

Environment & Emergency Committee

To: Committee Members

Cllrs Pitt (Chairperson), Banks, Bolanz, Dunford, Goodman, Simonis and S. Smith

Copies: County Councillors – S Ferguson, K Prentice, S Taylor & G Seeff

District Councillors – L Davenport-Ray, S Ferguson, A Jennings, M Pickering, I Taylor & S Taylor

Town Councillors (not a member of this committee)

Local Press, Town Council website

Agenda for the meeting of the **Environment & Emergency committee** to be held on **Tuesday 10th September 2024** at **6.15pm** in the Eaton's Centre, The Maltings, St Neots, PE19 8ES.

Please be aware that meetings may be recorded and made available to the public. Your participation in the meeting indicates your consent to being included in these recordings.

Public Participation

There will be a 10-minute session before the meeting to allow any resident to address the committee on any matter appearing on the agenda for this meeting.

Members of the Environment & Emergency committee are hereby summoned to attend this meeting to consider the following business.

C Robson
Town Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

To receive Councillors apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interest

To receive from Councillor's declarations as to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and/or Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests along with the nature of those interests in relation to any agenda item.

3. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the Environment and Emergency Committee meeting held on 2nd July 2024 as a true and accurate record. Attachment 1

4. Action List

To receive and note the committee action list.

Attachment 2

5. Baseline Carbon Emissions

To receive and consider the results of baseline carbon emission calculations for St Neots Town Council over the past year.

Attachment 3

- 6. Energy Assessment Audits**
To receive and consider quotations for energy assessment audits of Council-owned buildings and to resolve whether to progress with a preferred quote. Attachment 4
- 7. Vehicle and Operational Equipment Asset Register**
To receive and consider a report on the Council's current vehicle and operational equipment fleet, and opportunities for transitioning the fleet towards net zero alternatives. Attachment 5
- 8. Community Orchard**
To receive and consider a proposal on the planting of a community orchard. Attachment 6
- 9. Carbon Literacy Training**
To receive and recommend that the cost of delivering Carbon Literacy training to staff and Councillors be approved. Attachment 7
- 10. Budget Setting**
To note and consider the 2024/2025 revenue budget and any proposals for further investigation as part of the 2025/2026 revenue budget. Attachment 8
- 11. Date of next meeting**
To note that the date of the next Committee meeting will be 6:15pm on 12th November 2024.

Environment & Emergency Committee

Present: Committee Members
Cllrs Pitt (Chairperson), Banks, Collins, Dunford, Goodman, Slade and S. Smith

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Environmental Project Officer

Absent: Cllr Bolanz, Simonis

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment & Emergency committee** held on 2nd July 2024 at 7.15pm in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

Public Participation

There was one member of the public present. No member of the public wished to address the Council.

050 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Bolanz and Simonis.

ACTIONS

RESOLVED to co-opt Cllr Collins to the meeting.

051 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

052 Minutes

- i) **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Environment and Emergency Committee meeting held on 5th March 2024 as a true and accurate record.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Environment and Emergency Committee meeting held on 12th June 2024 as a true and accurate record.

Action List

Members received and noted the committee action list.

The Environmental Project Officer provided the following updates;

- The advisory flood leaflet was ready and would be shared with the new committee members before being distributed.
- The Biodiversity for all Grant was waiting for HDC to progress, Members noted that this needed to be done before February for seasonal planting reasons.
- The Environmental Project Officer will share plans for the old cemetery for which the funding has been awarded with the new committee members.

Energy Performance Certificates

Members received and considered the results of Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) for Council owned and/or operated buildings. The Environmental Project Officer introduced the report, which gave an overview of the recommendations arising from the assessments. The committee was advised that solar panels were not included in any of the recommendations. The Environmental Project Officer had queried this and was advised that the software produced recommendations with payback periods of less than 7 years, solar pv panels had longer pay back periods.

