

Green Living Plan Working Group

Meeting Report:

Date: 11 July 2016

Present: Charles Boundy (RSA), Tim Dabbs (21st Century Thame), Linda Emery (TTC), Helena Fickling (Chair), Alice Hemmings (CAG), Graham Hunt (TTC), Andrea Oughton (TTC) and John Scott (RSA)

Apologies: Gavin Bollan, Kath Daly and Sarah Sanderson

Introductions

Helena welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Green Living Plan Working Group.

Update from RSA

Charles explained the RSA was a large organisation made up of Fellows with the aim of empowering communities. RSA Thame was made up of a small group of Fellows and is acting as honorary consultants in the production of the Green Living Plan for Thame.

Haddenham Thame Parkway Cycle Path – The RSA has started investigations into the route of the cycle path. The two County Councils (Bucks & Oxon) had agreed to look at a possible cycle path along the road and delegated the task of producing a feasibility study to Sustrans. Publication of the feasibility study is expected imminently.

An alternative route could be across the fields, potential problems may be land acquisition, flood plain, footpath through Scotsgrove Mill. There is a third route which would enter Haddenham near the duck pond, go through a wood and would provide a good leisure cycling route but not a direct route for commuter cyclists.

It was anticipated that the cost of the cycle path would be in the region of £1m. Possibility of crowdfunding was discussed. The cost of parking a vehicle at the railway station is in the region of £900 per annum. It was suggested that a possible source of funding could be to persuade people who currently drive to cycle to the station instead and donate the money saved from parking fees to the construction of the cycle path.

Travel Plans – a discussion paper had been produced identifying the issues in Thame, it did not set out to find the solutions. Items identified: 1) Air pollution in town centres as a result of traffic, 2) Traffic flow – it had been proven that air quality had improved where 20mph speed limits had been introduced and 3) What did the Town want from the By-Pass?

John Scott (RSA) is an energy consultant with experience in dealing with renewable energy. The last few years had seen a change with an increase in demand for electric cars, charging points for electric cars, heat pumps, smart metering, etc. John has drafted a document raising awareness which he will circulate to the group.

Eco Fair

Tim Dabbs explained his idea of an Eco Fair to be held next year in the High Street car park (outside the Town Hall). The Fair will promote sustainability / green living / non depletion of resources with a wide range of exhibits and activities. There will be a charge for commercial exhibitors but charities and community stalls will be free of charge.

Will need to find sponsorship funding. Alice suggested the Big Lottery who had just launched a new community fund also TOE2. Alice to send list of possible funders to Tim.

CAG

Alice explained that the Community Action Group (CAG) is a large network of groups with over 60 groups across Oxfordshire. CAG is at the forefront of community led climate change action, organising events and projects to take action on issues including waste, transport, food, energy and biodiversity.

Alice had met with Sue Martin-Downhill, Mary Stiles and Linda Emery to see how CAG could work together. CAG is able to give support with fund raising, facilitating meetings, support to get projects up and running, promotion of events through the CAG website and newsletters. Groups who are members of CAG benefit from insurance cover for events. CAG's new website will launch this Thursday (14 July). A meeting with 21C Thame and CAG will take place on Wednesday 20 July, 10am at Racquets.

Thame Town Council

Environmental Policy – From 2010 it is a requirement by law for all businesses had to have an Environmental Policy. Although the law does not extend to Councils, the Town Council has decided to set a good example and Helena has agreed to draft the Policy.

Electric Car Charging Points – some discussion had taken place a few years previous re the possibility of installing charging points in the Town Centre with the help of funding from the SODC Capital Fund which is no longer available. Oxford City Council have undertaken a feasibility study on charging points and the Town Council could resolve to have such a project put on the 'wish list' for future infrastructure projects. Ecotricity is the largest supplier of charging points. Could possibly approach local companies in the town to sponsor charging points.

Energy Audit – An energy audit had been completed and rated the Town Hall quite high. Three key areas highlighted in the report had been completed.

Lea Park Signage - 21C Thame had completed a study of the footpaths and routes through Lea Park with the aim of funding the new signage through s106 monies. Graham reported that the only s106 funding available would be through the public art project to produce signage on Site F that could link with new signage on Lea Park. This funding would only be released once the trigger point had been achieved on Site F. Graham was waiting to receive the requirements identified by 21C Thame. Helena would progress this.

Database of PVS, Solar and other power generating already in place

It was agreed that a database was a good idea. It should capture what is happening for information and exchange, encourage exploration of different alternatives, educate people to the possibilities to achieving lower bills, measure impact on the community and signpost where to go for information. Need to include businesses on the industrial estates where large roof spans provide an ideal area for solar panels.

Opportunity to work with students to help develop the database. Alice highlighted a group in Rosehill who had obtained funding for a feasibility study to look at the possible installation of heat pumps on a local estate.

Other possibilities include; approaching Lord Williams's to gauge interest as a project for Sixth Form students, Oxford University provide three opportunities a year for student placement, would need to send a proposal to the University as a first step. May be able to apply to the RSA for a Research Assistant. Ideally the person / group needs to have had previous experience.

Meeting concluded at 7.30pm