

**Basingstoke Transition Network**  
**Meeting on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022, 7.00 pm, by Zoom**

**Present:** Miranda Chubb (MC) (chair), Martin Heath (MH), Martin Biermann (MB), Bob Clifford (BC), Malcolm MacInnes (MM), Jean Wilde (JW), Lucy Jones (LJ), Paul Beevers (PB), Sheila Peacock (SP), Kerry Hickman (KH), and guests Cate Crocker, and Cllr. Dr. Aji Peter (AP).

**Apologies:** Stacy Hart, Colin Andrews

1. **Welcome** to Kerry Hickman, a new member, and guests Cate (secretary to broadcaster and naturalist Chris Packham), and Cllr. Peter, a lecturer in environmental science at Brunel University.

2. **Welcome to Cllr. Dr. Aji Peter and discussion of his activities on environment, ecological emergency and Local Plan**

Cllr. Peter gave his view on the dire emergency of climate change and particularly that house building as planned for Basingstoke would add to emissions and damage biodiversity, hence he is opposed to it and is working to convince colleagues to press for the numbers to be reduced. He had met with Maria Miller MP and found her sympathetic, but some people still laugh at him. He is also concerned about air and water pollution and sewage. We pressed him on onshore wind (and its explicit exclusion from the Local Plan) – he was non-committal while agreeing that it is more sustainable than fossil fuels. He pointed out that many of the attractive new houses would be occupied by incomers rather than local people, and suggested that the housing should be transferred to less densely populated and less biodiverse sites in the north of England. He agreed in principle to make a presentation at Brookvale Sustainability Day on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept during Green Week (**Action – MM to confirm**). MM suggested that convincing the other Councillors to follow his lead might include addressing the too-close relationships between some of them and the developers. BC invited AP to suggest subjects on which talks could be given that would interest councillors and help them to learn about climate change, and which BC could add to the CafeSci schedule (conveniently in the Red Lion).

3. **Minutes of last meeting and matters arising not covered**

(a) *Lyford Road* (minute 11a) MC and PB submitted comments and PB served a FOI request for information on surveys done on the site. He received an unsatisfactory reply from the biodiversity officer (which he will circulate – **Action – PB**), including a promise of an internal review. MC heard unofficially that the land was cleared because of a failure of communication between the Council and a contractor, and the officer responsible was very upset. Asbestos was found during the clearance, which is likely to be given as the reason for it. MM and LJ also drew attention to the felling of ~110 trees and bushes surrounding the electricity substation at the west end of Glebe Gardens, said to be because the roots were growing under the building. That has now been revealed as an eyesore.

(b) *Urban & Civic on Manydown queries* (minute 2) – MC finally got a reply offering 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> April at 6 pm for a meeting: **Action – All** to indicate preference. MC invited AP to attend.

4. **Meeting with Sam Taylor and new staff on climate change team, earlier in the day**  
(3 pm by teleconference)

Sam Taylor, Alison Zarecky, Sara Osman and Chris Prichard met with MH, MM, KH, PB, JW and SP (MC sent apologies) and discussed how BTN could help the Council and the

team. We are pleased that a team of three now exists, following our pressure when, a few years ago, the Council was going to run down the half-post of climate change officer. We offered to help the team communicate with councillors and senior Council officers, and gave comments on Sam's plans for increasing publicity and improving the "brand" of climate awareness. The Council is planning assistance for businesses in meeting carbon-reduction targets and intends to help people who are least able to pay for insulation and solar panels. We warned that fuel poverty is rising sharply, and that the poor quality of some of the town's housing stock would prevent quick and easy insulation solutions; also the rules for energy performance certificates might prevent the removal of gas heating from rented accommodation. We gave feedback that the online residents' climate toolkit needed some improvement – MM will email Sam backing this up and suggesting that the website needs to be made more responsive and an app created. **Action – MM.** Alison Zarecky is preparing minutes, and we will circulate these when they arrive (**Action – SP**).

MH suggested we should try to arrange quarterly meetings with the climate change team. The Green Week committee consisting of climate team members and BTN reps including MM and KH (and anyone else willing – **Action – All** to consider, and to suggest contacts and activities) will meanwhile meet soon to continue planning.

We agreed to suggest to the team that they and we co-operate on organising training sessions for councillors on aspects of climate change and carbon reduction – MH offered to repeat the session we provided last year, at which he and PB spoke, but we wondered how to get more councillors to attend. **Action – MH** to take this up with the team.

It was noted that climate-change portfolio holder Cllr. Mark Ruffell is standing down and so there will be a new portfolio holder after the May election.

#### **5. May local elections – questions for candidates**

MB offered to circulate the questions to political group leaders, candidates or agents whose email addresses he can identify (nominations closed at 5 pm today so the list is available now). **Action – MB.** He has been posting questions on the social media pages of those candidates who have started to campaign by this means, but hasn't had any replies. **Action – All** to post questions on environment and climate change on candidates' social media sites.

#### **6. Rebranding and publicity subcommittee**

The paper circulated by the committee was warmly welcomed and a number of suggestions made. The addition of "Just" Basingstoke to BTN's aims was considered important. BC suggested that any new name should imply action. KH suggested that a community focus group might come up with a good name, and school children could design a new logo. JW reported that she had asked friends about the suggested names, and "Save the Planet" and "Sustainable Basingstoke" had been the most favoured. The Council climate change team might also make suggestions. MM suggested that "Greener" was a good description (there had been concern that "Green" would be associated with the Green Party). If we drop "Transition" from our title we can qualify the logo with "Part of the Transition Movement". KH pointed out that she had not heard of BTN until recently despite living for 13 years in Brookvale.

The subcommittee will review these suggestions: KH and BC will join it. **Action – publicity subcommittee.**

(AP left)

## 7. Direct Action subcommittee

MH reported that this coming Saturday (9<sup>th</sup> April) has two actions: Extinction Rebellion march in London, and a stall preceding Chris Packham's show at The Anvil. Cate will provide a table (and also for the Hampshire Wildlife Trust): LJ will organise providing leaflets and a few sentences for Chris to say while being video'd in front of it. These should include a suggestion for action that people can take up. We will need to be vague about our name if we are about to change it soon! **Action – LJ; and All** – to come at 6 pm to show support.

(KH left)

The committee is still trying to arrange a Town Hall meeting featuring Council Leader Cllr. Simon Bound, and is aiming for 18<sup>th</sup> July, the third anniversary of the declaration of the climate emergency; and to organise a march about the pollution of the River Loddon on 16<sup>th</sup> July.

## 8. Secretary

SP expressed a wish to stand down as secretary because of pressure of another voluntary commitment. Agreed MC would do agendas if SP does minutes; following name change there will need to be a review of website and email addresses and the opportunity can be taken to rationalise communications – MB and BC offered to look into "SimpleLists" as a means to share emails within the group. **Action – MB, BC.** We agreed to circulate a call for volunteers to our Mailchimp list. **Action – SP.**

9. **Council consultation** on making Crabtree Plantation and Black Dam Ponds a local nature reserve – **Action – ALL** to submit comments asking for this area to be made into a reserve.

10. **Hampshire Climate Action Network** – next meeting is in Brookvale Village Hall at 10 am for 10.30 am on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April. All are invited. **Action – All.**

The meeting ended at 8:45 pm.

**Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 7.00 pm by Zoom.