

Basingstoke Transition Network
Meeting on Tuesday 11th January 2022, 7.00 pm, by Zoom

Present: Stacy Hart (SH), Martin Heath (MH), Martin Biermann (MB), Miranda Chubb (MC), Jean Wilde (JW), Colin Andrews (CA), Mary Andrews (MA), Miriam Carr (MmC), Malcolm MacInnes (MM), Arun Mummalaneni (AM), Paul Harvey (PH), Bob Clifford (BC), Sheila Peacock (SP);
Apologies: Paul Beevers (PB), Lucy Jones (LJ).

1. **We welcomed** Stacy Hart to her first BTN meeting. She agreed to the sharing of her personal email address with the group.

2. **Minutes of meeting of 7th December** were approved.

3. **Matters arising not covered elsewhere:**

- Item 11: MC and MH drafted a followup letter to Urban & Civic after the Q&A session on 24th November; we agreed to send it and consider a second followup letter about community aspects. **Action – MC.**

- Maria Miller (passim) – MC sent her a letter and has had no reply; MH wrote and has been invited to a meeting with her on Friday.

4. **BTN's position on renewable energy generation**

Agreed MH extract a general position statement from his draft letter to the Planning Authority about the Preston Candover solar farm. Our position is more-or-less that we generally support well-managed and well-sited renewable energy generation projects but might have good reasons to oppose particular projects. MM reminded us to mention avoiding and exposing "greenwash" of unsuitable projects. **Action – MH.**

5. **Borough Council interactions**

(a) Local Plan Update – Agreed we should have a presence at meetings of Economic, Planning and Housing Committee (10th Feb) and Community, Environment and Partnerships Committee (16th Mar); MH suggested we should also arrange a meeting with Sam Taylor to find out the officers' position on the Local Plan Update. Agreed we need to focus on climate and environmental issues rather than trying to cover all the issues we'd like to change, although we are concerned at "permitted development" leading to overdevelopment and poor quality housing in the town centre, and about the house-building target of 18,000 being excessive. **Action – all who can** to look at agenda and apply for speaking slots at one or both meetings.

We also agreed to write to Democratic Services reminding them that we obtained an assurance that guest speakers at Zoom Council committee meetings should be seen by Councillors as well as heard. **Action – SP.**

(b) Borough Council investment strategy – MH and MC have drafted letters: agreed these need minor revision to address the specific point that the current investment plan seems to rule out "green" investments, and that one should be addressed to the Chief Executive and the other sent to all councillors (MH has an email list – needs revising with May's comings and goings). **Action – MH, MC.**

(c) Cllr. Aji Peter (professional and academic environmental scientist) – AM agreed to contact him and invite him to our next meeting. **Action – AM.**

6. Green Week

MM sent a message to Sam Taylor asking about progress but has had no reply – he will try again, in particular to find out what financial and other support the Council will offer, and whether the committee that organised it in the past will be reconvened. Ideas for activities included: presentation by Aji Peter; stall; street theatre; art and craft particularly for children. AM generously offered financial support from his Councillor's budget, since some of the activities are in his ward (Brookvale). **Action – MM, AM, SH, MB, MH.**

7. Direct Action

The small group is considering actions once a quarter, possibly involving music (SH and CA belong to bands) and children using upcycled instruments. BC is about to inquire whether the Repair Cafe will be restarting. The Roger Morris Centre in Eastrop Lane is now part of the Viables centre and might be available for CafeSci meetings.

The group was asked to consider doing public Zoom "Town Hall" meetings on various environmental topics, with the purpose of:

- (a) Raising contentious environmental political issues with local politicians;
- (b) Educating and raising awareness about these issues, and about local government procedures and ways for the public to influence them.

Publicity for such events might be arranged through the Gazette and also through a sign-up newsletter (another Mailchimp list) and use of existing social media fora such as NextDoor. The Zoom link for these meetings would need to be in the upfront publicity. The first one might use Sam Taylor's environmental toolkit. **Action – BC, Direct Action Group.**

8. Local Election in May

Agreed to prepare a list of questions for candidates – MB to draft. **Action – MB.** Discuss hustings at next meeting hoping COVID situation will be clearer – Christ Church Chineham or a hall of similar size might accommodate a socially-distanced in-person hustings.

9. Preston Candover solar farm application

Agreed we send MH's draft letter to the Planning Officers as BTN's view, with modifications to shorten it and take on board any points from Winchester FoE's similar letter that aren't already included. **Action – MH.**

NOTE – PH as deputy chair of the Borough Council Development Control Committee did not take part in the discussion of item 9.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm.

Next meeting – Tuesday 1st February 2022, 7.00 pm.