

Yealmpton Environment Group
Notes of meeting Tuesday 21st February 2023
Parish Room, Bakery Square

Present:

Linda Durman, Charles Weston-Baker, Jane Pennington, Sheila Melot, James Roberts

Apologies Sheila Barton, Jen Fox, Tony Hawkins,

1. Notes of meeting 21st February approved.

2. Matters arising

Advert to recruit a **tree warden** failed to elicit a response. YEM volunteers to be sent relevant information and advert to be posted on village Facebook page again. Action ? for YEM and Linda for Facebook page

Network capacity – government announcement expected regarding increasing capacity to enable more solar farms to be brought into use.

3. Funding

In a conversation with Tracy Ebrell (YCE) it became clear that section 106 funding to Yealmpton Parish Council is sent with the intention that it will be used for projects that enhance the environment. Linda had then raised this issue at the February PC meeting where the restriction for use for environment projects was contested.

Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, contributions can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place. The solar farms in Newton Ferrers Parish at Creacombe and Marland, are required to pass on a proportion of their profits to Newton and Noss, Yealmpton and Holbeton Parish Councils. Yealm Community Energy also allocates funding for environment projects directly. To date, the parish clerk in Yealmpton does not have a copy of this Section 106 agreement.

Income under the S106 agreement was received by the Parish Councils for the first time in 2020. Total amounts to date are:

		Receipts
2020		
July	YCE grant	£2,000.00
2021		
March	Creacombe Solar Farm	£2,197.65
	Marland Solar Farm	£1,448.70
2022		
July	Creacombe s106	£2,363.46
	Marland s106	£1,558.16
2023		
	Creacombe s106	£2,681.22
	Marland s106	<u>£1,767.48</u>
Total received s106		£14,016.67

The budget headings for this income were 'Creacombe' and 'Marland'. No effort has ever been made to make it clear that the intended use was for environment projects. Dedication of S106 funds for environment projects will be considered at the May Parish Council meeting. The presence of YEG members may be required.

Noted that a decision on use of these funds is needed as soon as possible as funding is needed in the coming financial year for local projects including:

- structural costs for the local tree nursery in Lodge Gate Field
- baseline survey; biodiversity Ruby's Wood and New England Quarry.

Linda expressed concern that YEG needs to keep its own account of funding received and reporting dates to the various funding bodies. Charles offered to design a spreadsheet. Action Linda and Charles

4. Previous biodiversity surveys in Yealmpton.

2009 Devon Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan summary attached

2010 <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/parish-biodiversity-audits/southhams>

This was noted.



5. River Yealm water quality

Monitoring for pollution

Hydrocarbons, metals, pesticides and surfactants can now all be monitored in response to an alert from the Continuous Water Monitor if necessary. This is in addition to taking photos at key vantage points which is a key part of evidence gathering. The newly established Response Team was mobilised on 8th March in both the upper and middle catchment taking photographs at predetermined sites. A peak in dissolved solids alongside a rise in turbidity suggested slurry or sewage rather than just soil alone. No specific source was identified. On 9th March the tributaries running down from the moor turned a deep orange colour, this being most likely from the peat. There are still remnants of solid china clay deposits in the river from the spill in November. On 16th March there was a China Clay spill from a lorry on the hill up to Tin Park. EA reference no 2136985. With the heavy rain it was likely to find its way into the Piall which feeds The Yealm. Photos confirm the presence of the spill in the Piall. It did not impact the Yealm especially.

Baseline samples were taken on 30 March in the Upper, Mid and Lower catchment of the Yealm, to be tested for E. coli.

West Country Rivers Trust - Ian Townsend, Evidence and Engagement Officer for WRT will be visiting us on 30 March for a tour of the catchment and to discuss a trial for passive sampling. We hope to confirm that the trial will take place on the Yealm and establish the positioning of their kit in order to take passive samples of trace organic pollutants (TOP) – hormones and heavy metals.

River Fly Project – Yealmpton Parish Council has agreed to allocate the £1950 necessary to fund the CSI training by WildFish of up to 10 volunteers. Further funding will be sought for equipment and laboratory sample processing. The Professional Baseline survey (funded by Wildfish) will take place in Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024. This is funded by WildFish. Recruitment of CSI volunteers can now commence. Approval of the River Fly Project will be sought from both YEM and the RYWQG in order to further facilitate fundraising.

Run off secondary to heavy rain – advice on limiting additional run off from roofs, driveways and parking areas, has been sent from River Yealm Water Quality Group to Parish Councils. Remedial methods considered include:

- promoting use of water butts to attenuate the flow of surface water to sewage plants; uptake may be enhanced if help is offered fitting the water butts
- preparation of advice leaflet on installing a soakaway
- preparation of an advice leaflet on use of grasscrete or plastic porous grass / gravel pavers as an alternative to Tarmac or concrete.

Action Linda

Meetings:

A YEG member gave a 5 minute Measurement & Data presentation covering the different forms of complementary data being collected by the Yealm Dippers including the Continuous Water Monitor, to the Sustainable South Hams River Assembly on 18th March 2023.

6. Trees

Community Orchard – a site in Stray Park adjacent to the wildflower meadow has been identified and use for 20 orchard trees agreed with the landlord (Kitley estate). BeeWild is providing funding for these blossom trees. Charles W-B and Cliff Harris will present the overall proposal at the April council meeting. Consultation with the community will take place in advance of autumn planting: an article has been submitted for the May Yealmpton Press and includes a link to a survey, in which people in the village can express their views and ask questions. The link will also be posted on the village Facebook page.

Action Linda

The orchard will not produce apples in the first year (best to remove them at bud stage so that the plants put their energy into their roots and branches) but there are lots of spare apples available in Yealmpton in the autumn (especially from Doug Palmer, YAGA apple expert) so apple pressing (organised by Parklife) may be possible adjacent to the new trees.

Please collect screw top wine and other bottles in preparation Action everyone

FWAG has completed 7 farmer advisory visits, 3 farmer events and 3 YEM advisory visits. Interventions following visits are funded by ELMS. The Local Nature Recovery Scheme is to pay farmers for locally-targeted actions, such as creating wildlife habitat or creating wetland habitats.

DWT (Devon Wildlife Trust) has undertaken eight comparable visits with smallholders. Interventions following these advisory visits are not funded.

A **micro nursery for local trees** is planned to ensure continuing availability and affordability of local tree planting. The nursery will be part of the newly planted Kitley Woodland, in Lodge Gate Field in partnership with Volunteers Outdoors. Funding for the structure – raised beds – for the nursery and adjacent wildflower meadow, and for the fencing to enclose them, is being pursued.

7. Light pollution

We asked Sir Gary Streeter whether he would consider joining the All Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies and had an encouraging response:

‘Thank you for your email and the suggestion and I will certainly look into the programme for the APPG on dark skies. I certainly appreciate the importance of the natural environment and in my chairmanship of the APPG on national parks we look in great detail into landscape and nature recovery, but I will certainly consider the interesting suggestion that you put to me. Kind regards, Gary Streeter.

Letter to Dartmoor National Park Authority re dark skies awaits response.

Resolved to write an article for May Yealmpton Press.

8. AOB

EV charge point survey results due end of April and a report will follow.

Community composting – possible site for this at Newton Downs Farm – project lead from Newton and Noss and Yealmpton and Holbeton invited to consider joining.

9. Next meeting Wednesday 3rd May 7pm at Parish Room again.