

**HENNOCK PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL ZOOM PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2020 STARTING AT 7.30PM.**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs P Baker (Chairman of the Planning Committee), S Edwards, P McCullar, J Parker, G Tully, C Webb and K Willett.

**PART I (Open to the Public)**

**1. RECORDING OF MEETINGS:** The Chairman reminded all in attendance at the meeting that they may be recorded or otherwise reported about.

**2. TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received from Cllr R Dixon and the reasons for her absence were accepted.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA & A REMINDER TO COUNCILLORS TO UPDATE THEIR REGISTER OF INTERESTS WHERE APPROPRIATE:** None.

**4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None.

**5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL ABOUT MATTERS WHICH CONCERN THEM:** None.

**6. APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF THE MINUTES:** The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2020 were approved and it was agreed that these should be signed in due course when it is practicable to do so.

**7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:** None.

**8. TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE, PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS RECEIVED SINCE PREPARING THE AGENDA:** None.

**9. TEIGNBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 2020 - 2040:** The document prepared by the Parish Council's Climate Emergency Working Group was considered and, after some discussion, it was agreed that the following consultation response should be submitted to Teignbridge District Council:

**Overall**

We were generally impressed with the plan and felt that the vision it presented was of a great place to live. We noted the provision of cycle storage in new homes, access to amenities/work by 'active' travel and public transport and presentation of healthy light, green and functional urban spaces. We were very pleased to see a whole chapter on climate change, because climate change now impacts on virtually all aspects of planning. The planners have obviously put a great deal of hard work, thought, and expertise into this. However, we have concerns that the language is not strong enough throughout the plan. Very few parts state 'will' or 'must' and instead say 'should' or 'try' or 'ask'. In order to achieve net zero carbon emissions many of these policies have to be absolute with no compromise or will very likely be undermined or ignored when it comes to development where profit and time is obviously important. We agree that some things will be mandated from Government but this is the time for Teignbridge to stand firm and achieve net zero. We, as residents, want a future where the worst of climate change is avoided and we can only achieve this if our community meets its net zero emissions promise. Ensuring that everything done at the district level is net zero supports and encourages net zero behaviours in us as individuals rather than undermining and negating our efforts.

### **Chapter 1/ Overall**

It is positive and reassuring to see so much attention and reference to climate and environmental issues but we would like to see a shift in how the term 'environment' is used to reinforce the central role it plays in all aspects of our lives. Environment is the 'whole' and our well-being and economic prosperity lies within that - not alongside it. It is the foundation on which we live and prosper not just another disconnected part that we need to manage. For this reason we would like to see the plan make greater connections to linking concepts together i.e. greater joined up thinking and interdependence, e.g. between good land management/use - development - farming - soil - trees/hedgerows/scrub - carbon sequestering - and flood risk reduction and also between sustainable local food production - resilient local supply chains - reducing food miles and fuel use - sustaining local economy - equity of access to healthy food - planning of homes and village/town centres - health and wellbeing.

### **Chapter 2: Sustainable Communities**

#### **Chapter 3: Climate Change**

This section seems to overlook and has insufficient detail on the role of food, farming and rural landscapes in climate change - these things comprise much of our local area. Greater detail is needed to ensure access (ideally via 'active' or public transport) to sustainable (in terms of soils and biodiversity), affordable, healthy, local produce and considers ways that communities can reduce and manage food waste. We welcome solar power but would like to see widespread roof top (public and private owned) photovoltaics in preference to taking up green spaces. Versatile and high-quality agricultural land should be protected for its importance in sustainable food production, carbon sequestering and biodiversity in its own right. We would prefer mandatory inclusion of renewable energy production technology in all new developments and protection of land for its other climate change, life enhancing and sustaining, flood risk reduction qualities - not just to prevent other development.

Mitigation needs to be managed long term e.g. developers should ensure trees are managed after planting and tree guards removed after established, remove reptile fencing before it degrades etc.

We would like stronger language used in many cases, especially where it comes to reducing emissions from transport and homes which are the largest contributors.

Can Teignbridge District Council broaden the recycling opportunities open to residents and find ways of sponsoring local collections of unusual waste streams (e.g. Terracycle) - collection points could be a requirement of new developments

All public lighting should all be low energy/LED, directional, and lit for as short timeframe as possible.

We recognise that carbon offsetting is going to be essential in some cases but feel that it really does need to be a last resort.

Developers should also ensure new houses can keep sufficiently cool in warmer months. Heat waves are increasing in frequency and severity and current new builds can be unbearably hot on hot days and nights.

