

Herefordshire Climate and Nature Board

Minutes of meeting held 6.00-8.00pm – 16th August 2022

Chair: Cllr Ellie Chowns (EC)

Attendees: Richard Wells (RW), Gareth Williams (GW), Julia Cotton (JC), James Marsden (JM), Jackie Jones (JJ), Emily Partridge (EP), Gordon Coppock (GC), Ian Howie (IH), Anna Darwood (AD), Elly Deacon-Smith (EDS) Jenny Hulme, JBP Associates, Simon Thurley, WSP

Herefordshire Council Support: Ben Boswell (BB), Danny Lenain (DL), Liz Duberley (LD)

Apologies: Kate Gathercole, Andrew Nixon, Stuart Brisbane, Richard Vaughan

1. Welcome

EC welcomed the Board.

Update on New Board member(s) – Kate Gathercole has joined the Board replacing Ross Whelan.

HC Activity - One-Pager Update - Circulated in advance

A query was asked regarding the EV charge points and whether a standard debit card could be used - a requirement for chip & pin was included within the specification.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 5th July 2022

- **Matters Arising** – None
- **Minutes to be agreed** – Approved
- **Action Log** – These have either all been done or are in the process of being done.
 - JM has met with LD and her team. Agendas going forward - November 2022 meeting on Soil & Phosphates important to join up with Nutrient Management Board and share knowledge prior to the November meeting.
 - At the last Cabinet meeting it was agreed to set up a Cabinet Commission on the phosphates issue and a meeting took place today with Powys Cabinet looking at how to work across borders.
 - Wetlands are now being built and have been signed off to start trading and unlocking development. This is a world first phosphate/wetland trading scheme of its kind for nutrient neutrality with phosphates. JC thanked LD, BB and their team for their hard work in achieving this.
 - JC suggested that the Council publicise this in IEMA magazine – BB to liaise with JC.

3. Herefordshire Retrofit Strategy, Simon Thurley, WSP

Presentation by Simon Thurley.

- Whilst the Board recognised the significant amount of work and challenge developing this into a deliverable business case, several board members raised questions and disappointment on the EPC targets and overall aspiration of the strategy.
- A number of questions were raised, but rather than doing a question and answers session it was felt that a separate and more detailed conversation through the Buildings sub-group would be more productive. A summary of the questions included:
 - The ability to achieve net zero by 2030
 - Concern on the use of SAP and suggestion to consider alternatives
 - Need to focus on energy usage rather than EPC rating
 - How do we pool resources to look at scale and at community/street level
 - Use of alternative finance such as the Robert Owen bank and Credit Unions
- EC thanked ST for his presentation. A lot of useful material in demonstrating cost benefit analysis and the BCR data beneficial when making a case where there is funding available and getting this spent on retrofitting rather than other infrastructure projects. Need to look at Hybrid model as a first step towards a trajectory down to Net Zero for the existing houses and mapping that out.
It was agreed the Building Sub-group would meet with ST to discuss the above comments/questions asap.

4. Dedicated Board Communications Resource – Update by JBP Associates

Presentation by Jenny Hulme

- GC - Seem to be stalling on 30 for 2030. Would it be worth focusing on builders' merchants in the market towns, it would be a win/win if they could be convinced to sign up.
 - Keen to reach out to companies that are not just within the City itself. Good idea to take this forward. Use companies that have already signed up to Greener Footprints to promote the opportunity for this cross sector collaboration. Companies which have already signed up are working with each other and share ideas and taking that best practice out to people in their sector. JC to contact GC with more specific media ideas and outreach to more companies. RW may have an 'in' to local builders' merchants – will report back.
- GW – Problem with a pledge is that it is just a pledge, and it doesn't mean you have to do anything. Media is picking up on 'green washing'. If you want this to be pushed it needs to mean something e.g. getting to join a group discussion or perhaps reporting on something. Not going to get anyway near Net Zero by just getting a sticker. The plan needs to show how the building (not just houses ?) stock gets to net zero by X date as various are saying.
 - Pledging is just a small part of this and as the campaign unfolds there needs to be some communication and engagement with the public. Research shows that if you ask too much to start with people will think they are already deal with cost of living etc., at the moment. One of the advantages of Pledge for the Planet is it is making awareness of the scheme. Changes have been made to the web site so people can now tick boxes to show what they are doing.

- JC – Would it be possible to create a cyclic diagram showing the whole cycle as to how it would be possible to retrofit with a carbon neutral footprint as far as possible using information from companies who have already pledged or can be encouraged to pledge e.g., Wye Valley Reclamation, Kingspan, Taylor Lane.
 - An interesting idea, to be discussed further.
- BB – As part of the business case we are developing an annual conference/celebration. GW to liaise with BB.
- JC – All the above to be discussed further at the next Communications Sub-group with a review of the theory of change behind communication work and links between pledging, action and achieving change of our metrics.

