

Notes of Informal Meeting of Climate Emergency Committee 14 September 2020

Present: Cllr R Coleman-Taylor (Chair and Mayor) Cllr M Taylor, Cllr R Williams and Cllr A Hollis (substituting for The Revd G Kent)

Apologies Received: Cllrs T Roberts and the Revd G Kent

Other Members: Cllr P Ripley

Support Staff: Susan Miles (minutes)

Each member gave a brief summary update about what they have seen/done since the last Climate Emergency meeting in January 2020.

Cllr R Coleman-Taylor has attended a couple of conferences on Zoom relating to climate change since January 2020. She is booked to go on the NALC Climate Change Leadership event on 28 September 2020 and she will share what she learns about what other councils are doing.

Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that the issue of waste disposal is a key one if there are to be intermittent lockdowns because of Covid-19. Although there were issues with the skip initiative, it may be necessary to provide skips again.

Cllr J Williams pointed out that there are 2 pieces underway which will impact on climate change:

- The provision of more recycling bins (although Calderdale has fed back that their infrastructure does not have the capacity for collecting any additional recycled waste from the centre of Todmorden), and
- The provision of bike racks (Calderdale has agreed to provide additional cycle racks on five additional sites in Todmorden and the Assistant Town Clerk is in the process of getting more information about this).

Cllr J Williams urged the group to focus on action. She said that she would like to revisit the information from one of the previous brainstorming meeting of the informal group.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to circulate the note of the brainstorming meeting with the papers for 23 September 2020 meeting.

In particular, **Cllr J Williams** is interested in the training offer from the Climate Emergency Programme and said that we could invite members/staff from other councils to this to share the information and cost. **Cllr A Hollis** agreed.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to progress this.

Cllr M Taylor said that the list of organisations to consult include:

- Tree Responsibility (Cllr T Roberts)
- The Woodland Trust
- Greenpeace
- Extinction Rebellion
- Friends of the Earth
- BEAT – Blackshaw Environmental Trust
- Incredible Edible
- Todmorden Flood Group
- Centre for Alternative
- Cllr C Potter's son who was instrumental in introducing natural flood alleviation methods at Settle Council

Cllr M Taylor said that TTC should lobby Calderdale MBC, the Environment Agency and our MP to stop builders increasing the level of building on flood plains. There is also a need to lobby Yorkshire Water about the drains on Halifax Rd near Lidl. Other related issues include finding out who is responsible for repairing the water lodges on the hillsides that help to control the flow of water.

Cllr M Taylor said that TTC could grant seed corn money for projects, and if necessary, raise additional funds for this through the council tax.

Cllrs M Taylor and Coleman-Taylor said that very little was being done to recycle plastic and that much was ending up in landfills because it was very light. Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that plastic is manmade and as such it can be recycled for different uses. In particular, there was an issue with single use plastic containers and bags provided by supermarkets. It was agreed that TTC should lobby local supermarkets as alternatives to plastic are available. It was agreed that it would be better if the TTC encouraged residents to use their own containers although, at the moment, some believe that possible contamination by Covid-19 prevents this. Cllr Coleman-Taylor said that Covid-19 contamination sticks to plastic much longer than people think.

It was noted that some teabags are sealed with plastic, although not Yorkshire Tea teabags.

Cllr M Taylor said that 'greening Todmorden' would be a worthwhile focus for the TTC as it would be within the freedom-to-act and budget of the Town Council , especially as many narrow streets have very little greenery and this would provide a cooling effect in hot weather (edges of urban areas can be up to 9 degrees cooler than at the centre) . The possibility of running a pilot in the Industrial St/Sackville St area (and neighbouring streets) was discussed and it was agreed that this would be positive action which would be very useful in areas also suffering from flooding. **Cllr J Williams** suggested that providing fruit trees in planters/tubs to each household that wants one would provide greenery where there is little/no front garden. It was agreed that using planters made from recycled plastic would be ideal. **Cllr M Taylor** said that he knew of a company (Green Business Network) in Brighouse/Sowerby Bridge that collected plastic and recycled into planters/furniture and other items.

