

## Stoke Environment Group

### Minutes of the Meeting 23 March 2022

Attendees: Helen Grant, Polly Burns-Cox, Andrew Boyle, Emma Arthurs, Nicolette Williams, Fi McQueen, Ian Upshall. (7)

Apologies: Sarah Evans, Dave Evans, Karen Housego, Eric McLaughlin, Alison Katte. (5)

#### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

#### **2 Minutes of Meeting 7 (Jan 22) and Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

Review of Outstanding Actions:

<b>8/6</b>	Ian U	Write a user guide in collaboration with SERC and SWT.	<b>In process.</b> This guide has yet to be completed.
<b>6/7</b>	Emma A	To consider how best SEG should promote a reduction of food waste and to report back at the next meeting	<b>In process.</b>

#### **3 Two-Minute Work Group Reports (All)**

##### *Hedges & Trees*

The hedge at the Village Hall is looking good and starting to green up. There are currently no indications that any of the whips are failing to take to their new environment. All the woodchip was obtained and delivered free of charge (Greenslades and SW&T).

Volunteers are invited to plant the 24 Wayfaring hedge whips and two trees (oak and lime). These plants were outstanding from the original supply. Ian asked if volunteers could help on Sunday 27 March from 10 – 11am at the Village Hall. Anyone able to help, please bring a spade and a watering-can. This planting will complete the project and we look forward to seeing the new hedge develop.

**Trees and hedge whips all subsequently planted as planned on Sunday 27 March 2022.**

IRU noted that at the last Parish Council meeting, it was discussed whether the PC wished to present children in the Parish with a gift to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There was no agreement so Ian suggested that every child 'under 18' could be given a tree and planted somewhere in the village. It was noted that land for planting trees is an ongoing problem. Following the PC meeting Ian contacted Reimagining the Levels who supported the idea and would be happy to source sufficient trees for free. We await feedback from the PC.

## *Mobility & Transport*

(Notes from the footpath group (SE))

The steps from Chris and Jane Pine's land into the green lane have been improved and a handrail added. Two steps have been put in place on the other side of the lane. There have been many positive comments

East Deane Way – There are no more white signs available, but it will be possible to put yellow ones up and the group is hoping to walk it in varying length stretches over the spring and summer, keeping paths and headlands clear and walked.

The allotment path - the PC kindly agreed that the footpath group could have the tools as listed and Ronan has agreed to use his own brush cutter to tackle the blackthorn between the hedge and path. Having spoken to Rob Ferrett he has requested that bark/wood chippings not to be laid as this would make the regular grass-cutting more difficult through the summer.

Tools purchased by the PC for the use of the footpath group - one of the items on the list was a hedge trimmer. This has been agreed and so it will be possible to cut back the hedge where it is badly growing over the path and hopefully, in the more accessible places, it can be used it to clear around stiles.

Walk directions and maps will be available on the SSG website and will be available in the community shop and pub for 20p each but not just yet as more walks to be written up. On the gate outside there will be copies of an overall map showing where the walks are and other sheets with a general introduction to the area.

There is a new county footpath officer, but Charlotte hasn't met or heard from her as yet.

At the pathway from Church Close into the allotments, there is a stile which prevents straightforward access. Ian has confirmed with the PC that a gate was obtained for this purpose and has offered to put it in place which the PC has agreed. However, there is a question of whether a gate is needed at all. Ian will speak to the PC.

***Action 8/1 – Ian to speak to the PC regarding the need for a gate to be put in place on the allotment path where it enters Church Close.***

IRU has made two large planters, from recycled wood. One to be put at each bus stop. Polly and Nicolette agreed to arrange for them to be filled and planted. Ann Woods has kindly offered some compost for the purpose. Many thanks to those who have offered to water them when needed.

## *Home Energy & Waste*

A lively and interesting discussion on managing food leftovers. Karen H thinks the recipes are a good idea. It's difficult getting the idea across that fruit and veg are cheaper and

healthier than processed foods and meat. It's important to teach our children how to prepare healthy meals now more than ever - and manage a tight budget. It's going to be a hard year ahead of us, changes will have to be made and if we can help in any way all to the good. Karen suggested compiling a seven-day meal plan that is costed to a specific budget, meals that are simple, nutritious, quick and energy saving. This can be printed out on A4 and handed out at the fair. We could have some samples of the recipes to taste at the fair too. Decision to be made at our next meeting.

Emma to come back to next meeting with smarter shopping, food leftover uses and recipes.

***Action 8/2 – Emma to bring forward suggestions on how we address food leftovers and menu management.***

The question was asked if anyone have access to war recipe books? Karen was lent some by a work colleague when she was newly married and had very small income. She still uses some of the recipes today. If so, can you please contact Karen Housego.

