

**Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held
on 10 June 2021**

PRESENT -

Councillor Alex Coley (Chair); Councillor Luke Giles (Vice-Chair); Councillors Christine Cleveland, Bernice Froud, Debbie Monksfield, Phil Neale, Guy Robbins, Clive Smitheram and Peter Webb

Absent: Councillor Julie Morris

Officers present: Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Teresa Wingfield (Senior Accountant), Stewart Cocker (Countryside Manager) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

1 QUESTION TIME

The Committee received one question from a member of the public with regard to the on-going protection of Horton Country Park, and noted that the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee had responded directly to the questioner. This response had also been published on the Council's website.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following matters were raised in relation to Items of business to be discussed at the meeting:

In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Christine Cleveland declared that she rents an allotment on the Kingston Road allotment site.

In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Guy Robbins declared that he is one of the allocated Councillors for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee held on 18 March were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 EPSOM & EWELL LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2020 PROGRESS REPORT AND REVIEW OF THE 2010 TO 2020 ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report providing an update on progress during 2020 in implementing the 2010–2020 Epsom & Ewell Local Biodiversity Action Plan and a review of the 2010-2020 Biodiversity Action Plan.

The following matters were raised by the Committee:

- a) **Impact of new developments:** Members raised concerns regarding the impact of new developments on biodiversity and habitats. The Officer noted that there are not currently means in place to monitor the effects of new developments, however all Planning applications are assessed and conditions are set out as appropriate for any cases of protected species. The Officer noted that the new Environment Bill proposes that developers must enter a 25 year agreement to ensure that biodiversity net gain is retained.
- b) **Hairstreak butterfly:** Members noted that all 5 species of hairstreak butterfly had been spotted in Epsom. The Officer noted that this includes the black hairstreak which is an endangered species. It was noted that this butterfly appears to have been introduced to the site, and that Officers would be looking over the next 2-3 weeks to see if there is a colony on site.
- c) **Net gain:** Following a question from a Member, the Officer confirmed that the detail surrounding who would be responsible for monitoring the requested net gain would be confirmed shortly, but that the onus would be on the developer to have entered an agreement.
- d) **Volunteers:** Members noted the commendable work completed by volunteers. The Officer noted that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, there had been no noticeable drop in volunteer numbers. The Covid risk assessments are still in action, but once things progress it is expected that adjustments will be made and new volunteers may be recruited.
- e) **Verges:** Members spoke about the current practise for the maintenance of verges. The Officer noted that this is a key aspect in which improvement is being sought.
- f) **Biodiversity Net Gain:** Members raised a question regarding the arrangements for lobbying the Government for support in meeting the obligations of Biodiversity Net Gain. The Chair noted that they would report back to Committee Members following their attendance at an LGA Planning Advisory Service virtual event with regards to this matter.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved unanimously to:

- (1) **Note the Action Plan Progress Report at Appendix 1 to the report.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.21 pm

COUNCILLOR ALEX COLEY (CHAIR)