

BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL



**Town Hall
Bideford
Devon
EX39 2HS**

Telephone:
Bideford (01237) 428938

Paul Swan
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

15th August 2024

To: Members of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee

You are hereby summoned to attend a Meeting of the **Decarbonisation and Environment Committee** of the above-named Council to be held in the Council Chamber, on **Thursdays 22 August 2024 at 6.30 pm** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

In accordance with The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 members of the public are welcome to attend. There is a legal right to film/record/photograph/report public meetings.

Paul Swan
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. To Elect a Deputy Chairman.
2. To receive apologies and reasons for absence.
3. To receive declarations of interest on items on the agenda and note any requests for dispensation received by the Clerk prior to the meeting. Enc.
4. Public participation session of 15 minutes duration on items on the agenda.
5. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2024 as a correct record (approved and adopted at the Town Council Meeting on 8 August 2024). Enc.
6. To discuss and resolve upon making a recommendation to full council to allocate some spaces to wild seeding. Enc.

7. To discuss and resolve upon making a recommendation to full council to inquire into having a carbon audit carried out on BTC operations.

Enc.

DECARBONISATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Councillors:

Mr J McKenzie
Mr J Gordon

Mr J Craigie
Ms R Clarke

Mrs J Gubb

Declaration of Interests at meetings

- Where a matter relates to an interest in list A, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He /she only need declare it if it is not already noted on the register of interests.
- Where the matter is in list A, but is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote; the member shall disclose that there is an interest but not the nature of it.
- Where a matter relates to an interest on list B the member shall not vote and may only speak as a member of the public.
- A member only has to declare an interest in list B if it is not already on the register of interests.
- If the interest is in list B and is sensitive in nature and not already registered then the member shall disclose the interest but not the nature of it.
- Where a matter relates to the financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than in list A) the member shall disclose the interest and not vote. He or she may speak but only as a member of the public.

List A:

- 1 **Employment, office, trade or vocation** – carried on for profit by member or spouse or civil partner.
- 2 **Sponsorship** – any payments for the previous 12 months, other than by the Council, to assist in Council duties
- 3 **Contracts** – any current contracts between the Council and the member or his/ her spouse or civil partner or a company the member is a director or partner of.
4. **Land** – any beneficial interest in land within the area of the Council by member, spouse or civil partner.
- 5 **Licenses** - any license, alone or with others, by spouse, civil partner or member to occupy land in area of Council.
- 6 **Corporate Tenancies** - any tenancy where the Council is the landlord and the member, spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest in the tenant.
7. **Securities** – a beneficial interest is held in a body that has land or business in the area of the Council by the member, spouse or civil partner that either exceeds £25,000 or the total share capital is in excess of one hundredth of the of the total shares issued.

List B:

Any interests which relate to or is likely to affect:

1. Any body where the member has general control or management and was appointed by the Council.
2. Any body that the member is in a position of control or management and either:
 - (a) exercises functions of a public nature;
 - (b) is for charitable purposes; or
 - (c) has the purpose of influencing public opinion or policy (including political parties and trade unions)
3. Any gifts or hospitality that the member has received by virtue of his or her office in excess of £50.



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee Meeting

held in the Council Chamber,

on Tuesday 2 July 2024 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: East Ward: Councillor J Craigie
Councillor K Hind
Councillor J Gubb
Councillor J Gordon (Chairman)

North Ward: Councillor K Bines

South Ward Councillor R Clarke

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Swan (Town Clerk)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Gordon was proposed by Councillor Bines and seconded by Councillor Clarke.

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

(Vote: For: 6, Against: 0)

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

2. ELECTION OF A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Councillor Bines was proposed by Councillor Gubb and seconded by Councillor Clarke.

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

(Vote: For: 5, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor J McKenzie.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

1 member of the public present.

The member of the public explained their view on the importance of moving away from a meat based farming production system and the pressure this puts on the farming community. They then explained about moving towards a plant based agricultural system and the benefits of doing so in terms of the vast amounts of land this would release.

6. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 August 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 2, Abstention: 4)

7. **TO SUBMIT IDEAS VIA PROJECT INITIATION FORMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the budget and that the 2% of precept will be restored for 2025/26.

The Chair advised that the Committee should put together an action plan and he would take the lead on this.

Councillor Bines recommended to that the Town Council consider a 25% plant based offering on all council held events.

The Committee wanted to strongly promote the uptake of a paperless system for all councillors.

8. **TO RECOMMEND TO THE STAFFING FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE UPON THE CARBON FREE MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT**

It was recommended to full council that they accept and resolve upon the quotation for the carbon free maintenance equipment to be funded by the 24/25 environmental budget.

Proposed by Councillor Craigie Seconded by Councillor Hind.

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting will be held on 6 August 2024.

The Committee advised that a regular 5 weekly meeting be added to the Council Schedule when issued next year.

The Chairman thanked the Members for their attendance and support. He concluded the Meeting at 19:00 pm.

Signature of Town Mayor:..... Date:.....

Signature of Chairman:..... Date:.....