Members discussed the recommendations arising from the EPCs at length, commenting;

- That the Council needed them for its buildings, but it was difficult to see that the recommendations were measured against cost benefit.
- A key part of committee's work is to look at SNTC buildings and work out what could be improved. Cost benefit is an important part of this as it will give better understanding of what to prioritise.
- Eligibility of grants for heating systems could help make heat pumps more achievable on a cost basis versus benefit basis.
- Heat pumps could be more effective than solar panels for buildings such as the Gate Lodge when grants and cost benefit are taken into consideration.
- Including batteries in solar pv solutions may improve paypack periods.

Members felt that there was still value in having an external company carry out an audit of council buildings (owned and operated) and provide recommendations, action pathway and industry costs on which priorities could be based and more detailed quotes than obtained.

Members commented that it was important to understand the carbon stock and level of each council building and have cost of getting those buildings to an improved position through estimates from an auditing company. This would provide more understanding on scale of challenge.

The Environmental Project Officer expressed caution with engaging an external company to undertake such an audit based on the results of previous similar work arranged by the Council, which was not as detailed as the officer would have liked.

It was agreed that it would be better to commission reports or obtain examples of audit reports from potential companies so their value could be assessed prior to going out to engage companies.

It was agreed that the Environmental Project Officer investigate reports and quotes with other auditing companies, with Members acknowledging that they did not want to spend money on reports that don't help. Companies should be asked what information and data they produce along with examples of outcome reports.

It was agreed that the Environmental Project Officer would liaise with the Committee Chair and Deputy Chair in investigating further.

Solar panels

Members received and considered a recommendation from the Operations and Amenities Committee that the Environment and Emergency Committee further consider and recommend an approach to solar panels in the wider context of the Council's estate. This arose from a request by a tenant of a Council owned building to partner with the Council on the installation of the panels.

Members commented as follows;

- As a public body the Council should actively support tenants wanting to improve the environmental impact of their companies. However, there needed to be a clear understanding of how this would work regarding Council tenants, costs and paybacks.
- The Council should look to improve environmental credentials of all buildings in its stock irrelevant of who owns it. However, where there is a commercial tenant, the Council should recoup energy savings by increased rent. An agreement on an amount whereby the Council gets a slower pay back and the tenant makes some savings would be the best outcome. However, it was acknowledged that lease lengths and break clauses do add a complicated factor.
- The Committee should consider and be clear on where it wants to prioritise its investment, would heat pumps for example have more impact than solar panels.
- Members debated the impact of heat pumps and the value versus benefit for certain buildings, noting any actions need to be accompanied with improving insulation. It was felt that the Committee had to consider and plan for all elements, not just solar panels and there should be a decision made on best value and biggest impact.
- The Council was more likely to be successful in securing grant funding for energy improvements.

The Committee commented that if the Council wants to move all buildings towards net zero by 2030 it needs a plan that measured the benefit of several solutions and that this should include supporting tenants to make improvements. This support should be commensurate to the situation of the tenant. A default solution may be from the Council to improve the buildings efficiency with a rent review and increase to pay towards such costs, with this coming from savings made by the tenants in utilities.

It was agreed that in the case of Gate Lodge heat pumps were worth investigating, as these may be more beneficial once grant funding is taken into account. However, it must be remembered the Council has 7 buildings it needs to consider and act on.

Carbon offsetting

Members received and considered a report on carbon offsetting options that the Council may wish to use in their efforts to work towards Net Carbon Zero by 2030. The purpose of the report was to help frame discussions on whether the Council should include offsetting as part of its approach to reaching carbon net-zero.

