

## Minutes of the Romsey Forum 27 June 2024

Present: J Bea, V. Brice, I Bullivant, N Bundy, D Chillingworth, M Cooper, G Darby, D&C Hall, R Hiley, L&R Hunt, J Jarvis, J Jones, V Messenger, T Oliver, F Pilkington, R&E Pratt, P&A Roberts, M&R Robinson, J Russell, C Simpson, C&J Tilley, I Tripp, R Wren.  
Speakers Ellie Banks, Jennifer Adams. Chair John Parker, Secretary Sandra Smith

Following the sad death of the Forum Chairman, Mark Edgerley, JP had agreed to chair this meeting. Roy Perry had offered to Chair the September meeting at which a new Chairman could be elected.

1. Apologies: N Adams King, N Daas, D Kingston, C Nixson, R Perry,

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

MC amended the date in the last paragraph of AOB which should be 1990s. With this correction the minutes were accepted.

3. The Hampshire Hedge Project. Ellie Banks, Project Officer, CPRE

Ellie started as a volunteer and is now running the Hampshire Hedge Project. The history of hedges was outlined, the species they contain and their function and benefits both to people and wildlife. In Britain peak hedge was in the 1800s during the enclosures. After World War II landowners were encouraged to remove hedges and 52% has been lost. Barbed wire is an alternative needing less skill to maintain. Hedge Laying is the key skill needed to achieve a thick bushy hedge, green from the ground up. Question: is there a point where you cannot layer a very old hedge.

Answer: Yes, eventually the stems are very old and thick and cannot bend but break and do not regrow. The Hampshire hedge project aims to create a habitat and connectivity for wildlife. It will connect two national parks with nature reserves, copses and woodlands along the way. The 3-year project offers training, works with schools and funds groups. There are online talks on management and ecology. There are 5 schools, 4 farms, 3 local businesses (including IBM) and 7 community groups involved. They aim for 5km of hedge using 25,000 small trees. Active work planting is done in the winter season. The first winter season has gone and 159 people were trained. Three hedge layers have been trained and can now do paid work hedge laying. Ellie's talk included information about species of trees included, community involvement, events and opportunities for volunteering.

Lots more information on this project can be found at [www.cprehampshire.org.uk](http://www.cprehampshire.org.uk)

4. Green Corridors, a Romsey Future Project. Jennifer Adams OBE.

Hampshire has a great many Sites Important for Nature Conservation (SINCS) as designated by HCC but developers were not taking these into account. Jennifer Adams gave a fascinating account of this complex mapping project, her notes are attached. [Link to the newest map](https://qgiscloud.com/Necmapping/Green_26_May_with_priority_habitats/)  
[https://qgiscloud.com/Necmapping/Green\\_26\\_May\\_with\\_priority\\_habitats/](https://qgiscloud.com/Necmapping/Green_26_May_with_priority_habitats/)

5. Short updates including planning

Question. Has anything been decided on the proposed 20mph speed limit in the town centre? MC said there has been no response from HCC.

Question: Brewery site. There has been clearance of quite a large area, what is going on? JP did not know. The builder had said they were researching the condition of the site.

Question. Is there any news on the Edwina Mountbatten home site. A: No, the appeal will be in 6 months' time. The South aspect is the problem.

Question relating to Botley Road repairs. Why has the worst bit been left, the top and bottom has been done? JP suggested email to Cllr Kirsty North. MC thought the worst bits had been repaired but asked to be copied in to the email.

Question. Buses to Winchester no longer go along the Straight Mile. What will be done with the bus shelters? There was no answer to this, but discussion showed general disapproval of the new bus routes.

6. Any Other Business Thanks were offered to Romsey Futures

7. Future dates: September 19<sup>th</sup> and November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024