



COLD ASH PARISH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, 28th JULY 2020

Present:

Cllrs Marie Fenner , Marigold Jaques & Ivor McArdle

In Attendance:

Representative of Greening Group: Richard Marshall

Apologies:

Cllr Dorothy Le Cornu

Representative of Allotment Holders: Jane Geater

Public Participation

- There was no public participation

1. Appointment of Chairperson

Cllr Jacques nominated Cllr McArdle for the post of Chairperson. Cllr Fenner seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations the proposal was passed unanimously.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

3. Minutes

As this was the inaugural meeting of the re-constituted Environment Committee, there were no previous minutes to approve

4. Matters Arising

As this was the inaugural meeting of the re-constituted Environment Committee, there were no matters arising

5. Terms of Reference

Cllr McArdle walked through the Terms of Reference outlining the main purpose of the committee, its responsibilities and the scope of its authority. He also highlighted that, whilst the committee is a formal committee of Cold Ash Parish Council and so will need to include certain formal elements, such as a formal agenda and minutes, it's hoped and expected that the committee will provide an informal forum for a sub-set of the council and interested parties to discuss environmental issues in a less formal setting. This should enable deeper consideration of the points than it is possible to cover at full council.

6. PROW Report

Cllr McArdle presented the information he has started collecting on the status of the Public Rights of Way within the parish. He highlighted that of the 27 PROWs only 2 of those that had been walked had material issues, both of which are known to CAPC and WBC and are under ongoing active management by WBC. The footpaths in question are:

- Footpath 18 – an inquiry is underway into the narrowing of the path, although the landowner has since re-widened it
- Footpath 25 – the footpath has been blocked by a building for over 10 years. The original resolution, of nominating a permissive pathway, has proven to be unworkable and the landowner has informally re-routed it. The situation needs to be resolved and an accessible route needs to be agreed for the PROW

Action: Cllr McArdle to check the status of the issue with Footpath 25, with the Parish Clerk

There was a discussion around how best to manage the ongoing review and management of the PROWs. It was agreed that we should try to establish a Footpath Group with owners for each PROW. Whilst the official responsibility for this sits with the landowners and WBC, the aim is to do minor clearance and identify any signage or major blockages, so that we can pass the information on to WBC, for resolution. It was agreed that this initiative should be taken forward.

8. Allotments and Grazing

In the absence of Jane Geater, Cllr McArdle provided the update, confirming:

- At the start of the year there was one vacant allotment. This has been filled and there are now 2 people on the waiting list. No action is required at the moment, but the position will continue to be monitored
- Jane Geater has advised that she intends to establish an Allotments Group to both share information and gain feedback from the leasers
- Informal comments have been received regarding the absence of a water supply to some of the allotments. This is currently being resolved by the kind supply from a neighboring property. There's a risk that this position will change if the property changes hands, so is something that will require monitoring
- There is an outstanding audit point to review the fees charged for allotments. The CAPC Finance Committee has this as an action

9. Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

Cllr Fenner shared details of the work she has done on TPOs. This has included research into the legislation relating to TPOs and the current status of TPOs in the parish. A very good basis has been put in place for this work by Cllr Fenner, however there was no response from the article that she placed in the Parish Magazine, at the end of last year. A discussion ensued and it was agreed that this is a very valuable piece of work for the parish and that we should see if we can generate interest within the community to support it. It was agreed that Cllr Fenner would arrange for the article to be placed on the Cold Ash Parish Council website and for a post, with a link, to be placed on the community Facebook page. Richard Marshall advised that this is a subject that the Greening Group would be able to support.

Action: Cllr Fenner to arrange for her TPO article to be placed on the CAPC website and a post, with link, on the community Facebook page.

Action: Cllr Fenner to arrange to share her TPO presentation and proposal to the Greening Group

10. Greening Group

Richard Marshall provided an update on the initiatives being undertaken by the Greening Group, covering:

- **Great British September Litter Pick** – the group will be supporting this initiative. An initial communication on Facebook has generated a lot of positive responses, so it looks like it will be well attended. The required equipment has been booked from WBC. COVID requirements are still under consideration, but are likely to be light-touch, as the work will be outside and in small groups
- **Woodland Trust Trees** – the trees are still on target to be delivered in the autumn; the exact date is yet to be agreed (the preparation of the site is being managed within the volunteer group). Sourcing the necessary stakes and collars is in hand
- **Swapshop / Closet Clear-out** – it is hoped that it will be possible to run either a Swapshop or Closet Clear-out later this year. Whether we'll be able to and, if so, which one, will be determined by COVID-19 restrictions
- **Household Carbon Footprints** – meeting the need to reduce the carbon footprints in our homes (in line with WBC Environmental Strategy) is a major challenge, as most homes produce many times the target. A good starting point for this work is to assess individual homes' current carbon footprints. The Greening Group has this as an initiative to take forward
- **Water Shortage** – it's being predicted that there is a high probability that there will be a water shortage in our area of the country within the next 10 years. We therefore need to look at ways to reduce our water consumption. A good starting point for this work is to assess individual homes' current water usage. The Greening Group has this as an initiative to take forward
- **Lockdown Wood** – the Greening Group is leading for the parish on the Lockdown Wood Project. This is an initiative led by the Newbury Branch of the Friends of the Earth. The aim is for parishioners to pot up any saplings that would normally be removed, for later planting in a site that will commemorate what we've been through in the current pandemic; the site(s) will be provided by WBC
- **Solar Panels** – the Greening Group is looking to engage with St Mark's School to see if it's a suitable site for solar panels

Cllr Fenner asked whether there are grants for environmentally friendly home improvements. Richard Marshall confirmed there are and will look to share the information more widely in the parish.

Action: Richard Marshall to look into communicating the grants available for environmentally friendly home improvements, within the parish

11. Recreation Areas

Cllr Jacques highlighted

No	Action	Owner	Target Date	Status
1.1	Check the status of the issue with Footpath 25, with the Parish Clerk	IM	15/8/20	Open
1.2	Publish an article outlining the Footpath Owners initiative, to see if there's enough interest to establish a group of volunteers	IM	15/8/20	Open
1.3	Kick-off the 2020/21 Members Bid work, in parallel with the 2019/20 Members Bid work	IM	15/8/20	Open
1.4	Arrange for the TPO article to be placed on the CAPC website and a post, with link, on the community Facebook page.	MF	15/8/20	Open
1.5	Share the TPO presentation and proposal to the Greening Group	MF	15/8/20	Open
1.6	Look into communicating the grants available for environmentally friendly home improvements, within the parish	RM	15/8/20	Open
1.7	Ask council to arrange the watering of the Jubilee Trees on a more formal basis	MJ	25/8/20	Open
1.8	Take the proposal on a Reptile Survey in the WAG to council for approval	IM	25/8/20	Open