Members discussed the report at length, key comments raised included;

- If the Council is to include offsetting into its approach it should not leave this too late but should not rush into it if more local based actions might be better than offsetting.
- If the Council is a long way off carbon net zero at a certain agreed point, it may be that we need to look at its inclusion to help reach net-zero.
- Carbon offsetting will be needed to assist reaching net zero, but it would not be a solution.
- Recommendations on what good offsetting looks like are compelling. Locally planting trees is more measurable and impactful for a community.
- Public view needs to be considered; the first thing the Council takes action on should not be carbon credits.
- Buildings and transport are biggest focuses for the Council and this is where action should focus ahead of carbon offsetting.
- Use of environmental infrastructure should be considered, particularly where there are options for wetlands, noting that any actions should not significantly alter the biodiversity of an area by creating something that wasn't historically there.

It was noted that the Environmental Project Officer was working on a carbon accounting tool to calculate the Council's base carbon level. To have carbon accounting for physical use of the buildings and running of building then have base to do timeline. Reduce our emissions by certain amount, pair with priorities in CAP and put in timeline.

The committee agreed that it needed to come up with a recommended position on offsetting and what we are going to do about it. It was felt that the Council should press forward with actions to improve its building's efficiency and measure the impact of this before reviewing and making a commitment on offsetting.

Members noted the document and the information it provided and would revisit carbon offsetting as it continued to develop and progress actions set out in the adopted Climate Action Plan.



Date of Next Committee Meeting

Members noted that the date of the next committee meeting would be 10th September 2024 at 6:15pm.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

DRAFT

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL – ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

ACTION LIST 2024/25

The following Action List summarises outstanding resolutions and activities that are ongoing from the last Council and will continue to be worked on over the year.

ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE				
Project	Objective	Status	Responsibility	Timescales
2024/25 Activities				
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLAN				
Community Emergency Plan for St Neots	To continue to develop and bring forward a completed, comprehensive Community Emergency Plan document for consideration by the Committee.	<p>Newly appointed Environmental Project Officer has reviewed current document and contacted relevant external partners to gather information required to complete the plan.</p> <p>Once responses are received these will be incorporated into the document and this will be amended and brought back to the committee for adoption.</p>	1) Env. Officer	Updated Plan to be brought to November 2024 Committee meeting
Solar Panels on Cemetery Gate Lodge	To obtain quotes and work with the tenant of Gate Lodge to bring forward a proposal on the installation of solar panels on the building, as requested by the tenant.	<p>The E&E committee previously expressed support for a proposal from the tenants of Gate Lodge (Council owned building) to look at a scheme to install solar panels on the building. Quotations were taken to the Operations and Amenities Committee for consideration. The Committee has referred the matter back to the Environment Committee asking for further clarity on a wider approach to solar panels across the Council's estate.</p> <p>The E&E Committee recommended that this action now be considered as part of a wider review of the Council's Net Zero ambitions in relation to its buildings.</p>	1) Env. Officer	To be reviewed after energy audits have been completed

AGENDA ITEM 4

ATTACHMENT 2

ENERGISE REPORTS				
Progression of recommendations made within Energise reports for Council owned buildings	<i>Any outstanding recommendations from the Energise reports to be considered by new Environmental Officer as part of review and action planning</i>			
	Replace Eatons lighting with LED lighting as and when they fail.	As lights fail within the centre they are to be replaced with new LED lights. Rolling program.	1) GM Eatons	Recommended to remove from Action List as is now Operational matter
	Actioning recommendations within the reports	Environmental Project Officer reviewed the energise reports and provided a summary on relevance and actions to the Committee.	1) Env. Officer	Recommended to remove from Action List as new audits are planned
BIODIVERSITY - NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT				
HDC Biodiversity Audit and Grant	Reviewing the results of HDC's audit and bringing forward opportunities / ideas that may arise from the audit	<p>Biodiversity Audit has been completed by HDC. Awaiting publication of resulting report. To review and see whether it provides opportunities for SNTC and the committee.</p> <p>Grant award confirmed and HDC will undertake works. Awaiting funding from HDC.</p> <p>HDC will provide timescales for works which will be reported to the committee. Works will most likely need to be undertaken in autumn.</p>	1) Env. Officer	Update to be brought to next meeting of the Committee
CLIMATE ACTION				
Climate Action Plan for St Neots Town Council	To continue to develop a climate action plan, with achievable and measurable actions for adoption and implementation by the Council.	<p>An initial draft plan was brought forward by the Chairperson for consideration. The newly appointed Environmental Project Officer will be developing the process and the plan itself in partnership with the Committee. The development of the Plan forms a key part of the role.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to consider recommending the plan for formal adoption. The Climate Action Plan has now been formally adopted by Full Council.</p>	1) E&E Env. Officer	COMPLETED

