**Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held 14 April 2025**

 **Present:** Cllr K Phillips (Chair), Cllr H Bishop, Cllr J Garner, Cllr B Witt,

 Mrs T Rhodes (Greenfield & Grasscroft Residents Association).

**632. Apologies for absence:** Cllr E Adamson, Cllr S Al-Hamdani, Cllr L Dawson, Cllr D Wall.

**633. Declarations of Interest:** None declared

**634. Minutes from meeting Monday 10th February 2025**

The minutes were accepted as a true record and signed at the meeting by the Chair. Proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded Cllr Witt, carried.

**635. Matters Arising**

The Clerk confirmed that the requested amendments to the 16 September meeting minutes had been actioned and were displayed on the website.

**636. Community Toilet Scheme (request from Finance to address costs involved with this scheme)**

The Clerk advised that the Finance Committee had requested the Environment Committee investigate whether the costs of this scheme could be reduced due to budget pressures and this was discussed. The £600 paid to each business annually has been frozen for some years. After more discussion Councillors agreed they would not withdraw the community toilet scheme as it is an important service to the villages of Saddleworth and they could not consider reducing these costs.

There was discussion around the cost of new signage which was not allocated in the budget for this year. The Clerk confirmed that it had been agreed that if funds were available later in the financial year this could then be considered. If this isn’t possible it can be considered in next year’s Asset budget.

Funding for stickers has been provided through Cllr Harkness’ ward budget. It was agreed these needed to be displayed in prominent places and that Cllr Garner would facilitate this and take them round the participating businesses. He will also share a bulletin, prepared by the Clerk, of the Parish Council requirements that the businesses should provide.

It was proposed that the Community Toilet Scheme be added to the responsibilities of the Asset Management Committee. There was no majority vote on this so this will be revisited at the next meeting.

**637. Update on Grouse Shooting/Rewilding Progress**

The Clerk advised she had received no response from the Upperwood Estate following her third email sent in September requesting a meeting with them. It was agreed we would not write again for the fourth time.

Cllr Bishop advised she had been in contact with United Utilities regarding actions they were taking.

 It was agreed Cllr Bishop would invite United Utilities to a full council meeting to discuss this, plus their action taken on rain catchment measures to reduce flooding. She would ask whether they wished it all to be covered in one meeting or two, ideally schedule for June and/or July

**638. Update on Diggle Rifle Range**

This agenda item was deferred.

**639. Energy survey – update from Clerk on measures taken so far**

The Clerk updated the Committee on the energy saving measures already taken that had been agreed at the September meeting. One other suggestion was to use radiator foils to reflect the heat back in to the building, this was agreed. Clerk to action.

Solar panelling was again discussed, and possible funding streams.

It was agreed the Clerk would invite Oldham Energy Futures to the June meeting of the council to present options available to us.

It was agreed that members of the Committee would examine the energy survey and possible funding streams.

**640. AOB**

Cllr Bishop explained her ideas for the Civic Hall which she will be presenting to Council at a later date.

Mrs Rhodes expressed concern at the significant debris in Halls Lock, adjacent to the weir on the river, near Churchill Playing Fields. Cllr Bishop agreed to add this concern to her list to discuss in her meeting with the OMBC Director of the Environment and United Utilities River Rangers. As Borough Councillor she has a number of concerns to raise regarding flooding, fires and rural environment.

Cllr Witt raised his concern regarding debris in the ponds near the old Saddleworth School site. It was agreed this is the responsibility of OMBC and Cllr Bishop will also raise this issue.

**641. Items for the next agenda**

Community Toilet Scheme

Update on Grouse shooting/rewilding

Update on Diggle Rifle Range

Energy Survey; funding streams

Cllr Phillips thanked everybody on the committee for their hard work and dedication, and that the next meeting would probably be a combined one with the Environment and Traffic & Transport Committees, if this is agreed by Full Council.

**Date of Next meeting: To be confirmed**