

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 8th March 2023 at 7.00p.n.
in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall

PRESENT: Cllr. J Macklin (Chairman); Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr L Goldwater; Cllr. S. Knights; Cllr. L. Handscomb; Cllr. Muriel Holmes; Cllr Sarah Keefe and Cllr S Crump.

ALSO PRESENT:

Ward Councillor David Hitchiner; Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk)
One member of the public.

Chairman welcomed those present to the March meeting.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Geary and Cllr C Draper.

2. To receive declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations. None declared.

3. Ward Councillor's Report. During his report, Ward Cllr Hitchiner referred to issues outlined in his report as Herefordshire Council Leader which had been previously circulated.

At the last meeting, Ward Cllr Hitchiner was asked to give the Parish Council an update on the Council's policy on Climate Change. Ward Cllr Hitchiner circulated a copy of "Herefordshire's Journey to Net Zero Carbon", a document prepared by Dr Ellie Chowns Herefordshire Council - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy – please see a full copy of her report attached to the end of these minutes.

Cllr S Keefe thanked Ward Cllr Hitchiner for this comprehensive document. A question-and-answer session followed covering various issues:

Cllr M Holmes asked about the number of local EV charging points – handful were available each at various council sites and car parks. Cllr Keefe said there is a site that allows you to share your EV charger with others for a fee, this is an opportunity to expand the network of chargers considerably. (Latter named Co Charger)

Cllr Keefe asked if the Environment Building Standards supplementary planning document recommend solar panels as a practical way of reducing carbon emissions. Ward Cllr Hitchiner replied the document is for guidance only.

Cllr Keefe felt the ecological component has taken a back seat and while activities are planned for 2023 which is very much welcomed, most effort seems focused on creation of woodland, orchards and tree planting. This is great for sequestering carbon. Cllr L Goldwater agreed and said more needs to be done to create diverse habitats such as wetlands, meadows, scrub.

Cllr Keefe would be interested to know more about the Renewables survey and what this comprises.

Ward Cllr Hitchiner explained that Herefordshire were expecting 120 asylum seekers who will be housed at the Three Counties Hotel – initially for up to 12 months with a 3-month rolling contract after that. This allocation has been made directly from the Home Office and despite worries of the infrastructure not being about to support this number – the arrival date has been brought forward and they are expected to arrive this week.

Ward Cllr Hitchiner has no further update on the TRO for A483.

Cllr C Draper sent in an email noting that the top half of Byford Lane has been cleared but the other end of the lane needs proper attention - considering the slippery conditions and the breaking down of the edges in at least two places. The Councillor did acknowledge that this was not helped by the increase of large vehicles and others who drive along the small lane without due care and attention – with no allowance for speed or the narrow width of the lane.

It was again noted that Byford Lane belongs to the Estate but the question was raised with the Ward Councillor – does Herefordshire Council have responsibility for itself upkeep/repair? It was noted that various repairs have recently been carried out by the Locality Steward but a larger repair was way beyond any funding available to the Parish Council.

Ward Cllr Hitchiner said that he had recently had sight of a document produced by Bruce Evans, Engineering Manager, relating to a similar situation and he will forward a copy to the clerk for circulation. A copy, when available, will be attached to the end of these

Cllr M Holmes tentatively suggested that maybe a one-way system could be considered – she appreciated that this would require mountains of legal paper work; Traffic Regulations Orders etc but thought it was worth a mention – maybe something to be considered in the future.

The Chairman thanked Ward Cllr Hitchiner for his report and for his support during his four years as Ward Councillor to Bishopstone Group Parish Council.

3.1 Open Session

A resident from Kenchester asked about the KT1 footpath – which, although in good order has lost its marker post. Cllr S Crump offered to supply and erect a replacement post and re-attach the finger marker. Resident and Cllr Crump to liaise.

The resident reported that bridleway KT6 seems to have no signpost-style signage on this route. There was a lengthy discussion regarding this footpath and the fact that it now goes straight through a large pond. It was agreed that the Chairman would arrange to meet with a representative from the Herefordshire PRoW team to discuss the various issues associated with the KT6. Clerk to liaise.

The resident offered to fill the vacant post of the Footpath Officer representing Kenchester and whilst the Parish Council would be delighted to accept this offer – the Chairman explained that

'officers' are usually appointed at the Annual Parish Council Meeting due to be held in May – and invited the resident to attend that meeting with a view to being officially appointed.

Coronation Celebrations – after discussion, it was agreed that as there are 5 parishes within the Group – that each parish should be encouraged to arrange and fund their own celebrations as was agreed last year when celebrating the Queen's Jubilee.

