



# Tiverton Town Council

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## Minutes of the Climate Change Committee Meeting held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 via zoom.

**Present:** Cllr's A Hendy (chairman), Cllr S Bush, Cllr D Garcia-Parejo, Cllr P Hill, Cllr B Holdman, Cllr A Perris, Mrs S Chapman, Mrs F Armstrong, Mrs V Pelaou, Mr C Shears, & Mr A Walker.

**In attendance:** Assistant to the Town Clerk (Mrs J Hubbard).

22	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies received from Cllrs C Daw, S Griggs, D Knowles, & A Mulligan.
23	<b>Minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting held on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2020, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a true record.
24	<b>Matters Arising</b> There were no matters arising.
25	<b>Democratic Period</b> .No items and no public attendance.
26	<b>Hydro Power Update</b> Mr C Shears from Mid Devon District Council gave an in-depth update on the plans for the River Exe hydro power station. Chris informed that he had been working on the hydro-power development for 3 and a half years. The plan proposed would be to site a 150 kilo-watt twin Archimedes screw hydro-power scheme alongside the overflow channel on Rotary Way. This would generate over 120 watts of energy and would generate enough power to serve Phoenix House effectively off grid and provide surplus to cover for any maintenance or replacement parts. The planning application had already been submitted and Mr Shears said this would be sent to members once it had been validated. The scheme had been planned carefully to recognise that the river Exe was a salmon river. His aim was to design an ethical and biodiverse scheme and he felt that they were now at a stage to achieve this. The project team were looking at an advanced fish path design and investigating fish monitoring technology to provide online data. The scheme would have the fish path sited on the other side of the Archimedes screw, Chris said that studies have shown that Archimedes screws were safe for fish and that the blades create a safe place to allow them to traverse through. The structure itself would have a flat green roof approximately 3 metres off the ground which would create a safe

space for wildlife. Chris said he was working with councillor E Wainwright and other members looking into how they could go out to wider consultation to the community to look at what additional benefits could be brought to this particular stretch of river. Ideas included installing an artificial reed bed but this would have to be weighted as it is in a high risk flood plain zone. The hope was to create a welcoming and safe place to help engage people with the river. With this in mind the team were now looking at how to best go out and consult with people to ask them what types of things they would like to see on the stretch of river in question. Chris asked the committee for their ideas and suggestions in readiness to go out to tender in the early part of 2021. Construction was being planned for May 2021 and was anticipated to be a 12 month build. The turbines would be built on site and the civil engineering works would undertake the alterations to the weir and place the turbines so that they sat half in and half out of the water. There would be a viewing platform along with an educational area. Chris felt that Tiverton did not make the best use of its river and said that this was an untapped area that could be utilised more. He welcomed the committee's suggestions for the stretch of river and said that perhaps artwork could be introduced on the bare concrete wall surface and this could involve local schools.

Fran Armstrong said that she thought the scheme sounded wonderful and informed Chris that Sustainable Tiverton were planning to launch an art competition in a few weeks with the theme "imagining what Tiverton would look like 12 months further down the line. She asked Chris if he was aware of the South West Rivers Trust and the work that they have been planning on the weirs on the river Exe. He said that he was and had been in conversation with them and Mr R Furness regarding looking at other bio-diverse improvements in other parts of the river possibly near to Bickleigh. Chris said that the local fly fishing group although initially being on-board with the hydro-power scheme were now not in favour of it. However the scheme on the whole had received a positive response.

Cllr B Holdman praised Chris for his work on this project, he said he would be keen to involve West exe in the plans for any artwork as this would link the two areas and would help promote and often forgotten area of the town.

Cllr A Perris asked a question on behalf of Cllr S Bush, regarding the locally known area "Tivvy beach" would it remain open, as this was a focal point for young people.

Chris explained that there would be a need for some alterations in this area and to introduce some safety measures but recognised the importance of this area as a community space.

Victoria Pelaou the Environmental Manager from Heathcoat Fabrics offered her assistance to Chris as Heathcoat Fabrics had already installed a successful hydro-power scheme.

Sally Chapman asked how much council money could be saved by the scheme and whether the council would engage with other community energy projects.