### **Policy CC2**

We would like to see this worded more strongly. All new builds should have solar panels, battery arrays, electric charging facilities and bike storage. New developments should not be permitted to utilise gas for heating or cooking.

Should parking and congestion charges be part of this plan? We would like to see higher charges for non-electric vehicles.

***Policy CC5***

We do not see that having declared a climate emergency and achieving net zero emissions is consistent with permitting any new non-renewable energy generation.

**Chapter 4: Design and Wellbeing**

New development should have food production/ provision at the heart of a community with community gardens, orchards, fields and allotments being central to any plans. Green/ community space isn't just for 'leisure' activities but can increase self-sufficiency, resilience and sense of community purpose. We have seen a greater need for this during the Covid-19 pandemic. Increasing numbers of people growing their own produce for example, and people exchanging and helping each other out more with food provision. The plan should ensure this is a required part of any development of community spaces - not just see allotments as a separate entity for individual ownership/ use.

Design of community centres and developments should also be required to include plans for reducing and managing food waste - such as a community fridge, shared food stores, communal composting etc, not just food retail - which is central to and easily accessible to all.

***Policy DW1***

This appears to be missing any mention of green elements within developments which are essential for health (reducing heat stress/providing shade), mental health, biodiversity and local food (fruit trees and bushes, herbs, community gardens).

***Policies DW10 and DW11***

Note that natural infrastructure and spaces are very important for mitigating against heat stress by providing locally cooler and shadier zones.

**Chapter 5: Economy**

The plan does not include reference to the need to attract and develop agricultural/ raw food production and supply skills and jobs. This will be a significant part of ensuring sustainable and resilient communities, economies and food supply in the Teignbridge area - a need which has been highlighted nationally by Covid -19 and Brexit/ immigration issues.

**Chapter 6: Homes**

We would like stronger language used in many cases. For example, developers should be forced to use sustainable (recycled where available) materials and designs.

**Chapter 7: Environment**

Overall, the biodiversity section seems fairly comprehensive, well written and with good priorities/targets.

***Policy EN10***

This plan, like all plans, must be careful when talking about a 'baseline' – if all plans start with a new baseline which is lower than the previous one (as will have been the case for many years with the general declines of the majority of habitats and species), we are always going to be measuring against a lower ambition than was previously accepted as the norm. But the State of Nature report says how nature-depleted we are, so baselines should give us something to improve against, not just a line which we are hoping we don't drop beneath. It is simply a change of mindset – 'be ambitious and let's improve things' as opposed to 'let's do as little damage as possible'

**Policy EN11**

We do not see any specific mention of wood pasture or scrub habitats, which are often neglected in favour of other priority habitats/species, yet these habitats are the bedrock of our food chain, the fundamental habitats that have driven the evolution of our native fauna and flora, and so should be a priority not just for protection, but for creation and expansion.

**Policy EN15**

Tree planting is mentioned a few times in the document with an emphasis on native species, which is fine, although it is worth mentioning the need to ensure that any new planting schemes include species with the right genetics (in terms of seed source) to be fully prepared to survive the likely effects of climate change. The Forestry Commission has some good research here with regard to how certain species of trees will be affected by climate change over the next 30-60 years: <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/research/climate-change-impacts/climate-change-impacts-and-adaptation-in-englands-woodlands/regional-changes-in-england-in-tree-species-suitability-resulting-from-climate-change/tree-species-suitability-in-a-future-climate-in-south-west-england/> More diverse planting schemes have been shown to be better at sequestering carbon at the forest level, and are more resilient to tree diseases, so any new planting schemes should look to plant a mix of native species – some of local provenance and some with genetics from 2-3 degrees further south (e.g. oaks from central/southern France)

**Policy EN16**

We would like to see mention of support in making Teignbridge’s listed buildings as energy efficient as possible. While the listing should be respected there are many situations where energy efficient changes can be made respectfully regarding the historical character of these buildings. Our historical buildings need to be future proof and resilient if they are to last and be lived in and loved in the future. They need to be transformed to utilise alternative methods of home heat and power that are not fossil fuel based and still be affordable and habitable.

There is no value in preserving a past if we do not have a future.

**10. MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY COUNCILLORS:** None.

**11. DATES, VENUES AND TIMES OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS:**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020: Virtual Zoom Parish Council meeting starting at 7.30pm

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020: Virtual Zoom Planning Committee meeting starting at 7.30pm

As there was no further business the meeting ended at .....

.....Chairman

**Dated**.....