

**Basingstoke Transition Network**  
**Meeting on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 7.00 pm, by Zoom**

Present: Martin Biermann (MB), Miranda Chubb (MC), Colin Andrews (CA), Beth Rice (BR), Miriam Carr (MmC), Lucy Jones (LJ), Paul Beevers (PB), Martin Heath (MH), Malcolm MacInnes (MM), Jean Wilde (JW), Sheila Peacock (SP).

Note that Beth Rice and Miriam Carr have stated that they are happy to have their email addresses shared with the BTN "committee".

1. MC welcomed the newcomers and thanked everyone who had worked on the COP26 stall on 6<sup>th</sup> November and the Q&A with Urban & Civic on Manydown on 24<sup>th</sup> November.

2. **Minutes of last meeting** were accepted.

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

From October's meeting, item 11 – CA to help MH with ensuring that web users can view PDF slides in browser;

Item 4 – MB submitted an invoice on behalf of Personalised Print for the banner and handouts for the COP26 stall (£146.68) which has been paid.

**4. Publicity and Information**

Agreed:

- Need another popup banner, with a clearer message;
- To reconsider our name since "Transition" doesn't mean much to many people; or at least have a "strapline" or "message" that explains our purpose;
- To have consistent "branding" across website and promotional materials;
- LJ, CA, MM, MmC to meet to consider these; involving LJ's husband who is kindly designing a poster for the town library; members are encouraged to suggest catchy names/phrases. **Action – LJ, CA, MM, MmC, all.**

**5. County and Borough Council investments**

(a) Agreed we would send a letter to the Borough Council targeting its investments so that they are consistent with its Climate Emergency policy, and specifically removed from fossil fuels, and contesting the Treasury Management Statement accepted last February that specifically ruled out "green" investments for reasons of return that are probably unsound. MC and MH to draft this for decision at our next meeting; letter directed at councillors but a copy to be sent to the Gazette. **Action – MC, MH.**

(b) Noted the need for a similar letter to Hampshire County councillors about divesting the County pension fund from fossil fuels (but no specific agreement on who would write it?).

**6. Cabinet member for Environment's view on wind farms (Gazette last week)**

MH wrote a complaint to the Gazette about the unbalanced coverage of Cllr. Ruffell's negative views on renewable energy. The editor has agreed in principle to a meeting with him/BTN to discuss the issue; meanwhile MH has written a personal publishable letter disputing Cllr. Ruffell's facts, for publication in the Thursday edition.

**7. Council environment document Sept 2021**

PB wrote to a Council officer asking about the status of this document, found recently on the Borough Council website. He has not had a reply and will chase. **Action – PB.**

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/councilplan> (click on “read more”)

## 8. Future actions

We agreed in principle to actions centred on various world sustainability days in the spring, and also the local elections and publication of the draft Local Plan Update, with possibly a march or a stall (maybe on Alençon link at the bottom of the steps to the station). Street theatre is a possibility. The aim is to challenge the complacency of those in power. More prominent, but definitely non-violent, direct action will be considered by a subgroup of JW, LJ, MM, MH, BR, CA and Mary Andrews (not present). **Action – JW, LJ, MM, MH, BR, CA, MA** (MH to convene).

9. The meeting approved the **Coronavirus Risk Assessment**.

10. **Green Week 2022** – MM agreed to chase Sam Taylor at the Council – **Action – MM**.

## 11. Followup to Urban & Civic Q&A session, 24<sup>th</sup> November

MC will write a follow-up letter asking for clarity on:

- Future Homes Standard not being zero carbon – exactly what building standard will be used, particularly for insulation;
- Accounting for embodied carbon in the development;
- Only 15% of roofs having solar panels, and relying on the decarbonisation of the national electricity grid to meet low carbon energy targets;
- The balance of built and green space;
- Water retention, ponds and reservoirs (in a water-stressed zone).

**Action – MC.**

## 12. Rural part of Local Plan, at EPH meeting on Mon 13<sup>th</sup>

The Borough Environment, Planning and Housing Committee meeting on Mon 13<sup>th</sup> December to consider the Local Plan (rural) is being held face-to-face in the Council offices. We refuse to attend for coronavirus safety reasons (omicron variant is spreading rapidly in the town). We agree to send a letter to the committee chair complaining at the meeting not having a Zoom option, and making our points: rural planning should avoid building on sensitive natural areas like the Loddon Valley – and we endorse the SOLV campaign (Save our Loddon Valley) on this; housing should be at passivhaus net-zero standard, and inefficient fossil fuels (tank propane and heating oil) not allowed; the policy must include rewilding of agricultural land (especially land for animal husbandry: we should use fewer animal products) for biodiversity and carbon sequestration. Rewilding might also be considered for the Borough’s urban area (cf. Nottingham). MB and SP will write this. **Action – MB, SP.**

## 13. Clarity on BTN’s policy on renewable energy

Agreed to consider this at next meeting with possibility of holding a special meeting.

## 14. Basing Fen battery planning application

We became aware of this application too late to oppose it; but PB will lobby councillors, pointing out the habitats for rare species that would be threatened. **Action – PB.** The group considering direct action will consider this application as a focus.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

Next meeting on **TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2022** (exceptionally not the first Tuesday).