

HERTFORDSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY FORUM

Minutes of Meeting held on 29th September 2015 at East Herts Council

Attendees:

Cllr Alison Scarth	Three Rivers District Council
Cliff Cardoza	East Herts District Council
Cllr Graham McAndrew	East Herts District Council
Cllr John Gardner (Chairman)	Stevenage Borough Council
David Thorogood	East Herts Council
Julia Coulson (Minutes)	East Herts Council
Katherine Frost	Three Rivers District Council
Peter Christmas	Groundwork Herts

1. Introductions

Councillor McAndrew welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Lesley Davies, Cllr Derek Scudder, Alan Gough, Gemma Paris, Cllr Sharon Taylor, Cllr John Dean, Cllr Anne Rindl, Ian Potter, Duncan Jones, Nathan Shelly, Cllr Peter Ruffles, Cllr Janice Marshall, Nicola Turvey, Lee Myers

3. Presentation: Quality of Life Report 2014 (John Rumble, Herts County Council)

John Rumble was unable to attend & sent his apologies. The presentation will be postponed until the next meeting.

**4. Presentation: Opportunities for energy generation using solar canopies
Jamal Gore, Confluence Sustainability**

Key points:

- Confluence Sustainability works with local authorities to install and operate renewable energy projects
- Changes to the Feed in Tariff mean solar PV projects are not as financially appealing but are still worth doing, the pay back periods are simply longer (approximately 10-12 years, compared to 5-7 years previously).
- Energy efficiency shouldn't be forgotten, it is considered "the fourth fuel" and local authorities can lead by example
- Virtual Power Plants (VPPs) & Dynamic Demand Response – these systems allow organisations to tie in their back up generators to the National Grid and earn revenue. This could drive future energy efficiency investment.

Graham McAndrew queried the universality of car charging points & Jamal confirmed that, through the use of adaptors, the points were universal. Lessons have been learnt from the huge waste caused by differences in mobile phone chargers.

Cliff Cardoza queried combined heat and power (CHP) for leisure centres. Jamal explained that Confluence Sustainability doesn't install it directly but Islington Borough Council has been doing

work to deploy CHP so may be worth contacting. Katherine Frost suggested that Buckinghamshire County Council has done a lot of biomass projects in schools so could also be a good contact.

5. Presentation: Sustainable St Albans Week (Catherine Ross, Transition St Albans)

Key points:

- Sustainable St Albans Week is jointly coordinated by Transition St Albans & St Albans Friends of the Earth, with support from St Albans District Council
- Supported by a small grant from Awards for All & www.crowdfunder.co.uk
- It's taking place 21st-28th November, the week before the Paris Climate Summit
- A variety of organisations have signed up to support the week and have been encouraged to run a sustainability-related event during that week
- As of 29/09/15, 107 organisations are supporting the week, 64 events are being held
- A large range of events are taking place including a litter pick, nature walks, repair event, film screening and a Green Careers fair. A celebration event will be held at the end of the week –chance for all organisations taking part to come together
- The week will focus on positive practical works and the hope is it will lead to better integration between the local authority and the voluntary sector and between voluntary groups – lots of new connections have already been made
- For more details visit: <http://sustainablestalbans.org/>

6 Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting held on 5th March 2015

Minutes Agreed. There were no matters arising.

7) AGM:

i. Election of Chair & Vice Chair

John Gardner proposed that Graham McAndrew be elected Chair of HSF for the coming year & Graham McAndrew proposed John Gardner be elected as Vice Chair. No other representations had been received so the elections were accepted.

ii. Annual review of Terms of Reference

Proposed changes to the Terms of Reference were reviewed and accepted. The revised Terms of Reference will be circulated to HSF members.

The group discussed inviting representatives from the Transition Town Network to become a member of the forum. It was agreed that the local groups will be invited to attend future meetings initially. If, as a network, they want to become a formal member with voting rights they will need to become a paying subscriber

iii. Finance update and annual review of subscription rate

David Thorogood gave a finance update. The balance brought forward from April 2015 was £90,303.12. Taking into account expenditure for the year so far (£1,636.39), funds ring fenced for the coordinator post (approx. £36,000) and expected income from subscriptions (£9,500), the estimated uncommitted balance is £62,166.73

8) Green Our Herts Update (Julia Coulson, East Herts)

Julia Coulson gave an update on the Green Our Herts (GOH) group's activities since spring:

- **Green Your Garden**

The main spring/summer campaign focused on encouraging residents to manage their gardens sustainably. It included advice on gardening for wildlife, alternatives to paving over gardens, reducing water use in the garden and composting. A booklet was produced and 5000 copies distributed round the county. More detailed information has been added to the GOH website.

The campaign's been promoted on social media and at various events around the county, where free packets of wildflower seeds were distributed as a promotional tool. A competition was run in conjunction with the campaign, sponsored by Ayletts Local Garden Centre in St Albans, who offered £100 vouchers as prizes. 55 competition entries were received.

- **Energy Saving Campaign**

The focus for this autumn/winter is on insulation –GOH are producing a technical guide for residents that details the various options for insulating your property and the advantages and considerations for each. It will be available to download from the website.

GOH are now looking at different ways to promote energy conservation – currently considering creating a short form video about external wall insulation; if successful they may develop a series about other sustainability measures and create a GOH You Tube channel.