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
Date:	10 th SEPTEMBER 2024
Title:	BASELINE CARBON EMISSIONS
Contact Officer:	ENVIROMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

To receive and consider the results of baseline carbon emission calculations for St Neots Town Council over the past year.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee notes the report, but that any decisions on what actions to take are deferred until after relevant audits have been undertaken.

3. Background

3.1 The Committee asked for baseline carbon emissions to be calculated for the Council and all its operations

3.2 The purpose of the calculations was to understand the opportunities and challenges for making carbon savings in the Council’s ambitions to become Carbon net zero by 2030

4. Information

4.1 Carbon (and other greenhouse gas) calculations have been calculated using the GHG Accounting Tool, which has been produced by Local Partnerships to help local authorities establish their baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over a single reporting year. It was recommended to the Environmental Project Officer for use by Huntingdonshire District Council’s Climate Change Officer.

4.2 Calculations were taken for the period April 2023 – March 2024 and included all of Scope 1 and 2 reporting, and as much of Scope 3 as was reasonably available. Calculations were only taken for Council business and operations, and do not include any emissions from buildings which are Council-owned but leased out to other parties.

4.3 See Appendix A for calculation results.

4.4 Councillors to note that there are two identified caveats to these calculations:

- There is no ability to insert a run time for the air conditioning units, just a single calculation for the type of gas (R410A and HCFC-22/R22) that they use
- There is no ability to break down the type and source of food and drink purchased by the Priory Centre. The calculation is based on a total tonnage, without taking into account the type of food/drink or where it was sourced from.

AGENDA ITEM 5

ATTACHMENT 3

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report.

6. Legal Powers

6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

APPENDIX A

Scope	Emissions Type	Emissions (tCO₂e)	Percentage of Total Emissions
Scope 1	Heating ¹	34.18	28.7%
	Fugitive Emissions ²	7.91	6.6%
	Authority's Fleet ³	4.32	3.6%
	Authority's Fuel Use ⁴	1.53	1.3%
Scope 2	Electricity ⁵	0.00	0.0%
Scope 3	Staff Business Travel	0.74	0.6%
	Staff Commuting	10.59	8.9%
	Working From Home	0.66	0.6%
	T & D Losses	0.00	0.0%
	Water	0.74	0.6%
	Material Use ⁶	58.51	49.1%
	Waste generated from own operations	0.00	0.0%
	Outsourced Scope 3	0.00	0.0%
Total Emissions		119.19	100%

1. 33.56 tCO₂e (98.2%) **natural gas**; 0.62 tCO₂e (1.8%) **wood pellets**
2. 4.04 tCO₂e (51.1%) **R410A**; 3.87 tCO₂e (48.9%) **HCFC-22/R22** (both air conditioning gases)
3. 4.32 tCO₂e (100%) **diesel** vehicles
4. 1.53 tCO₂e (100%) **petrol** for lawnmowers and machinery
5. 0 tCO₂e due to being on a green tariff ("Under the GHG Protocol Corporate Standard market-based methodology, businesses on an SSE Green Electricity contract can report zero Scope 2 emissions.")
6. 58.11 tCO₂e (99.3%) **food and drink** from the Priory Centre; 0.4 tCO₂e (0.7%) **paper**

AGENDA ITEM 7

APPENDIX B

VEHICLES

Option 1: Total £236,730 (variety of vehicles)

