

Dear Heather / Bob

Following on from the most recent IWALC meeting I can confirm the following regarding Ventnor Town Council's progress in our Environment Group.

In November and December 2022 we ran a series of public outreach exercises. These were carried out in St Lawrence, Lowtherville, Bonchurch and the Town Centre in local halls, all are wheelchair accessible with refreshments available. We started each 2-hour session with a talk that was presented by me and Stephen Cockett about the Climate crisis, and then round table discussions took place. Every single person was given the opportunity to talk, with an emphasis on listening to participants and recording notes. We asked all attendees to vote on what they felt Ventnor Town Council should prioritise from a list of; education, transport, food security, housing (insulating), biodiversity, waste, and recycling . The 3 that were chosen were Education, Food Security, and Insulation. This has given Ventnor Town Council a steering in the projects that we are embarking on.

Last winter in about October time, 3 councillors trialed a scheme that had residents donations start it off. The scheme was around draught-proofing residents windows and doors with window sealants ('D 'and 'P 'profile), letterbox covers and keyhole covers. We put together a form for people to complete and trialed it at the Food Pantry and Food Bank. Time was taken with each form that was handed out to explain what they were for, and a sample of each sealant strip was attached to a post it note that residents could remove and attach to window and door frames to ascertain what they needed.

We gave out about 100 forms in total and received about 10 back.

Of those forms, 3 had been incorrectly filled out meaning we had to go and do a site visit.

Feedback was given from helpers at the Foodbank that people found the form too complicated.

Feedback from the few that had completed the forms and received their insulation was excellent and warm thanks were given.

Given the time it took to implement this scheme, the time spent explaining what to do and the returned forms, it was decided not to proceed with this initiative at this time. What we need is investment in paid people to go out to people's homes and fit the tape directly, whilst giving extra advice on additional measures that could be implemented within homes.

In 2022 we ran a Wild Gardens pilot competition to encourage residents to wild their gardens and help nature. We had a small response and would like to run the scheme again this year.

We are currently looking to plant an orchard on an area of land leading from Lowtherville to mid-Ventnor. At this time we do not know if the depth or type of soil is suitable for trees, but there may be planting of other food that is possible.

We have stopped the use of Glyphosate in all areas that come under the remit of Ventnor Town Council land that we look after

This year we took part in No Mow May in 15 of our 18 areas that are contracted to be mowed. The Isle of Wight Council have also started with this course of action this year with more work to be done

Ventnor has been very encouraging of other town and parish councils to start up their own sustainability and biodiversity groups, we had John McLagan from Ryde visit a few times to get his group started. Julie has had conversations with councillors elsewhere on the Island.

The Council also ran an audit of all of the buildings it owns to see if energy saving can take place. We have a rolling replacement scheme working now where light fittings are being exchanged for lower power units as and when needed.

The Time and Tide Bell is going to be installed at some point in Ventnor, this is an artist's environmental project to signify rising sea levels.

One of our councillors regularly collects waste leftover food from a local supermarket chain to go to a local pre-school.

This year we were allocated a small budget to do things locally. One of the projects we would like to start is working alongside Art Ecology in Sandown called co-create, this is dependent on additional funds coming in from a member of the public who would like to support this initiative.

This really is the tip of the iceberg as to our ambitions in Ventnor. We welcome partnering with other councils and the door is always open for this.

We have talked at IWALC and at Together for Mission Zero. We are still seeking to start up a monthly meeting for town and parish councils who have Environment groups formed, I have asked Holly Jones at IW Council if there is any funding available to help us and there is not.

The format that we take in our meetings is

Assets (council buildings)

Residents' homes

Biodiversity

Food growing / waste / water

Transport

Waste and recycling

We cover the same topics every month for an update on projects and to open up new projects / discussions. We have a shared chair to remove hierarchy and to share responsibility for chairing.