

# **Greener Woking Working Group meeting notes**

Held on 9 March 2023, virtually via Teams

## **1.0 Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) Update Report**

The Group received an update on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan since the last meeting in November 2022.

Members were informed that the active travel bid submitted in July 2022 by Surrey County Council (SCC) to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was unsuccessful. However, a further bid had been submitted following a new active travel fund which was launched in February 2023. The results were expected on 17 March 2023. Members would be updated on the result at the next group meeting.

SCC was looking into a programme of 'Liveable Neighbourhoods'. The programme would identify areas across the county where measures such as 20mph speed limits, tarmac paving and crosslines could be introduced.

A request had been made to SCC to consider e-bike charging points and storage in funding bids.

## **2.0 Planet Woking Garden Guide**

The Green Garden Guide was inspired by a Planet Woking webinar featuring a presentation by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) entitled 'Invisible Gardens Wildlife Havens'. The guide had been put together following a resident request for advice and guidance on best practice for gardening to encourage biodiversity in a low carbon manner. The guide offered ten top quick tips for greener gardening.

The drafted guide had been distributed to local environmental stakeholder groups, inviting informal comment and suggestions for improvement. Feedback received from RHS, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Woking Environment Action (WEAct) had been incorporated.

Following a public consultation period and updating as necessary in light of feedback received, the guide would be distributed via Planet Woking, WBC channels and partner organisations. It was hoped that the guidance will help gardeners understand how to support biodiversity.

## **3.0 Natural Woking**

The Woking Biodiversity Group (a part of WEAct) reported a productive year. Attention was drawn to the fantastic work volunteers were undertaking within the Borough. A total of 335 hours were worked by volunteers of the group during 2022.

It was highlighted that volunteer activities at heathland sites were likely to only begin after the bird nesting season around September. However, other activities would be identified before then within the borough. The new Surrey Heathland Partnership Project Officer due to start soon would be setting up regular opportunities in Woking borough for the local community to help manage local heathland sites.

It was noted that the maintenance contract for highway verges and trees would return to SCC to manage from April 2023. WBC will continue to maintain their own grassed land within the Borough.

Regarding Flood and Drainage, government confirmed plans to ensure new Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are adopted under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. The plans are confirmed as part of a review of sustainable drainage systems. The new rules will come into effect from 2024. It was confirmed that SCC was the lead authority on this item.



It was noted that the BBC's new Wild Isles series with David Attenborough features Brookwood Cemetery in the 'Woodlands' episode.

#### **4.0 ThamesWey**

Action Surrey, part of the ThamesWey group of companies, has been delivering the Sustainable Warmth domestic energy efficiency grant scheme for low-income households since October 2022. £7m of grant funding was made available to support approximately 580 Surrey households, to reduce their energy consumption and fuel costs.

In early 2023, the ThamesWey team commissioned a major overhaul of the Action Surrey website. The work is nearing completion and will be launched in the next month.