Notice of Motion / Project Initiation Form – Bideford Town Council

Project Initiator and Lead:	Jack Gordon	Date:	9/8/2024
Project Description	<p>To discuss and resolve upon making a recommendation to full council to allocate some spaces to wild seeding.</p> <p>Initially three sites in close proximity are proposed, in order to aid with implementation and any ongoing maintenance (information on sites can be found overleaf). The aim would be to create an area of circa 100m² to dedicate to wild seeding over the three selected sites.</p> <p>Given the benefits such a project can bring to achieving our goal of decarbonisation as well as supporting a healthy local ecosystem, funds from the decarbonisation budget could be used to support such a project.</p> <p>The sites chosen either sit on Town Council owned land or are owned by Torridge DCC, with Bideford Town Council having a contract to maintain the spaces.</p>		
Benefits	<p>Pollinating insects have experienced a significant decline in recent years in the UK, and without intervention this decline is only likely to continue. Given the surrounding areas reliance on agriculture, a lack of pollinating insects could have serious long term implications for the economy of Bideford and the surrounding area.</p> <p>Wild seeding also helps create suitable habitats for many insects that are fundamental to healthy ecosystems. If insects numbers continue to decline at current rates, we will see knock on effects on many species of birds that make up the bio diversity of North Devon. The diversity and health of bird and other animal life along the River Torridge is a significant draw to tourists visiting the area and people moving to Bideford.</p> <p>Not only will such a proposal support bio-diversity and healthy eco-systems in the area, all of which factor in making Bideford an attractive destination, wild seeding can provide real beautification to the areas it is undertaken in. Further supporting Bideford as a destination to visit but also as a great place to live</p>		

Financial Implications	<p>The main financial implications are in the initial purchase of seeds or plugs and this can vary significantly depending on the choice of seeds or ready to plant plugs and the choice of flowers.</p> <p>If only using seeds, initial purchasing can be as low as £100-£200, though the additional maintenance of planting from seed does need to be considered and this option can take 3-7 years before becoming fully established.</p> <p>Using plugs is considerably more expensive with costs closer to £1000+. However, the advantage of this is it allows you to establish wildflower beds far quicker, in as little as 6-18 months, and gives you more control over the final makeup and appearance of the wildflower bed. Plugs also require less maintenance over time and therefore will have less of an ongoing maintenance cost, at least initially.</p> <p>Budgeting for signs that promote this as a town council led project and the benefits of such projects should also be considered.</p> <p>Ongoing costs of maintaining such areas need to be considered as well. Depending on the makeup of the wild seeds chosen, it is recommended to cut back 3 times a year as well as to rake out any cut grass in the wild seed beds. Much of this maintenance can be carried out by Town Rangers who already have to maintain these areas, cutting far more than 3 times a year! Working with organisations like Bideford Sustainability Group and Little Green Towns can also help keep maintenance costs down, especially in the early stages when more maintenance is required. I am currently in discussion to see how these groups and potentially others could support such a project.</p>
Officer resource required:	Town Rangers would need to aid in initial creation and planting of the wild seed beds. A maintenance schedule would also need to be set up with them to keep the areas healthy and in a good state.
Risks and issues	Appropriate plants need to be chosen in order to thrive in the selected locations and provide real benefit to the eco-systems of the surrounding areas. Consultation with experts in the field should be done in order to ensure correct choices are made

	<p>and this is something I am already in the process of.</p> <p>Without some degree of maintenance, the chosen areas could easily become overgrown and weed filled, having a negative impact on the appearance of the area.</p> <p>When previously carrying out 'no mow May' there had been issues of littering and dog fouling in the long grass. Access to waste and dog waste bins near the sites should be considered and erection of border edging may need to be considered to deter dogs from entering the wild seed patches.</p>
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Action List	Yes / No	Name of person to complete action	Observations:
Planning Permission	No		None required
Owners Consent	No		Council owned land
Consultation Required	No		

Please continue on separate sheet if necessary

Site A – Little America



Site B – Ford Rock



Site C – Entrance to Ford Woods



Notice of Motion / Project Initiation Form – Bideford Town Council

Project Initiator and Lead:	Jack Gordon	Date:	9/8/2024
Project Description	<p>To discuss and resolve upon making a recommendation to full council to inquire into having a carbon audit carried out on BTC operations.</p> <p>Carbon audits are carried about by external organisations and help provide information on total carbon emissions and footprint, along with a breakdown of which areas of operations have the largest carbon footprint.</p> <p>By carrying a carbon audit, Bideford Town Council will be better positioned to create its own Town Climate Plan, a recommended step for all councils looking to reduce their carbon emissions.</p>		
Benefits	<p>Without such a carbon audit, we are essentially operating blind as to how to reduce Town Council’s carbon emissions and where we can have the greatest impact.</p> <p>Such audits can also provide advice on how to decrease carbon emissions and allow for a more targeted and efficient strategy in bringing Bideford Town Council in line with the national target of achieving net-zero by 2050.</p> <p>Such an audit would show BTC’s commitment to decarbonisation and would bring it in line with the work already being carried out by Torridge DCC and Devon CC.</p>		
Financial Implications	<p>Costs vary depending on the scale of the audit and size of the organisation. £3,000 can be seen as a starting figure, but this can easily exceed £10,000 if a more detail report and consultation is required.</p> <p>Consideration should be made on if subsequent audits should be carried out to measure progress that is being made in decarbonisation. For example, auditing every 3-5 years to check progress and provide guidance on if plans should be updated.</p> <p>If a carbon audit is agreed upon, it would be worthwhile conducting research on if any national grants would be available to BTC to help offset some of the costs of such an audit. Other organisation may also be willing to support in</p>		

	providing funds for such an audit and this avenue should be explored as well.		
Officer resource required:	<p>Town officers would need to support in researching appropriate companies to audit an organisation like BTC.</p> <p>If an audit was agreed upon and carried out, officers would also be required to share appropriate information with the auditors in order for them to complete their service.</p>		
Risks and issues	Such an audit could take a significant proportion of the money allocated for decarbonisation and does not include costs of implementing any recommended actions. This can be seen as largely offset by the benefits it will bring in allowing us to make an informed action plan on decarbonisation.		
Action List	Yes / No	Name of person to complete action	Observations:
Planning Permission	No		
Owners Consent	No		
Consultation Required	No		

Please continue on separate sheet if necessary