

PARKS REPORT  
RLA – 14 NOVEMBER 2024

**Broomfield:**

Repairs to the cricket square have been undertaken.  
Damaged vent at Pavilion secured and covered.

**Eagles Road:**

Shrubs cut back and spring bulbs planted.

**Heritage Park:**

The shrubs and trees at the skull site have been cut back and raised.

**Knockhall:**

A play specialist contractor has completed the repairs/refurbishment works as previously highlighted in the Annual Play Area Inspection.

**Manor Park:**

x2 flower beds at the entrance gate are being planted out.  
The area between the park and the houses has been cut back and tidied up.

**Swanscombe Park:**

Repairs to the bowls green have been undertaken.

The beds at the Memorial and the mini-orchard have been prepared and planted out.

The memorial has been cleaned in preparation for Remembrance Services.

The Community Garden and the picnic areas have both been cut back and tidied up.

The tennis nets have been taken down for the winter.

**Saxon Court:**

The shrubs and trees have been cut back.

Spring bulbs have been planted.

**Equipment / Staffing:**

A new electric van has replaced the last diesel van.

The ride-on mower has been repaired.

One van has had a new battery installed.

**Miscellaneous:**

Bulb planting over all sites has been undertaken.

Spring Vale has been cleared and arisings chipped.

**Recommended:**

**To note.**

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP MEETING –  
NOTES FROM 23 OCTOBER 2024 AT 11.25am

**AGENDA ITEM**  
RLA 14-11-24

7.2

Present: Cllr Ann Duke  
Cllr Peter Harman  
Cllr Lesley Howes  
Cllr Hazel Stephens  
Cllr Elizabeth Wickham

Apologies: There were none.

Also Present: Graham Blew – Town Clerk  
Martin Harding – ATC/RFO

1. Members were provided with a copy of the notes from the last Working Group meeting on 3 July 2024, which were noted.
2. Members were provided with the Environmental Action Plan, which was adopted on the 25 July 2024, for review.

The following changes were proposed for consideration by the RLA on the 14 November 2024:

- That the section of the Action Plan entitled 'Trees and Hedges' be renamed to 'Biodiversity' and include the works that have been undertaken, and those planned to be undertaken at the Swanscombe Heritage Park, including the pond, hibernacula, meadow creation and wildflower planting.
- That the section on 'Vehicles & Plant' include the update that the Town Council have now disposed of all its diesel vehicles and were operating with both petrol and electric vans.
- That the section on 'Procurement / Contracts & Waste' include an update on the work that has been undertaken by the Town Council to reduce its print and postage costs by ensuring that 85% of members received meeting agendas and general information by electronic means only.

