

Notes of a Discussion regarding Future Priorities and Plans – Climate and Biodiversity Cttee Members

7th Sept 2021 3 pm

Present : The Mayor Councillor Paul Stevens, and Councillors Toynbee (Chair), Owen, Milln (part), Oliver, Hornsey (part), Boulter (part)

Attending : Steve Kerry, Connor Powell

Consideration of inviting the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Easier to promote clean air, clean river, local transport eg bike route, accessible pavements, buses than mega-issues like national or continental carbon footprint.

Categories for awards in a new C+B-Diversity Section – school project to increase bio-diversity, talk to the BID re shops/businesses making a contribution eg best hanging basket, initiative in sustainability. Greatest improvement to the ward/are in a year. (Unloved corners brought back to life). Most effective reduction on carbon emissions by a local business. Look at outdoor awards on a pleasant garden/school/park site and have outdoor catering.

Flower planting in areas which are not used for sports pitches or play areas in parks. Aubrey will follow up an earlier discussion and we could fund the seeds. Seek out a local botanist who can advise on rarer species and insect supporting ones.

Proposed urban wetland site on the Essex Arms site and the Yazor Brook site. Connor will follow up re Yazor as they have a lot of very impressive material we can use.

How do we feed into other committees?

Planning is a big one – neighbourhood heating systems, minimum numbers of charging points and cycle storage, sustainable residential development in the city centre to allow residential and commercial/leisure to sit side by side (Liverpool model), grey water provision. Joint letter to all major developers questioning profit versus investment in the future eg building in solar power.

Community Development – need to take a view on street weeds. A massive undertaking, no support for toxic chemical solutions but heated water systems might be acceptable. BBLP will act if it is a hazard to safe access, setting that threshold fairly high. HC will never have the funding and people could be encouraged to hoe themselves or contact a community group – but this doesn't hit the roots. Largescale weed killing is anti-bio-diversity, need balancing projects.

Finance and Policy – major budget implications of the electric buses including interrogating the County Council about their plans for electric buses and new routes etc as mentioned in their budget consultation notes. Following a meeting with Wildlife Trust possibly supporting their initiatives. Small but very noticeable improvements on quality of life/environment gets good publicity and positive responses. Social media moans feature how to get around (free weekend buses very popular), litter etc.

Diana to talk to Becci regarding how Community Development and Climate & Biodiversity can tie together, creating a list of actions the two can work on. EG; avoiding support for grants which have diesel or petrol powered equipment or non-eco projects. Instead, we should be encouraging greener initiatives in grants and community groups.

Ask all other councillors to:

Contact schools about their nature gardens, forest projects etc, junk modelling and recycling initiatives to enable a short list of possible award recipients – do this via Schools Forum and the SENCO Forum. Perhaps better to do this to all kids via “Raring to Go” magazine. Back up via social media. Connor and Cat will raise with Ben Lea and the Youth Council to see if they want to get involved.

Unloved areas where there are people willing to get involved in doing something about them, helping with permissions, funds and other resources.

Roundabouts – Bloom have tried to get flowers on the PC World traffic island, there is shrubbery on the Steels roundabout because it is large enough.

Transport – biking, encourage under cover cycle storage in shops, accessible map of places where bikes can be parked

River – primarily a Natural England issue not ours, high phosphate levels mean encouraging further use is seriously unwise. Ross want to dedicate some areas of the river as bathing areas which mandates action on water quality, Rob will follow up.