**Minutes Environment Committee Monday 19th June 2023 Saddleworth Civic Hall.**

**Present:** Cllr Kathryn Phillips, Chair, Cllr Megan Birchall, Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani, Cllr Jeff Garner, Cllr Helen Bishop., Cllr Mavis Bingley

**5.70.** **Apologies for Absence** Cllr Linda Dawson

**571.** **Declarations of Interest** None

**572. Minutes from meeting Monday 13th March 2023**

 Agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman at the meeting.

As most of the Environment Committee members were new, the Chairman supported by Cllr Al-Hamdani briefed them on the current issues in order to quickly bring them up to speed.

It was recognised the no progress had been made on item 568. This was deferred to item 575 on the Agenda

**573. Proposed allotment extension update/Ecology SBI Survey**

There was a detailed discussion of the September 2021 survey of the land next to the allotments, ‘The Nature of Uppermill Parish Field ‘. It was agreed the Clerk would circulate this report to the Environment Committee members.

Cllr Phillips and Al-Hamdani said they had been advised today Mandy Elford, Senior Ecologist and Programme Manager for GCN District Level Licensing and her team visited the site at the beginning of June and unfortunately, it does not meet the criteria to become a Site of Biological Importance.

There was then a full and detailed discussion about the future of the field. It was agreed that the suggestion of the assets Management Committee to extend the allotments into this area was not appropriate either environmentally or financially. It was felt more people would benefit from leaving it as it is than a handful of people benefitting from new allotments, although in the longer term we could explore how we could start supporting allotment groups within Saddleworth.

In summary it was agreed that the measures in the ‘The Nature of Uppermill Parish Field’ report on pages 4 and 5 should be adopted.

1. Maintain the site as it is, but with one or two carefully strimmed, narrow paths to allow access without taking away much of the habitat vegetation.
2. Interpretation Boards, with signage highlighting the flora and fauna on the site.
3. Approach incredible Edible to ask if they are still interested in using the edges of the site for their crops.

It was decided that the Chair should discuss with Karen Allot how to action this and also approach Incredible Edible.

**574. Pollution of the River Tame in Delph Valley**

The Committee then discussed recent information about levels of pollution found in the River Tame extending from Delph to beyond Greenfield. It was agreed to put forward the following motion to the Parish Council Meeting on 24th July

**Saddleworth Parish Council notes:**

1. The data from the Rivers Trust that shows details of raw sewage discharge into Saddleworth streams, including along the River Tame at Delph, Greenfield and other Saddleworth sites.

2. The water sampling at Pingle Mill which found 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid, PFOS, and

pFoctanoate.

3. That despite United Utilities reporting £788m profits in the year to 31st March 2023 and paying dividends of £300m to their shareholders, UU proposes to add the costs of any clean up to our bills.

Saddleworth Parish Council resolves to write to United Utilities requesting detailed plans, including a timetable, to ensure these discharges into our local waters are prevented in future and calling for the clean-up costs to be met by United Utilities and their shareholders and not paid for by customers.

Saddleworth Parish Council also supports calls for mandatory monitoring of sewage outlets and increased fines for sewage discharges.

Motion proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Bishop.

**575. Civic Hall possible energy reduction measures**

It was noted by Cllr Al- Hamdani that the renewal of the energy contract was less than originally expected, but the cost was still being met by reserves. A wide ranging discussion ensued about the use of renewable energy. It was decided to ask the Clerk to find three companies who could give us advice, and propose options for the Civic hall, taking into account conservation area status. They should be invited to our next meeting.

Suggestions were made to consult Saddleworth Hydro, Oldham Energy Futures and get some advice from Robert Scott’s, a local company who have invested in renewable energy about how they did it.

**576.** **Items for the next agenda**

Energy

Allotments /ecology

**Next meeting: Monday 11th September 2023 at 18.00hrs**

It was noted that some meetings were on Tuesday and others on Mondays. People seemed to prefer Tuesday, Cllr Phillips agreed to discuss this with the Clerk