

**Minutes of the meeting of Whitworth Town Council's Environment and Wildlife Committee
held on Monday 11th August 2025, 12 noon, Council Chamber**

1. Welcome

Attendees were welcomed by Councillor Rhodes to the meeting of this committee, and each attendee introduced themselves with their specific areas of interests and responsibilities.

2. In attendance

WTC Councillor Sarah Rhodes (SR)
Karen Cowley (KC), Rochdale Field
Naturalists' Society (RFNS)
Steve Haigh (SH)
And 1 member of the public.

Sue Neilson (SN) E&WC member
Andrew Thorpe (AT) Farmer, Landowner and
Chair of the Commoners Association
Ian Wright (IW) (LCC Treescapes)

Apologies: Kim Olaolu and Councillors Gareth Baron, Ste Butterworth, Janet Whitehead and Michael Whitworth.

Minutes taken by Rachel Hodson (RH), Town Clerk and Abbie Luxton, Business Admin Apprentice.

3. To approve minutes of the last meeting

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

4. Matters arising from minutes of the last meeting

SN queried recent surveying at Barlow Bottoms and IW reported that Lancashire County Council (LCC) have spoken to two forest contractors who have made field visits, possibly to make field assessments.

SN also discussed the positive feedback from the peat presentations in the 4 local primary schools and reported that the children had retained information at the Mayor of Whitworth's presentation 2 months later, which was excellent.

SN reported that she had followed up the missing Cowclough heritage assets with RBC, Mid Pennine Arts and UU. No one knew where they had gone. AT discussed the background regarding the works done on the area.

5. Updates from members:

(i) Updates on local building works

SN asked for WTC to follow up on what is happening with Albert Mill.

(ii) Tree planting plans at Waingap

SR reported that she has not yet been able to go and look with the working party. IW reported that he included Waingap Woods in a grant application. SR enquired about the type of trees to be planted, IW responded by saying he will send over the proposed species via email. IW reported that normally work would go out to tender to two or three contractors used to carry out the preparation for this. IW discussed the idea of using paying local farmers who have the machinery needed to bring down the cost as the budget for Waingap Woods would be tight due to mileage charges. AT reported that he could identify 3 good local men for this but stated that they would need fair payment for the work.

(iii) Update on tree felling and replanting at Britannia

IW reported that he is not directly involved in this. The Forestry Commission had issued a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN), which is a legal requirement to remove affected and diseased trees. Two forestry contractors have been contacted and have submitted quotes for works involved. The committee asked if some larch trees would remain in situ. IW reported that all larch trees will have to be removed as they had a notifiable tree disease. The committee asked if other species of trees would be removed and IW reported that other species of tree would not have to be removed unless they are damaged in the process of removing the larch trees.

(iv) Whitworth Quarry Liaison Committee

SN has been corresponding with Rob Hope from LCC who said that Marshalls needed time to understand the site and have a complete plan of action for working it before having a meeting. Rob Hope anticipated that it would be best left until after the summer holidays.

(v) Picnic area and pond at back of Cowm Reservoir

SR reported on behalf of KO, who had met with UU who are obtaining quotes for pond repairs. SN reported that United Utilities are still on the case and are seeking grant funding to cover costs.

(vi) RFNS ecological survey at Barlow Bottoms, 21 June '25

KC reported that she has undertaken two surveys since the last meeting and cumulative results of all three surveys were shared with members of committee. KC also commented that the mandatory felling of diseased larches would affect biodiversity in the area.

(vii) Update on scrutiny of RBC's weekly planning application lists

SN reported that the EWC now receive RBC weekly plan list and are feeding back any ecological concerns to WTC

(viii) Feedback from Mid Pennine Arts re Cowclough heritage items

See agenda item 4.

(ix) Any other updates

SR discussed the recent Lancashire Nature Recovery Strategy Survey. SR has been in contact with LCC regarding the survey and suggested that they utilise the local knowledge of Whitworth EWC going forward. SR reported that her contact was happy to help. SN reported that she will contact LCC to identify the specified red flag areas of Whitworth. IW reported that a Nature Recovery Map has been created featuring geological and biological aspirational priority habitat sites. IW will forward the map to be circulated to members of committee.

6. To discuss an EWC logo

SR shared the options she created for a new logo. The decision to choose one was deferred to a future meeting.

7. To discuss creating an EWC social media profile on Facebook

SR discussed that having a social media profile would be beneficial for EWC to promote what they do and give out updates. She explained that the social media profile could be managed by three approved members. This item was deferred to future meeting.

8. To discuss establishing wild-flower highways in Whitworth

SR discussed the green spaces in Whitworth. She also reported that the schools are keen to participate. SN reported that Whitworth in Bloom are already starting to sow areas at Britannia with flower bombs. SR reported that she has contacted LCC councillors for the area and will invite them to future meetings.

9. To discuss future educational presentations in local schools

SR discussed SN's suggestion of taking schools on local farm visits in the future. AT reported that he may be able to assist with this in future when the farm prepares, is risk assessed and safeguarded for the Wellbrow Stud Open Days. SR suggested forming a working group to organise this.

10. Scout Moor 2

SN stated that the Scout Moor 2 wind farm planning application had now been submitted by Cubico and is currently being validated by the two Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). SN asked the committee to consider the possible environmental damage to the deep peatland resulting in potential negative impacts on the community should Scout Moor 2 go ahead. SN encouraged members to look at the planning application once validated, when consultees and the general public will have a period of time to comment. SN stressed the importance of everyone making individual comments. In Rossendale, the planning portal is a good option as all comments posted will be acknowledged by email.

11. Any other business

SR encouraged members to use the iNaturalist app to contribute to a vast database of biodiversity information.

RH asked members for advice regarding a verge in Whitworth. RH asked members to contact her if they were able to assist with this.

12. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 13th October, 7pm, Whitworth Town Council Chamber

13. Thanks for attendance and close of meeting

Attendees were thanked and the meeting closed at 2:30pm