3.2. Discussion on the possibility of changing the Parish Council meeting venue to Nelson Inn – Cllr Knights had followed up this suggestion – but, after discussion, it was agreed to remain hiring Stretton Sugwas Village Hall for the foreseeable future.

3.3 Close Open session

4. Chairman's Report

As agreed, and recorded in the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on 11th January 2023, I have purchased the No River crossing sign for fitting onto the post carrying a Byford sign at the junction of Church Road and the A438. I installed this sign on 31st January 2023.

On January 19th I received an email from a Bishopstone Parishioner who lives on Church Lane Bishopstone complaining about water leaking from a Gigaclear trench causing sheet ice on the lane. I forwarded the email onto the locality steward as the lane had recently been resurfaced. He passed this on to Herefordshire Council because the resurfacing money had come directly from a grant controlled by them so it was not Balfour Beatty responsibility.

On 31st January 2023 I reported to Herefordshire Council the blocked pillar box drain at Kenchester Rectory after a complaint from a Kenchester parishioner (the road surface was one sheet of ice after overnight frost causing very dangerous conditions). The Lengthsman had tried to jet out the blocked pipe but it had collapsed. I received an email on February 15th the repair (Balfour Beatty Ref: Enquiry: 11130370 Job: 41373113) has now been completed.

Sunday 26th February, I had a meeting with the Lengthsman and a drive around the Parishes to identify the ditching work which we could not complete because of funding shortfall. We agreed the ditching work most needed were on the New Road Bishopstone, Byford Common Road and Mansell Gamage Road B4230.

This work was carried out on 6th and 7th March 2023.

Finally, on Sunday 5th March I visited all the Parish Notice Boards to put in the Election notices, I noted all the notice boards except Bishopstone require some maintenance; Kenchester and Bridge Sollars need new locking catches; Byford and Mansell Gamage are difficult to open.

At this point – Cllr Goldwater mentioned that he might have a spare metal Notice Board to replace the one at Mansell Gamage which he would be willing to erect. Cllr Goldwater to report back to the next meeting.

5. Finance: Schedule of payment sheet (circulated).

5.1 Agree payment of outstanding invoices. It was unanimously agreed to pay all outstanding invoices.

5.2 Confirmation of Drainage Grant remittance - the Clerk confirmed that the reimbursement for the drainage grant had been received.

5.3. The Clerk reported that there had been an offer of additional drainage funding but that it had to be used by 31st March 2023. To be eligible for this additional grant – the Parish Council had to be a current member of the lengthsman scheme and to sign a 19-page Agreement/Contract between the Herefordshire Council and the Parish Councils. The chairman and the clerk signed the Contract – the clerk will now post to Herefordshire Council. D C Gardening liaised with the Chairman and the agreed additional work has now been carried out. It was agreed that the invoice for this work should be paid and the clerk will submit a claim for reimbursement from Balfour Beatty.

5.4 HALC annual subscription renewal – it was unanimously agreed to re-join HALC and for the clerk to pay the invoice before the 31st March which would entitle the Parish Council to claim two free training sessions for Councillors. It was noted that the invoice represented a 15% increase since the 2022-2023 invoice.

6. Correspondence

6.1. Police report are circulated as received.

7. To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11th January 2023. Cllr Knights highlighted that a small amendment was needed on item 11.4 'on' should read 'no' – this amendment was made and initialled by Chairman. It was then agreed that the minutes were a true record and unanimously voted they be adopted and signed by the Charman.

8. Highways and Environmental Matters:

8.1 Footpath Officer Reports – Kenchester covered in the Open Session.

Cllr R Morgan reported a broken post on he BN4 – Chairman will liaise with D C Gardening about organising a replacement. No other issues reported from the other Footpath Officers.

8.2 An up-to-date BY31 - a new 'temporarily closed sign' has been issued covering the period up to June. Cllrs Holmes kindly agreed to erect the new signs.

8.3 The Estate Management Plan – Cllr Holmes explained that whilst many trees were being felled for reasons of disease etc. all were being replaced by the Estate. The Clerk supplied Cllr Holmes with a paper copy of the Estate Management Plan.

8.4 Jubilee trees

As reported in the last minutes – Cllr. Holmes has met with representative from the Estate and they have identified five suitable places to plant either a Rowan or Flowering Cherry tree. This will mean that there are some trees spare – Cllr Crump will ask at the Kenchester PCC meeting if they have room for one in the churchyard – due to time restrictions regarding Spring planting - Cllr Crump will report back and liaise directly with Cllr Holmes.

