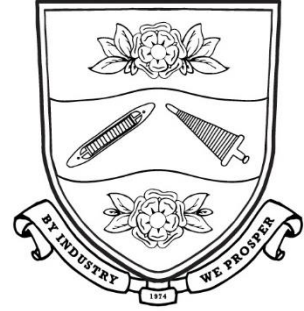


# TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

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## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE Held remotely on Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 7.30 pm

**Councillors Present:** The Revd G Kent (Chair) – present from 8.10pm, Cllr R Coleman-Taylor (Vice-Chair and Mayor), Cllr M Taylor, Cllr T Roberts, Cllr J Williams, Cllr M Carrigan substituting for Cllr P Ripley (substituting for Cllr The Revd G Kent)

**Absent Councillors:** Cllr P Ripley

**Observing Councillors (not a member of the committee):** Cllr P Taylor, Cllr C Potter, Cllr A Hollis

**Officers:** Susan Miles Assistant Town Clerk (minute taker)

**Members of the Public:** Robin Gray, Ginny Harris and **Stella**

2020(CEC)033	<p><b><u>ITEM 1. Apologies for Absence</u></b> To receive and approve apologies for absence and reasons given to the Clerk prior to the meeting</p> <p>As the Revd G Kent was experiencing difficulty in accessing the meeting remotely, Cllr R Coleman-Taylor took the chair until his arrival.</p> <p><i>No apologies were received</i></p>
2020(CEC)034	<p><b><u>ITEM 2. Declarations of Interests</u></b> To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from members on matters to be considered at the meeting. Officers are required to make a formal declaration about council contracts where the employee has a financial interest.</p> <p><i>None Declared</i></p>
2020(CEC)035	<p><b><u>ITEM 3. Public Participation</u></b></p> <p>To adjourn the meeting to allow members of the public to make representation on the business of the agenda for the meeting. Note: No resolutions can be under public participation.</p> <p><i>1 member of the public present at this stage (another joined around 8.20pm)</i></p> <p><i>Cllr R Coleman-Taylor deferred this decision for the Revd G Kent when he joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>(Note: This was picked up by the Revd Cllr G Kent in item 6.)</p>

Signed Chair: .....

Dated: 10 February 2021

2020(CEC)036	<p><b><u>ITEM 4. Minutes</u></b></p> <p>To approve the draft minutes of the Climate Emergency Committee held on 23 September 2020.</p> <p><i>Proposed by Cllr R Coleman-Taylor And Seconded by Cllr M Carrigan Unanimous</i></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> <i>That the draft minutes of the Climate Emergency Committee meeting held on 23 September 2020 be approved as a true record of proceedings.</i></p>
2020(CEC)037	<p><b><u>ITEM 5. Exclusion of Press and Public - Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960</u></b></p> <p>To consider and confirm any agenda items that require the exclusion of the Press and Public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 for matters appertaining to confidential or exempt information.</p> <p><i>Proposed by Cllr M Taylor and Seconded by Cllr J Williams Unanimous</i></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:-</b></p> <p><i>That the agenda items for the meeting do not require the exclusion of the press and public and that they be allowed to remain for the duration of the meeting.</i></p>
2020(CEC)038	<p><b><u>ITEM 6. Presentation by Robin Gray on Peat/Moorlands</u></b></p> <p>To receive presentation</p> <p>Mr Gray started the presentation by saying that the title of his presentation, 'Peat' was an inaccurate description as there is a lack of peat in the Todmorden area. He said that the current TTC Policy was a product of the time including issues such as fly tipping but not including carbon abatement. He went on to say that a key issue in Todmorden is that of landowner behaviour and that this was very mixed. Some landowners have always burned the land to encourage additional growth in the Spring. Much of the uplands around Todmorden is degraded.</p> <p>Mr Gray said that he used to work for Pennine Projects such as the Watershed Project but that he now works for Lancashire County Council on the Bowland Forest.</p> <p>The Revd G Kent joined the meeting at this point.</p> <p>There was a discussion about landowners, their importance and their impact. Mr Gray said that the current legal approach with landowners is one of the 'voluntary principle'. He explained that from 2024, the Environmental Landowner Management Scheme (ELMS) would be launched. This would mean that landowners will be paid for taking actions such as planting trees etc and that this will offer a real incentive for landowners to undertake natural flood management (NFM). Mr Gray went on to say that there were already best practice example of landowners working this way – Yvonne Howarth of Lower Allescholes Farm has planted a wildflower meadow, put up bat boxes and run educational events for local cub groups and schools.</p> <p>Mr Gray explained that Todmorden once had peatland with blanket bog. Unfortunately, this has been undervalued and therefore degraded. He explained the concept of 'Ecosystem Services' – where nature provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon storage</li> </ul>

