

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
BOROUGH PARISH LIAISON FORUM
HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.00 - 8.45 PM**

Councillors Present

Michael Firmager (Chairman) and Gregor Murray

Parish/Town Council Representatives

Mark Picken	Arborfield & Newland Parish Council
Jane Hartley	Charvil Parish Council
Geoff Littler	Earley Town Council
Alistair Neal	Earley Town Council
Tony Farnese	Sonning Parish Council
Trefor Fisher	Sonning Parish Council
John Anderson	Swallowfield Parish Council
Roy Mantel	Twyford Parish Council
John Bowley	Twyford Parish Council
Shaun Hanna	Winnersh Parish Council
Adrian Mather	Wokingham Town Council
Lesley Foxwell	Wokingham Without Parish Council
Steve Bromley	Finchampstead Parish Council
Tom McCann	Woodley Town Council
Liz Halson	Clerks Forum
Jan Nowecki	Clerks Forum

Officers

Neil Carr (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Rhian Hayes (Category Manager, Economic Prosperity and Place), Mark Redfearn (Lead - Localities Service) and Nick Austin (Interim Assistant Director, Customer and Localities)

21. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Stephen Conway, Roland Cundy, Dianne King, Ken Newland and Pam Stubbs.

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 30 September 2019, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

24. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25. WOKINGHAM CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL

The Forum considered a presentation on the Wokingham Children's Book Festival, to be held in the autumn of 2020. The Book Festival was being developed as a partnership event between Wokingham Borough Council, Wokingham Town Council and More Arts.

Gemma Cummings and Elizabeth McDonald, from the library service, attended the meeting to give the presentation and answer questions from the Forum.

The presentation highlighted the ways in which Town and Parish Councils could contribute to the Book Festival, as follows:

- identifying and engaging with local schools who would be able to host an author event – author visits would take place in September/October 2020.
- funding an author event at a cost of £500. The library service would undertake all the contract work for authors.

Any Town/Parish Councils interested in supporting the Book Festival were asked to contact Elizabeth McDonald, Young People and Families Outreach Manager at Elizabeth.mcdonald@wokingham.gov.uk

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the presentation on the Wokingham Children's Book Festival 2020 be noted;
- 2) Town and Parish Councils interested in supporting the Book Festival contact Elizabeth McDonald by 1 May 2020.

26. HIGHWAYS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Forum received a presentation on the Highways Information Management System (HIMS).

Bob Pizzey (Volker Highways – the Council's highways contractor) attended the meeting to give the presentation and answer questions from the Forum.

The presentation gave examples of road defects which presented a danger to motor vehicles and cyclists. These defects would be addressed within 24 hours. Other defects would be included in a longer term programme of works.

Residents were able to record issues on the WBC website. Bob outlined the process for recording issues electronically or by phone and set out the targets for completion of work and feedback to residents.

In the ensuing discussion, members of the Forum raised the following points:

What happened when defects originated from the work of utility companies such as Thames Water? Bob confirmed that WBC should forward issues such as damaged drains to Thames Water and should update residents accordingly.

The website reporting process was not mobile phone friendly. Bob confirmed that there were plans to address this issue, probably starting in the summer of 2020.

In addition to road defects, what other issues were being reported to Volker Highways? Bob stated that a range of additional issues were reported, including missed bins, parked vehicles, tree damage, public rights of way and lighting defects.

Bob advised that members of the Forum should contact him, as necessary, for further information or guidance about the HIMS system: bob.pizzey@volkerhighways.co.uk

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Bob Pizzey be thanked for attending the meeting to brief the Forum on the HIMS system;
- 2) Forum members requiring further information on the HIMS system contact Bob Pizzey at Volker Highways.

27. DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY - INITIAL ACTION PLAN

The Forum considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 13 to 64, which gave details of the Borough Council's initial Climate Emergency Action Plan. The Action Plan set out the initial steps that the Council would take on the journey to achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

Gregor Murray, WBC Executive Member for Climate Emergency (and Forum member) and Rhian Hayes (Category Manager, Economic Prosperity and Place) presented the report and answered questions.

The report stated that the Borough Council had passed a Motion declaring a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 18 July 2019. Work had been carried out to establish a baseline carbon footprint for the Borough. Wokingham Borough's carbon footprint was estimated as 580.9 ktCO₂e (based on 2017 data). This calculation did not include areas outside the Council's influence such as carbon emissions from motorways and rail travel.

The Council had identified eight key priority areas to pursue as follows:

- Reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions from transport – initial work to understand travel patterns and demand and to identify possible solutions which were practical, achievable and sustainable;
- Reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions from domestic and business property (provision of advice and development of a Green Bank);
- Generating more renewable energy – a number of potential sites had been identified in the Borough for solar farms;
- Creating a Local Plan which specifies Net Zero construction and infrastructure – also producing a new Borough Design Guide which addressed issues such as charging points for electric vehicles;
- Increasing the levels of Carbon Sequestration by greening the environment – working with the Woodland Trust to develop plans to plant 250,000 trees across the Borough;
- Engaging with young people and supporting sustainable schools – WBC to host a Schools Climate Conference on 30 March 2020;
- Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill – target of zero waste to landfill by 2030;
- Encouraging behaviour change across the Borough – providing information and guidance to residents on lifestyle changes which reduced carbon footprints.