5. Board Priorities – Sub-Groups Update

Housing and Buildings

- EP – Not been able to have a full meeting due to members being on leave. EP has been talking to Stuart about timber frame building and looking at future research into timber frame. Session with Simon being set up to get up to speed. Just been issued with the Retrofit version of the SPD which the group will review.
- JJ– Update on Building Sense Programme. In terms of training buildings 17 have expressed an interest in the Future Proof Essential course. 11 have signed up and 6 have started – these include general builders, college lecturers and heat pump installers. There has been one social meeting and another is planned for 8th Sept., hope some of the Board members can come along. Trying to arrange events in collaboration with local groups to try and get their energy involved and their outreach into communities. 5 planned so far in Oct/Nov., LLangarron, Almeley, Staunton-on-Wye, Eardisland and Colwall. Future Ready Homes Project – there will be a Q & Q on line event on 24th August – 8 people have signed up so far. 20 applications have been received for a free survey. Open homes event at the start of Oct.

Food

- RW – taken Government Food strategy – local public services should be exemplar. Sodexo run PFI – have got hold of their sustainable plans and have some best practice from other fairly local Trusts which have developed full green plans which are innovative. Brining that all together with the Director of Strategy to look at forming one of these for the Trust and part of that will be food. Now have last survey of staff and patients and need to generate questions which will be more informative. Will then get together with Comms team to find how best to use this and ask the right questions. Questions will be circulated to the Board for their input. Opportunity to influence a lot of people

Energy

- GC – 29 groups/institutions have submitted applications for the LEP grant. 8 have been have been put forward to full business case and will be submitted by mid Sept. Herefordshire Energy Mapping project – have agreement with Herefordshire Council for hosting mapping and GIS. Have received feedback from Western Power about sharing information and providing grid limitation data on top of the mapping as to where energy projects might be. A number of ground based solar applications are being made in local areas. Shropshire Council are advising parishes as to

what they should be asking for from the installers i.e. community benefits etc. If any of the Board have experience of this please let me know. Some legal hiccups with installation at a large business in Tenbury but is going ahead.

Land-Use and Farming

- IH – Very good meeting with John Josephs which is like to be in the farming press. EC has spoken to Martin Williams and forged a good link with Farm Herefordshire. Farm 5 point Guide – very valuable resource for farmers. Farm Footprint – proposal was put forward on 19th April 2022 – The proposal submitted will provide baseline information on farm emissions in Herefordshire and investigate the overall picture for the range of different farm types in the county. It will be a great start in increasing everyone’s understanding of just how the farmers in Herefordshire are responding to the climate crisis already and what more can be done to reduce emissions. This is now with the PMO for review. JC will report when it has been signed off.
- JC to contact Co-chair of Farm Herefordshire about joining Land Use & Farming sub-group.

Transport

- AD – Have been taking to schools about sustainable transport. Possible use of Bus Bikes using Bikko bikes where primary school children would ride bikes to and from school. Email being drafted to send to primary schools to gather their interest. There are a number of e-cargo bikes available for use and an email will be sent to High schools to promote sustainable school travel. At the next meeting we will be going over the action plan and looking at what we want to focus on. Will also be speaking to someone from the Council about EV chargers. GC - update as to where we are with changes to the grants from the Energy Saving Trust which have been reduced from 75% to 60% by the Government and how we can fill any gaps. There is an ongoing project to do 12 systems across the County. Anna/Gordon - please let me know when the meeting is so we can join up. (as I said Rich is on paternity at the moment so please email me or Danny) Cycle Greenways – being pursued.

EC to let AD have contact details of Bike Bus being run in Worcester.

JM – Updates very helpful. Sustainable tourism has not been looked at critically by this Board, this would be cross cutting. *Put on Agenda for a future meeting.*

IH – Cycle ways – Approach NFU and CLA re cycle routes “the other side of the hedge”.

IH to forward contact details to BB

GC - One of the additional uses of the cycle greenways would be to also encourage cycling holidays /tourism across this wonderful county.

6. County-wide action plans – updates and proposed new actions from the HCNP Board

- Action plans have been reviewed, updated and should have been shared with Group and Sub-group leads. Any new ideas/actions to be added, the Team will review/update again and new ideas/actions can then be brought back to the Board.
- Website to be kept up to date and be ‘live’ to enable public to see what progress is being made.
- It was noted that this may take longer than 4/5 weeks and there was a need to share updates across the groups to help crossover and avoid duplication.

