**Notes of the Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst Parish Climate Change & Biodiversity Steering Committee**

**Meeting on: 17th July 2023**

**Meeting at:** Longframlington Memorial Hall

**Meeting Time:** 7.15 p.m.

**Present:** Cllrs: Judith Baker (JB), Jackie Scarpa (JS), Jamie Whicker (JW) – Chair, Des Barker (DB), Roger Powell (RP), Jen Teulon (JT),

**In attendance:** Clerk: Garth Rhodes.

**Note:** These brief notes are intended to record the main issues discussed and decisions agreed. They are not intended to provide a verbatim record of the meeting.

*Meeting opened at 7.22 p.m.*

1. **Apologies**: Patricia Welsh (PW), Sue Whicker (SW)
2. **Notes of Previous Meeting** - The notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28th March 2023 were reviewed, unanimously approved as a true record.
3. **Matters Arising not appearing in the agenda** 
   1. Carbon Literacy Project (CLP) It was agreed to ask David Owen for an update on this matter. **Action: Clerk**
4. **Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 9th May 2023** It was reported that the Parish Council had approved and fully supported the Climate Change & Biodiversity Five-year Action Plan & Budget. The PC had also funded the purchase of the two ‘Litter Picking’ signs
5. **Update on current applications to Wingates Windfarm Community Fund (WWFCF).** 
   1. Two successful applications had been approved for the Playing Fields Fence repairs( £553.56) and the Climate Change & Biodiversity Event (£455). Final reports to be submitted in order for the final payments to be made. **Action: JS/JW**
   2. Two further bids nearing completion for the hedge laying project and bird- boxes to be submitted as soon as possible. **Action: RP/JW**
   3. Further submissions to be made in September (see 7 below).
   4. Still awaiting the WWFCF approach/decision on approving the overarching £10,000 application. This was not fully discussed at their June meeting, as there was some confusion regarding the information sent to them. A number of the WWFCF committee had attended the CC&B information event and had indicated their enthusiasm for the work being undertaken.
   5. It was agreed that the Clerk must be the main point of contact regarding all WWFCF applications and committee business in order to maintain complete records and audit trails.  **Action: All/Clerk**
   6. Rothbury Parish Council had asked for guidance to help them run a similar Climate Change & Biodiversity Event. All in favour.
6. **To discuss the potential impact of the sale of the Rothbury Estate upon the Five -Year Action Plan .** Unanimous agreement to recommend to the BHPC, at its extraordinary meeting, that the sale of the estate offered a significant opportunity for the BHPC CC&B agenda and that we should support the nomination of the estate as a community asset in its entirety or selected areas from within the parish, dependent upon what the regulations allowed . That whatever was agreed, that this be undertaken in consultation and co-operation with the other Parish Councils that had land within the estate. If the Parish Council agreed to nominate specific areas of land for potential CC&B projects/protection, the Committee would recommend the areas around Wards Hill and land South of Embleton Terrace. It was suggested that the estate may well be bought for Biodiversity Net Gain purposes which may prove to be a great opportunity for the Parish to work with the new landowners. The Clerk was in the process of gathering further information regarding the sale and the possibility of making one or more nominations for a community asset in preparation for the extraordinary meeting and would submit the comments from this meeting. **Action: Clerk**
7. **Strand & Project Reports**

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| **Strand/Focus** | **Project Report** | **Project Lead/***Action* |
| 1. **Recognition and maintenance of the scenic beauty of the landscape** | Litter Picking Programme There had been a further litter picking event since the last meeting. This had been somewhat thwarted by the growth of vegetation, therefore there would be no further events until the autumn when the vegetation had died back. | **Patricia Welsh**  *DB* |
| 1. **Wild-Flower Areas** | 1. Wild Flower Meadows/areas DB had identified suitable areas around the parish for wild flowers. Some of these were on NCC land and would need their approval. Kevin Waugh (wildflower seed grower/expert) was to meet Des to discuss types of seed and planting arrangements. The work to develop the wildflower area adjacent Embleton Tce was ongoing. | **Jackie Scarpa**  *DB/JS* |
| 1. Proposal to establish a baseline and ongoing monitoring botanical (& potential insect) surveys. JB explained the importance of undertaking a baseline survey within the Parish to determine areas of fauna and flora high density/ gaps. JB agreed to lead on this project. The proposed phases of the project were to begin immediately with a desktop study and then a ground study to be undertaken in the Spring 2024. The project would need to purchase/acquire a digital surveying system; JB/JS to develop an application for submission to the WWFCF in September. JB was to have further negotiations with ESRI as to whether this equipment/software could be donated to us. | **Judith Baker**  *JB/JS* |
| 1. **Partnership Working** | Meeting with Duncan Nelless, Thistleyhaugh Organic Farm and Mark Child, Great Northumberland Forest. The two farm visits to Thistleyhaugh and meetings Healey farms had been very successful and informative. Further visit(s) to be arranged in the winter. JW had extended our thanks to Duncan Nelless, | **Jamie Whicker**  *JW* |
| A meeting with the Duke’s land representatives to outline plans and to seek permission to develop/regain an organic landscape. Due to the sale of the Rothbury Estate this would now be put on hold for the present time. However it was agreed that discussions with both the Lishman & Nellis families to discuss how the Parish could integrate/work with them on CC& B activities was to be followed up. All agreed that it would be a very positive move to engage in discussion with local gamekeepers. | **Roger Powell**  *RP/JW* |
| 1. **Improving Biodiversity** | Playing Field Pilot Hedge Laying Project Whilst there was some concern about the future of the playing field it was agreed that this project should go forward. JW to speak with Lesley Hall about an alternative hedge if the Playing Field was lost. | **Jamie Whicker** |
| 1. **River Coquet Ecology** | Monitoring and maintenance of the River Coquet and its immediate environment. No report. JW to speak to MF as to the progress being made on this matter, and whether it was necessary to delay actions until the following year. | **Mark Fenwick** (MF) |
| 1. **Enhance bird breeding populations** | Nest Box building programme . RP had provided the detail for the submission to WWFCF. This to be completed ready for submission ASAP. | **Roger Powell**  *RP/JW* |

1. **To discuss a proposal for a Coquetdale Cluster Climate Action Plan**

There was unanimous support for this proposal. The issue of whether the Coquetdale Cluster Group of Parish Councils were likely to support/be the co-ordinating body for such a venture was also discussed. All were agreed if they were not, then they would still be in favour of being part of a Coquetadale Action Plan initiative. This recommendation to be presented to the BHPC at their extraordinary meeting on 20th July 2023. **Action: JW/Clerk**

1. **Any Other Business.** None
2. **Date of Next Meeting: 7.30 p.m. Thursday 31st August 2023, Longframlington Memorial Hall**

*Meeting closed at 9. 15 p.m.*

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