- Water supply (70% of the UK water supply comes from the peatlands)
- The Landscape around us
- Supports biodiversity
- A historic environment
- Recreation
- A source of wellbeing
- Inspiration

He went on to say that peatlands globally are the 'Cinderella habitat'. Globally there are peatlands in many locations ranging from Siberia, Kenya, Canada, Sweden and Malaysia as well as the UK. Even the tropical rainforests and the Amazon jungle have peatlands. It is therefore much more important than previously thought.

Peatlands contain more carbon than any other ecosystem on earth. It is therefore important to keep the blanket bog in a good condition in these locations. Blanket bog (at least 0.5m thick) is formed through environmental conditions (waterlogging) which prevent the decay of vegetation. The main species are mosses such as:

- Sphagnum spp,
- Cotton grass *Eriophorum* spp,
- Heathers – *Calluna* and *Erica* spp,
- Deer grass *Trichophorum cespitosum*.

Other habits such as grass moor and pools are present and form part of the blanket bog landscape. Blanket bog has accumulated over up to 7,000 years.

Mr Gray said that in the Fens there was a crisis as soil loss had been taking place and that it is estimated that there are only 50 seasons left before it is lost to agriculture.

Mr Gray said that degradation of peatlands had been caused by:

- Industrial pollution (which makes the soil acidic)
- Increased drainage causing it to be drier
- The subsequent increase of agriculture
- Increased grazing of animals
- The ownership of land for shooting or for water supply
- The use of fire
- The increased uniformity of heather moors
- The warmer climate

Mr Gray showed a slide of the South Pennines Ecosystems Services Pilot which identifies the condition of blanket bog in the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The only sites remaining in Todmorden are near Gaddings Dam and Langfield Common. On the east of Todmorden the blanket bog (when degraded is known as 'white moorland') needs ecological restoration. He mentioned that although the moorland is degraded, as with other 'malinear wasteland', the quality of water coming from it is higher than from blanket bog.

Mr Gray said that in many places (Duchies of Lancaster and Westminster) shooting was less prevalent. The Duke of Westminster estate had been ravished by heather beetle (caused by climate change). He said that in Todmorden the main area for grouse shooting was now the Warshaw Estate above Keb).

Mr Gray went on to say that the ecosystem of the peatlands should ideally contain a 'mosaic' of species and not be limited to heather. He said that the regeneration had been taking place at Black Hill, near Holmfirth and that this had started by planting a grass mix initially. They also laid coir/coconut matting to help maintain the water level.

He pointed out that the peatland at Black Hill had previously been eroded by up to a metre.

Mr Gray said that biodiversity on the peatlands is a conservation priority as many species are declining. He said that many species (which spend part or their full life cycle on the peatlands) are sensitive to pollution, land management approaches and climate change. In the Calder Valley the peregrine, short-ear owl and curlews are indigenous species. In particular, the twite, a type of finch is particularly found near Todmorden. He said that introducing wildflower meadows was important.

Mr Gray was asked what funding might be available to Todmorden for flood alleviation. He said that there was no mechanism in place (unlike with Bowland Forest with DEFRA) for Todmorden (as part of the South Pennines area) to receive funding for natural flood management. He mentioned that the Calderdale Countryside Service used to offer wide support but as its funding has been cut its role has shrunk. Matt Taylor, as part of the Facilities Scheme, had received funding from DEFRA but this was ending soon.

Other sources of funding were discussed. It was agreed that funding would not be available from ELMS (payments only made to landowners not councils) but perhaps it might be available from flood grants, the Lottery fund Yorkshire Water, the National Trust or from Calderdale MBC. Mr Gray said that Yorkshire Water has a Biodiversity Fund and there was also a Calder Rivers Fund.

Mr Gray said that work was being considered near Gorphey Reservoir at Inchfield Moor, with its water gradients, to alleviate flooding in Walsden.

Mr Gray was asked what needed to be done to improve the Todmorden uplands. Mr Gray said that a different microculture was needed by the introduction/importation of species such as heather brash, microrisie and sphagnum moss.

There was discussion about who might be able to help TTC update its Moorland Policy. Mr Gray suggested that Geoff Sweeney, Matt Taylor and Mike Cash, the Calderdale Countryside Officer may be able to help.