*Information Hub*

See above

*Biodiversity*

The Spinney at the Village Hall is really starting to develop, and to encourage increased biodiversity. Two dry hedges have been built, using coppiced natural materials from the Spinney, and creating a new habitats. Leaving the grass to grow long around the perimeter will give wildlife a buffer zone from the protection of the Spinney to the shorter open mowed grass areas. There is still a little tidying to undertake during the summer months. Ian is going to make some signs explaining what SEG are doing in the Spinney and why. The six birch trees also have an area now that is not being mowed to protect the trees and to provide an area where it would be possible to plant some spring and summer-flowering bulbs.

**4 Envirofair22**

The need for refreshments was discussed. Helen Grant noted that the length of the day might present some difficulties for one group (i.e. the WI) to manage all refreshments. There was a discussion about hot food. Nicolette suggested a barbecue – it was agreed that this was a good idea. So, tea and cake in the morning, barbecue mid-event and tea and coffee in the afternoon. This will be finalised at the next meeting.

Ian asked if we should sell alcohol. There was no firm decision, but Ian said he would speak to HOTV/Royal Oak about running a mini-bar.

***Action 8/3 – Ian to speak to HOTV regarding them running a mini-bar at Envirofair 22.***

It was agreed that a raffle should be run. This would be a good source of revenue based on last year's performance. One 'significant' prize of a year's membership to Somerset Wildlife Trust has been obtained. More prizes required.

Ian noted that there would be a number of volunteer tasks to make the day run smoothly. These would be agreed at the next meeting.

Themes for an SEG stand were discussed. It was agreed that single-use plastic was probably a topic that could be used as a basis. Emma agreed to give this some thought and report back at the next meeting.

***Action 8/4 – Emma to report back to the SEG on an outline for raising the profile of single-use plastics at the Envirofair 22.***

## **5 Environmental Arts & Crafts Group**

A written report from Karen noted that she had started up a craft group who were going to use the environment as their inspiration. Banners for the EnviroFair are to be made, each one tackling an environmental subject. The output will be quite diverse and interesting.

Karen has kindly offered to sell some dog toys at the EnviroFair. These will be made from re-purposed materials / and or sustainable fabrics. Everyone agreed and all proceed will go to SEG.

## **6 Report from CCC Seminar 17 March 2022**

Ian apologised for postponing the SEG meeting scheduled for last week. The reason was that the PC had offered him a place at a hastily arranged seminar with members of the independent Climate Change Committee (CC) whose role it is to advise the government on Climate Change action.

The understanding was that the event would provide an opportunity to highlight the challenges of rural communities wishing to move towards a net-zero carbon life. On that basis, Ian prepared some notes on rural transport, land-use and intensive farming practises. However, the topic of discussion was directed towards how the government should effectively engage rural communities. This somewhat disappointing development meant that there was no opportunity to better understand the challenges – it was merely a fact-finding exercise for the CCC. No feedback report is expected.

It was a good networking opportunity, however. Ian spoke briefly to one of the principal coordinators of 'Green Wedmore' and this contact will be followed up. One of the recent initiatives of Green Wedmore was to form a working partnership with a local renewable energy company.

Ian will be reporting back to the PC on the outcome of the seminar.

## **7 Community Infrastructure Levy Update**

There is little to report. Ian has requested further information on the status of the Expression of Interest that was submitted last year. It was noted that with the forthcoming local and Parish elections in May 2022, the PC has stated it will not be making any decisions on the CIL money until after a new PC has been elected.

## **8 Green Charter Update**

Ian reported that the PC has stated that its preferred course of action is to use the Langport Town Council Green Charter as the basis for an SSG equivalent. SEG has been asked if it would be happy to contribute. It is understood that a first draft will be produced after which SEG will be invited to comment. Ian has emphasised to the PC that a local Green Charter must be 'owned' by the PC, and not SEG.

## **9 Finance and Insurance Update**

Polly reported that SEG has just over £1000 in the bank at this time. It was agreed that thought must be given to how the group generates, or acquires, further funding for future projects.

Polly has chased the insurance provider, but progress is slow. Assurance has been given that the group is covered but we would all prefer to see this assurance formalised with the copy of a policy.

## **10 SEG Funding**

The group needs to have a discussion to identify ways of raising funds for the future.

## **11 AOB**

- Silent Fireworks: Could we ask the Parish if they would consider? No objection.
- Butterfly Conservation wants volunteers to walk transects to record butterfly numbers and species or a garden survey using an app. Fiona to share iRecord Butterflies app.
- Future Meetings: It was agreed to book the Parish Church Rooms for the next three meetings (May, June, July 2022). Wednesday was the preferred day with a start time of 7.30pm.

## **12 Next Meeting – 20 April 2022, Parish Church Room, 7.30-9.30pm**

Fiona McQueen

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29 March 2022