Chris replied that the Mid Devon District Council's energy bill was in the region of £50,000 per year and that the hydro-power scheme would effectively wipe this out. It was anticipated that it would generate £63,000 per year so would leave a £13,000 surplus and although the feed-in tariff was lower now at 5p per unit, this would still equate a 5 to 6% return in

	<p>energy per year. This would then be allocated to maintenance costs and replacement costs.</p> <p>Cllr P Hill said that the justification for the initial expenditure of the scheme would be mitigated in relation to a return on the investment over the life of the scheme. He continued to say that any project to raise the profile of the passage of the river Exe in Tiverton, which in his opinion was largely ignored can only be a good thing.</p> <p>Cllr A Perris on behalf of Cllr S Bush asked if any other potential sites had been considered for the scheme that were as convenient as the proposed site. Chris replied to say that other sites had been considered but all would impact further up or down river, and would not be as prominent as the chosen site and would not bring the same opportunities to the town.</p> <p>Cllr A Perris asked if the recent MDDC cabinet shuffle would impact upon the scheme.</p> <p>Chris said that as the scheme had been in development for 3.5 years he did not think that there would be too much resistance from members over the scheme. He said he was due to go back to the cabinet in December to report on the scheme and address their queries.</p> <p>Fran Armstrong asked if a small proportion of the surplus income generated could be put to perhaps to the installation of mobile charging points or USB points for the public to use within the proposed building. This in turn would create more footfall and whilst they were in the unit could encourage engagement with the information boards on display.</p> <p>Chris said that his priority would be to install some form of lighting first as this would be a health &amp; safety issue, but thought that benches with USB charging points could be installed along the stretch of river close to the scheme.</p> <p>Cllr B Holdman offered his support to the scheme and praised Chris for all his work on it.</p> <p>Cllr A Perris asked where the costings for the scheme could be found.</p> <p>Chris said that they were now waiting on sourcing quotations for the works as the design was complete and that he would send a copy of the cabinet report which included a breakdown of some of the costs. It was estimated that the total cost would be in the region of £800,000.</p> <p>He would also forward the planning application reference so that the members could obtain the additional information.</p> <p>Cllr A Hendy thanked Chris for his detailed report.</p>
27	<p><b>Tree Team Project</b></p> <p>Mrs F Armstrong gave her report on the team's achievements to date. She began by saying that there had been 6 or 7 tree planting sessions with between 20 and 70 volunteers each time. It had unleashed a massive enthusiasm for people getting out there and physically tackling the climate crisis. This had been encouraging considering the scale of the task.</p> <p>The planting had taken place both on public land and private land including Knightshayes Court entrance, Tiverton Adventure Playground, a burial ground, farmland and a community orchard. Approximately 6000 trees were planted in all. Mrs Armstrong said that this had all taken place last year and had been achieved by utilising crowdfunding. This had raised £7,000 and enabled the purchase of the trees and the protective guards. The plan was to hold an epic year 2 of planting but the Covid-19 pandemic had halted this</p>

	<p>because of the rule of six. A meeting held last week had resulted in three aims for this year, to firstly tend to the trees already planted in groups of 6. To hold a public awareness campaign asking people to collect tree seeds from their gardens or parks and to provide information on how to grow them in readiness for next year's planting. This would require central spaces where seeds could be brought to and collected.</p> <p>The third aim was to have a Tiverton Garden Forest this would involve giving members of the public trees to plant in their own gardens or land and to provide advice on suitability of the trees and how to tend for them.</p> <p>Mrs Armstrong said that at a previous council meeting held last year she recalled the mention of a £1500 grant that was available for the project. She asked if this would be still available. If so, then this money would be used to purchase the trees.</p> <p>The Assistant to the Town Clerk would investigate to find out more on the availability of the grant.</p> <p>Cllr B Holdman suggested perhaps the Tiverton Pannier Market could be utilised to provide a tree seed collection point or the newly opened Central Space run by Tiverton Community Radio.</p> <p>Cllr S Bush asked if there had been an audit of the trees within the wards to identify any possible planting areas.</p> <p>Mrs S Chapman informed the committee that the local neighbourhood plan had identified all the open spaces in the draft plan.</p>
<b>28</b>	<p><b>MDDC Climate Change Committee Update</b></p> <p>Cllr B Holdman previously emailed his report to the Town Clerk but some of the members of the committee had not received it. Cllr A Hendy informed the committee she would send the report to them.</p> <p>Cllr B Holdman added that he would contact Cllr E Wainwright to ask if she would like to join the committee.</p>
<b>29</b>	<p><b>Climate change during Covid-19</b></p> <p>This item was deferred until the next meeting due to lack of time.</p>
<b>30</b>	<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p> <p>TBC</p>