

**Minutes, Environment Committee held 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Saddleworth Civic Hall.**

**Present:** Cllr K. Phillips (CH) Cllr M. Scholes, Cllr J Battye, Cllr Al-Hamdani,  
Mrs T Rhodes (Greenfield & Grasscroft)

**563. Apologies for Absence** Cllr D Simpson, Cllr L Dawson (rec'd 14/3)

**564. Declarations of interest,** Cllr Scholes declared on point 568 of the agenda. He is a member of Saddleworth Community Hydro, Centre of Alternative Technology, Bristol Energy Coop, Ecology Building Society, Coop.

**565. Minutes of meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

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

**566. Proposed Allotment extension**

The Clerk shared the proposal for extension of the allotment from the Asset's Committee and it was discussed.

Cllr Scholes questioned how this could be being considered as there is no allocated money in the new budget.

Cllr Al-Hamdani advised the cost for the original allotment build was funded by the District Partnership.

Cllr Al-Hamdani advised that he didn't think anything could be planned until we receive the report from the Ecology SBI survey due to take place in April.

Mrs Rhodes expressed concern that she believes not enough consideration is given to the other wards in the borough and Cllr Battye suggested it would be a good idea to look into developing allotments for other areas of Saddleworth instead of being centred in Uppermill?

After more discussion the Environment Committee decided they would need to see a proper cost benefit analysis and be able to consider the feedback from the survey before they could consider progressing this.

**567. Ecology SBI Survey**

This survey has been arranged for early April. The Clerk advised that she would contact them to see if a date could be agreed.

### **568. Solar Panels for Civic Hall/possible funding options**

Cllr Al-Hamdani advised this was discussed at the last full council meeting when it was explained that soaring energy costs meant that we have been forced to budget £30k of reserves this financial year to be able to keep the precept request at a reasonable level. This is not sustainable going forward.

There was some discussion around this about possibilities and any funding that may be available to facilitate solar roof panels.

Cllr Scholes said reserves should be invested in sourcing energy solutions rather than just paying for increased energy costs and all agreed.

Cllr Battye advised that after the initial investment we should be able to see a return within 5-7 years.

It was agreed that Cllr Scholes would contact the Centre for Alternative Technology as well as Saddleworth Hydro to see if you would be able to support us.

The Committee asked the Clerk to contact Oldham Community Power (OCP) for advice and support.

Cllr Scholes asked if the building was in a conservation area and the Clerk confirmed it was. But Cllr Al-Hamdani said that as the roof doesn't face the road and not visible we should be able to get it approved.

### **569. Items for next agenda**

Invite Solar Panel Companies to the next meeting to advise and support

Ecology SBI Survey

Update from Asset's Committee regarding proposed allotment extension.

**Next meeting: Still TBC (5<sup>th</sup> June not available)**