

Notes of Informal Meeting of Climate Emergency Committee 19 October 2020

Present: Cllr R Coleman-Taylor (Chair and Mayor) Cllr M Taylor, Cllr R Williams and Cllr T Roberts

Apologies Received: The Revd G Kent

Absent: Cllr P Ripley

Other Members Present: None

Guests: Sarah-Jayne Robbins (Todmorden Flood Group), Ginny Harris (Calderdale Green New Deal Hub) and Mary Clear (Incredible Edible)

Support Staff: Susan Miles (facilitator and minutes)

1. Presentation from Sarah-Jayne Robbins - Todmorden Flood Group

The Todmorden Flood Group was set up in September 2012. Ms Robbins was one of the founder members and she is the elected chair. Ms Robbins said that there were increasingly more flood events although many of them were smaller localised floods from surface water rather than from the river/canal. She said that the flood events happen quickly so that they had to respond quickly. The last flooding event was in February 2020 and Todmorden Flood Group were present in the Town Hall flood hub.

There are several flood wardens and they have received quite a bit of training to help them understand the flooding patterns and peoples' expectations. They are all volunteers and they rely on the Town Council for support. They have worked with previous Mayors of Todmorden and look forward to working closely with Cllr R Coleman-Taylor this year.

Ms Robbins asked for help with recruiting additional (potentially younger) flood wardens as several of the current ones are shielding with Covid and so resources could be stretched if there is a flood.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to ask Administration Officer to put request for more flood wardens on the TTC website.

Ms Robbins said that climate change had had changed the levels of flooding in Todmorden. There are now additional locations flooding which were not a problem before such as Stoney Royd, the Bacup Rd culverts, Halifax Rd and Shade Chapel. She said that if members hear of any new flooding locations to let her know. Ms Robbins said that a Zoom meeting has been planned with the Environment Agency and Network Rail for Thursday 22 October at 7.30pm.

Action: Ms Robbins will let the Assistant Clerk have the details so that members can attend if they wish.

Ms Robbins said that TFG were in the process of building a website to provide a focal point for local people on flooding. Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that the TTC website was a source of information about local organisations and this included TFG. Cllr M Taylor suggested that Ms Robbins contact Nicola Pugh, the Administration Officer to discuss the sharing of information on the TTC website. Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that the Town Hall noticeboard could also be used.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to ask Administration Manager to get in touch with Ms Robbins about content on TFG for the website.

Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that she was concerned about whether the Town Hall would be available to support a flood hub as it had been closed since March 2020. Ms Robbins said that she had approached Kirsten Fussing for clarification on this. She is concerned that the items TFG have stored in the Town Hall be accessible as they are not the property of Calderdale Council. In the meantime, it was thought that the Central Methodist church could be used as a hub in the absence of the Town Hall. Cllr T Roberts was particularly concerned that everyone is aware that the Flood Hub provides more than food etc. Ms Robbins assured him that she was able to communicate the full range of support that the Flood Hub offers. She said that she was still involved in some of the flood cases from February 2020.

Cllr T Roberts suggested that a full list of locations that are vulnerable to flooding be compiled.

Cllr J Williams mentioned problems with some of the drainage in land above Longfield Rd which causes floodwater to run down to the centre of Todmorden. She suggested that this is a problem elsewhere in Todmorden. Ms Robbins said that they work with Slow the Flow to find solutions (such as with Shade Chapel). Ms Robbins said that TFG find out who owns the land by consulting with the Land Registry. They had approached landowners about the repair of such faulty drains in the past with little success and unfortunately there is no way of encouraging the landowners to do the work if they do not want to. She mentioned that grants are available for this work. Cllr M Taylor said that Calderdale MBC could request that the remedial work is done, and if this fails, they can do the work and invoice the landowner. Ms Robbins expressed doubt that Calderdale MBC would be able to do this with the pressure on funds.

Action: Cllr J Williams to let Ms Robbins have the details of this issue.

Cllr J Williams asked if everyone who had applied for the £500 grant/3 months free council tax following the flooding in February 2020 received it? Ms Robbins confirmed that they had. However, she said that DEFRA is offering a £5,000 grant to residents who had been flooded. Initially, this was only available to those who had not previously received grants, for example, after the Boxing Day Flood in 2015. However, this rule has been changed and anyone can apply – however, the deadline for applications is 31 October 2020.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to ask Administration Officer to ask Ms Robbins for these details so they can be added to the TTC website ASAP.

Cllr R Coleman-Taylor thanked Ms Robbins for her very useful presentation.

2. Presentation by Ginny Harris – Calderdale Green New Deal Hub

Ms Harris said that the Calderdale Green New Deal Hub (CGNDH) had been set up three months ago and that it was small. She said that the Green New Deal UK (GNDUK) had been set up in 2008 following the financial crash as it was believed that a drastic rethink was required which focused on climate change and fairness. She said that Jeremy Corbin/Labour Party was set to support this initiative prior to the general election last year. Since then, the group has been positioned outside party politics so that it will have a wider appeal.

Ms Harris talked through slides which said that GNDUK had five key principles which include the decarbonisation of UK energy, the creation of millions of well-paid jobs and transforming the economy. She said that the role of the Calderdale group is one of campaigning and supporting local initiatives and being part of the solutions required.

She said that they had approached the two local MPs for support for their goals. They received full support from Holly Lynch but that Craig Whittaker had declined citing that the conservative Government had a good track record. Their campaign was called 'Build Back Better'. This also included sending a letter to 40 local organisations and businesses. She said that CGNDH had a presence on social media including Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

Cllr J Williams suggested that CGNDH formulate a resolution and forward this to TTC so that support could be given to their work. Cllr R Coleman-Taylor said that this would need to go before the full Town Council and that a paper would need to be provided and that someone attend to present and answer questions on the night. She also mentioned that the TTC website could be used to let residents know about initiatives and projects. She said that TTC could perform an information sharing role. Ms Harris said that Facebook could also be a useful tool for letting people know about green initiatives in Todmorden. Cllr M Taylor also said that TTC has a modest amount to offer as grants for suitable organisations. He said that applications would go before the Resources Committee of the Town Council.

