

Report from the Environment Working Group meeting 5.2.20

Walford Village Hall 7-9pm

Present - Cllr Newbert, Cllr Dolman, Cllr Evans, Cllr Smith, Bridget Vine
Member of the public - Dave Berry

1. **Apologies** - Cllr Cole, Cllr Jordan, Ward Cllr Watson

2. **Declarations** - Cllr Smith declared and interest in the Canoe Launch

3. **Public Participation Session** - None

4. **Howle Hill Memorial Project** - The clerk to inform the group as to progress. At present the Parish Council is waiting to hear that the asset transfer has begun. Bridget Vine will act as project manager and liaise with residents. It was agreed to ask Cllr Puzey to include the project in a future edition of the Parish newsletter.

5. **Footpath Walford to Kerne bridge** - A resident had contacted the council to ask if such a footpath was possible. Cllr Smith said he would research historical documents to find any relevant information and it was agreed to ask Ward Cllr Watson if any funding might be available.

6. **Glebe Patch** - Is an area of woodland adjacent to Coughton Marsh SSI where dormice are present. The land has recently changed ownership and concerns have been raised that it might be cleared causing any dormice in the area harm and isolating the community present in Coughton Marsh. It was agreed to try and establish the owner of this area of woodland to see if a survey could be arranged. Cllr Newbert to search the Land Registry.

7. **Elvers** - Concerns have been raised as reported by Cllr Evans in the previous meeting about Elvers being present in the watercourse known as Castle Brook as it runs down Bulls Hill which is currently being cleared. Cllr Newbert has tried to establish when Elvers may be present in local watercourses as they are a protected species. Little headway had been made with Natural England. Cllr Newbert also contacted the Environment Agency who were very helpful and said fishing licenses are granted between February and May. However, Elvers may be present before this time and efforts are still being made to establish more exact timings. The Environment Agency pointed out that watercourses are protected under the Fisheries act and the Wildlife and Countryside Act and any work to be carried out is required to have permission from the Environment Agency or the Local Authority. It was agreed to pass this information on to Cllr Cole.

8. **The Canoe Launch** - This item on the agenda was not discussed as Cllr Newbert explained it had been discussed at the SWG meeting 4.2.20 and another meeting would be called on the return of Charlie Baker.

9. **Climate Emergency. the Great Collaboration** - Cllr Newbert, Cllr Evans, Cllr Dolman & Bridget Vine attended the Great Collaboration event in Ross. It was generally agreed that the event had too heavily loaded an agenda and that consequently information given out was hurried and confusing. It was agreed that this

was an important & critical subject for the council to address but more information was needed. It was agreed to look at what other Parish Councils were doing and gather more information. The needs of our Parish being a dispersed community and within the WVAONB need special consideration when looking at this important issue and more research on this needs to be done.

10. Walford CES - This stands for Cable End Site which is where underground cables come to their end and is owned by the National Grid. The National Grid has directed a team of their graduate workforce to carry out a sustainability project on this piece of land which lies between Coughton Marsh and Land owned by Cllr Drummond. Cables were sent underground in order to preserve the landscape as described in Wordsworth's poem 'We are seven'. Some of the ideas put forward are - establishing wildflower meadows, tree planting, introducing bumble bees, making ponds etc. The project team would like to have some community involvement. To this end the group will arrange a group visit to the site and Bridget Vine will contact the governors of the school to see if it is something that would interest them as a school project.

11. Parish Land - The clerk sent a list of Parish land but no maps have yet been located. Cllr Newbert brought large scale maps to the meeting and with the help of other councillors was able to mark some locations on the map, some still need to be verified.

12. Meeting Frequency - The frequency of meetings was looked at but the group decided that the current bi-monthly arrangement seemed to work well so it was decided to keep it the same.

13. Public Participation session - With regard to the Climate Emergency Dave Berry commented that practicalities should be concentrated on and also commented on the fact that the private ownership of land could be an issue with regard to establishing a footpath between Walford and Kerne Bridge. Other comments were to have a list of council meetings on the web site separate from other events and to find out the name of the Herefordshire ecologist.

14. Items for next Agenda - Reptile surveys & planning, waterways, habitats & permissions, Ash die back & tree planting, Howle Hill War Memorial, Climate Emergency, Forest Green oak wood, enhancing the village.

15. Items for recommendation for full council approval - None

16. Next meeting date - Tuesday April 7th venue TBC