There was a discussion about the role of development/planning in natural flood management. Mr Gray said there is going to be an Environment Bill brought forward to encourage 'Biodiversity Net Gain' (as part of 'Environment Net Gain'). With this, each applicant for planning permission would need to demonstrate a net gain within their plans.

There was a discussion (following Item 3) about whether members of the public could ask questions. The Revd Cllr G Kent invited Ms Harris and Stella to ask any questions they had.

Cllr G Kent thanked Mr Gray for his very informative presentation.

Cllrs P Taylor and C Potter left the meeting at this stage.

Cllr G Kent said there is a fine balance to be had with the role of this Committee/ the Council. It is focused on climate change and is concerned with flood alleviation but it is not a 'flood committee' as there are others locally that lead on this.

There was a discussion that funding would be required to undertake this work. It was agreed that this would be discussed further under item 10 of the agenda.

2020(CEC)039	<p><b><u>ITEM 8. Correspondence</u></b> To receive and consider any items of correspondence for consideration.</p> <p>None received</p>
2020(CEC)040	<p><b><u>ITEM 9. Informal Meetings of Climate Emergency Committee 12, 19, 26 October and 2 November 2020</u></b> To receive minutes of Informal Meetings and to consider what matters to take forward to the next meeting of the Town Council on 18 November 2020.</p> <p>Minutes received. Cllr G Kent said that there had been an enormous amount of work done in these meetings.</p> <p>Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that a report had been agreed with the Town Clerk and was an agenda item for the Town Council meeting on 18 November 2020. The Revd Cllr G Kent said that members should have the opportunity to comment on it before it is presented to the Town Council. It was noted that it had already been sent to members this evening.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Assistant Clerk to copy members with the report and to receive comments by 9am on Monday 16 November at the latest. She will liaise with the Town Clerk to see if any amendments can be added at that stage and the report reissued to members.</p>
2020(CEC)041	<p><b><u>ITEM 10. 2021/22 Budget Requirements</u></b> To consider Committee Budget requirements for 2021/22.</p> <p>The issue of scoping out the requirements for work on the update of the Moorland Policy was discussed. It was agreed that the update should be done before April 2021 and that the scope should include the identification of what is still relevant, the gaps and the process milestones. It was thought that there may be funding available elsewhere for work on the Moorlands Policy.</p> <p>Use of the 2020/21 budget was discussed. The Assistant Town Clerk said that there is £5,000 in the 2020/21 budget and that consultancy fees for the update of the Moorland Policy is estimated at £2-3,000. It was agreed that the following should be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of 9 litter pickers to Incredible Edible</li> <li>• Design and distribution of a leaflet about recycling for school children to take home (proposal to be developed further)</li> <li>• Production of the Moorlands Policy</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that budget (possibly £10,000-£15,000) would be required in 2021/2 for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the number of recycling bins</li> <li>• Tree planting</li> <li>• Increasing the number of benches</li> <li>• Introduction of planters into terraced streets to increase greening</li> </ul> <p><i>Proposed by Cllr J Williams    And Seconded by Cllr A Hollis    Unanimous</i></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> <i>That Cllr M Potter should be consulted on the scoping of the project for the update of the Moorlands Policy.</i></p> <p><i>Proposed by Cllr R Coleman-Taylor    And Seconded by Cllr A Hollis    Unanimous</i></p>

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That sources of funding be sought. Cllr J Williams to investigate if funding might be available from Yorkshire Water and other organisations and report back to the Committee.</p>
<p><b>2020(CEC)042</b></p>	<p><b><u>ITEM 11. To agree Agenda for the Next Climate Emergency Informal Meeting</u></b> To agree agenda for the next working group meeting.</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk reported that there are 2 presentations scheduled for the meeting on 7 December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treesponsibility</li> <li>• Extinction Rebellion</li> </ul> <p>Other items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading the emphasis on the climate emergency on the Council website</li> <li>• Consider the suggestions for other areas of investigation provided by Cllr R Coleman-Taylor</li> </ul> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk will also contact the Woodlands Trust to see if they can provide a presentation.</p>
<p><b>2020(CEC)043</b></p>	<p><b><u>ITEM 12. Date of Next Committee Meetings</u></b></p> <p>The date of the next Informal Meeting is Monday 7 December 2020 at 2pm.</p> <p>The date of the next Climate Emergency Committee Meeting is Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 7.30pm.</p> <p>There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.35pm</p>