



HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE 27 FEBRUARY 2024

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillors Elizabeth Foxton, Cat Hornsey, Jeremy Milln, Rob Owens (Chair), Ben Proctor, and Diana Toynbee and Jim Kenyon (attending as a non member).

Attending: Becci O'Reilly Administration and Events Manager and Dave Tristram External Funding and Community Support Officer

Also in attendance were Kevin Knipe Hereford in Bloom, Richard Weston Hereford in Bloom and Herefordshire Tree Warden Network, Paul Waldron and three other representatives from the City Branch of the Wildlife Trust, Roger Finn Monmouth Rotary Club, Callum Dover Hereford City Youth Council Chair and Nathaniel Hornsey.

CBD2023/24.40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillor Powell.

CBD2023/24.41 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Foxton was substitute for Councillor Hornsey after Item 5 /Minute 44 (6.25pm).

CBD2023/24.42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Ben Proctor, Diana Toynbee and Rob Owens declared non-pecuniary interests in Item 7 Ledbury Road Rose Gardens as members of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. Councillor Elizabeth Foxton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 as a volunteer with Hereford in Bloom.

CBD2023/24.43 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was reported at this point by the Administration and Events Officer that Putson Community Association had confirmed that their street lighting project did not need planning permission and therefore the grant approved at the December meeting would be paid.

It was proposed by Councillor Proctor, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and, with two abstentions,

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2023 be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

CBD2023/24.44 CITY CENTRE WATER MACHINES

Committee received a presentation from Roger Finn of Monmouth Rotary Club about their project which installed a number of free to access water machines, in the hope that Committee would support a similar project if developed by the Hereford Elgar Rotary Club.

Roger gave an overview of the history of the necessity for clean drinking water when there were concerns about disease and the temperance movement and then explained their consultation exercise which ascertained that residents wanted to make Monmouth a better place to live, work and visit, by reducing litter, reducing plastic use and replacing sugary drink consumption with water consumption.

They installed fountains at four locations and have an ongoing project to restore the ornate Victorian fountain at the parish church. The project was supported by the Rotary, St Thomas PCC, the Off Street Project, Plastic Free Monmouth, Monmouth Town Council and Gwent Police.

The ground work and installation costs were approx £10-12k per fountain achieved through funds from grants, charities, the local authorities, local people, volunteer time and of course the Rotary, and running costs including cleaning, servicing and water supply were covered by the Town Council.

Councillor Kenyon then explained he was bringing this to Committee as a Rotarian, and that they would be consulting, investigating funding opportunities, sites and maintenance costs.

At the end of the meeting, Committee decided to ask Officers to write a letter of support to the Hereford Elgar Rotary Club for a water fountain project.

At this point (6.25pm) Roger Finn and Cat and Nathaniel Hornsey left the meeting and Councillor Foxtan became sub for Councillor Hornsey.

At this point, the Chair resolved to bring Item 7 forward so the representatives could leave the meeting afterwards.

CDB2023/24.45 LEDBURY ROAD ROSE GARDENS

The Chair agreed to firstly listen to Hereford in Bloom (HIB) regarding their clearing activities, then the City Branch of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust (CBHWT) and to then open discussions about the future of the site.

Kevin Knipe explained that they had looked after the site for a few years, but that it had become untenable for their volunteers due to the amount of hands on work required with the shrubbery. They had been asked by City Council to clear the overgrown area for redevelopment, after requests from residents with noise complaints, feeling scared and unsafe, litter, it being used a toilet and at the request of the retirement complex, which had caused some shock due to how different it looked and that previous storm damage to trees could now be seen from the road. The rose beds would be cleared by mid March. This would give a clear canvas for any new roses to be planted but the area at the back till had a lot of brambles. Their involvement would now cease as they do not have volunteers who are able to take this area on.

Paul Waldron from CBHWT then spoke how local residents used to use this area to see birds and butterflies, that the roses were valued, and that they would like to see the area from the path down to the brook turned into a valuable part of the biodiversity network by making it a mixed habitat. They would develop it with lower maintenance native plants, which wouldn't grow so high, with the intention of it becoming a calm community biodiversity garden for anyone to access including local people and schools. They have 25 to 30 volunteers and local people nearby who would manage it as a wildlife garden and are already working there testing the water etc on the Yazor Brooks' project. The project would have a staged approach, and would involve the public.

It was established at this point that both groups were interested in different parts of the site, and that both types of gardening could compliment each other. Further discussions involved whether either group had any kind of licence to operate there, and it was reiterated that the land is owned by Herefordshire Council, who mow there twice per year and contract BBLP to do some work, and that groups would look to achieve some kind of Service Level Agreement with them to develop it.

