

Sampford Courtenay Environmental/Sustainable Living Group
Minutes, 16 June 2020

The first meeting of what is hoped to be an environmental/sustainable living group took place on Tuesday 16th June. It was hosted by Mrs Joy Tucker via Zoom. Others attending the meeting Mike Carpenter, Robin Bevis, Jill Bevis, David Botting-Page, Helen Cunningham, Charlotte Reynolds, Marion Pratt and Janet Palmer. Apologies were received from Sadie Coventry. Janet Palmer volunteered to take notes and it was decided at this time unanimously that Joy would take on the roll of chairperson.

The first topic up for discussion was funding and what would be the best way to achieve this. Various suggestions came forward from participating parties all agreed that we should look into what is available via local council, government grants. Marion Pratt said that the rural affairs digest has lots of useful information and is of interest to anyone wanting to find out what there is out in the wider community.

The next point was, How to we want the group to work and what we are aiming to achieve. It was agreed that ideas should be explored and the group to discuss what views both the group and other members of the parish. It was raised that we need a mission statement and a name that fits our group with possibly a local reference in the name. This statement was agreed as: 'Steps towards an environmentally sustainable Sampford Courtenay'.

We have set out to achieve an overarching ambition for the village which should be achievable and sustainable and for that reason it was thought that we should focus at first on just a few missions so that these could be carried out and either completed or put in place for the future as an ongoing work for those that want to take part. There is a proposal for a community garden on the village green which would be there for everyone to contribute to or just sit back and enjoy. We acknowledge that most people in the parish are fortunate to have a garden of their own and may not see the benefit of such an enterprise. But I think it could be an area where people who are alone could come and join in, bring a picnic etc, chat and make friends. I expect there is a wealth of gardening knowledge that could be shared, especially with the younger generation.

We all thought that putting up a platform for ideas from the community of what they feel is relevant, important and useful.

As several people have been volunteering during the Covid 19 crisis it was suggested that this may be something worth carrying on with in view of shopping, taking items for recycling for those unable to get to town. The less car journeys that are made the better for the planet. Also local car share or village car club which could provide opportunities for setting up something which could put people in contact to share for work, recreation or shopping. Another good way of getting people connected and in sharing they stay connected.

It would be useful to contact other villages, towns to see if they have any groups and where they have got Grant's and information from. We need to establish what our aims are and maybe have a list of 10 the most popular ideas that have come forward from parishioner questionnaires which could be circulated via Facebook, the website or leaflets or parish magazine.

Several ideas started to generate from the group from going peat free to having a garden waste shredder day .

I think it was agreed that 5 specific priorities to start exploring were:-

- 1, Peat free Parish
- 2, Community garden
- 3, Community composting scheme
- 4, Village hall, aim to achieve a sustainable environment, ie plastic free
- 5, Electric car/bike charging point in village.

The general feeling was that a lot of community spirit has come out of the recent pandemic with people appearing to appreciate their local space and taking the time to take note of what has happened around them with less traffic and noise, cleaner air and wildlife coming back even if it's just hearing the birdsong.

This could be a golden opportunity to carry on and even if everyone just made a few small changes it could be a world of difference for the future.

Publicity put out on Facebook, Website and Roundabout.

Sampford Courtenay Environmental and Sustainability group/project (name yet to be finalised!)

This new group held its inaugural meeting, via Zoom, on Tuesday, 16 June. A lively debate regarding the overarching aims of the group as well as immediate priorities ensued. A statement of intent was adopted: 'Steps towards an environmentally sustainable Sampford Courtenay'.

The first projects identified for action were a community garden; working towards 'peat-free' SC; connecting the garden with the plant stall in the village centre - and perhaps instigating something similar elsewhere in the parish; building on the networking that SCPC has created during the COVID crisis to form a 'community hub' to coordinate more 'joint trips' like the ones made currently, so that we could have a 'trip to the recycling centre day' or similar and incorporate a local 'swap shop' (e.g. 'I have two dining chairs that I don't need. Would anyone like them?' or 'I am looking for pallets to make my own compost heap. Does anyone have any going spare?' - a sort of very local Gumtree, but including actions and other contacts as well as things).

At the next meeting, via Zoom, on Tuesday, 14 July, at 7.30pm, we will have guest speakers who can give us the benefit of their experience in working for the environment at a local level. Please join us if you can (link below).

If anyone has any ideas or thoughts or would like to get involved, please contact Joy Tucker at bobandjoytucker@gmail.com or phone 07749522996.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86578146516?pwd=WXhHcWR1bWp5QmV1bXBEEWJCYzh3dz09>

Meeting ID: 865 7814 6516

Password: 860948