- **Community Events**

GOH aims to run stalls at community events to promote the GOH brand and various campaigns. A target of 6 events per year has been set, 5 events have been attended so far this year.

- **Climate Change Toolkit**

A draft PowerPoint presentation aimed at community groups/school groups has been produced for members to use. It covers the basics of what is climate change, its effects, what residents can do to reduce their environmental impact and limit CO2 emissions. The presentation will be sent to individual districts so that they can each add to it to give it local flavour.

9) Herts Healthy Homes Report (Peter Christmas, Groundwork)

Peter Christmas provided figures on the Herts Healthy Homes campaign. These will be circulated to HSF. Groundwork has carried out 418 visits so far this year and has allocated time to carry out an additional 40 visits per month from Oct-Dec. Groundwork now carry out improvement measures for residents, rather than make referrals as was done previously.

Groundwork has now been commissioned to promote the scheme. They have attended dementia cafes and older people's lunch clubs (23 events attended so far in 2015, and a further 6 planned).

Katherine Frost queried why referrals to citizen advice bureau (CAB) had increased. Groundwork have since clarified that the reason is twofold. Firstly they are part of two CAB Integrated Advice Partnership projects (in Hertsmere and Three Rivers) and their officers received training from the CAB and therefore are better placed this year to make informed referrals. Secondly, Groundwork now stipulate that if it is necessary for a client to receive an emergency Hertfordshire Community Foundation grant, they automatically provide a referral to the CAB for budgeting and money advice if they aren't already in touch.

10) Local Nature Partnership Report (Julia Coulson, East Herts)

Julia Coulson gave an update on the Herts Local Nature Partnership activities:

- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

One of the LNP's key objectives is to make links with the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and identify opportunities for joint working. To assist with this the LNP is inputting into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This is an assessment of the health and wellbeing needs of a population that all local authorities must produce. JSNAs must consider wider determinants of health, including the natural environment. The LNP has set up a small task group with officers from Public Health to collate evidence of the links between the natural environment and health. Whilst there a lot of general evidence available; the LNP are keen to know of any evaluations of local interventions—please forward any details to julia.coulson@eastherts.gov.uk

- **Pollinator Project**

As a result of the National Pollinator Strategy that was published last year, DEFRA administered a competitive funding pot for LNPs to undertake pollinator projects. The Herts LNP application was successful and Groundwork will be leading on the project, which focuses on engaging schools across the county, helping them to make their schools grounds more pollinator friendly. More details can be provided upon request.

- **Green Infrastructure**

The LNP is next considering a piece of work on Green Infrastructure and is engaging with the Landscape & Green Infrastructure Group over what form this will take.

11) HSF Conference 5/11/2015: 'Community Energy in Hertfordshire'

The HSF annual conference will take place on Thursday 5th November at Ware Priory. The focus for this year is Community Energy and a key aim is to explore how local authorities and community groups can best work together to develop community energy projects. The morning will be more high level and include presentations from the Renewable Energy Association, an exemplar local authority and local community energy groups. The afternoon will be workshop based covering topics such as finance and planning of community energy projects.

The conference is free and lunch is included. Tickets can be booked via Event Brite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-energy-in-hertfordshire-conference-tickets-18864731921>

12) HSF Work plan

A draft work plan was circulated to the forum and discussed. It was agreed that the work plan was comprehensive and ambitious. Possible additional actions may result from the community energy conference so the work plan will be adapted accordingly.

The Business Resource Efficiency Scheme proposal, produced by Groundwork, was discussed. It was agreed that all were supportive of the project to support SMEs to reduce their energy usage and become more sustainable but as the funding for it would equate to a substantial proportion of HSF's budget, the funding must be sought elsewhere.

13) Hertfordshire Lifestyle and Legacy Partnership (HLLP)-joint working with HSF

The HLLP have requested representation from HSF at their meetings, which are aimed at officers and partners across sectors for profile raising, collaboration, sharing resources, commissioning and delivery. The forum agreed that more information was needed before committing a resource to the HLLP. Cllr McAndrew offered to discuss it further with Cllr Heritage.

14) Sharing Best Practice – An opportunity for members to share best practice and exemplar initiatives from their own organisations

Katherine Frost, Three Rivers District Council:

- The Green Deal Communities project focusing on external wall insulation will be completed by November, 150 homes will be insulated (on top of the 118 previously completed)
- Three Rivers District Council is planning to have solar panels installed on Three Rivers House before the end of the year

Cllr John Gardner, Stevenage Borough Council:

- Stevenage is currently updating their portfolio of council properties suitable for solar PV. The procurement process hasn't started yet. They are trying to determine if they can offer private households some kind of discount if their neighbouring council owned properties are having solar panels installed.
- Biodiversity work continues in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust. An additional Green Flag has been obtained – they now have 3 in total.

Cliff Cardoza, East Herts District Council:

- East Herts has retained 2 Green Flags and is looking to maintain other green spaces according to Green Flag standards.

15) AOB

Julia explained that the HSF website is now up and running (www.hertssustainability.org.uk) and the forum agreed that the meeting minutes, once agreed, can be uploaded to it.

16) Items for future agenda

- Presentation: Quality of Life Report
- Presentation: Air Quality Strategy
- Climate Change framework review
- Business Resource Efficiency Scheme
- Feedback from the Community Energy conference

17) Date and time of next meeting: TBC

A range of provisional dates have been suggested, HSF members will be asked which they prefer.