Vehicle	Reg	Vehicle Description	Year	Replace	Proposed vehicle	Type/range	SPEC	Extra	Price, exc VAT
Peugeot Van	X241 NAV	Diesel van Class I (up to 1.305 tonnes)	2000	YES/Urgent	Ford Transit Van, H3 425 L4	EV/166-196miles	Extra Large Long Van: 1450kg, 15.1m ³ load; 2.02m height, 4.25m long	no towing	£55,085
Ford Ranger	AJ10 YKA	Diesel van Class II (1.305 to 1.74 tonnes)	2010	YES/Urgent	Ford Transit Custom, H1 320 L1	EV/163-209miles	Medium Van: 1065kg, 5.8m ³ ; 1.43m height, 2.60m long	2300kg braked trailer	£43,380
Nissan Navara	AK13 OHG	Diesel 4x4	2013	YES/Urgent	Maxus T90	EV/205-290-miles	Double Cab Pick-up: 1000kg; 1.48x1.51 cargo box	1000kg braked trailer	£49,950
Ford Transit	AD16 DKF	Diesel van Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes)	2017	YES/Urgent	Citroen e-Berlingo XL	EV/210miles	Small Panel Van; 650kg,	no towing	£28,905
Nissan NV400	EF70 VDM	Diesel van Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes)	2021	YES	Citroen e-Berlingo XL Crew Cab	EV/195miles	Combi van; Crew Cab. 4 passengers	4 passengers	£30,505
Nissan Navara	EY21 SKE	Diesel 4x4	2021	YES	Citroen e-Berlingo XL	EV/210miles	Small Panel Van; 650kg,	no towing	£28,905
Nissan E-NV200	EJ70 VRP	Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes) BEV	2021	NO	n/a	n/a	n/a		£ N/A

Summary:

1x Extra Large High Van

1x Medium Van with 2000kg+ towing capacity

1x Double Cab Pick-up (4 passengers)

1x Small Crew Cab Van (4 passengers)

3x Small Combo Vans (incl. Nissan)

AGENDA ITEM 7

APPENDIX B

Option 2: Total £231,760 (more unified fleet)

Vehicle	Reg	Vehicle Description	Year	Replace	Proposed vehicle	Type/range	SPEC	Extra	Price, exc VAT
Peugeot Van	X241 NAV	Diesel van Class I (up to 1.305 tonnes)	2000	YES/Urgent	Ford Transit Van, H3 425 L4	EV/166-196miles	Extra Large Long Van: 1450kg, 15.1m ³ load; 2.02m height, 4.25m long	no towing	£ 55,085.00
Ford Ranger	AJ10 YKA	Diesel van Class II (1.305 to 1.74 tonnes)	2010	YES/Urgent	Ford Transit Custom, H1 320 L1	EV/163-209miles	Medium Van: 1065kg, 5.8m ³ ; 1.43m height, 2.60m long	2300kg braked trailer	£ 43,380.00
Nissan Navara	AK13 OHG	Diesel 4x4	2013	YES/Urgent	Ford Transit Custom, H1 320 L2	EV/163-209miles	Medium Van: 1065kg, 5.8m ³ ; 1.43m height, 2.60m long	2300kg braked trailer	£ 43,381.00
Ford Transit	AD16 DKF	Diesel van Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes)	2017	YES/Urgent	Citroen e-Berlingo XL Crew Cab	EV/195miles	Combi van; Crew Cab. 4 passengers	no towing	£ 30,504.00
Nissan NV400	EF70 VDM	Diesel van Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes)	2021	YES	Citroen e-Berlingo XL Crew Cab	EV/195miles	Combi van; Crew Cab. 4 passengers	no towing	£ 30,505.00
Nissan Navara	EY21 SKE	Diesel 4x4	2021	YES	Citroen e-Berlingo XL	EV/210miles	Panel Small Van; 650kg,	no towing	£ 28,905.00
Nissan E-NV200	EJ70 VRP	Class III (1.74 to 3.5 tonnes) BEV	2021	NO	n/a	n/a	n/a		£ N/A