The initial Action Plan had been developed using ideas from local residents, Town and Parish Councils, businesses, schools and Council Officers. The Forum had produced a number of recommendations for action at its meeting on 30 September 2020.

The report stated that the Borough Council had committed £50m over the next three years (subject to Council Budget approval) for implementation of the initiatives in the Action Plan.

The report stated that an annual progress report would be submitted to Council, commencing in July 2020. The progress report would include a fully costed action plan with carbon saving quotas against individual projects.

Gregor confirmed that the Action Plan template had been shared with Town and Parish Councils who may wish to develop their own action plans. WBC was also working on the analysis of carbon footprints for each Town and Parish Council area.

In the ensuing discussion, members of the Forum raised the following points:

In relation to initiatives such as tree planting, were there potential synergies from the use of adjacent plots owned by WBC and Town/Parish Councils. It was confirmed that this issue would be considered as the discussions progressed.

The new food waste collection service was received positively, but there were concerns about the fact that green food waste bags were not provided by WBC. Residents were approaching the Town and Parish Councils for green bags. Rhian undertook to follow up on this point with the relevant WBC team.

Would the Climate Emergency Action Plan be posted on the WBC website? Gregor confirmed that this would happen shortly.

Progress on the Action Plan was welcome, but the current document was short on specific, measurable targets. Gregor confirmed that SMART targets were being developed and that the University of Reading would provide independent advice and evaluation of progress.

WBC could not control carbon emissions relating to the M4, but was the Borough Council planning to lobby Highways England on this issue? Gregor confirmed that the Borough Council would lobby Highways England but the main focus was on issues which could be tackled locally.

Was the Borough Council exploring access to grants which could fund electric vehicle charging points at less cost? Gregor confirmed that Officers were exploring all options relating to potential grant funding and were seeking to ensure a consistent pricing position across the Borough.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Rhian Hayes and Gregor Murray be thanked for their work on the Climate Emergency Action Plan and for attending the meeting to answer questions from Forum members;
- 2) further update reports on the Climate Emergency Action Plan be submitted to the Forum in due course.

28. FLY TIPPING STRATEGY

The Forum considered a presentation on the Borough Council's draft Fly Tipping Strategy.

Mark Redfearn (Lead – Localities Service) and Nick Austin (Interim Assistant Director, Customer and Localities) attended the meeting to give the presentation and answer questions from Forum members.

The presentation highlighted the fact that fly tipping was a criminal offence and one of the most common forms of anti-social behaviour. In 2018/19 Councils in England dealt with over one million incidents, an increase of 8% over 2017/18. Within Wokingham Borough there were 1,171 incidents of fly tipping reported to the Council, an average of 93 per month. The cost of collection and disposal was £145k. This did not include the waste fly tipped on private land, for which disposal was the responsibility of individual landowners.

The Fly Tipping Strategy aimed to ensure that residents, businesses and landowners understood their responsibilities for waste and how the Council would work with the various stakeholders to achieve a cleaner environment across the Borough. The key aspects of the Strategy related to:

- prevention – by raising awareness of the Waste Duty of Care;
- communication – up to date information and a communications strategy;
- enforcement – a clear waste enforcement policy with robust sanctions;
- responding – clearing waste within five working days of reporting;
- reporting – improving recording and reporting through a single point of contact;
- working with partners – a joined up approach with shared data and intelligence.

In the ensuing discussion, members of the Forum made the following points:

How many free pick-ups of waste (e.g. bulky waste) were available for residents? Mark confirmed that details of collections would be circulated after the meeting.

What plans were in place to set up local Countryside Watch projects? Mark advised any Towns/Parishes interested in this idea to contact him directly:

mark.redfearn@wokingham.gov.uk

In situations where bins were full and rubbish was placed on the floor nearby, was that fly tipping? Mark confirmed that that Council looked at each case on its merits. Officers were keen to speak to residents in the first instance to understand any background issues and provide guidance if necessary. WBC was keen to hear about local hotspots which would allow targeted action.

What happened when there was uncertainty whether fly tipping had occurred on public or private land, e.g. ditches? Mark confirmed that the Council's mapping tool helped to clarify land ownership issues. In cases where ownership was uncertain, Officers would take a pragmatic approach.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Nick Austin and Mark Redfearn by thanked for attending the meeting to answer questions from Forum members;
- 2) the WBC draft Fly Tipping Strategy be supported;

- 3) Towns/Parishes requiring further information on the Fly Tipping Strategy contact Mark Redfearn directly.

29. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND URGENT ISSUES

The Forum considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 65 to 66, which gave details of potential items identified by Town and Parish Councils.

In addition to items previously approved by the Forum, the Chairman had met with a number of Town and Parish Councils and agreed a further set of issues for consideration at future meetings.

The Chairman stated that a prioritised list of items would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum.

Neil Carr asked if Forum members would appreciate a briefing on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Members confirmed that a briefing on GDPR would be useful.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) a prioritised list of potential Agenda items be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum;
- 2) a briefing on the General Data Protection Regulation be added to the list of items.

30. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Forum considered dates for future meetings. In addition to the meeting on 6 April 2020 the Forum discussed meeting dates for 2020/21.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the next meeting of the Forum be held on 6 April 2020;
- 2) the proposed future meeting dates (set out below) be considered at the next meeting of the Forum:
 - Monday 20 July 2020;
 - Monday 19 October 2020;
 - Monday 8 February 2021;
 - Monday 12 April 2021.