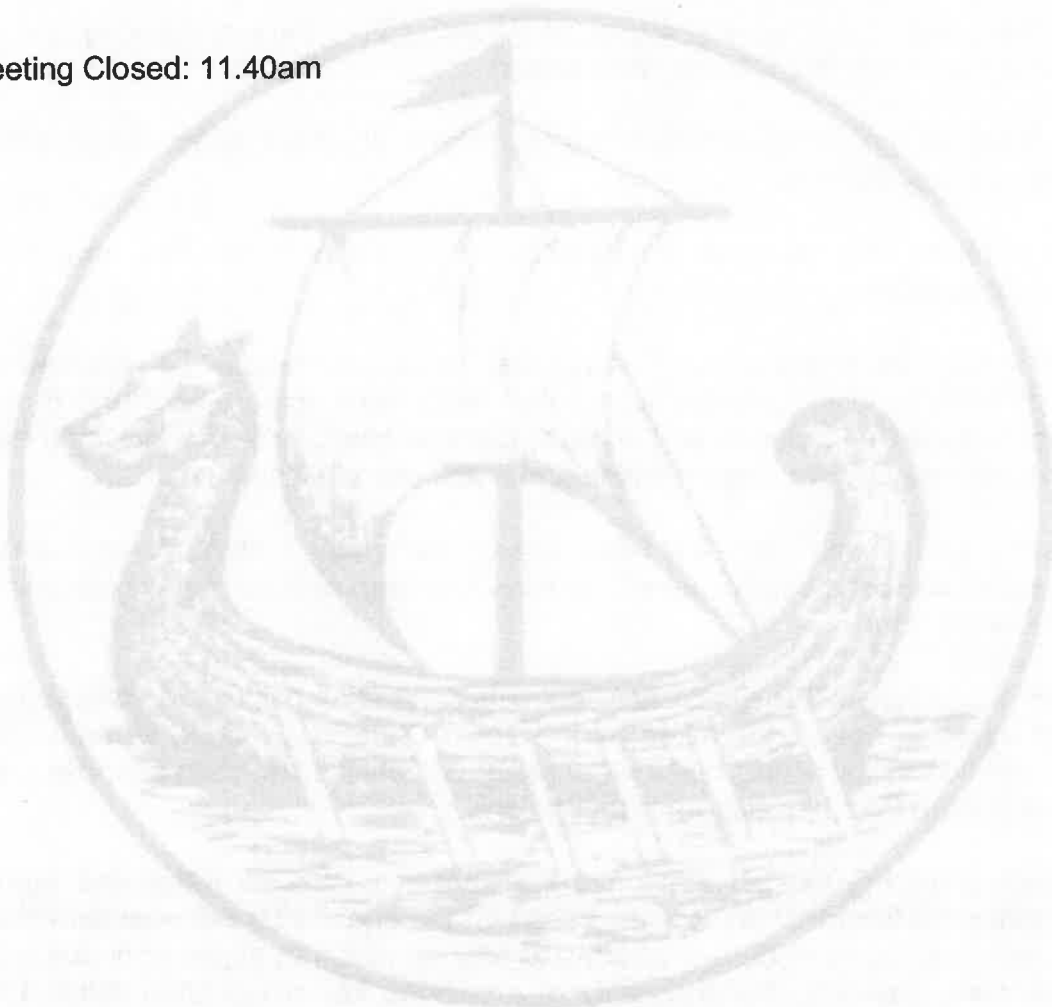
Members also requested that once the current vacancies within the Town Council were filled that an item be placed on the agenda for the next full Town Council meeting to discuss measures to fully transition to digital agendas and paperwork, including the possibility of projecting key information within the chamber during meetings.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP MEETING –**  
**NOTES FROM 23 OCTOBER 2024 AT 11.25am**

**Actions to be taken:**

- That officers would amend the Environmental Action Plan to include the updates as detailed, and this would be placed on the agenda for the RLA meeting on the 14 November 2024 for consideration.
- That once the current vacancies within the Town Council were filled that an item be placed on the agenda for the next full Town Council meeting to discuss measures to fully transition to digital agendas and paperwork, including the possibility of projecting key information within the chamber.

**Meeting Closed: 11.40am**



**122/24-25. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP.**

The Working Group met on 3 July 2024 and the notes from that meeting, including a recommendation, are attached for members consideration.

It was discussed that a future review should be undertaken on the section relating to trees and hedges to widen this around all bio-diversity projects being undertaken and proposed to be undertaken within the Town. It was agreed that this would be put to the next meeting of the Working Group.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the item be noted.
2. That the draft Environmental Action Plan be adopted, subject to a further review of the section relating to trees and hedges as detailed.