- The board should help to improve the communication of those already existing actions and uses our links within the community and ensure that they have effect.
- Aspirational /in development ideas can be brought forward for consideration when future funding opportunities arrive and then these can be further developed when resources are available.
- It was noted that the action plan was jointly owned and to include actions from across the county.
- JM noted that the action plans need to take a view about the extent to which we follow from the bottom up. In favour of doing something locally, Herefordian and relevant to the County, but have to take account of UK and international context and treaty obligations and commitments that have been made by UK Gov.
- The Board discussed a number of national and international commitment and the need to localise these.
 - 30% by 2030 of land and sea managed for nature which is a UK Gov., commitment and an international treaty. How does that represent itself on a Herefordshire scale and how can this be delivered?
 - Global Methane Pledge – Another international treaty obligation which UK Gov., has signed up to. We know about the contribution from agriculture to methane. This was recognised as a challenge as even though the Team have made great progress on the arable side, there are also challenges on emissions from livestock.
- EC – Looking forward to next in person meeting when the Board can think about how we are going forward to bridge the gap between our own goals and international commitments and what it is we are currently able to do and are aspiring to do in Herefordshire with the resources available. Find the path forward from those projects we are getting started with through to actually achieving the big picture aim. How do we move beyond with the Council projects, input into Council projects and pushing for more Council funded projects? How are we really going to engage with this broader agenda to mobilise the entire County, going beyond pledges to action. These conversations will be very helpful.
- JM – Need to have a conversation about the extent to which we are ‘from the bottom up’ or ‘top down’, how we broker something in the middle that is distinctly Herefordian , makes a contribution nationally, which keeps it local and democratically accountable. Local political leadership in that context. Herefordshire Council under present administration is doing an extraordinary job in that space. We are here because of their leadership, but need to think about leadership in the context of top down/bottom up, what we are trying to achieve and how does it marry up.
- GC – Does anyone in this group talk to anybody in their local area about what this group is doing? Do local people know about/look at the website? Frequently get negative feedback about the Council which try to defend. How can we share the effort that is being made to push forward climate change, carbon reduction and biosphere improvement as do not feel it is getting across?
- EC – Would not necessarily expect the person in the street to know about the Board. When Greener Footprints has been running for some time there should be brand recognition. Need to monitor effectiveness of what we are doing. In terms of Town Council – EC attends a meeting every six months which is outreach to the market towns which local businesses, Town

Councillors and Clerks are able to attend and Greener Footprints is included in these meetings. As a first step enthuse and encourage, but what do we need to do to reach County wide?

- The Stakeholder Board which includes EC and GC are looking at the future of the County and shaping proposals which would go forward to any future funding.
- Levelling Up Fund – £20 million for the Transportation Hub in Hereford which is a step towards our sustainable transport ambition with cycle paths etc. Ross Enterprise Park which again will have sustainable transport integrated and conditions as to the structure of the buildings to be erected.
- Need to move away from conversations about what Herefordshire Council is doing to a broader agenda of mobilising the County as a whole. Suggestions as how the way we do this can be improved and feedback are welcome.
- BB – We have the opportunity through the Climate Reserve to have an annual celebration and we are working on a business case for that which will be an opportunity to raise the profile of the Board and the various activities. Thoughts and suggestions as to how to do that are welcome. Also working on a business case for further on-going Comms support and engagement.
- GC – Roadshow in each market town.
- EC – Board join together to do some retro-fitting/tree planting at a school.
- GC - Should we try to give the HCNP an update/overview from the recent applications of the £6M and £20M projects that have just been submitted this last month. Again to try and stay in sync with all the effort of what is going on within HCC and to share this out in terms of the effort to the general population.
- Further ideas to BB.

7. HC Climate Assembly /Climate Reserve projects - update – Ben Boswell

- The business cases for each of the climate assembly projects have been developed and are under review by the Council's Project Management Office before progressing for approval.
- This also includes additional business cases for the three suggestions from the Board; the Farm Carbon Audits, Renewable Mapping and Dedicated low carbon technical support for the 30 business participants in the 30 for 2030 campaign.
- Will be doing an update to the Climate Change Assembly in September.
- Request to include the board to the climate assembly update for those that would like to learn more about it – BB to action
- Further updates by next meeting

8. AOB & Good News Items and Funding Opportunities

- IH expressed his thanks to Judith Whateley for all the help she has given him, as a member of this Board, and the Farming Group. The Board agreed with this. BB will pass on thanks.
- Conversation about the importance for political support for action on this agenda and the importance of engaging and supporting communities through the board.
- Local BBC radio are doing a series on the cost of living next week including features around energy efficiency and retro-fits. EC will be on radio talking about that including some of the projects the Council is working on and the aims the Building Sub-group have around this agenda.
- Wetlands – great work being done across the County.
- New Repair Café grant available – if the Board knows of anyone or any community interested in setting up a Repair Café contact BB.
- The Council have been invited to put in an expression of interest to both the Marches Energy Fund and to an MCS fund for some retro-fit work and have will be putting applications to both of these.
- The Council have recently appointed a new Principal Natural Environment Officer.

9. Date/ Time of future Board Meetings & Agenda Items

- **27th September – 6.00 – 8.00 pm** meeting in person and dinner afterwards at own expense.