

York Environment Forum

Minutes of meeting 14th February 2023 at West Offices

Present:-

Penny Bainbridge (chair)

Katherine Harrison (FoE) (guest)

Debby Cobbett

Phil Bixby

Graham Collett

Chris Copland (Labour group environment representative) (guest)

Rachel Melly

Dave Merrett

Apologies:-

John Lane

Benoit Parrein

Ellie Stead

CLlr Martin Rowley BEM

Mary Cannon

York Environment Week 2023

Basic question – do we have resources to run YEW in 2023? Penny has reported on YEW 2022 and stated it requires a team of six with a mix of skills to deliver, given complexities. Noted we had three years of successful events and didn't want to spoil reputation with a poorer-standard event – part of work behind scenes was ensuring events fitted requirements (local, non-profit-making, non-party-political etc).

Debby stated she'd like to see it happen and would be part of team.

Phil set out complexities from past experience – lengthy process of obtaining commitment from organisers results in it being hard to prepare publicity media in advance; even website was problematic (requiring rolling programme of updates) and print media was purely a pointer at the website given inability to set out complete programme until late in the day. Specific requirements of event organisers may seem arbitrary but were to try to make organising team's life easier.

Graham noted annual event organised by YOPA, where help was provided by Aviva in the form of tech staff support etc. How did they do this?

Katherine asked about funding. Past two years had money from GBGW as YEW was tied into this. This year GBGW has no funding to give and is just flagging up other potential funders. The tie-in with GBGW brought some attendance but probably limited.

Discussion around the idea of a "fair" type event – similar to St.Nicks / Fulford Show etc. Noted this was a different thing to the week of events and hence required additional organisation. Noted that some community organisations would benefit from simply being able to take a table for a day – perhaps easier than organising a YEW event. Bloom was cited as an example – feedback from organiser is that it has been complex to organise though.

Graham asked if we can break down the jobs into a list to enable people to see what they would be committing to? Broadly:-

- Making contact with and getting commitment from event organisers
- Agreeing timing and programme
- Printed publicity and distribution
- Website set-up and maintenance
- Social media in advance and during week
- Background admin – organising and chairing meetings, minuting, following up including admin / finance / liability issues.

Agreed deadline of end of February given target dates to tie in with GBGW again, this time in June.

Actions:-

Penny will do appeal for organisers via mailing list / YEW mailchimp list / Twitter / Facebook.

Penny will contact Mary at YOPA for feedback / advice.

Transport:-

Penny note Dave Merrett had been key person within YEF and will be standing for election as councillor in 2023 so is likely to have limited time available. Do we retain intention to comment on transport issues or (with exception of specific interests – eg YBF) leave this to YCT and others? Dave suggested this was sensible.

Council transport strategy now published on council website – this is effectively a “bridge” to the new administration; still a hefty set of documents but intended to fulfil demands for strategy in absence of immediate likely action. LTP4 will happen after final approval of Local Plan.

Various transport-related consultations underway:-

- City centre shuttle bus. YBF is preparing a response. Debby commented that that the aims of the scheme seem unclear and the atmosphere at the in-person event was not terribly welcoming.
- LCWIP work being carried out by Systra looking at walking and cycling priority routes /zones. Limited by funding and also working within very constrained timescales. But is at least joined-up and city-wide in its vision.

The Local Plan:-

Currently pending final consultation following council amendments. Eleven documents with an accompanying guide to amendments – all comments / feedback will be limited to these. Dave suggested focus on covering letter which sets out procedure going forward. All responses will go to the Inspectors, who will then decide if issues raised require a further hearing, or whether they can complete report to Secretary of State. May also recommend early review, given slice of Plan period already consumed.

Actions:-

Dave will try to look through documents (including CIL consultation below) and report back. 27th March is closing date for public comment on Local Plan.

Community Infrastructure Levy consultation:-

CIL is a general levy for any purpose/location whereas S106 funding has to benefit the area of the donor development. Dave noted need for funding for sustainability issues – biodiversity, sustainable travel etc. Graham noted some local authorities have used CIL creatively and provide good examples.

Outer Ring Road:-

YEF submitted an objection. Planning meeting uncertain – possibly in March / possibly delayed until after elections. XR campaign continues as Rethink Outer Ring Road (RORR).

Friends of the Earth:-

Katherine will return to a future meeting to talk about Climate Action Plans.

Upcoming meetings:-

Debby – has a list of suggested topics including disability and the environment, circular economy / Library of Things / share & repair, and biodiversity in new developments (Chris knows a DEFRA contact who may be helpful). Dave suggested contacting Biofuelwatch regarding the Drax campaign.

Graham pointed out speakers need a good audience – Dave commented that social media publicity can be effective and suggested boosted Facebook posts (there is a cost but not huge).

Actions:-

Debby & Penny to discuss.

AOB:-

Chris asked for any knowledge of upcoming ECO+ funding scheme – subsidy for building fabric insulation via ECO mechanism (ie involving the energy suppliers). Article on Energy Saving Trust website and Ivana has previously pointed to MoneySavingExpert article online.

End of meeting. Next meeting Tuesday 14th March – to be decided whether online or in person.