**This page is intentionally left blank.**

## Environmental & Financial Impact Analysis

Area	Action	Analysis	Environmental Impact	Financial Impact
Education	<p>That the Town Council would both actively promote its own actions in reducing its carbon footprint, and any advice or schemes available to the wider community to aid in making the town greener.</p> <p>This promotion would be undertaken via the Town Councils website and social media feeds.</p>	<p>This could be achieved by setting a dedicated web page on the Town Councils website with advice and links to activities the Town Council are undertaking or supporting. This could then be regularly shared with social media.</p> <p>As above</p>	<p>Unmeasurable without knowing the potential content.</p> <p>As above</p>	<p>Officer time in updating the site and regular social media posts.</p> <p>As above</p>
	<p>That all appropriate planning responses by the Town Councils Planning Committee include the need for developers to have considered the installation of both Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and renewable energy products i.e. solar panels, heat pumps and LED lighting.</p>	<p>This would become a standard set of wording included with all planning responses to DBC, EDC, GBC and KCC.</p>	<p>Whilst this would have no direct impact it would send out the Town Councils positive message on the aspiration for net zero technology use within the Town.</p>	<p>Minimal officer time.</p>
Procurement / Contracts / Waste	<p>That, where possible, the Town Council ensure when purchasing items these are the most environmentally friendly (low carbon) options possible and are recyclable.</p> <p>In addition steps are taken to reduce the level of printing undertaken and in turn postage of documents.</p>	<p>This would require a review of all regular purchasing items within the Admin Office, Parks Department, Café and Caretaker cleaning supplies. This is already being undertaken at the café with the use of recyclable takeaway materials and within the admin office for paper supplies.</p> <p>Measures have been taken to reduce postage by 85% of members adopting email only communication for agendas and paperwork.</p>	<p>Potential to lower carbon footprint by reducing wastage.</p>	<p>On the basis of current stock ordering the more environmentally friendly or recyclable items are more expensive and therefore will increase consumable budgets.</p>
	<p>That, where possible, any contracts issued are to suppliers that are either local, therefore minimising commuting distance, or from environmentally friendly contractors i.e., those that use electric vehicles.</p> <p>That a review would be undertaken of the Town Councils current waste management, with a view to making it more environmentally</p>	<p>This is currently being undertaken where possible.</p>	<p>Would lower the carbon impact of our suppliers but is not a measurable target against the Town Councils impact.</p> <p>Unknown at this time</p>	<p>Whilst beneficial to support local businesses, every effort would have to be made to ensure best value is obtained.</p> <p>Unknown at this time</p>
		<p>This would be best left until the Town Councils building assets are resolved with the completion of the Community Hub and transfer of Ingress Park Community Centre. This would allow a better understanding of the total waste demands and look for economies of scale with procurement.</p>	<p>Unknown at this time</p>	

# Environmental Action Plan

Adopted by the Town Council on 25 July 2024, Minute 122/24-25

Area	Action	Analysis	Environmental Impact	Financial Impact
Reducing Electricity Usage	That the Town Council replace lighting fixtures, at the point they fail, with LED or the lowest energy option available on the market	This has been started within the Town Council offices over the last 12 months.	This would reduce our energy consumption and therefore our carbon footprint	Would help to reduce the Town Councils overall electricity bills. The replacement units purchased have cost between £100 and £200 to purchase. This cost has been on a par with the repair cost for a standard (non LED) unit.  Consideration needs to be given to the cost of replacing the high ceiling bulbs in the chamber and the whole lighting systems in both the chamber and hall as these work from a dimmer system. Work is underway to look at options.
	That staff are reminded about switching off both lights and equipment when they are not in use.	A memo would be issued to all staff.	Would need to take a snap shot of electricity usage before the memo and then take a comparable measurement in 12 months time.	Once known could indicate a reduction in electricity.
Buildings	That any new buildings constructed with the Town Councils involvement are undertaken with a target of being as low carbon as design, technology and resources allows, this is with the aim of being an example to the wider community	The Town Council have agreed a decision to ensure this is in place for the new Pavilion. Work has been undertaken to ensure this is being factored into the energy package for the new building.	This would result in the building being designated as low carbon with water consumption being the only direct utility, but water harvesting and grey water recycling is being considered.	Whilst the initial equipment costs of solar, heat pumps and tanks are greater than a conventional system they would be repaid in savings from utilities within 5 years.
	That the practicality, environmental impact and cost of retrofitting its existing buildings with environmentally friendly technology (solar, heat pumps & insulation etc) is explored.		This would result in the buildings being designated more energy efficient as the Council Offices, Mess Room and Church Road Hall have all had energy efficient glazing installed.	We have sought quotes for Solar across the x 3 buildings where it is possible (Council Offices, Mess Room and Knockhall Changing Rooms). The average cost to install across these three sites is £78,000 with an expected annual cost saving of £10,000.  Indicative prices were sought for air source heat pumps for the same sites plus Church Road Hall. The total cost of the installations would be £122,000. This would save around £8,000 per year on gas bills but would also push up energy consumption for electricity.
Vehicles Plant	That the Town Councils fleet of vehicles / equipment are replaced, when required, with the lowest carbon option suitable for the task.	All 3 diesel vehicles have now been replaced with x 2 petrol vans and one electric vehicle.	The Town Council would see a reduction in its carbon footprint due to the change to either electric or lower carbon vehicles.	Whilst the expense of purchase is currently looking to be around £7,000 to £10,000 for a used vehicle, the Town Council would see a reduction in fuel bills for the new vehicles purchased.



