

**Burwell Parish Council Climate Change Forum**  
**Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 7.30 pm at Mandeville Hall**

Present:	<p>Jenny Moss (Chair of the Climate Change Forum)  Liz Swift (Chair of Burwell Parish Council)  Robin Dyos (Burwell Parish Council)  Jim Perry (Burwell Parish Council)  Michael swift (Burwell Parish Council)  Geraldine Tate (Burwell Parish Council)  Paul Webb (Burwell Parish Council)  Lea Dodds (Burwell Parish Council)  John Rollin (Burwell Environment Group)  Nicola Hallows (Wild Burwell)  Martin O’Leary (Spring Close)  Christine Ware (Brixworth Parish Council -Observing)</p>	Action:
Apologies: CCF/021120 21/1	Linda Hart, Gill Miller, Helen McMenamin-Smith, and Brenda Wilson	
Approval of previous minutes CCF/021120 21/2	Martin O’Leary asked that the fact that grasslands are carbon sinks should be included in the minutes. He also suggested that the minutes should be scientific and evidenced based. His suggestion was noted. The minutes were approved. Proposed by Paul Webb, seconded by Robin Dyos.	
Election of Vice-Chair CCF/021120 21/3	Liz Swift proposed Paul Webb to be Vice Chair of the Climate Changed Forum. The proposal was seconded by Robin Dyos and agreed by all present. Paul Webb was duly elected Vice-Chair of the Climate Change Forum.	
Newmarket Road Housing Developmen t and the Burwell to Exning Cycleway CCF/021120 21/4	<p>With the proposed 350 new homes being built on Newmarket Road it was agreed that there is a need to ensure that the new homes are built to high environmental standards, being well insulated, with climate friendly heating systems and EV charging points etc. ECDC Planning can only stipulate standards to those stated by Government. However, next year Building Regulations will be much tighter for heating and energy efficiency. This Land, the developer for Newmarket Road will need to meet these standards.</p> <p>Jenny Moss agreed to email Lucy Frazer MP.  East Cambridgeshire District Council Climate Change – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Adopted 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and brought into effect on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021  <a href="http://eastcambs.gov.uk">Climate Change SPD (eastcambs.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>John Rollin informed the Forum that he found the cycle provision in and around the development to be good but was disappointed that any cycle link between Exning and Burwell appeared to have made no progress since 2015. It was explained that the cycle link has made a lot of progress, with highway surveys being carried out and West Suffolk Council looking at land acquisition around the bridge, which due to legal requirements may take time to complete. The link will go around the back of the new developments in Exning, joining on to the existing cycleway in the centre of the village.</p>	Jenny Moss

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	The proposed development in Exning, which joint funding for the project will form part of the Section 106 agreement, is still waiting to be determined.	
Report from the East Cambs District Council Parish Conference focusing on Climate Change CCF/021120 21/5	The Conference was cancelled due to high Covid levels.	
CFF/0211202 1/6 Trees and Rewilding	<p>Jenny Moss reported that she had written to ECDC and CCC regarding any land in the village which may be available for the planting of trees. ECDC has no land available and the Rural Estates Team at CCC is looking to see if they have any suitable areas. Lea Dodds informed the Forum that the land for Priory Wood had been purchased from the County Council using funding raised from the village. The County Council has just purchased some land on Heath Road, and there may be an opportunity for further woodland on this site.</p> <p>Martin O’Leary then gave the following report on the importance of wildflowers:</p> <p>GRASSLANDS AS CARBON SINKS While the principal reason for much less frequent mowing of roadside verges and other areas of grassland is to enhance biodiversity at a time when nature is under threat, grasslands also act as carbon sinks by storing carbohydrates formed from atmospheric carbon dioxide by photosynthesis. There are three main storage routes. PLANT STRUCTURE Plants store the carbohydrate products, sugars and starches, formed from photosynthesis, in leaves, stems, roots, seeds and fruits. Broad-leaved grassland plants like dandelions have tap roots to store carbohydrate underground. Less frequent mowing should allow plants with tap roots to store more carbohydrate in their roots because their leaves have a chance to grow and capture more carbon dioxide than if the grassland was mown frequently SOIL BACTERIA AND PLANT SPECIES OF THE PEA FAMILY Plant species of the pea family obtain the essential nutrient of nitrogen in exchange for carbon through a symbiotic relationship with rhizobia bacteria. Rhizobia can convert nitrogen gas in the air and in spaces between grains of soil into ammonium, a form in which nitrogen can be absorbed as a nutrient by plant species of the pea family. Rhizobia attach to the roots of the plants, forming colonies in the shape of nodules. In exchange for ammonium rhizobia absorb carbohydrates from plant roots, thus fixing carbon in the soil. Two species of the pea family, white clover and black medick, are abundant locally in grassland. Two</p>	