Summary:

- 1 Extra Large High Van
- 2 Medium Van with 2000kg+ towing capacity
- 2 Small Crew Cab Van (4 passengers)
- 2 Small Combo Vans (incl. Nissan)

OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT

Total £158,585 (includes equipment which is only just coming onto the market so no price competition)

EQUIPMENT	SPECIFICATIONS		PRICE	TOTAL
Electric excavator x1				£54,545
Takeuchi TB20e	Up to 8h		£50,595	
Superfast charger			£3,950	
Electric(battery) ride-on lawn mowers x4				£68,640
Toro 60V eTimeCutter™ eMR4275 107cm Zero Turn Mower 75642	~2.4acre/6battaries single charge/1.5h		£7,000	
Toro Flex-Force 60V 10 Ah Li-Ion Battery L510 68810	6no set, 4 set for each mower		£370	
Toro 60V MAX* Flex-Force 12Ah 6-Pod Li-Ion Charger - 66560	4 for each mower		£320	
Electric (battery) string streamer trimmers x2				£2,400
Milwaukee M18™ brushless grass trimmer	1h x 1 8Ah battery		£200	
Milwaukee M18™ PACKOUT™ six bay rapid charger	3h for charging		£250	
Milwaukee M18™ HIGH OUTPUT™ 8.0 Ah battery	4pack, 8Ah, 1.1kg each (x3 to ensure all day capacity)		£500	
Electric (battery) brush cut trimmers x2				£2,600
Milwaukee M18 FUEL™ Brush Cutter	1h x 1 8Ah battery		£300	
Milwaukee M18™ PACKOUT™ six bay rapid charger	3h for charging		£250	
Milwaukee M18™ HIGH OUTPUT™ 8.0 Ah battery	4pack, 8Ah, 1.1kg each (x3 to ensure all day capacity)		£500	
Milwaukee Electric (battery) push lawn mowers x5				£19,000
M18 FUEL™ dual battery self-propelled lawn mower 53 cm	1h x 2nos 12Ah batteries		£1,200	
Milwaukee M18™ PACKOUT™ six bay rapid charger	2nos (12 batteries) per each mower		£250	
Milwaukee M18™ HIGH OUTPUT™ 12.0 Ah battery	4pack, 12 batteries per each mower		£700	
Car Chargers x6				£11,400
Generic chargers, average price plus installation fee			£1,900	

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
Date:	10 TH SEPTEMBER 2024
Title:	VEHICLE AND OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT ASSET REGISTER
Contact Officer:	ENVIROMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To receive and consider a report summarising information on the Council’s current vehicles and operational equipment, plus indicative prices of transitioning all vehicles and equipment to electric (at current prices).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report, but that any decisions on how to proceed with transitioning all vehicles and equipment to electric is done at another meeting, when a timeline for all carbon reduction initiatives can be discussed and agreed.

3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the Council’s goal to meet Carbon Net Zero by 2030, a fleet and operational equipment review was required to understand what is required to transition away from fossil fuel use within the Council.
- 3.2 The purpose of this report is to identify what vehicles and equipment we currently own, and whether their electric counterparts are currently sufficient for the Council’s needs and affordable.
- 3.3 The prices for the electric counterparts are for full ownership. It should be noted that lease vehicles may be more attractive due to the relatively short length of EV battery life, however this has not been priced up within this report.

4. Information

- 4.1 Please see **APPENDIX B** attached to this report for vehicle and operational equipment information.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report at this stage.

6. Legal Powers

- 6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
Date:	10 th SEPTEMBER 2024
Title:	COMMUNITY ORCHARD
Contact Officer:	ENVIROMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

To receive and consider a recommendation to plant a community orchard in the green space behind the Eynesbury Hub.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee recommends to the Operations and Amenities Committee that unallocated trees from the Biodiversity for All Ecology Audit are used to create a community orchard on land located at the Steven Van de Kerkhove Community Centre.
- 2.2 That the recommendation to the Operations and Amenities Committee is supported with information on the management and operation of such a community offering should the committee approve the proposal. .

