

Gloucester City Council

Environment and Ecology Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 24th July 2014.

Present

Richard Trelfa Chairman Hempsted resident.

Andrew Harley Vice Chair Gloucester City Housing tenants Association.

Jackie Cave Friends of Robinswood Hill

Jim Porter Cabinet member for Environment.

Meyrick Brentnall City Environmental Planning Manager.

Stephen Mc Donnell Environmental Co-ordinator.

Apologies

Margaret Day Friends of Robinswood Hill

1, Meyrick introduced the meeting which was the Annual General meeting.

Richard Trelfa agreed to continue as Chair and Andrew Harley as Vice chair both were elected unopposed.

2, Declarations of interest.

Jim Porter as Cabinet member for environment.

3, Public questions, none.

4, Petitions and deputations, none.

5, Minutes of the previous meeting 26th of November 2013.

There was a discussion about sending out a press release in advance of meetings in order to generate more interest. Meyrick reported that it had not been possible to do this but that social media had been used to send out details of the meeting.

6, Gloucester City Public Open Space Strategy

Meyrick Brentnall City Environmental Planning Manager gave a presentation. The current version of the strategy was the result of an earlier draft that was put out to consultation in 2013 and was formally adopted in April 2014. It is a high level strategic document. The detail of how it would work on the ground would come later. The purpose of the strategy was three fold as evidence for the City Plan. To provide a co-ordinated action plan for officers-and to provide residents with a clear understanding of

the City Councils open space aspirations and programme of improvements. Gloucester was well served for public open space indeed there are 150 separate public open spaces in the city, comprising 521 hectares this amounts to 12% of the area. Unfortunately these are not distributed equally with some of the older city centre areas such as Tredworth and Kingsholm are poorly served whereas newer housing areas such as Barnwood have more space. The City Council hopes to spend £200,000 a year on developing public spaces this would be funded from Section 106 monies from new developments grants and additional capital funding would also be spent. The City has one Green Flag designated park at Barnwood Arboretum this has a friends group as do a number of other areas including Robinswood Hill Country Park. RT asked if the areas around balancing ponds were also public open space Meyrick said that yes they generally were and said some of these had great potential such as the Horsbere Flood management scheme .

There were also objectives in the strategy which involved the development of new play areas and a proposal to plant 5000 trees in the city. JP asked if this would effect the water table, Meyrick felt it would have mainly positive impact on the city. RT expressed a concern over the loss of older more mature trees.

With regard to new developments the six acre standard or 2.8 hectares per 1000 population was the model most commonly followed in public open space provision.

Meyrick also stressed the different functions of open space one of which was moderating water run off.

The strategy contains ward profiles with maps, the next step would be to create action plans and each area would be subject to consultation starting later this year after which the action plans would be implemented. Some areas of public open space might be changed others designated for other purposes.

AH felt Hillfield Gardens was the hidden gem of the cities parks, he also highlighted the possibility of some Gloucester City Homes public open space being transferred back to the city. JP felt small parcels with limited amenity use could be used for alternative purposes. RT asked if many new allotments had been created Meyrick said there would be approximately 40 at Kingsway. He also asked if the Kings Quarter development would reduce the amount of available public open space in Kings Square MB felt it would.

RT asked about the Horsbere Brook scheme MB explained that though outside the city boundary the City Council had agreed to manage the space on behalf of the environment agency it was very popular with bird watchers'. Asked about new housing plans in the Joint Core Strategy (a planning policy) to build 30,000 homes around Gloucester. MB felt that 2.8 hectares of open space would be required per 1000 properties of new open space. Most of these would be developed within what is now Tewksbury Borough Council area.

7, Allotment Strategy Meyrick Brentnall gave a presentation on the City Allotment strategy.

The draft strategy was about to go before the cabinet for approval it was an overarching strategic document which set the need for site action plans which would follow its approval. The main thrust was

to encourage and support the allotment associations and users to move towards more self management of the sites. Recent changes to fee's and charges were known to be unpopular and this was addressed in the strategy. RT asked how many staff worked on allotments MB replied that there was one part time administrator.

JC asked how long the waiting list for an allotment was,MB said there were 196 waiting for plots at Kingsway, lesser numbers on other sites.

8, Ideas for future meetings RT asked for suggested topics for speakers suggestions were;

What does the Environment Planning do?

Neighbourhood services an overview.

Dog bins, Recycling Green Waste Collection Litter.

AH questioned the green box kerbside he felt more types of plastic should be recycled Plastics recycling

JP suggested Dawn Fearn could come and give a report on the details of the current collection system and future plans.

RT The proposed waste incinerator from Urbaser at Haresfield.

County Cycling strategy

Air Bourne pollution air quality in Gloucester i.e. particulates.

Elmbridge Park and ride update on progress.

9, Date of next meeting 23rd October, 15th January 2015, 5th March 2015.