

PRESENT:

East Ward:

Councillor J Craigie (Chairman)
Councillor J McKenzie

South Ward:

Councillor Mrs S Langford

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mr B Garman (NDCC)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor J Craigie was proposed by Councillor McKenzie and seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford.

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Craigie is appointed as Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.

(Vote: For: 3, Against: 0)

(Councillor J Craigie assumed the Chair and thanked the Members for their vote.)

2. ELECTION OF A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Councillor J Herron was proposed by Councillor J Craigie and seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford.

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Herron is appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.

(Vote: For: 3, Against: 0)

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Mrs R Craigie (alternate meeting, TDC), Mrs Corfe and Herron (personal).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

Mr Garman explained that the North Devon Cycling Club were operating very well. They had been in discussion with the developers of Brunswick Wharf to provide access to the Tarka Trail via Ethelwynne Brown Close.

He spoke about a UK wide local cycling and walking infrastructure plan along with an ABTA Travel Plan that could provide for cycling tourism opportunities. Fifty thousand people use the Tarka Trail annually.

While the Chairman noted the potential economic benefits to the Town, Councillor McKenzie expressed concern that cyclists could be routed through private areas, passing those vulnerable occupiers of Ethelwynne Brown and by passing the Heritage Centre. He conceded that Ethelwynne Brown would provide for flat access to the Trail.

6. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 February 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 3, Against: 0)

7. PROJECT ACTION PLAN

a. Parish Decarbonisation Action Plan.

• The Chairman, with a view to Central Government's lifting of restrictions on 21 June 2021, intimated a desire to pursue a crowd funding initiative in July 2021.

- He intended to promote public awareness at the Bike Show and the Bideford Fair.
- Liaison work is underway with the newly appointed North Devon Council Environment Officer and the Bideford Carbon Cooperative.

b. Tree Strategy. North Devon Council (NDC) are developing a Tree Strategy for the Local Plan; effectively a directive of authority as opposed to simply a guideline. The Chairman indicated the need to prioritise the drafting of the (Bideford) Tree Strategy.

c. Dempsey Woods. No update.

d. Pannier Market. The Chairman reminded members that the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills fund application with a view to Pannier Market and Office Energy efficiency was not pursued given the tight timescale. Those Councils that had been successful (neither NDC nor TDC were) already had pre-existing plans available to submit. Nonetheless both he and Councillor McKenzie had held positive talks with a firm of Architects.

Discussion followed on working with the Market Management Committee on future funding opportunities, the prohibitive price of carbon, the potential to explore new heating and updating the lighting in the Market.

The Chairman spoke about solar power energy clubs based on local energy models where renewable producers sell to consumers on the same grid. He advised that Bideford has four "transformers" in the Nutaberry Works area and a further four at Victoria Park. In our rural area the bias is towards the industrial developments, but he explained the technicalities that showed potential for those with smart meters, time of drawing energy, load balance, critical mass and avoidance of overloading the grid system could provide for an opportunity to set up a club amongst residents. He noted that Tamar Energy Community is looking to set up a pilot scheme.

e. Tidal and Estuary Energy Project. No update.

f. Recycling Litter Bins. The Chairman indicated that TDC have concerns over the cross contamination of recycled waste by the members of the public using segmented waste receptacles. He noted that DCC would not receive segregated / sorted waste at the Caddsdawn facility from public bins, deemed business, that it would have to be transported to Deepmoor.

Discussion followed that included:

- Writing to TDC vis a vis their commitment to Climate Emergency.
- The use of the NDC, Brynsworthy facility, that would receive the recycled waste from Bideford but only on approval from TDC. It was noted that Brynsworthy is closer to Bideford than the Deepmoor facility that would address a further climate emissions element.
- Opportunity to address the responsible officer, possible (TDC) Notice of Motion, noting that budget constraints inform their torpor.
- In-house operation:
 - o Costs.
 - o Sorting of waste.
 - o Licenses.
 - o Need for TDC support to access Brynsworthy.

Councillor McKenzie believed there would be benefits from engaging with Brynsworthy not least to encourage a joint working initiative.

The Chairman indicated that following a modest line of enquiry six local businesses expressed interest in the sponsoring of recycling bins. Smaller businesses were keen to show their "green" credentials and improve the tidiness of the Town.

Further discussion included a request, from a resident, for the Council to provide netting / covers for the recycle bins (potential delays in handling, safety, cost, individual responsibilities), dedicated cycling routes and recycling points for new developments.

g. Cycling. Funding approach for local cycling plan to be considered by SF&GP Committee.

The Chairman spoke about a DCC Cycling Community engagement programme that could provide an opportunity for the Council to promote. He described a French model of subsidising E bikes that saw a considerable return on emissions compared to subsidised public transport.

h. Fifteen minute economies. No update.

i. Fishing. Councillor McKenzie took the opportunity to explain the damage to breeding grounds (and more widely, the food chain) caused by factory ships.

While he felt that there was little that could be done at a local level the Chairman suggested that awareness could be raised, and generally on recycling / environment matters, through a drive to inform the public with leaflets, the use of the Council's interactive information board, in Cooper Street, and generally by educating young people (who could coerce their parents / families).

The Chairman thanked the Members for their attendance and support. He concluded the Meeting at 7.34 pm.