

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
14 March 2023**

Present:

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore (Chairman)
Councillor R.J. Noble (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

R.O. Barratt	K.M. Grant	O. Rybinski
M. Beecher	K. Howkins	J.R. Sexton
J. Button	V.J. Leighton	
N.J. Gething	S.C. Mooney	

Substitutions: Councillors C. Bateson (In place of T. Fidler)

Apologies: Councillors L. E. Nichols

15/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 and the extraordinary meeting held on 31 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

16/23 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

17/23 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

18/23 Ward Issues

There were none.

19/23 Green Initiatives Fund Bid - Solar for Laleham Nursery

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund to purchase solar panels for Laleham Nursery. Laleham Nursery currently utilised solar panels on part of their roof space, and the remaining roof space had been rebuilt to accommodate further installation of solar panels. The solar panels would create an estimated savings of £1,469 per annum, and that was expected to increase with the rising price of electricity.

The Committee confirmed that despite the rising cost of materials, there was still expected to be a return on investment in the solar panels.

The Committee **resolved** to approve funding of £20,000 from the Green Initiatives Fund to purchase solar panels for Laleham Nursery.

20/23 Green Initiatives Fund Bid - Sweeps Ditch Works in Staines Park

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund to help fund the creation of a pond within the Staines Park section of Sweeps Ditch. Surrey County Council had agreed to fund a majority of the works as it was a flood alleviation project and would provide further biodiversity to the area. The installation of underwater sills would also work to prevent catastrophic water loss such as occurred over summer 2022.

The Committee noted that the Environment Agency supported the project. The Committee queried the depth of the pond and requested that safety and warning signs be clearly placed around the site.

The Committee acknowledged the loss of water and flow problems that were caused by the failure of a pump over the summer and queried if steps were being taken to avoid similar situations in future. It was confirmed that a further pump had been installed to protect against future failure, and contractors would be attending on a regular basis to monitor the performance of the pumps.

The Committee congratulated the team on their work and for their work with external agencies on the project.

The Committee **resolved** to approve funding of £8,000 from the Green Initiatives Fund towards the creation of a pond within the Staines Park section of Sweeps Ditch.

21/23 Update on Climate Change Strategy

The Committee received a verbal update from the Climate Change Officer on the Climate Change Strategy.

Since adoption in September 2022, 41 of the 72 actions were underway and two were completed. A number of Council departments and external stakeholders were undertaking work for the strategy on behalf of the Council

as a whole, and individuals had undertaken Carbon Literacy Training to address their own carbon emissions.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the Climate Change Strategy.

22/23 Updates from Task and Finish and/or Working Groups

The Committee received updates on the work of the CIL Task Group and the Climate Change Working Group.

Councillor Noble provided a summary of items considered by the Climate Change Working Group, which included the GIF Bids on the agenda for the meeting as well as a further anticipated report regarding the development of a tree nursery for the Council.

The Committee queried the status of sapling trees that were planted as part of an initiative and damaged. Cllr Noble explained that part of the rationale behind the Council developing a tree nursery would be to easily replant damage trees and reduce costs.

The Committee **resolved** to note the updates from the CIL Task Group and the Climate Change Working Group.

23/23 Forward Plan

The Committee considered the forward plan for future Committee business.

The Committee noted the item related to the boardwalk along the River Ash was not committed to a particular meeting and requested that an update on the status of the item be provided.

The Committee queried if there were any further updates on the Local Plan Inquiry. The Chair explained that provisional dates had been received for the end of May and June, but calendars needed to be coordinated with key attendees before dates could be confirmed.

The Committee **resolved** to note the forward plan.