There was further discussion on the costing of guards; stakes; ties etc. Initially costings worked out at approximately £30 per tree. It was unanimously agreed to fund the £150 for the guards

etc. Cllr Holmes offered to ask if she can get any materials from the Estate; Cllr Goldwater said he may be able to help with materials and Cllr Crump also said she would see if they had any spare stakes etc on the farm. However, it was agreed that this planting and purchase should go ahead before the next meeting otherwise the 'planting window' would have been missed which would mean a delay until the Autumn.

Once these trees are planted and established – the Parish Council agreed to purchase commemorative plaques to Celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation – wording yet to be agreed.

8.5. Update on the original drainage grant funding work – this has now been completed.

8.6 There is no update on the A483 speed reduction.

8.7 Byford Common Lane – see discussion with Ward Councillor – open session 3.1.

9. Election 4th May 2023. The Clerk handed out the Election Application forms for Councillors to fill in and return to the Town Hall before 4.00p.m. on the 4th May 2023. Councillors were reminded that photographic ID is now necessary when going to vote but not necessary when delivering their forms to the Town Hall.

10. Planning – none received to date

11. Date of next Parish Council meeting: Wednesday 17th May 2023

Please note: This will be the Annual Parish Meeting starting at 7.00p.m. followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting starting at 7.30p.m. Clerk to book the larger room if available.

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45p.m.

Signed:

Date

Presented by Cllr Hitchiner - a document prepared by Dr Ellie Chowns, Herefordshire Council - Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy.

Herefordshire's Journey to Net Zero carbon by 2030

8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a climate emergency and set a target of zero carbon by 2030. In December 2019 this was strengthened to a 'climate and ecological emergency', showing the Council's commitment to protecting Herefordshire's natural environment, biodiversity and wildlife.

April 2020 an updated [carbon management plan](#) and [associated action plan](#) for Council emissions was published and the Council commits to using 100% renewably sourced energy where this provides the best carbon reduction return on investment.

January 2021 A Task and Finish Group, established to carry out a climate emergency review to contribute to the design and delivery of the council's new climate change commitments, reported back to the general Scrutiny Committee. They made a total of 72 recommendations covering a wide range of topics supporting the Council's journey to net zero and nature rich. **All Council decisions now include consideration for Climate and Ecological implications.**

Autumn 2021 The Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership was established to catalyse and coordinate new action to help the whole County reach net zero by 2030. Herefordshire's Climate and Nature Action Plan is developed with involvement of people from across the County. The plan focuses on six key areas including sustainable housing and buildings, energy, transport food, land use and farming and waste and can be found at www.zerocarbonherefordshire.gov.uk Public awareness of the action plan is supported by the Greener Footprints communications and engagement campaign.

January 2022 A Citizen's Assembly was held and as a result **35 recommendations** of projects, which could help the County progress towards net zero, were made under four categories: Buildings, Transport, Land-use, food and farming, Cross cutting. The new homes bonus grant funding of £1.33m was allocated to the climate change reserve to progress these recommendations.

Changes in Planning - Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document

The Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been drafted in response to the council's recognition of the climate and ecological emergency and vision for a zero-carbon. The key aim of this SPD is to drive up environmental standards of buildings in Herefordshire and set out recommendations to drive up higher, more efficient standards of building design and construction and will encourage the adoption of these by developers and householders. The SPD includes best practice recommendations for standards in key areas of building performance, energy use, external environment, accessibility, and construction. The guidance also includes best practice case study examples for high-quality sustainable design, use, and construction.

As a supplementary planning document, it cannot enforce building standards or introduce new policies into the development plan. The Local Plan is currently being updated, and the revised

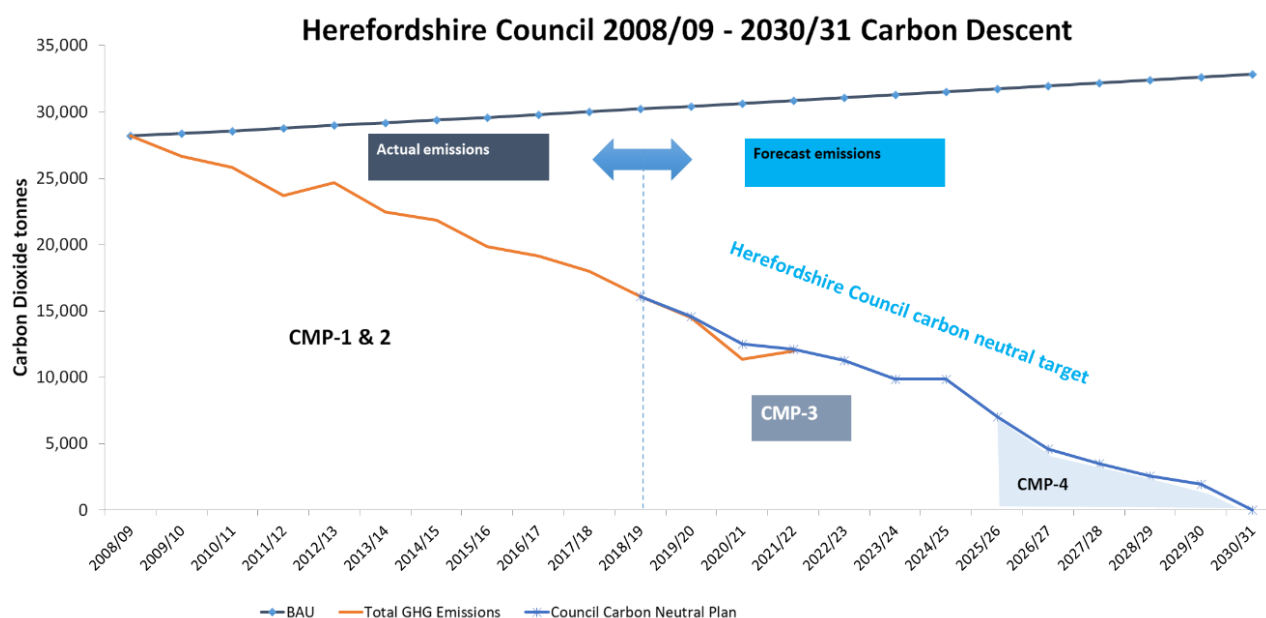
plan will include policies to deliver and set out higher environmental building standards to help meet carbon zero targets, net zero carbon is an integral theme threaded throughout the draft Local Plan. The SPD is seen as an interim measure to set out recommendations for best practice building standards. The SPD provides detail of how development can achieve higher quality buildings through design and higher quality materials, as well as greater use of renewable energy technology in buildings. This identifies ways the new Local Plan can include the future policy to ensure that it is fully aligned with our zero-carbon, nature-rich goals for Herefordshire. For existing buildings, there is the Net Zero Retrofit Toolkit to provide guidance on retrofit schemes to help improve the efficiency of existing buildings. This is expected to be used by householder and developers to use for existing and listed buildings.

Future Homes Standard

The Herefordshire Future Homes Report sets out the environmental building design standards for future housing developments on council-owned land and council retrofit schemes. This document outlines the Herefordshire Future Homes standards we will use when building these homes and represents a key step towards the Council's 2030 carbon reduction commitment, and a key step towards better housing for all. This standard will be part of the solution to the climate crisis – reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero. Herefordshire Future Homes will be healthy for residents – eliminating cold, mould and damp. This aims to build warm and cosy homes, in healthy neighbourhoods with space for kids to play, space for nature, and provision of sustainable transport options. Herefordshire Future Homes will minimise energy use and fuel bills – tackling fuel poverty and making these homes truly affordable to live in.

Herefordshire Council's 2021-22 Carbon Footprint

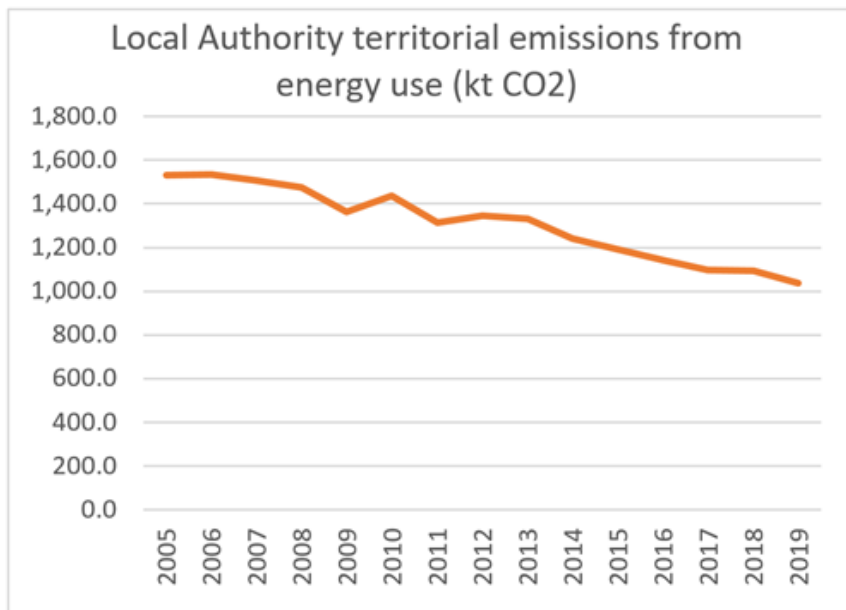
Total emissions are down by **57.4%** (16,176 tCO₂e) overall compared to 2008/09 (baseline year) when the Council started measuring carbon emissions. **The Council is also on target to meet its 75% reduction by 2025/26 and its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030/31.**



County Carbon reductions

Since 2005, Herefordshire Council has been using data provided by government to report carbon emissions from the county. Over this time we have seen a **32% decrease** in emissions.

This carbon footprint represents a **territorial-based** footprint, which is based solely on emissions from **energy** use in the county.



What's happening in 2023?

The recommendations from the Citizens Assembly have been reviewed in consultation with teams across the Council. 15 projects are moving forward in the first phase with more projects which have been initially scoped and ready to go once phase 1 projects underway and delivering.

Priority projects include:

- Active travel – walking
- Home energy efficiency audits
- Decarbonisation of corporate buildings
- Decarbonising/Electrifying the school transport fleet
- On street residential electric charge points
- Energy and Climate Business Conference
- Supporting the development of the retrofit supply chain and PAS 2035 skills training
- School travel plan support
- Taxi and private hire low carbon strategy
- Farm carbon audits
- Business energy audits
- Renewables survey
- Updating the LCLIP for Herefordshire
- Herefordshire Council Tree Management Plan
- Developing zero carbon website

The Built and Natural Environment team have also undertaken various projects to address the Climate and Ecological Emergency:

- Development of the Nature Strategy which sets out a series of priority actions for the council to address both the ecological emergency and wider benefits including climate change.
- Due to commence working on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Network Mapping which will identify land for proposed habitat restoration this may well include the creation of woodland, orchard, tree planting which will increase carbon sequestration.
- We have also recently had sign off to commission a tree management plan for the councils own land this will set out good practice in terms of tree planting, management and replacement and will advise on a strategy for Ash die Back to ensure removal only where necessary and replacement planting of a wide variety of species to ensure longevity of the trees in situ. We are proposing to include within the management plan a mechanism to assess level of carbon sequestration our tree coverage brings within the county.
- We are also involved in a number of biodiversity projects to offset highways maintenance; including tree planting within areas of open space within the market towns and tree, shrub and hedgerow planting at our wetland sites.

In Summary

Good progress has been made by Herefordshire Council, leading the way to show it is possible to reach its ambitious net zero target. Residents, community organisations and businesses must now make their own changes, from making homes more energy efficient, reducing and recycling waste and choosing alternatives to car travel. Together we can better protect the environment and preserve our wonderful county for future generations.

Herefordshire Council: Managing Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS)

Herefordshire Council is the Highway Authority for all highways maintainable at public expense within Herefordshire. The council has a duty to maintain in relation to the character and use.

BOATS can be surfaced, stoned or naturally surfaced.

Background

Section 66(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 defines a byway open to all traffic (“BOAT”) as “a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purpose for which footpaths and bridleways are so used”.

Herefordshire has a recorded network of 2159 miles (3475 km) of public rights of way (PROW) at the time of writing which consist of:

- 1873 miles (3014 kms) of footpaths
- 257 miles (414 kms) of bridleways
- 20 miles (32 kms) of byways open to all traffic (BOATS)
- 4 miles (6km) of restricted byway

The network provides important access across the county for the community; it also provides a valuable amenity function.

The council's Highways Maintenance Plan details how we manage the highways network which includes Byways Open to All Traffic, (BOATS) link below:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/5210/highway-maintenance-plan-covid-19>

Network Hierarchies page 45

Inspection Inspections will be undertaken when a defect is reported, remedial action to make the path safe will be arranged.

Maintenance

The surface is of a standard for travel by foot, horseback, pedal cycle or wheeled vehicles including mechanically propelled vehicles but is used by the public mainly for walking or for riding.

Where surfacing is provided (either unbound or paved), the surfacing material shall respond to the local landscape character and be of a type suitable for the usage allowed by the status of the public right of way, including periods of inclement weather.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498941/Technical_Standard_-_Public_rights_of_way.pdf)

Where there is a need to repair, this will be undertaken on a risk based and asset management approach, the basic repair will be undertaken.

If higher standard of maintenance is required contributions from the adjacent landowners will be sought.

Residents / landowners may request and wish to repair the surface themselves. The council will support where able. It is envisaged this will be in the provision of materials, this will be provided on a case by case and available resources, hence the need to maintain on character and usage