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	<p>other species of the pea family, red clover and birdsfoot trefoil, are common in local grasslands. PLANTS AND FUNGAL MYCORRHIZZA Most plant species that are herbaceous perennials also form symbiotic relationships with fungal mycorrhiza. Plant roots link with underground mycorrhiza systems. The mycorrhiza provide plants with essential nutrients, including nitrogen and phosphates, in exchange for carbohydrate from plant roots, thus fixing carbon in the soil. Mycorrhizal systems allow plants to forage for essential soil nutrients over a wider area than their root areas. This can be important for the absorption of phosphate, which can be in short supply in some soils. CONCLUSION These are three ways in which grasslands act as carbon sinks. Some of the carbohydrate in the soil will be used by soil organisms, converted back to carbon dioxide, and stored in the soil. The Wild Burwell team References J H Langenheim and K V Thimann ; Botany R G S Bidwell ; Plant Physiology Brian Spooner &amp; Peter Roberts ; Fungi Penguin Dictionary of Botany Plantlife website .</p> <p>Nicola Hallows, Wild Burwell gave the following report:  <b>Wild Burwell – what are we all about?</b> Working with villagers to create a more biodiverse environment, to enhance the local landscape for people and wildlife, and to raise awareness of links between the climate emergency and loss of nature.  <b>Why the ‘Wild’? ‘Rewilding’ – what does that mean?</b> – some definitions provided by councils in England “any kind of wildlife friendly natural habitat creation, for example creating a wildflower meadow in a park or planting a small area of new woodland” “restoring natural processes”, “allowing nature to reclaim a previously managed area”.</p> <p>At least 40 councils in England are initiating rewilding projects – mostly at the city or county level. Cambridgeshire, for example, has introduced wildlife-friendly mowing regimes on the whole of the road network outside towns and villages. Some local parishes are also taking action – eg Teversham and Wilbraham have changed the management of their verges and grassy areas. Burwell’s projects include Pauline’s Swamp, Spring Close, the Rec borders and the new tree nursery.</p> <p><b>Aren’t we doing enough rewilding in Burwell?</b> No – not when we can easily do more! - for example, planting more trees and hedges, changing the management of grassy areas, phasing out pesticide use. All of these will help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon sequestration – trees and species rich grasslands suck in carbon from the air and lock it away.</li> <li>• Easy access to nature – with the known benefits to wellbeing and mental health</li> <li>• Educational benefits – how can children learn about and hence be responsible for the natural environment unless they are surrounded by it: nature is not a destination.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's cheap! To state the obvious, public funds are limited and must be used for the common good.</li> </ul> <p>But most importantly – rewilding is an opportunity to increase <i>biodiversity</i>.</p> <p><b>What is biodiversity?</b> Biodiversity is the amount of variety of life on earth. For example, a wildflower meadow or mixed forest has lots of biodiversity – but a close mown lawn or single species pine forest has much less. Biodiversity boosts ecosystem productivity – each species on Earth, no matter how small, has an important role to play. All life on Earth is interconnected – humans depend on this interconnectedness, we are not separate from nature, we are part of it. Greater species diversity ensures natural sustainability for <i>all</i> life forms.</p> <p><b>Do we need to increase biodiversity in Burwell? Why bother?</b> The UK is the most nature depleted country in Europe – and Cambridgeshire one of the most nature depleted counties. Burwell has some great areas – but we can do so much more – we <i>need</i> to do so much more.</p>	
	<p>Over the last 100 years, the UK has lost 97% of its meadows and other species-rich grasslands. There has been a 60% decrease in biodiversity. A third of bumblebee species are under threat of extinction while 70% of butterfly species have seen population declines since the 1970s. All the species which depend on insects are faring the same, with declines in hedgehogs, bats and nearly all species of once common farmland birds.</p>	
	<p><b>There is lots in the news about trees, but why are the little grassy areas important?</b> As well as providing the means to increase native floral diversity, they can be pollinator corridors - most insects don't travel very far. Nature can't be 'parcelled off' into reserves - 'refugee camps for dying species'. Roadside verges, the edges of playing fields, grassy patches between roads...the Parish Council manages very many small grassy areas in Burwell – add them up and you have a meadow! One simple (cheap!) rule to improve the biodiversity of these areas: 'Cut less, cut later'. (More frequently mown borders show that the area is 'looked after' and</p>	
	<p>Trevor Dines, Plantlife charity Botanical Specialist says: 'Did you know that just eight dandelion flowers can provide enough nectar for 15,000 bee visits per day?'</p>	
	<p>maintain visibility at junctions).</p> <p><b>But people will say it looks untidy and ask why we aren't 'caring' for the environment anymore.</b> How did these expectations arise? Why <i>do</i> we mow these areas so often? We never used to – look at old photographs (when nature was not in trouble...) – the advent</p>	