# Environmental Action Plan

Adopted by the Town Council on 25 July 2024, Minute 122/24-25

Area	Action	Analysis	Environmental Impact	Financial Impact
Biodiversity	<p>That the Town Council continues to actively plant new trees where space allows and areas of hedging, on land it owns, to both promote areas for nature and reduce carbon levels within the town.</p> <p>That every possible enhancement to the biodiversity and eco-system within the Swanscombe Heritage Park is undertaken.</p>	<p>The Town Council continues to engage in the Woodland Trust free tree planting scheme each year and has also continued to work with NWKCP on corporate tree planting events within our sites.</p> <p>Work continues in partnership with NWKCP on a programme of improvements to the Heritage Park, including restoring the pond, creating meadows, hedge planting, installation of bee post and hibernacula.</p>	<p>The tree / hedge planting work have an environmental impact and be beneficial to nature. The amount is not measurable within the carbon calculator the Town Council uses.</p> <p>The creation of enhanced biodiversity at the Heritage Park is being measured as part of surveys and a site wide plan.</p>	<p>The procurement of trees has been free, and parts of the labour due to corporate events. The Town Council would still have the ongoing maintenance costs, including man hours. It is also worth noting that the hedge planting will create an additional burden on the level of gree waste we produce from cuttings. The Town Council also has limited space for potential further planting schemes.</p> <p>The funding for the works to the Heritage Park has been sourced from a successful bid to the LTC Fund.</p>

**This page is intentionally left blank.**

# DEC 2024

AGENDA ITEM 7.3  
 RLA 14-11-24

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 CAPB	3 JTB	4 CSC (3)	5 TC (3) Cabinet	6	7
8	9 GAC	10 Policy Overview	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 PTE (8)	19 DCB	20	21
22	23	24	25 • B/H	26 • B/H	27	28
29	30	31 • B/H	1	2	3	4

**This page is intentionally left blank.**

**228/24-25. FINANCE REVIEW – ESTIMATES 2025 – 2026.**

As per minute 123/24-25 Members considered the report regarding the current financial position of the Town Council.

The RFO detailed the report and the financial position of the Council. Members acknowledged that the Town Council had worked very hard to attempt to keep its demands on residents to a minimum but the current pressures the council were under meant that this was no longer sustainable and, as disappointing as it was, the recommendations in the report were reasonable and proportional.

After discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed unanimously:

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the current financial position of the Town Council be noted.
2. That the proposed timeline for the setting of the budget, including the review of the FRAs, be noted and endorsed.
3. That the precept be increased by a figure of 7% to enable the Town Council to cover the potential shortfall, begin increasing reserves and add resilience to its budget.
4. That the provision of youth services be re-assigned for the 2025 – 2026 financial year directly from the budget. But that funding is sought to try and still commission this service, and that the money allocated for youth provision be redirected to the maintenance of both the Church Road and Grove Halls to resolve the leaking roofs, with Church Road Hall being the priority.
5. That the increase to fees and charges for the 2025 – 2026 be set to 3% across all areas to support the financial stability of the Town Council and to mitigate the increased costs of providing these facilities.
6. That the recommendation of an initial pay rise of 2.5% be set for the 2025 – 2026 financial year, subject to a review by the Personnel Committee at its meeting in May 2025.

**This page is intentionally left blank.**