

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK****BIO DIVERSITY TASK GROUP**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Bio Diversity Task Group held on Monday, 15th April, 2024 at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M de Whalley (Chair)  
Councillors D Heneghan (sub for Cllr Bartrum), P Kunes  
and T Parish (sub for Cllr Bullen)

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors M Bartrum and A Bullen

1 **MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes from the previous meeting on 2 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

2 **MEMBERS PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

Councillor P Devulapalli attended on zoom under standing order 34.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

4 **ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None

5 **BIODIVERSITY COMPETITION - COUNCILLOR DEVULAPALLI**

Councillor Devulapalli gave a presentation of her draft proposals for the introduction of an annual biodiversity competition intended to promote and encourage greater awareness of biodiversity across the Borough. (a copy of the draft proposals are attached.)

Cllr Devulapalli intended that the competition would be community led relying on community volunteers. She asked that the Council support the introduction of an annual biodiversity competition by:

1. Publicly supporting and endorsing the proposal
2. Providing support and guidance to the group on how to run the competition through preparation of a project plan.
3. Provision of Comms support to highlight the importance of biodiversity and the competition.

The presentation set out a selection of 4 potential categories for the competition which would be subject to agreement – Under 14s, Container garden, small garden and large garden. She also suggested best nature friendly space in work place, schools, parish, and longest bee line.

It was also suggested that best town space should be included. This was supported. It was also suggested that the RSPB had criteria for different sized gardens etc for their birdwatch which could potentially be used. Each category would have potential criteria which could be ticked off for each entry.

G Hall Executive Director explained that if the Group supported the proposal a detailed proposal could be brought to Cabinet. The Group agreed with the proposal.

The logistics of the proposals were discussed and it was suggested that entries be sent in electronically or hard copies either to the Council offices, or to the libraries. with concern raised that there was limited capacity within the officer side to resource the proposal. It was suggested that potentially parish councils could get involved in their areas and forwarding what they felt were the strongest contenders, although it was stressed that a level of expertise in the subject was essential to also ensure the same criteria were being applied across the board as appropriate.

**RESOLVED:** That cabinet be invited to support a community driven Bio Diversity competition relying on community volunteers with the Council providing the following support:

1. Publicly supporting and endorsing the proposal
2. Providing support and guidance to the group on how to run the competition through preparation of a project plan.
3. Provision of Comms support to highlight the importance of biodiversity and the competition.

6

**POLLINATOR ACTION PLANS - SPEAKER - HELEN BACZKOWSKA (NORFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST)**

The Task Group welcomed Helen Baczkowska from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust who gave a presentation on the Trust's new Business Model for wildlife Caring for our nature reserves

- Advice to land managers from farms to communities
- Planning & advocacy
- Research, science & innovation

The presentation gave detail on the decline of pollinators in the country and how that could be improved by the reduction of pesticides, increased connectivity between green areas.

With regard to the Council's increase in b-connectivity sites it was acknowledged that often people complained when grass areas were not cut as often they wished, but it was suggested that the public be made aware that a reduction in cuts was to promote biodiversity in the area.

A discussion was held on the current position the Borough Council was in for biodiversity net gain which was in its early stages. Ms Baczkowska offered to assist where possible to the Open Spaces Team in their planning for increased biodiversity, and also was planning on running some workshops on the requirements for authorities and parishes, and the parishes could sign up to a mailing list on the subject.

Her timely offer of assistance was gratefully accepted and it was agreed that managing the wilding and informing people of it would help the public's understanding of the reasoning behind areas of uncut grass.

Councillor Parish commented that the council should decide what it wants to do and establish how to go about it. A discussion was also held on gardens which were destroyed and replaced with concrete or astroturf.

Further comments were made on walk-throughs carried out in areas before strimming was commenced.

**RESOLVED** That the presentation from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust be noted, and Ms Baczkowska's offer of assistance be gratefully accepted.

7

#### **NOTE ON POLLINATOR ACTION PLANS - CLAIRE WIGGS**

Claire Wiggs, Senior Ecologist presented a paper she had prepared on developing a Local Pollinator Strategy. It explained that a Local Pollinator Strategy or Plan should sit alongside other Local Biodiversity Action Plans, greenspace and green infrastructure strategies, and link into existing Local Development Plans or policies. It should outline a range of positive principles and associated actions which could be applied across the management of local authority projects, assets and decision-making processes. At its core, it should be about providing pollinator food and shelter across all types of land so that our pollinators will survive and thrive.

It was suggested that the Plan highlights examples of what was being done well and it be split into themes: threats, what the pollinators needed, connection and community engagement.

She had commented on a number of strategies which were currently in circulation and commended Cornwall's approach to a Plan.

A further discussion was held on biodiversity net gain (BNG) and the potential for banking land for BNG as some local providers had come forward. It was noted that a variety of habitats would be needed for such endeavours, and a site would receive a higher ranking the more local it was. It was noted that at this stage the council was concentrating on what it had to do legally to ensure it was compliant.

The question was raised as to whether there was a point to register large areas of planting of hedgerows etc, it was confirmed that from a BNG point it was not required, but potentially advisable from a tree and hedges point of view.

8 **OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIODIVERSITY - SPEAKER - GUEST  
SPEAKER (NORFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST)**

This item was not considered as the guest speaker could not attend.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

14 May and 25 June at 4.00pm

**The meeting closed at 5.34 pm**