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	<p>of cheap mowing machines (which also contribute to carbon dioxide emissions...) have shaped our expectations of an acceptable village environment. It doesn't have to stay this way! We <i>know</i> we are harming the environment with our tidy green deserts. Let's act now to make a real difference. The Parish Council – as a public body – has a <i>duty</i> to do its best for residents. Even if a few residents may not understand the changes at first, education helps – eg Suffolk County Council 'excuse the weeds' notices. Consider a middle ground – if local residents <i>really</i> can't cope with less frequently mown grass surrounded by a neat border, maybe they would welcome a few trees?</p> <p><b>Who will collect all those grass cuttings in the Autumn/early Spring?</b> For large areas 'cut and collect' machinery can be used, like in Spring Close. Smaller areas – volunteers with rakes! Eg Wild Burwell volunteering at Pound Hill and the churchyard last year.</p> <p><b>Final message</b> The time to act is <b>now</b>. We need to think about our message to future generations...will it be 'once we knew, we did everything we possibly could to halt climate change and ecological collapse' OR 'we carried on doing what we had done for the past</p>	
	<p><b>Sir David Attenborough</b> "Where in 1945 it was thought that the way to solve the problem was to create wildlife parks and nature reserves, that is no longer an option. They are not enough now. The whole countryside should be available for wildlife. The suburban garden, roadside verges ... all must be used".</p>	<p>longer an option. They are not enough now. The whole countryside should be available for wildlife. The suburban garden, roadside verges ... all must be used".</p>
	<p>50 years – <i>knowing the harm</i> – because.....'</p> <p><b>Note</b> Wild Burwell's rewilding aspirations are directly supportive of aims in BPC's Climate Emergency Action Plan, especially:          'Enhance Burwell as a place with beautiful, accessible wild areas, some tiny, some larger, so that villagers can enjoy this area for recreation and exercise'          'Encourage the planting of trees in appropriate pre-defined and approved places - Support restoration of disturbed wetlands and peat - Continue to promote the creation and management of more green spaces, wildlife gardens, and community gardens. These actions will continue to encourage biodiversity of our flora and fauna, which in turn will protect our pollinators, which in turn will ensure a better local food supply.'</p> <p>Short term aims in the Plan:          6.1 WHAT WE AIM TO DO SHORT TERM - Establish the Parish Council <i>carbon footprint</i> (properties, <i>grass cutting</i>, mileage etc.) - Encourage parishioners to identify their own carbon footprints - <i>Look for suitable land for tree planting, and maintain existing mature trees that are sited away from housing</i> - Install EV charging stations - Set up a survey to gain local opinion, and to raise awareness - Encourage buying local produce – maybe a more frequent farmer's market - <i>Establishing wild flower verges</i> - Work with the community and local environmental group - Liaise with</p>	

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the gardening and allotment group - Lead by example, with the refurbishment of the Gardiner Memorial hall having the environment, key in its design, by incorporating climate change technology / insulation etc.

**Issues raised at the October WB meeting:**

- WB offer to help BPC with communications and public engagement about 'rewilding' projects and other initiatives to support biodiversity in Burwell;
- whether BPC could help identify locations for trees and shrubs on BPC owned land;
- request information re BPC's planned audit of mature trees in Burwell (noticed in BPC minutes);
- request info re management of the Rec borders.

**Buglife** Current rates of decline could lead to the extinction of 41% of the world's insect species over the next few decades. Butterflies, moths, bees, wasps, and dung beetles are amongst the most at risk, along with freshwater insects such as stoneflies, caddisflies and mayflies. A small number of unfussy, very mobile and pollutant-tolerant species are able to cope with the damage that humans are doing to our planet. These generalist species are replacing the rich diversity of species that make up the fabric of life on Earth. It is becoming increasingly clear that our planet's ecological balance is breaking and there is an urgent need for an intense and global effort to halt and reverse these dreadful trends. Allowing the insect eradication crisis to become a catastrophe is not a rational option for anyone.

Insects make up over half the species on Earth, our planet's health depends on them, so their enduring disappearance is intensely concerning. The rate of loss of insect life is much faster than that of higher profile wildlife like birds and mammals – the local extinction rate for insects is eight times higher! There are many causes, and they all need to be addressed, but the evidence is clear, we will not halt the crisis without urgently reversing habitat loss and degradation, preventing and mitigating climate change, cleaning-up polluted waters, and replacing pesticide dependency with sustainable farming methods.

