

Minutes of Meeting of the Environmental Committee held on 2 October 2023 at 6.30 pm A hybrid meeting conducted via 'Teams'.

Councillors Present Helen Nelson (Chair), Sara Keeton, and Carrie Townsend-Jones.

Co-opted members Cllr Chris Evans (Swansea City Council) and Peter Jones

Officer Present: Lydia Graham – Environmental Officer and Ian Hughes – Committee Support Officer ((CSO)

In attendance Mr Peter Jones (public)

EN2309-01 Apologies: Cllr Rebecca Fogarty and Michael Parkin.

EN2309-02 Declarations of Interest: None

EN2309-03 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th July 2023 as a true record.

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 24 July 2023 as a true record. Cllr Townsend Jones indicated that the minutes incorrectly recorded Cllr Will Thomas as being a councillor present and that his contribution to Castle Woods Path was inaccurate item **EN2307-05**.

EN2309-04 Budget Monitoring Report to 30/06/2023

Ian Hughes, the CSO, gave a presentation to the committee on an awareness of financial matters relevant to councillors. This included the processes of individual committees being allocated a budget in January for which they are responsible for monitoring throughout the financial year. Councillors should refer to spending detailed in spreadsheets prepared on a monthly basis by the RFO, Paul Beynon. They should question both underspending and overspending of money allocated, by questions (actions) to the RFO and in discussion at monthly committee meetings.

AGREED that 'budgeting' be given a raised priority in the 'running order' of agenda items at future meetings

EN2309-05 Budget 2024/25

Ian Hughes, the CSO, raised awareness of the significance of each committee preparing a budget for 2024/2025. This proposed budget needs to be agreed by Full Council in January 2024, either at the regular monthly Full Council or at a specially convened meeting. The budget would need to be agreed by the committee through the use of Budget Proposal Forms prior to approval being sought by Full Council in January; this would ideally take place at the November Committee Meeting. Paul Beynon, the RFO has issued Budget Proposal Forms to all councillors.

EN2309-06 Castle Wood Paths

Cllr Townsend Jones introduced this item and stated that this should refer to Castle Woods and Washinghouse Brook Paths. She explained the requirement for the paths to be improved to ensure they are accessible and useable all year round. The paths had not been maintained for many years and as a consequence collect rainwater during rainy weather. Cllr Townsend-Jones believed that an opportunity to improve the paths would have additional wider community benefits including tourism.

Cllr Townsend Jones informed members that a Grant Funding from the Landfill Tax Grant would need to be matched by MCC. She proposed a sum of £20,000 being ring fenced from the 2024/25 budget with any unspent money from the current budget being used in lieu of next year's budget.

In answer to questions Cllr Townsend Jones explained that the paths would need to be porous, probably chippings and she believed that the maintenance of the paths would be the responsibility of MCC. This could be included within the current volunteer scheme.

Action: Cllrs Nelson and Townsend Jones to meet with Paul Beynon (RFO) to provide financial details for any Full Council Decision.

Recommended Cllr Townsend Jones' proposal for £20,000 to be 'ring-fenced' from 2024/25 budget, subject to any surplus money from current budget being made available was unanimously approved by committee.

EN2309-07 Environment Officer – Monthly Report on current projects and overview

Environmental Officer Lydia Graham had previously provided detailed reports on projects and other work that she had been progressing. In answer to questions Lydia stated that she would be seeking volunteers for Mumbles Green Heros. Lydia explained that due to other commitments and time restraints she was unable to attend all The Summer Events which had been a great success.

Lydia was pleased to confirm that MCC is now part of the Litter Picking Hub, and that MCC will be added to The SCC Litter Picking Hub Link. Arrangements are in hand to advertise Litter Picking Hub status locally. Lydia was grateful to the assistance provided by 'Keep Wales Tidy'.

EN2309-08 Grounds Person – monthly verbal update

Martin Russell the Grounds Person will be attending the meetings every three months to provide a verbal update.

Resolved: Martin Russell's update deferred until December Meeting

EN2309-09 Clyne Gazebo Update

Cllr Nelson detailed how £6,000 had been transferred from existing MCC funds to assist in the procurement of a wooden gazebo at Clyne Park. A discussion between committee members considered a number of options on how to progress the project. These included MCC taking full responsibility for the building of The Gazebo which would cost £10,500 and its future maintenance/responsibility/insurance etc. The committee were inclined to making a donation to Friends of Clyne who would then be responsible for its upkeep etc.

Action: Cllrs Nelson to explore options prior to October Meeting.

EN2309-10 Committee work plan – next steps

Resolved: Deferred until October Meeting

EN2309-11 Mayals 5G Mast

Due to Cllr Keeton not being able to participate in this agenda item, the discussion concerning Mayals 5G Mast did not form part of the committee meeting which was not quorate.

EN2309-12 Environmental Questionnaire

Cllr Nelson outlined how with the development of The Ostreme Project, views should be sought from the local community to identify wider concerns and recommendations that MCC could assist with.

Action: Cllrs Nelson to explore options with Down To Earth prior to October Meeting in relation to seeking wider views of community on environmental issues.

EN2309-13

Introduction to Carbon Literacy

Resolved: Deferred until October Meeting

Meeting ended at 8.05pm