

Basingstoke Transition Network
Meeting on Tuesday 4th August 2020, 7.00 pm

Present: Martin Biermann (MB) (chair), Arun Mummalaneni (AM), Paul Beevers (PB), Paul Harvey (PH), Martin Heath (MH), Miranda Chubb (MC), Bob Clifford (BC), Malcolm MacInnes (MM), Sheila Peacock (SP);
Apologies: Sarah Warriss-Simons, Lucy Jones.

1. **Minutes of last meeting** – were accepted with amendment of item 8 “Cliddesden Road” to “Lancaster Road Open Space”.

2. **Matters arising** – none not otherwise covered.

3. **Green infrastructure and trees**

PB has sent to the Council (on behalf of Hatch Warren Nature Group) a call for action on green infrastructure. We discussed the felling of trees and clearing of natural areas with little or no planning oversight. PB believes that the Council's claim to be carrying out biodiversity loss mitigation successfully is unfounded. MM had example from Brookvale/Eastrop (Sarum Hill) of felling of mature woodland. PH said he would ask the Council's tree officer, but he pointed out that the Council is under-resourced to monitor all the minor development sites as well as the major ones. PB also pointed out that ecological surveys commissioned by developers are inadequate: the law unfortunately does not require that ecological surveys be carried out by independent agents.

4. **Climate Emergencies**

(a) MH attended the Hampshire County Council Cabinet meeting on 14th July and spoke, and has emailed three Councillors who have agreed to meet him, but have not since replied. His response focused on the opportunity presented by Manydown. He will circulate it to us. **Action – MH.**

(b) Hampshire County Council Expert Stakeholders Engagement 6th August (minute 4 of last meeting) – SP obtained an invitation to this and has circulated it. MH and MM and others hope to attend (0900-1200). **Action – MH, MM.**

(c) Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council on 16th May passed Cllr. Tomblin's motion calling for officers to investigate a fast-track SPD on the existing plan to enable the climate emergency to be tackled. MC, SP and MH spoke. MC made the point that the existing Local Plan has a Design and Sustainability SPD so why not add a Climate Change one? MB expressed the view that the “emergency” aspect of the Councils declaration was not being taken seriously. The officers charged with carrying out the consideration called for in the motion need to be encouraged to think creatively in the interval between now and their presentation to the EPH committee in mid-September [**NOTE** added afterwards - BDBC calendar gives date as Thursday 3rd September]. It might also go to the CEP committee (aside - leading to possibility of conflict) [**NOTE** - CEP meets on Wednesday 16th September]. **Agreed** that we severally write to the three main officers, Mark Lambert, Joanna Bromley and Sam Taylor, and try to arrange meetings with them. MB has already written to Mark Lambert; MM offered to write to him asking how he intends to proceed on the objectives of the motion; MC offered to write to Joanna Bromley; MH to Sam Taylor. **Agreed** we prepare a BTN position paper for approval at our 1st September meeting **but it wasn't clear who'd write it!** We believe that the Portfolio Holder is sympathetic but is swayed by the legal case against an SPD on the existing Local Plan. A point to make is that legal precedents for action outside the bounds of the existing Local Plan are set by the “Merton Rule” and by Client Earth's case against the Heathrow third runway. Another is

that the work by officers on an emergency SPD for the current plan can be transferred directly to the Local Plan Update for 2023. **Action – MM, MC, MH (MB already did).**

5. Manydown

PH said that the Council's contract with Urban&Civic is still not in the public domain; MH described the mentioning of the Wellcome Trust's involvement in Urban&Civic as "greenwash", and reported that several limited-liability companies are involved in the Manydown project, presumably mostly set up to capitalise on it, the principal one being Mills & Reed LLP. The involvement of Urban&Civic is necessary because the Council lacks the resources to manage such a large development on its own. MB offered to write to the lead officer on Manydown in Hampshire County Council (PH will provide contact details). **Action – MB, PH.** MM also noted that regeneration projects have been announced for Winklebury, Buckskin and South Ham: PH described these as being in "pockets" of only a few streets and being carried out by local Housing Associations.

6. Council Service Plan

PB received a response from the Council to his FOI request for details of its Service Plan to carry out the most recent Council plan. His aim was make the council demonstrate that it had set and was following meaningful objectives. The officers contacted him to ask what he wanted, and a useful discussion took place. He did not get exactly what he wanted but the precedent was set and he suggests that we take the same approach for other policies, e.g. cycling.

7. Green Week substitute and Eco Directory

MC has proposed a number of activities to take the place of Green Week, which has been suspended this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. These include a small display in Chineham Library, an environmental article in the "Chineham Chat", and work to encourage solar panel installation on schools (with the national body promoting this, Solar on Schools). She is offering to give talks to local associations (starting with the Women's Institute) and local schools in Chineham. PB and AM asked if she could come to schools in Hatch Warren and King's Furlong, and BC offered to publicise talks at CafeSci. **Action – MC, BC.**

These and any other projects and photographs of action should be included in the Eco Directory being prepared by Lucy Martins for the Council website. MM offered to collect these and pass them on to her. **Action – MM.**

8. Cafe Scientifique

<redacted> ... starting in September 2021, so there is a need for a new Cafe Scientifique organiser.

9. All-out Borough and County Council elections

Agreed we would consider this in October, and possibly plan a hustings.

10. Nitrogen pollution

PB asked if there is any information on how the airborne NOX pollutants measured by the roadside are precipitated into the soil and act as fertiliser for "bully plants". We don't know and would have to get someone to work on this.

11. "What defines 'place'?"

PB asked for this to be discussed at a future meeting since a modal shift away from urban design around cars is necessary. Agreed – with suggestion that a public discussion of this be set up as a Cafe Scientifique meeting. PH was asked whether councillors could be

persuaded to take part: this apparently depends on the political party groups, which control the activities of individual councillors affiliated to them.

12. **Next meeting** – Tuesday 1st September, online. MB will reply saying we are too numerous to take up the offer of the Village Hotel to resume meeting there: it would breach COVID-19 socialising rules. **Action – MB.**

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.