

Minutes from second meeting of sustainability subcommittee ('Corner Greenies')

Date: 7 December 2022

Present:

- Fiona Colbeck (FC)
- Jill Cochrane (JC)
- Juliet Cairns (JCa)
- Mac Cochrane (MC)
- Nik Thuesen (NT)
- Rose Abdollahzadeh (RA)

Absent:

- Tristan West (TW)

1. Membership update and review of minutes

- Members welcomed Juliet Cairns (no 11) to the subcommittee
- Members reviewed and approved the minutes of the previous meeting
- Members reviewed and approved the text drafted by RA on the purpose and remit of the subcommittee (document renamed as 'Terms of Reference').

Action: Agreed that for transparency purposes it would be a good idea to upload meeting minutes and terms of reference to the CG website. TW nominated to do this, as he also does for the Directors' meetings.

2. Discussion of agenda items and actions

The subcommittee continued its discussion of previous areas and reported on progress made since the October meeting:

2.1 Electric vehicle (EV) charging points

- Members of the Committee discussed and ruled out the option of having EV charging points on each of the CG garages as this would not allow sufficient passing space at the bottom garages and would require individual meters per garage. The Plantation has the option of back walls with electric points specific to each house, which would not work for CG.
- NT proposed that one option could be to have charging points along the CG access road that would limit this parking only for charging, and then CG car owners would need to park their cars in another spot to keep the charging points free.
- Since the last meeting, the Keep has now installed communal charging points along one row of parking bays. Members agreed it would be good to learn how the payment and usage has been set up and how well it is working so far.
- The option of a car club was raised again as a potential way to reduce the number of individual cars on the road, which would make the charging issue easier to resolve.

Action point: MC to get contact details from Rosie / Dick Hewson of Andy Slater who led the Keep project and discuss his research and learnings to date from the new EV charging points.

Action point: RA to contact estate agent(s) to establish whether there would be any tangible uplift in house value if EV charging was possible.

Action point: RA to arrange a date in early 2023 for Gideon Bullock from Toyota to share the company's research on the future of EV usage in urban/suburban areas such as Blackheath.

2.2 Renewable energy

- JCa fed back that some of the houses in The Lane are exploring the viability of getting solar panels, but they have slanted roofs which offer a much more optimal angle for solar panels than CG's flat roofs. Even so, JCa offered to look into the research that The Lane residents have done on the solar panel options.
- Members continued their discussion re solar panels on garages which face the right way and with no tree cover. NT highlighted that the optimal use for solar energy is to heat water for a heating system/ hot water usage, and so generating energy on the garages and transporting this to the houses would likely be inefficient.
- Members discussed whether installing 'green' roofs on houses and garages would offer good insulation and at the same time be beneficial for nature.
- In addition to ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps were also ruled out as too noisy and not suitable for CG houses.
- The railway embankment was highlighted as a potential area of land for the subcommittee to keep in mind for some form of local clean energy generation.

Action point: JCa to enquire about solar panel research undertaken by The Lane residents and feed back to the subcommittee.

Action point: Members to look out for information from Greenwich Council in Spring 2023 on solar panel installation offer to refresh our information on costs and feasibility.

2.3 Communal gardens

- Members continued the previous discussion on adapting Seasons' existing gardening methods, specifically to ensure ground cover rather than bare soil, to reduce the machinery used, and to introduce more drought resistant planting.
- Agreed to propose a meeting between the gardening and sustainability subcommittees in 2023 to share ideas and concerns, and which will include proposing the introduction of 'no mow May' and 'no blow October'.
- JCa raised the issue that some young trees need to be planted to ensure longevity- especially behind no. 18.

Action point: FC to put together some guidelines on sustainable gardening practices.

2.4 Light, air and noise pollution

- JCa raised the issue of keeping vigilant to Network Rail chopping down trees along the track embankment as it has a major impact on air quality and noise pollution.
- Members continued discussion of existing path lighting which creates glare and light pollution into certain houses.
- MC reported that the wiring was last checked 4 to 5 years ago and was in good condition. Reusing the existing wiring would keep the costs down of a project to change the current bollards.

Action point: MC to look into some options for alternative lighting and changing bulbs to an energy-efficient option.

Action point: FC to look into potential apps that would help CG residents coordinate regular food deliveries

3. Overcoming potential barriers to change

- As discussed in October meeting, members agreed to continue with plan to survey CG residents to assess appetite for change.
- JC suggested the subcommittee writes a piece in the Cator Estate newsletter as one route for connecting with other parts of the Estate looking at these issues. A larger portion of Cator Estate residents making adaptations on sustainability grounds could assist with permissions and wider changes that may need to be initiated by the Cator Estate.

Action point: RA to draft a questionnaire for CG residents

4. Agenda for next meeting

- I. Review of minutes
- II. Review of action points
- III. Review of draft CG survey
- IV. Review of gardening guidelines document
- V. Share any reflections, research or interesting updates related to the committee's work
- VI. Agree date of next meeting

5. Date of next meeting

TBC in late January or early February, RA to suggest dates