3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the planned biodiversity improvements to St Neots Cemetery a Biodiversity for All Ecology Audit was completed. The recommended works were quoted for, and the Council was awarded a grant to the value of this quote. Upon completing a site visit with the HDC contractors who will be completing the works, it was identified that the ecology audit recommended significantly more tree planting than is appropriate for the site.
- 3.2 It was suggested that some of the planned woodland trees could be substituted with fruit trees to create a small community orchard.

4. Information

- 4.1 The green space behind the Eynesbury Hub is part of the Cemetery site and is an ideal size for a small community orchard. Creating a small orchard would contribute to the biodiversity uplift of the site by providing an additional food source for insects and small animals whilst increasing the range of species diversity on the site and supporting our move to conserve 30% of St Neots’ land for nature by 2030, as per 3.1.1 of the Climate Action Plan.
- 4.2 The orchard would have an added purpose of providing free fruit to the St Neots community, supporting people on low incomes, engaging families with nature, and potentially being a source of education on growing your own food, as per 3.3.3 of the Climate Action Plan.

- 4.3 The creation of such an orchard would need to be considered in the context of operation, management and community involvement. This has not yet been fully investigated and the Environmental Project Officer will look at how similar schemes are managed as a basis of provide proposals to the Operations and Amenities Committee should the idea be supported by the committee. In terms of resources for tree maintenance and pruning, this will need to be considered in the wider context of ongoing management if we want to increase biodiversity by 2030. Should the committee support the suggested orchard further information will be taken to the Operations and Amenities Committee.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report.

6. Legal Powers

- 6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
Date:	10 th SEPTEMBER 2024
Title:	CARBON LITERACY TRAINING
Contact Officer:	ENVIROMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

To receive and consider a recommendation to develop a training course with The Carbon Literacy Project which will be rolled out to all staff and Councillors.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee approves a spend of £300 for the verification of a bespoke Carbon Literacy course plus £10 per completion certificate.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Environmental Project Officer (EPO) completed Carbon Literacy training in November 2023 and is now able to deliver similar training.
- 3.2 The EPO attended a workshop in July 2024 regarding Carbon Literacy Day, which is happening on 14th November 2024. The aim of Carbon Literacy Day is to get as many people around the world trained in Carbon Literacy so that they may better understand the causes of climate change and what action they, as individuals and as part of a larger business/community, can take to mitigate against this. Each year, more and more people are trained, increasing the global reach and thus global action.
- 3.3 As the EPO is able to deliver Carbon Literacy training, it feels appropriate that they use Carbon Literacy Day as a platform for launching a training programme for Councillors and Council staff. To become Carbon Literate, Councillors and Council staff would need to complete a course verified by the Carbon Literacy Project.
- 3.4 Part 1.7.3 of the Climate Action Plan sets out that “All staff and Councillors to complete training on climate change, environmental impact, carbon literacy (or similar)”. This would help us achieve that objective.

4. Information

- 4.1 The Carbon Literacy Project have a template course available for Local Authority use, which would then be tailored to our individual organisation. Whilst the process of tailoring the course would be free of charge, there is a £300 cost associated with getting the course verified so that attendees may gain their Carbon Literate certificate.
- 4.2 There is an additional cost of obtaining the certificates of £10 per person.

AGENDA ITEM 9

ATTACHMENT 7

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There is an initial cost of £300 for the course to be verified, then an additional cost of £10 per course attendee for their certificate.

6. Legal Powers

- 6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.

ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL

Committee	ENVIRONMENT AND EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
Date:	10th SEPTEMBER 2024
Title:	BUDGET SETTING
Contact Officer:	ENVIROMENTAL PROJECT OFFICER

1. Purpose of the Report

To note and consider the 2024/2025 revenue budget and any proposals for the 2025/2026 revenue budget.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee considers a recommendation from the Environmental Project Officer to increase the Revenue Capital budget to allow for an in-depth review of the carbon impact of the food and drink used by the Priory Centre for its café and events.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers a recommendation from the Environmental Project Officer to include additional opportunities from the Climate Action Plan (CAP) when deciding on the 2025/2026 budget.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers any additional proposals for the 2025/2026 revenue budget.

3. Background

- 3.1 The current 2024/2025 Revenue budget is £10,000. There is £22,693 in earmarked reserves, and a £5,000 flood management budget.
- 3.2 The budget setting process has now started for the 2025/2026 financial year. Councillors are asked to consider the current budget of £10,000 and any forthcoming recommendations or proposals for changing the budget.

4. Information

- 4.1 A recommendation has come from the Environmental Project Officer that the budget be increased for the 2025/2026 year to accommodate an audit into the sustainability of the food and drink provided by the Priory Centre for its café and events. The cost of this audit, plus a service to facilitate a move towards sustainable food and drink purchasing has been roughly estimated at £5,000-£10,000. An accurate quote will be obtained imminently, but the EPO has only just been made aware of the available service and the desire by the Priory Centre Manager to have the audit undertaken. If the quote is at the higher end of the estimate, this would leave very little budget for any other activities.
- 4.2 The Priory Centre Manager provided the following information with regards the auditing service: "We as a food and beverage outlet / retailer, have the opportunity to set the example of sustainability in our purchasing decisions. As a Council it is something we should be doing. From the Priory Centre point of view, it is something to be proud of, with the right planning it can improve our systems and can be part of our marketing message. ...

And do our bit for the environment. An important part of this process is to accurately measure performance so it can be monitored and improved.

We are also developing the systems internally to manage our stock and the procurement processes more efficiently. Minimum stock levels will be built into the system, so we are prompted what to order. This is across all food and beverage. The next step on from this is a procurement system / process which simplifies the ordering process. Given the importance of sustainability for the Council we can make informed decisions on preferred suppliers to meet our objectives of both sustainability and price.

The combination of data measurement, reporting with a procurement system, will enable us to make informed decision about our supply chain, a system that will facilitate that process and constant report on performance

Following is a link to an organisation I have worked with in the past who can deliver this. Have a look at the website. Domini is obviously reluctant to indicate prices without scoping out exactly what we need but has suggested a budget of between £5,000 and £10,000. I suggest we understand more about what Tried and Supplied can do and for what Price.

My personal objective is to have our procurement system fully imbedded 3 months before opening 'new Priory' and will need time to imbed the process so at least 6 months prior to opening"

- 4.3 An audit and move towards more sustainable food and drink procurement would support objectives 1.1.1 and 1.8.2 of the Climate Action Plan.
- 4.4 Other opportunities for the coming financial year which may warrant consideration when budgeting include a Terracycle scheme for blister packs (1.2.2 and 1.3.2 of the CAP), an e-bike and charger for staff use (1.7.2 of the CAP), The Great Big Green Week and any other events specific to the environmental agenda (1.8.2 of the CAP), increasing the amount of public green space we own so we can protect it (3.1.2 of the CAP), and initiatives to purchase wildlife enhancing furniture such as bee stops (1.4.3 of the CAP), bird and bat boxes (3.2.1) etc.
- 4.5 Councillors are asked to set out if there is anything further that they may want officers to investigate feasibility and costs for as part of 2025/2026 Environment & Emergency budget so information can be brought back to the committee for consideration and recommendation to the Council.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications are yet to be determined.

6. Legal Powers

- 6.1 The action undertaken is covered by the Localism Act 2011, s.1 the General Power of Competence, for which St Neots Town Council is eligible and is a power of first resort allowing the Council to do anything an individual can do.