Reconnect isolated wildlife-rich sites at a landscape scale. Habitat-linking corridors, and stepping stones including B-Lines, must be integrated into new and existing schemes and policies to target habitat creation and increase opportunities for species to move. [Small steps can have a huge impact – a B-line brushes Burwell]

**Plantlife** Grassy verges cover an area equivalent to ALL our remaining lowland species-rich grassland so this new approach can literally double the opportunities for wild flowers and wildlife.

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	<p>“It’s heartening to see road verges increasingly recognised as wildlife havens, rather than the inconsequential ‘edgelands’ that flash by in the car wing mirror as we speed ahead with our busy lives. Where once there was a desire to see verges scalped to the bone for that neat-and-tidy look, there’s an increasing appetite for ‘messier’ verges that provide better cover and food for wildlife. As well as offering hope to some incredibly rare flowers like wood calamint and fen ragwort that now ONLY appear on road verges, the shift in public attitudes - reflected in the huge support for the Plantlife petition - means we could see more familiar flowers like cowslip, oxeye daisy, knapweed, tufted vetch and even orchids on our journeys.”</p> <p>...trailblazing councils such as Dorset...providing heart-warming botanical results - where UK verges were once soulless scorched strips they now are on the road to abounding with rare gems like bee orchids.</p> <p>Nicola Hallows expressed that biodiversity is equally as important as Climate Change. Grass needs to not be cut until late summer. Issues with visibility can be solved by cutting the out edge. When the grass is cut in late autumn, it needs to be collected and volunteers can help to do this. Collected grass can be composted. The Parish Council should for areas they are responsible for cutting, change the way grass is managed.</p> <p>It was noted that Wild Burwell is willing to help with grass cutting management.</p> <p>It was explained that the Council in particularly the Assets and Environment Group who will be making recommendations to the Council about grass management receives information delivered to the Climate Change Forum and as the majority of the working group are members of the Climate Change Forum will be in a knowledgeable position to make an informed decision but will need to work out what can be achieved and if this can be incorporated in the current grass cutting contract which still has a further two years to run.</p> <p>A question was raised asking if the wildflower areas at the Recreation Ground had been cut yet. The Clerk informed the Forum that the hedges around the Recreation Ground were in the process of being cut and that the ground alongside the hedges, about a metre wide would be cut as well. The Council’s Maintenance Officer would cut the rest.</p>	
<p>CCF/021120 21/7 Environment al Survey</p>	<p>Data has been analysed from the Burwell Environment Group Survey. Unfortunately, Survey Monkey has changed its terms and conditions only allowing access to 40 of the submissions out of 86 available. There would be a further cost of £300 to access more. Available results to be circulated. It was agreed following a proposal from Michael that a recommendation should be made to</p>	

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	<p>Full Council that the survey should be put to the village again via the Clunch magazine and survey monkey. Costs could be in the region of £1,000 but external funding may be available to cover this. The wording in the survey needs to be well thought out and how the results data can be utilised.</p> <p>The results of the initial data show that on a scale of one to ten, the average level of concern is 5.</p> <p>Nicola Hallows asked if a recommendation could be made to Full Council about the grass cutting. She was advised that initially this needs to be discussed by the Asset and Environment Group.</p>	Recommendation Council meeting on 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
CCF/021120 21/8 Proposed Green Open Day	<p>A Green Open Day combined with the Pauline's Swamp Open Day had previously been considered. However, this needs to be discussed by the Pauline's Swamp Trustees before further planning takes place. Their next meeting is 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021. Michael Swift explained the need to have a day to educate the village on Climate Change issues. Youth need to be involved as well as it is their future that is at risk. He suggested that a subgroup involving members of the Climate Change Forum should be set up to organise.</p>	
CCF/021120 21/9	<p>The following updates from the previous meeting were noted:  The Farmer's Market is unable to do more sessions in Burwell as it is part of a four-week circuit.  No response has been received yet from Richard Kay ECDC regarding Carbon Footprint.  Jenny Moss has compiled an item for the next issue of Clunch on Food Miles.  Any suggestions of representatives of other groups, particularly youth groups and the farming community should be made to the Clerk. Geraldine Tate can represent Burwell Belles as she is a member of both the Forum and Burwell Belles.  It was suggested that Paul Pickles, previously employed by the Environment Agency could be invited to speak to the group. Jenny Moss to contact Paul Pickles.  Martin O'Leary suggested that the members of the public should be allowed to attend the Forum meetings. It was agreed that this should not happen at this point in time, however a programme of open sessions could be arranged for the future.</p>	<p>Jenny Moss to email Michael Geary</p> <p>Jenny Moss</p>
Date of the next meeting CCF/021120 21/10	4 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 7.30 pm at Mandeville Hall	
Meeting Closed	8.55 pm	
Signed		Dated