It was noted that the HWT is a constituted group, and therefore could apply to City Council for funding for their project, which Committee would look at favourably. It was also noted that Councillor Foxtan had one volunteer interested in maintaining a formal rose garden on the other part of the site, however this was a lot of work for one person and would require additional help, plus a constituted group behind it to apply for funding, at which point Councillor Kenyon suggested the Central Tupsley Community Group might be able to get involved.

It was proposed by Councillor Proctor, seconded by Councillor Foxtan and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Committee supports the City Branch of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust developing a community biodiversity garden on one part of the site, and would support any community group that was able to manage a rose garden on the other part. Committee are happy to work with the City Branch, any community group and Herefordshire Council as the land owner to facilitate the above.

At this point, Callum Dover and all representatives from HIB and CBHWT left the meeting.

At this point, the Chair resolved to bring Item 8 forward so that Councillor Kenyon could leave the meeting afterwards.

CBD2023/24.46 WILDFLOWER SEEDS

Councillor Kenyon explained that the request for seeds for Aylestone Park, Tupsley Quarry and Scouts Corner, have all come from Aylestone Park Association (APA), as they have planted wildflowers for a number of years and understand the nuances e.g. quantities required, types of seeds for different areas (shade, wetland etc), necessity to burn grass away before planting etc.

Discussions included the exact area at Scouts Corner, and it was confirmed it is within the building curtilage and that APA will offer their tractor, which was funded by City Council, to other groups requiring it for planting wildflowers.

Committee would like to see that any other groups who are applying for wildflower seed funding have knowledge of the nuances, that the Clerk should report and further spending back to Committee, and that all areas of wildflowers funded by City Council display a sign. Some discussion took place around this and it was agreed that the existing signs used for Community Grants projects are too large, so the Admin and Events Officer would look into sourcing approximately 20 smaller alternatives.

It was proposed by Councillor Owens, seconded by Councillor Foxtan, and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Committee agrees to fund the seed planting proposals for Aylestone Park and Tupsley Quarry to the sum of £1,155.

That the Committee authorises the Clerk to spend up to £500 per site to a total of £3,000 from the environmental improvements budget to support similar planting schemes on other suitable sites, and reports and spending back to Committee.

That City Council sources approximately 20 small plaques on stakes stating that the wildflower area is funded by Hereford City Council.

At this point (7.20pm), Councillor Kenyon left the meeting.

CBD2023/24.47 SMALL CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY GRANT – HEREFORD YOGA CIC

STUDIO UPGRADES – £3,000

Discussions around the grant application focussed around whether the CIC owned or leased the building, and therefore whether the capital grant would be funding improvements to a private property and subsequently, whether the grant application should have come from the building owner not the tenant. Whether the project had enough of a carbon reducing aspect and therefore was appropriate to come to this committee or should have gone to Community Development was also discussed plus whether it should have been split and only the carbon reducing aspects brought to this Committee.

It was clarified that both Committee chairs agreed it should come to this committee, that it wouldn't be fair on small organisations to effectively split small grants/make them apply twice, and that currently, Climate and Biodiversity Committee grants are operated under and within the budget of the Community Development Grants Committee so are bound by their criteria. Councillors compared this application to the previous Rainbows Nursery application where it was approved to make capital improvement to a leased property, and that if this application had come before them at Community Development Committee, it was likely to have been approved.

It was requested that the External Funding and Community Support Officer ascertain whether the applicant owned the building, and if not, what their length of lease was.

It was proposed by Councillor Proctor, seconded by Councillor Owens and with one abstention

RESOLVED That Hereford Yoga CIC be awarded £3,000 for their grant application, on the proviso that leasehold conditions were established and there was confirmation that approval was in line with existing practices.

POST SCRIPT - Since the meeting, it was established that the applicant held a renewable 13 year lease, and that City Council have in the past awarded grants to groups who have enough lease time to get a return from the grant being awarded, so this grant should go ahead.

CBD2023/24.48 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

HCC Carbon Footprinting (April Agenda).

Grants Criteria – to discuss what criteria should be used to establish which grant applications go to Climate and Biodiversity Committee and which to Community Development Committee. Also to discuss requesting that Council separate the budget and allow development of a new set of criteria specifically for Climate and Biodiversity Committee applications, that is additional and independent to the existing Community Grants criteria. This will need to be considered by Community Development Committee and Council also.

Climate and Biodiversity Awards Criteria.

Review of Allotments polices and environmental elements of the agreement with HALG advise Policy and Resources Committee as the responsible authority for the agreement.

Environmental implications of the feasibility study by MACE on the future of the Town Hall.

Street Trees.

Shrewsbury Cup.

CBD2023/24.49 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 6 pm

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Signed

Date