



RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Climate Change Task Group

Venue: The Council Chamber, The Custom House, Harbour Parade, Ramsgate

Date: Tuesday 1 August 2023, 3pm

Present: Councillors; Albon, Austin (Chair), Driver, Green (joined during Item 2), Hudson (joined during Item 3), Nixey (joined during Item 5) and Ovenden.

Residents; M. Foley and A. Stevens.

Also in attendance; Mr D Williams (Marketing and Communications Officer - Minutes)

IN THE ABSENCE OF A CHAIR, THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (MR D WILLIAMS) TOOK THE CHAIR

ELECTION OF A CHAIR

RESOLUTION: The Chair for the ensuing year will be Councillor Austin.

COUNCILLOR AUSTIN TOOK THE CHAIR, AFTER BEING ELECTED CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

Councillor Green joined the meeting.

ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIR

RESOLUTION: The Vice-Chair for the ensuing year will be Councillor Green.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Huxley and Wing (Personal Commitment), Councillors Crittenden and Hetherington (Work Commitment). There were no other apologies.

RESOLUTION: To approve the apologies received.

Councillor Hudson joined the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

Councillor Nixey joined the meeting.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The task group received the amended Terms of Reference from the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference lack detail and clarity of the group's intentions going forward. Achievable targets need to be set.

Two steps were identified to be taken forward.

Firstly, the Terms of Reference should be clarified to outline what is within the task group's scope. Secondly, the first job of the task group is to create an action plan for the next year.

It was agreed that two aspects should be added to the Terms of Reference:

- The Group should be using its influence with Thanet District Council and Kent County Council to make sure they are meeting their obligations, including making information available to residents.
- The Group should be working with business: it is not our role to advise businesses, but on the other hand businesses do enquire as to what they can do to make a difference. To be able to point businesses in the right direction would be a great step forward.

M. Foley stated that the Group should refer to the Climate Change Act 2008 which defines what the Group's legal duty is to act on Climate Change and what is required. The Chair asked if he could summarise the main points of the Act for the Group, which he agreed to do.

Councillor Austin suggested for example that she would like to invite Josie Sinden, Thanet District Council's Conservation Area Officer, to speak to the group later in the year to get her angle on what can and can't be done to historic residential and business properties to reduce their carbon footprint, so we can give the same consistent message to residents and businesses.

RESOLUTION:

- 1. The task group agreed to review the Terms of Reference and make amendments to help clarify the Group's intentions. Councillor Austin will draft these amendments and send to the group.**
- 2. M. Foley to produce a summary of the main requirements from the Climate Change Act 2008, that need to be undertaken by the task group.**

REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES FOR ACTIONS

The Group reviewed the list of actions and received updates set out in the minutes, with the suggestion that some of these be followed up.

Councillor Green has exchanged emails with Kent County Council and they are not opposed to tree planting in the Nethercourt Estate; however they insist on their staff doing the planting, which costs around £400 - £600 a tree. This relates

to street trees. A suggestion was made to persuade residents to put trees in their front gardens adjacent to the footpaths, but Councillor Green has not pursued that yet.

Councillor Nixey raised the idea of possibly giving trees to residents as an incentive, so they are looked after. For example, a tree could cost the Council £50 to go in a garden. 10 residents doing this would cost the same amount for one tree by Kent County Council. The suggestion was made that if a budget of £1,000 was allocated this would be enough for 20 trees, but it would be welcomed if the trees could be sought for free.

Ways of providing information to residents were discussed – e.g using the Community Ad Magazine. Councillor Albon raised the point that the former Town Clerk wrote an article on the disadvantages of using fake grass in residents' gardens. The article explained the impact of the water drainage and potential of flooding. It was agreed we should seek to have a regular feature on climate issues in every Community Ad Magazine, and aim for one issue soon that is mainly climate-focused.

Councillor Austin pointed out that Southern Water will come out to residents and do an assessment of water use and how to save it. They will give free tools to use, undertake minor repairs and give clear information on what to do going forward. This is something to promote to residents.

Councillor Albon stated that the current Local Plan does not instruct that new developments should have the facilities of solar panels and rainwater capture methods. This is something the Group should have some influence on and should take this forward via the Thanet Area Committee.

M. Foley stated that the expertise is ready to go for installing EV Charging Stations at Radford House; it is just waiting on the brief from Council on when to go ahead. Currently the project is not at the stage to proceed with this, however it will be done at a later point of the development.

Councillor Green informed the task group that Kent County Council have completed the survey for the 20mph zone in Nethercourt, comparing the speeds before to the speeds now. These results are to be shared by the group.

Councillor Austin stated that she had asked questions at Cabinet about air quality monitoring. Pollution levels have come down across the District and we have been advised that we can now stop monitoring, but Cabinet agreed to continue monitoring a smaller area around St. Lawrence which is still causing concern. Councillor Austin was assured that other areas where there could be a potential problem will be kept under review.

The Town Clerk had been in contact with Kent County Council regarding the Highway Improvement Plan. Kent County Council agreed that Ramsgate is too big for one Plan; however, they would consider individual ward plans for Ramsgate.

RESOLUTION:

- 1. An article to be put in every issue of the Community Ad Magazine on climate issues – e.g advising residents on how you can have hardstanding with permeability, how to get advice from Southern Water etc**
- 2. A dedicated issue of the Community Ad Magazine to be used purely for Climate Change, giving hints, tips, potential grants to make a difference.**
- 3. Councillor Green to share the results for 20mph zone survey from Kent County Council.**
- 4. The Marketing and Communications Officer to work with A. Stevens when the Ramsgate Town Council Carbon Audit is updated to include 2022.**

HEAT LOSS ANALYSIS REPORT

M. Foley gave a summary of the heat loss analysis report for The Custom House. He pointed out that many of the recommendations here apply to all older buildings.

Councillor Austin pointed out that if the doors are to be shut for the Custom House in the winter a sign needs to be up stating it is open.

RESOLUTION:

The task group to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to proceed with the recommendations detailed in the Heat Loss Analysis report. The Town Clerk to liaise with the landlord to check if all of the recommendations are feasible.

ESTABLISHING A GREEN AGENDA

The Group discussed what changes the Council can make, what the local community can do and how the resources of the Council can be used to educate and inform the local community.

The group agreed to focus on specifics for the action plans, for example water butts, planting street trees etc, and to contact other local Councils to check what process they have gone through and to see what they have done. Such Councils might include Sandwich, Dover, Westgate and Folkestone.

The Group should be using its influence with Thanet District Council and Kent County Council to make sure they are meeting their obligations and to work with them to make information available to residents. Information is currently on the website but needs to be made clearer and easier to find.

RESOLUTION:

- 1. Neighbouring Councils to be contacted to check if they have gone through this process and what they have done so far.**
- 2. The Group to focus on the climate side to begin with rather than a broader Climate and Biodiversity remit, which may come later.**
- 3. The Group to focus on specific goals that can be quickly enacted.**
- 4. Councillor Austin to liaise with the Marketing and Communications Officer to create an action plan, which will then form an annexe to the Terms of Reference.**

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that future meeting dates will be before Council meetings between 5:30pm and 6:30pm, possibly every six weeks initially. The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 6th September 2023, 5:30pm – 6:30pm.

Dates for meetings thereafter will be set at the next meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 4:10pm.