Action: Cllr M Taylor agreed to investigate the possibility of planters made from recycled plastic.

Cllr M Taylor also suggested that some of the narrow road surfaces could be replaced with permeable surfaces. **Cllr J Williams** said that the Development Committee stipulate permeable surfaces with new buildings but that it would be useful to remake some of the older existing roads with permeable surfaces. **Cllr J Williams** suggested that the committee invite an expert/organisation that can provide this type of service to a meeting.

Cllr M Taylor suggested that a consultant might be engaged to do a survey. There would need to be a consultation. In the absence of public meetings residents could be surveyed (through cards pushed through letterboxes), Tod Chat or the TTC website.

It was noted that Slow the Flow will be presenting at the Climate Emergency Committee on Wednesday 23 September. **Cllr R Coleman-Taylor** said that the invite to talks such as this should be extended to all members and staff.

Action: The Assistant Clerk to extend the invite to all members.

It was agreed that the Moorlands Policy needs updating. **Cllr M Taylor** said that we should canvas other councils for their Moorlands Policies rather than reinventing the wheel. The Assistant Clerk said that she had made contact with Slow the Flow and Cllr Scott Patient for contacts and had received some, including a director who manages a landowner network, who had offered to help the review of our policy.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to research council websites for their moorland policies, especially Settle and Colne Councils.

Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that she had received feedback that planting sphagnum moss was more beneficial for the retention of water than planting trees. **Cllr J Williams** said that Slow the Flow have been planting sphagnum moss on the tops. She wondered if trees would survive on the tops. **Cllr R Coleman-Taylor** said that she had seen the planting of trees (by Tree Responsibility) from the top footpath at Gorpley Reservoir.

The Assistant Clerk reported that NALC had produced an article in the 'Clerk' magazine in January 2020 which shared the progress of several councils and listed 10 actions that councils can do to support the climate Emergency:

1. Declare a climate emergency
2. Sign up to the Tree Charter
3. Develop and promote green transport
4. Ensure that all council buildings are as energy efficient as possible
5. Increase tree cover
6. Plan for a green community in a neighbourhood plan
7. Limit the use of single-use plastics

8. Recycle as much as possible
9. Create a task force to establish a green agenda
10. Consider a community orchard in your community

Action: The Assistant Town Clerk to provide website links for this article if they are available

Cllr A Hollis said that a major issue with the Local Plan is potential building on Todmorden hillsides which are known to be unstable. If building takes place up the hill, this potentially exacerbates flooding issues for houses further down. He mentioned that the Geographical Survey used by Calderdale for the Local Plan was that from 1998 and that there had been landslips and an increase in flooding episodes since then which bring the value of it into question. **Cllr M Taylor** cited the issues on Longfield Grove where the properties below had to be demolished because of rising damp. He said that if building is to go ahead on such land, the builders must provide adequate drainage and not damage existing land drains. He said that TTC must lobby Calderdale to enhance planning guidance about flooding and drainage. It was suggested that Weir be approached for their views about building. **Cllr A Hollis** said that Weir are on the Town Deals Board.

Cllr J Williams suggested that an 'action committee' be set up for each of the key climate emergency initiatives. She also suggested that there be 2/3 speakers from organisations of interest at each of the meetings. Everyone agreed that this would increase focus. **Cllr R Coleman-Taylor** said that we could possibly group organisations for their input at meetings. Also, we could deal with one initiative at each meeting.

The initiatives included:

- Greening urban spaces
- Making existing roads impermeable
- Moorlands Policy
- Recycling plastic

The **Assistant Clerk** said that the drafting of a declaration of climate Emergency was on the agenda for the 18 March 2020 meeting which was cancelled. It was agreed that it should be dealt with at a forthcoming meeting.

Action: The Assistant Town Clerk to research the declarations of other councils (of similar size to Todmorden and share these).

The meeting ended at 11.30am.