



## Environment & Ecology Forum. October 2019

### Attendance

Richard Trelfa	Chair – Hempsted Residents Association
Meyrick Brentnall	Gloucester City Council (City Imp and Env)
Cllr Richard Cook	Cabinet Member for Environment (Gloucester CC)
Cllr David Brown	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Usman Bhaimia	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Kevin Stephens	Gloucester City Council
Gareth Parry	Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
Roger Price	City Centre Resident
Angela Porter	Gloucester Climate Action Partnership
Barry Leach	City Centre Resident
Eleanor Buffery	UKCN & YS4C Gloucester
Gerard Lenagan	City Centre Resident
Frances Griffiths	Gloucester Resident
Judith Williams	Alney Island resident and Friends of Alney Island
Pam Jones	Friends of Alney Island
Jackie Cave	Friends of Robinswood Hill
Peter Wiggins	Gloucestershire County Council

### 1. Election of Chair Vice Chair

Richard Trelfa and Andrew Harley were elected Chair and Vice Chair respectively un-opposed.

### 2. Apologies

Cllr Brazil	Gloucester City Council
David Entwhistle	Vision 21
Andrew Harley	City Resident (Kingsholm)

### 3. Declarations of Interest None

### 4. Public Question time/Petitions and Deputations None

### 5. Minutes Agreed

**6 Matters Arising.** Barry Leach asked a question regarding the Amey contract. Cllr Cook said that discussions were reaching a conclusion. He said that the relationship on the ground was significantly better and that outcomes were improving. Even so there were concerns expressed by the Forum about the quality of service. Meyrick suggested that although overall it had improved – if

nothing else the level of complaints had abated, there would still be areas where an improvement would not necessarily be seen. If this is the case, then members can report them direct to him. Barry Leach also asked a question regarding a 20mph zone and if anything had happened in the light of the air quality strategy. Pete Wiggins replied on behalf of the County Council. Peter referred to the Air Quality and health strategy (<https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s52324/Gloucestershire%20Air%20Quality%20and%20Health%20Strategy%20v.%204.pdf>) he would ask about the 20-mph zone.

## **7. Ash Dieback**

Gareth Parry from the Glos Wildlife Trust (GWT) talked the Forum through the problems of Ash die back. It is a fungus and evidence from elsewhere suggests that once a tree is infected it will die. So far there has been little if no resistance displayed by the current population of Ash. In terms of impact it would be similar to Dutch Elm disease and would have a significant bearing upon the landscape in Gloucestershire. GWT after talking to, and visiting other trusts and organisations around the country are essentially adopting a precautionary approach to trees that could pose a danger. As such, on their sites, where ash trees are potentially a risk (for example over a footpath) these will be felled whether they are displaying the disease or not. The main reason for this is cost, as they will be able to employ a contractor to fell a large number of trees all at once. Also, trees that are not seriously infected will have a higher value as timber. He understood there may be public perception issues with this policy but the situation dictated it. Trees in woodlands where there was no safety issue would be allowed to fall where they stood and natural regeneration from neighbouring species allowed to take its natural course. Where trees were removed the trust would plant two replacements, though he did admit that there was an issue with finding land.

Questions concerned what can we learn from Dutch elm and would there be resistance. Gareth and Meyrick responded that it was similar in impact though because Dutch Elm disease needed a beetle to infect the tree and because of the lack of genetic diversity within Elm compared to Ash there could be a chance of resistant genotypes in Ash.

Cllr Brown asked if they were aware of what was happening elsewhere, Gareth said they had been out around the country talking to other trusts and organisations.

The Chair asked for confirmation of it being a fungus and the insurance implications – yes but it is often secondary diseases that actually kills the tree. Insurers were content with their methodology and approach to risk.

Gareth was thanked for his time.

## **8. Climate Change Current Position**

Eleanor Buffery representing the UK Student Climate Networks and Young Students for Climate talked us through what the group she was representing had

been doing. This included; 3 youth strikes, they had 10 young people working to create new events. They had representation on the County Council's youth climate panel. They were involved with a climate rally/peoples' assembly on November the 1<sup>st</sup> where they will be collecting a board of ideas to present to the City and County Council. Eleanor confirmed she would like to be involved with Forum.

Peter Wiggins from the County Council talked about their targets for CO2 reductions. While they had net Zero target for 2050 for the County as a whole, they recognised it would need to be around 80% reduction by 2030. In terms of the Council and its activities the target was net zero by 2030, progress on this had been good.

The County had held a summit over the summer which resulted in the creation of a youth panel where 40 young people (initially aged 16-24 but later dropped to 14- 24) had been appointed that reflected the geographical make-up of the county.

In terms of a strategy their Cabinet is programmed to debate a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November (It will be forwarded on to the Forum).

Peter listed a number of projects that had been rolled out such as the dimmable LED street lighting and the E pool cars.

Meyrick (City Improvement and Environment Manager) talked the Forum through the City Council's Climate Emergency resolution. The main points being the Net Carbon Neutral City by 2050, with 2030 as the City Council's target for being net neutral with its own activities. Meyrick did point out that this came with a lot of questions as to what to measure. So, for example while business travel will be included should travel to work? also where is the line drawn with outside contractors, for example streetcare partner, aspire the airport etc. As with the County, Meyrick said there had been progress for example Energy efficiency and renewables installed, some reductions had been on the back of other projects for example the office relocation from the Docks to the County building. Meyrick was clear that a resource would be made available to drive this forward and this would include a climate change officer of some sort.

A debate followed concerning the formation of some sort of climate change panel and how the message should be best communicated to the general population. This culminated in the following resolution being proposed, seconded and passed;

*'That a Climate Emergency Update should be an item on all future Forum agendas. The item should include updates from City Council, and where appropriate from the County Council and Youth Climate Activists plus a specific discussion point e.g. an invited speaker. It was agreed that the first discussion point should be an outline of the City Council's Climate Emergency Communication Plan'.*

Cllr Stephens asked when this was going to happen and questioned whether one officer was enough.

Meyrick committed to have a Forum by Feb 2020 with a lot more detail, as to whether one officer was enough? this was difficult to answer but is in line with other authorities who have adopted a similar resolution.

There were concerns about the Council's ability to police the built environment. Meyrick explained that the building control consents for a long while have been signed off by independent inspectors. Planning control and enforcement lies with the City Council, but officers always have to be aware of the ability of an applicant to appeal against a decision.

Richard Trelfa thanked the speakers for their input.

## **9. Information Exchange/AOB**

Angela Porter made the Forum aware of their Gloucester Climate Action Partnership who were keen to engage with other Citizens. They were keen to do on the ground action and had progressed a tree planting scheme.

Suggestions for future meetings Electric Busses/electric vehicles.

**10. Date of next meeting** To be confirmed but before end of Feb 2020