sections of residential verges in 13 roads around the Town joined the project. In both years all sites demonstrated significant increases in biodiversity (see Committee report, November 2022).

The following sites are included in the project:

<u>Open space sites:</u>	Henrietta Close	Boudicca Walk	Broadfields entry	Cracknell Close
Frances Close	Grasby Close	Bobbits Way	Ernest/Rectory Rds	Millfield
x4 areas of KGV				
<u>Residential verges:</u>	Feedhams Cl	Leys Rd	Lammas Way	Almond Close
Ernest Road	Rosabelle Ave	Parkwood x2	Woodland Way	High St
The Nook bank	Valley Rd x3	Milford Close	De Vere Road	

**For 2023, it is proposed that:**

- The same sites are included in the Green Spaces project in 2023;
- Open spaces sites are mown just once in October (as in previous years) and continue to be surveyed monthly by volunteers;
- Residential verge sites are mown twice in the season: in late July (to prevent fire risk in the event of another hot summer and to restore appearance of the roads) and then at the end of the season in October;
- Letters are sent to neighbours and site notices erected explaining the mowing regimes and changes are publicised on the the Town's social and traditional media;
- I meet with neighbours of some of the residential sites in mid season to gauge reaction.

The responsible officers at the City Council have approved these mowing regimes and the City's contractor (IdVerde) and the Town's Groundsman (Jim) have confirmed they can implement the mowing regimes. Liaison with the Elmstead contractor (for the Millfield site) is underway.

As a related initiative, it is also proposed that the Town Council observe "No Mow May" on its sites at the Council offices, outside the William Loveless Hall, at Smiths Corner and at Sandford Close. These sites will not be mown during May and explanatory signage will be erected on the sites.

**Note:** Heavy May growth can overwhelm the mowers. Jim will have discretion to mow before the end of May if he judges it necessary. This proposal is made with his support.

**Committee members are asked to approve the management of both the Green Spaces sites and No Mow May sites as described here for the 2023 growing season.**

Maps of sites:



