

APPENDIX – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident 1

The resident proposed a starting point would be to set up a Climate Fund to fund things such as tree planting to be funded by various initiatives. He proposed that free parking for polluting vehicles should be removed and become chargeable. It may not change behaviour but it would provide income. He asked whether the Town Council would support this. Another resident pointed out that it was WODC who managed parking and charges and therefore he asked those Town Councillors who were also District Councillors if they would support this.

Cllr Aitman explained that WODC had called its own Climate Emergency and now had a committee dedicated to dealing with it and this proposal would need to be discussed at the committee.

The Town Clerk explained that in terms of the Town Council such a proposal would need to go through the Policy, Governance and Resources Committee and then to Full Council. The minutes from this meeting would be following that process.

Cllr Prosser added that the Town Council was going to have an environmental action plan. Cllr Aitman explained that everyone was welcome to come to the District Council's Environment Committee. Janice Bamsey asked if the Town Council had any parking that it controlled. The Town Clerk explained that there was some by the Leys and also at Burwell Hall. Janice Bamsey suggested trying this in those locations.

Resident 2

The resident urged information sharing between the Town Council and other Councils. The Town Clerk advised that she did attend meetings with other councils and they did share best practice and ideas.

Resident 3

The resident commented about cars idling and that perhaps they could be fined by Community Wardens. Councils could apply to the Secretary of State for the power to do this. Another resident said that at least the Council could put up notices stating that idle engines must be turned off.

Resident 4

The resident advised that the inaugural meeting of the Witney Extinction Rebellion had taken place the previous evening and it had been well attended.

Resident 2

The resident asked for clarity about definitions. Was the Town Council committing to trying to be carbon neutral by 2028 or actually being carbon neutral by 2028? Is this just the Town Council officers, or the residents etc? There were huge possibilities for misunderstanding. She recommended watching a video from the Oxford Citizens Assembly called Net Zero. Janice Bamsey added that this needed to be monitored but there needed to be something to measure it against.

Tony Swift – The Wychwood Project

Toby explained that he did public engagement and activities for organisations such as the Scouts. The Project also offers corporate membership and these members were offered advice on their grounds. The Project would like to get into schools but it was impossible to make money on conservation and

schools wouldn't pay. They worked with the Cotswold AONB and Witney Woodland Volunteers. In Witney they had been working with the Town Council to see if some re-wilding could be done. A town plan for how rewilding could be done would be great. Neil Clennell, the CEO of the Wychwood Project was working on a scheme starting from the north Windrush and coming through Grimes Meadow, picking up all the places that used to be cut, pollarded etc and he would be happy to come and speak to the committee about what this might look like. A resident asked Toby if they planted trees. He replied that they would but the issue was land to plant up. If Witney Town Council had some land available they would gladly plant trees. Toby did add that we needed meadows etc as well as trees.

Rachel Crooks – LWVP Project officer

Rachel explained that the LWVP cover an area south of Witney all the way to Newbridge. The Project carries out biodiversity projects and looks after areas including Tar and Rushy Lakes. They had worked in the past with Witney Town Council on the Lake and Country park and were keen to become involved again.

Ben Williams – Earthwatch

Ben explained that he was specifically involved in a naturehood project – a community wildlife project. This supported people and communities to take action in terms of nature – such as hedgehog houses and log piles. Ben spoke at length about the work of Earthwatch.

Janice Bamsey – Policy Officer, WODC

Janice asked if the Town Council had a welcome pack for new residents – as this could influence people's actions before their habits are established. The Town Clerk said that it did not have one.

Soraya Wooler - WASP

Soraya gave an overview of the work of WASP. The aim was to get the Windrush River back to a healthy state and to get it blue flag status. They were trying to stop raw sewage from being released into the river and took samples. They would be keen to work with the Town Council.

Resident 5

The resident asked why there was such a big gap between this meeting and the next one on 26th February. The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had a great number of meetings to fit in and the Chair explained that this did not mean that work would not happen before then. There were also queries about cycle paths.

Members of the public and invited representatives left at 5.05pm. Janice Bamsey and Nick Dalby remained.