

Charmouth Parish Council

Environment Working Group: Tuesday 7th December 2021

Present: Jane Bremner (Chair), Julie Leah, Maralyn Hinxman, Andrew Lightfoot

Apologies: Peter Noel

1. **A35 verge enhancement:** Jane welcomed John Calder to the meeting and invited him to present a brief history of the botanical verge enhancement scheme along the A35 Charmouth bypass. John's involvement commenced in June 2018 when he confronted contractors who were about to flail the verges when the flora was in full bloom. Subsequently, Oliver Letwin MP convened a meeting with Highways England which led to botanical survey of the verges (a summary of the results had been circulated to the Group). With support from the community and adjacent landowners, this was followed by a Dorset Wildlife Trust survey and co-operation with Highways England to agree a new management regime.

John explained the fundamental conflict between the management requirements for enhancing biodiversity (a cut in September/October) and control of ragwort (hand plucking flowers during the season). During the past summer, in particular, John felt that the contractor had not been sufficiently rigorous in controlling the ragwort, increasing the risk that it would proliferate in adjacent fields. His protests to the contractor and Highways England had resulted in a breakdown in relations. Consequently, John requested the Parish Council to consider acting as the local representative to Highways England on verge management in order to:

- Express support for the biodiversity programme;
- Encourage inclusion of the roundabout in the scheme;
- Receive regular updates from Highways England and its contractor;
- Inform the local community of the programme.

The next species survey was due in May 2022 and the risk assessment of where to pick ragwort needed revisiting.

John was thanked for his presentation and it was **agreed to recommend** to the Playing Fields Committee that the Parish Council should request

engagement with Highways England and the Dorset Wildlife Trust on the matter.

2. **Carbon literacy training and carbon footprint auditing:** following the training course which Jane and Julie had attended on carbon literacy, **Julie agreed** to research means of assessing the Parish Council's carbon footprint.
3. **Tree strategy and planting:** trees from the Woodland Trust were due to be delivered in March 2022 for planting a copse on the playing fields and hedging around the reed bed at the foreshore. Julie suggested the whips for the copse might need heeling in as a nursery prior to planting out: sites for such a nursery were required (Post meeting note: lack of water supply at the cemetery suggests this would be inappropriate). Planting for the hedging could be undertaken by volunteers. The Council's staff were to be consulted on these schemes. **Julie volunteered** to research creation of mulch mats.
Andrew agreed to contact Dorset Wildlife Trust about methods of surveying the vegetation in the village.
4. **Car parking:** it was **agreed** that the Council should seek advice from Dorset Council on:
 - How road markings for parking restrictions might be improved;
 - What might be done when bad parking was witnessed;
 - Whether seasonal parking restrictions could be reviewed;
 - Whether more parking bays could be accommodated in the village car park;
 - The terms and conditions for a residents' parking scheme.

Meanwhile, **Maralyn** was to collect some data on the problem areas.

5. **Issues arising from staff appraisals:** the following topics had been raised by staff and **further research was to be undertaken by:**
 - Recycling: Julie
 - Fuel use: Jane;
 - Solar panels: Andrew
 - Documents in the cloud: discussion at Council about reducing unnecessary e mails;
 - Pesticides: Jane.
6. **Input to Council's web site:** Julie **agreed** to draft an item on the beach management plan and Andrew on verge management.

7. **River Char project:** an impressive study had been conducted on the water quality of the river Char and the streams running down from Monkton Wyld. It was **agreed to recommend** to the Foreshore Committee that the Council should engage with the follow up to this study.
8. **Dorset CAN Local Plan campaign:** it was **agreed to recommend** to the Planning Committee that consideration be given to supporting this campaign.
9. **Compost facility:** following the last meeting, it was **agreed** that Andrew would liaise with the Facilities Manager about creation of a composting facility at the playing fields.
10. **Notes of meeting held on 5th October:** noted
11. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 8th February 2022 7pm.