Action: Cllr M Taylor said that this working Group could recommend that an agenda item be scheduled for the next Town Council meeting.

3. Presentation by Mary Clear – Incredible Edible Todmorden

Mrs Clear said that Incredible Edible had been set up in 2008 at the beginning of the global crash. Their objective was to 'act local but think global'. In particular, they were concerned about the food system/feeding people and are self-sufficient and so avoid state funding to support their activities. Instead, they decided to rely on the skills of local people. They now have hundreds of volunteers. Their philosophy is about 'just getting on with it', 'it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission' and 'fuelled on kindness'. An example of this is the artwork for 'kindness' which they gave to the Todmorden Information Centre which is now

made into saleable objects such as fridge magnets and cups. They are also interested in 'the power of the table' (eating together) as a way of bringing diverse people of different ages/backgrounds together to share (for example after local planting sessions). They also actively support the Recovery Centre for people with addictions such as drugs and alcohol and emphasise that they are part of our community.

They are self-sufficient. They intend to leave grants for other groups that need them. They earn some money through their activities (up to £10,000 a year). For example, Otherwise they rely on gifts.

Their values/philosophy is based on 'planet care, people care':

- We are frugal
- We have a procurement policy
- We buy local (even though it may be much more expensive)
- We do not use chemicals/feeds
- We do not use pesticides
- We do not cook meat (and therefore are more inclusive)
- We share all of our resources
- Plastic is not acceptable for our eating unless it is reused from others' events
- We do not charge our participants
- No paid staff
- All monies go back to the Town and its people
- We share all of our resources
- We help schools wherever we can
- We recycle and repurpose

Their activities have included:

- Planting flower and vegetable beds throughout the town and people can help themselves to the produce.
- Installing 'straw people' and look after the land on Water Street to encourage shoppers to visit the area.
- Running the 'Fabulous Feast' which fed 1,000 people in the Peace Hall, Halifax.
- Providing and erecting new colourful location signs in Todmorden.
- The production and distribution of 'freedom boxes' (currently providing 74 a week) made up from food destined for landfill. The food is supplied by the Food Warehouse in Wakefield. The money raised from this goes to the Food Warehouse.
- Working closely with the Food Warehouse in Wakefield so that this organisation reciprocated during the lockdown by providing food for the food hubs in Todmorden.
- Supplying, erecting and filling free book 'houses' at Fielden Square, Ashenhurst Rd and the Cricket Club so that local people can help themselves to books.
- Working with the local mosque, including the provision of pancakes and pakoras for the pancake day fund raiser (raising funds for the market traders' charity). The mosque is the only one in the country with a plaque for 'kindness' on it.

- Providing maps of the town and providing tours to visitors (£6 or 'pay as you feel').
- Repairing and refitting the window boxes at the Town Hall (purchasing new could have cost £1,000).

Their suggestions for what TTC can do:

- A local procurement policy
- Fairtrade town? Not
- The use of plastic could be banned from the Town Hall
- The grants that are given could be looked at more carefully (green and recycling etc)
- Encourage more self-help, fix things. Bins, bollards, tubs
- Discourage the twice-yearly planting
- Question the heat in the Town Hall. It's not your bill it's the planet
- Provide equipment in the Town Hall. Spoons etc so that people do not bring in plastic instead
- Stop building over our green spaces
- Be out and proud. It's a green town Its our colour
- Make a green stream of grants for rowers and planters
- Don't pay CMBC for jobs you cannot check on – Lob Mill and Patmos Gardens
- Be brave
- Be kind
- Encourage collaboration
- Insist the Town Hall is used as a community hub (organisations shouldn't have to apply for grants from TTC to hire the Town Hall
- Save money on the annual knees up/mayors do and plant trees to benefit future generations
- Give us some litter pickers to keep the town tidy
- Ensure CMBC recycle from the Town Hall, everyone sees what goes on after a wedding
- Help the Fix-it Café set up a base in Todmorden

Action: It was agreed that this list should provide the agenda for a meeting of this Committee

Cllr J Williams suggested that the TTC buy 10 litter pickers and pass them to IE. Cllr R Coleman-Taylor suggested this be put to the Resources Committee

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to let Clerk know for the next Resources agenda

Mrs Clear offered the help of IE volunteers to help TTC to improve the town.

Cllr R Coleman-Taylor thanked Mrs Clear for her inspirational presentation and said that the Committee would be back in touch to continue the discussion.

4. Trees for Cities

This was received.

5. AOB

It was agreed that a meeting should be scheduled to review the information from these presentations.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to schedule an informal meeting for Monday 2 November 2020, 2-4pm to review the information and produce a list of activities for the formal meeting on Wednesday 11 November 2020.

It was agreed to set up a further informal consultation meeting of the Committee.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to schedule an informal consultation meeting for Monday 7 December 2020, 2-4pm and invite Treesresponsibility, the Woodland Trust and Extinction Rebellion.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next informal meeting is scheduled for Monday 26 October 2020, 2-4pm where presentations will be received from:

- Finn Jensen of Blackshaw Environmental Trust
- Cllr Mike Potter of Ryedale Council
- Dave Wardell of Todmorden Learning Centre

The date of the next formal meeting is Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 7.30pm

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next informal meeting is scheduled for Monday 26 October 2020 at 2pm

The date of the next meeting of the Climate Emergency Committee is Wednesday 11 November at 7.30pm