



Uttoxeter Nature Recovery Network

Minutes of UNRN Meeting Held 23 February 2023

Present: Dave Trenery (Co-Chair/Meeting Chair), Rob and Janet Hawkins, Carolyn Green, Kate Copeland, Marie Williams (Co-Chair), Ken, Justin and Mavis Harrison, Dave Thomas, Philip Knight, Maureen Turner, Geoff Buck; *Via Zoom:* Alison Trenery, Kate Hollins-White

Guests: Liz Peck - Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
Cllr George Allen and Tom Deery – East Staffordshire Borough Council

AGENDA:

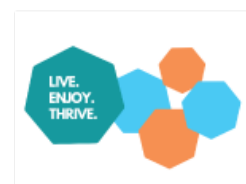
1. **Welcome:** The Chair welcomed those attending in person and by Zoom
2. **Presentation and Questions: Liz Peck, Advocacy and Campaigns Manager, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust**

The Defend Nature Campaign presentation by LP centred around the **Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill** whereby all retained EU Law is to be reviewed, amended, retained or scrapped by the 31st December 2023. This posed a risk to the continued protection of our biodiversity and wildlife because if the review of pertinent laws was not completed by this date they would then be scrapped. Although existing UK legislation already gives some support to nature, in many cases EU Legislation enables a much higher level of protection to be achieved. Such legislation was relevant to many of our local species and habitats such as Pasturefields Salt Marsh in the West Midlands which is the only known remaining example in the UK of a natural salt spring with inland saltmarsh vegetation. It was also relevant to watercourses particularly as none of our Staffordshire watercourses are classified as 'good'. LP urged people to help by spreading the word, encouraging action from environmental groups and lobbying their local MP.

The Chair agreed that this committee was concerned about the effects and timing of this piece of legislation and asked that all members look at what ways we can contribute to this campaign. In particular, we should write to our MP and to help with this SWT have provided postcard templates that can be found on their website:- www.wildlifetrusts.org/defend-nature-postcard-campaign (Ctrl + Click)

3. **Greening the Maltings: Discussion with Councillor George Allen, Leader, ESBC and Tom Deery, Senior Enterprise Officer, ESBC on the Maltings Redevelopment.**

The Maltings sub-group had previously prepared and circulated a paper to the Leader of the Council and Senior Officers outlining the reasons why the Council's policies meant that the Maltings redevelopment must address biodiversity and sustainability. This was recirculated with the agenda along with a paper setting out how the Borough Council might address these issues.





Following introductions, the Chair emphasised that the reason for this meeting was to advocate that biodiversity and sustainability were important considerations in whatever progress was made in the redevelopment of the Maltings area. GA acknowledged that it was evident that in the 1st consultation people were concerned about sustainability and energy conservation and on the evidence from the discussion papers some of this would seem achievable. GA and TD were interested in garnering ideas ahead of potential development and this could potentially set the standard for future Borough policy. They added that SWT had assisted in the Climate Change and Sustainable Development SPD, and stated that they were committed to a flagship scheme with sustainability as one of the main considerations but that biodiversity also needed to be considered.

TD proposed that the UNRN is added to the list of consultees for this planning application. It was noted that although local planning policy is driven by ESBC, developments are undertaken by developers who were constrained by the funding of such schemes. However, the Maltings did have an advantage as this development would be Council led. TD was open to the idea that an Ecology professional was included in the design team and there was discussion as to how the maltings could be integrated into the wider landscape and also form a gateway into the High Street.

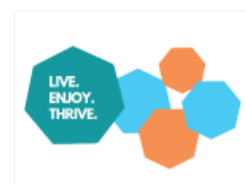
Other areas that were discussed included utilisation of waste heat, a district heat network, ground source heat pumps and solar panels in the car park, the importance of positioning of buildings and window openings and wind turbine trees. An example of sustainable development was given as Hockerton Estate in Southwell, Nottinghamshire and it was suggested that ESBC could engage with Keele University at its meeting in May. It was emphasised that energy saving proposals needed to include retail as well as residential accommodation.

Nesting sites (swift bricks etc) and greening up were discussed and it was agreed that while the concepts were admirable there needed to be confidence that such areas were actively maintained. It was suggested that a 'Friends' group could be formed to help with this. The committee hoped that biodiversity greening would be extended into the High Street and would be considered regardless of the outcome of the Maltings development.

ESBC were urged to look at how the spaces are used and in reference to the car park this needed to be an inviting area in its own right and could be an important social space with multi-purpose use. There was discussion on the types of semi-permeable materials to reduce water run-off and promote rain water catchment and systems of self-irrigation.

ESBC asked the committee to encourage as many people as possible to engage in the consultation so that there would be a good response and hopefully more good ideas put forward. ESBC were keen to get UNRN involved at an early stage and KC offered collaborative working to help inform the public.

TD emphasised that planning is a conciliation between differing ideas and acknowledged there was more work to be done on an option paper. It was agreed that when the results of the consultation are published UNRN will be happy to offer more help and advice. The Chair thanked TD and GA for attending and engaging in a useful and productive exchange of ideas.





4. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous UNRN Meeting held on 26th January 2023 were approved.

5. Brief Updates

MW informed the committee that the revised UNRN Biodiversity Action Plan for 2022-2024 was adopted by Uttoxeter Town Council on 14th February 2023.

6. Next Meeting Date; 23 March 2023 at the Globe Foundation.

Dave Trenergy/Marie Williams

Co-Chairs

