

WTC 807 : Climate & Biodiversity Quarterly Report – General Overview

Council Meeting 22nd July 2024

Library of Things

- Reported under separate cover WTC808.

City to Sea Refill

- HP visited all businesses that appeared suitable for a refill station, i.e. cafes and other businesses who usually have more than 1 staff member on the shop floor as theft was a concern for a number of businesses.
- The few pubs visited voiced that they either already provided tap water for customers or did not wish to encourage underage people into the premises.
- 10 businesses have currently registered as refill stations with a few more interested, however they have not yet registered via the App. Step by step instructions have been provided together with information and a window sticker to interested parties. HP will be prompting some of the businesses again over the coming month.
- Unfortunately City to Sea have provided limited support and contact has mainly consisted of requests for WTC to join in various activities to promote their mission. At this point in time, resources are currently being used on other priorities therefore the potential for doing some of these activities will be revisited in the future.
- A launch was put out on the website and newsletter including a photo with the Mayor, Town Clerk and Southern Maltings (who have signed up for Refill), together with the WTC refill station and a giant plastic bottle made of water bottles. GH will be taking the bottle to Glaxo for an event in September.

Refill Sink

- We have created our own refill station consisting of a large trough sink with 3 taps and signage which made it's debut on Carnival Day.
- The carnival stalls were asked to bring their own reusable water bottles to use at the refill station and some were purchased for those who do not have one. No SUP water has been provided to stall holders this year.

- WTC have signed up as a Refill station with City to Sea Refill with a link to our events schedule. The sink will be sited on the Priory front lawn during events but unfortunately cannot be left out permanently due to the likelihood of vandalism.

Single Use Plastic in WTC Operations

- An on-site area has been identified for a composting facility for plant based products, however it is currently covered in bindweed therefore this needs to be eradicated before the site can be put to use. It is intended to do this throughout the season so that construction can be started in the winter.
- There have been very few beaker suppliers that have been able to verify certification to Seedling logo status for home composting. Research indicates that not all products labelled as “compostable” can be composted at home therefore these will need to be trialled for composting.
- Due to timescales and the search for a composting solution, compostable beakers were unable to be purchased for early summer events or the carnival. Instead, reusable plastic beakers were purchased for trial at the first concert. Unfortunately a large number were not returned. Physical and digital signage was produced to encourage people to return them at the next concert which was much more successful.
- Vegware has been identified as a reliable/cost effective supplier of compostable cups and compostable corn starch clear beakers and they supply GSK.
- EHDC/NHDC do not offer compostable collections for businesses and none of the recycling centres within a reasonable distance can reliably take compostable products either. Two collection contractors have been identified and HP is currently carrying out a cost analysis for the products and collections.
- HP has reviewed internal activities and highlighted a number of SUPs that can be removed and replaced with an alternative. Teams will be sourcing alternatives once current stock has been used. Processes will be reviewed again once suitability has been confirmed and new procedures put in place.

Building Surveys – Utility Aid

- Surveys of WTC buildings have been carried out and the draft reports reviewed.
- The post survey discussion meeting for the Priory has been completed & the report is currently being updated, with the reports for Lido and Fletchers Lea to follow by the end of July.
- Priory : The main recommendation was to get a company like Hysop, Honeywell or Daikin to provide a “digital twin” of the building services which are not currently cohesive and are therefore not operating efficiently. This will enable bespoke recommendations to be made regarding control upgrades which could reduce energy consumption by up to 20%. Alternatively a cheaper alternative would be a schematic by an M&E consultant.
- The other main recommendations were: reducing boiler flow temperature & using infrared heaters for people who feel the cold; adding a weather compensator and digital TRVs; installing a variable speed pump to slow down the water to radiators not needing heat; connecting the zone pumps for the flow and return radiators and finally, turning fridges, fans & pumps off overnight.
- Recommendations for Fletchers Lea and Lido will be passed on to the refurb project managers in due course.

Carbon

- Costs and service level have been confirmed with Green Business Benchmark and HP will be onboarding with them over the next few weeks.
- HP is putting together a “Sustainability To Do List” spreadsheet incorporating actions from the bi-annual Carbon Report, Building Surveys and Green Business Benchmark ESG pre-requisites and base line action tasks.
- These will be prioritised according to cost, effort and impact. Actions for the buildings will be passed onto the project managers for Lido and Fletchers Lea for inclusion into the refurb designs where possible.
- For the other priority actions, HP will provide an approximate cost for the new budget year where applicable.

- As actions are completed, information will be passed on to include within the next Carbon Report which will help to calculate the current Carbon reduction and inform the budget for Carbon Offsetting for the next year.

Carbon Offsetting

- A budget of £11,000 has already been approved for carbon offsetting in the 2024-2025 period, calculated from the remaining Carbon for WTC operations from the last Carbon Report.
- It is the intention, with the agreement of Councillors, to use this money to benefit a Carbon reduction scheme by a local charity/organisation rather than invest in a scheme abroad.
- Using the existing Grant Policy but with the Grant Form adapted with some bespoke questions, it is proposed to offer the whole or part of the £11,000 for appropriate schemes.
- It is proposed that TP/SH/HP are able to approve applications up to £1000 with Councillors approving larger grants. Should a number of applications be received for the whole amount, it is proposed that these should be voted on by TP/SH/HP and Councillors.
- Schemes could include examples such as: provision of Photovoltaic Panels or an Air Source Heat Pump on a school/community building; insulating an existing school/community building to reduce energy usage; adopting a public space to turn into a community biodiversity garden project, medium scale tree planting; local plastic reduction or reuse schemes. Ideas of other projects that could be considered would be welcome
- Entries would need to provide a clear project plan including costing and management and agree to report on the carbon saving following completion (at their own cost).
- Entries would also need to demonstrate that monies are in place to fund the project if costs exceed the grant awarded.
- A deadline would need to be in place for completion of projects and Carbon reporting.
- Due to the specific nature of the grant funding it is proposed to do a Mail Chimp approach to a targeted audience of schools and local organisations and charities. September would seem to be a good target date for when schools come back from summer holidays.

Communications & Community Engagement

- A new section “Environmental Sustainability” has been included under Services on the Website.
- Articles have been written regarding Improving Garden Biodiversity including soil health, garden pests, butterflies, bees and birds and these are regularly being put onto the newsletter and website.
- An article has also been written on Forever Chemicals and one is currently in progress on Single Use Plastics.
- HP & GH are looking at doing a Biodiversity Day event (perhaps twice a year) to encourage wildlife friendly gardening to improve garden biodiversity. We have got some ideas which we will be looking at in more detail over the coming month. These could also be split down and repeated on the WTC Market Stall to encourage additional public engagement.
- HP is happy to get involved with Climate & Biodiversity ideas and resources for the monthly WTC market stalls.