



Meeting of the Environment Committee

Wednesday, 18th June 2025 at Singleton Village Hall, Parish Office

starting at 16:00

Present: Cllrs Peter Barker, Steve Herring, Barry Mercer, and Malcolm Wiffen (joined Item 4)

Also Present: Aniko Szocs (Clerk), Cllr Sally Gathern (ABC) and 1 MOP

The meeting started at 16:10

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Dave Gathern

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 16th April 2025 were duly approved.

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| Proposed: Cllr Herring | Seconded: Cllr Mercer | In Favour: 3 |
| Vote against: 0 | Vote Abstain: 0 | Motion carried |

4. Parish Walkabout

Members of the committee, accompanied by the Clerk, carried out a parish walk to identify and assess any environmental and maintenance issues within the area. The walk began at the Singleton Environment Centre and followed a route through Millennium Wood, the Orchard, Allotments, Woodland Trust Woodland, Playing Fields, Buxford Meadow, Singleton Lake, Heron Walk, and back to the Environment Centre.

Throughout the walk, several concerns were noted and have since been reported to the relevant authorities. These included:

- **Fly-tipping**
- **Dog waste**
- **Overgrown vegetation**, which emerged as one of the main concerns

The committee inspected Heron Walk (Item 6 on the agenda) and observed that the vegetation in the area is significantly overgrown and looking untidy. The Clerk also presented images of the Heron Walk, which has recently been tidied and improved.

During the walk visited the North Field, the committee was pleased to note that the avenue of trees appears to be in good health. It was confirmed by an Aspire employee that the trees are being watered at least once a week, indicating they are being well cared for.

5. Allotments

All plot holders have now received their new key to the lock. The committee noted the excellent work being carried out and praised Dan for his role as an effective and dedicated Chair.

The upcoming allotment inspection will be carried out by members of the Allotment Committee, who will report their findings back to the Parish Council.

The committee also agreed to request a key for the Parish Council, to allow access to the allotments when or if necessary, such as in the case of an emergency.

6. Heron Walk

Please see Item 4.

7. Biodiversity Task Group

Cllr Gathern has shared key findings from a report prepared for the Biodiversity Task Group. The purpose of the report is to identify key areas within the borough, assess their biodiversity value and significance, and propose actions to enhance those that receive lower ecological scores.

It has been acknowledged that the development of a comprehensive management plan, along with potentially substantial investment, will be essential to raise the standard of low-scoring areas and support long-term ecological improvements.

In addition, it has been noted that the public consultation for Queen's Platinum Jubilee Park (commonly referred to as Discovery Park) is now open, providing an opportunity for the community to contribute to the future management and development of this important green space.

Lastly, felling notices have been issued for several trees along Bucksford Lane. Further information and monitoring are ongoing.

8. Tree Trail

Thanks were extended to Cllr S. Gathern for their continued support in helping to complete the tree trail. The project is now nearing completion, with only two locations remaining. The parish is currently awaiting confirmation from the church to finalise the dates for installation at these remaining sites.

The Kent Friends of the Trees have announced a *Tree of the Year* competition. The committee agreed to engage with the local community to gather suggestions for a tree to submit for the competition.

9. Singleton Lake & Buxford Meadow

The Friends of Singleton Lake will be holding their Annual General Meeting on 18th June.

The committee noted recent social media posts highlighting concerns around an injured gosling entangled in fishing line and reports of dead fish at the lake. These incidents have raised important questions about responsibility for ongoing maintenance and litter removal around the lake, particularly with regard to discarded fishing line and other hazards.

10. Ashford Community Woodland

The Parish Steward has recently assisted with some maintenance tasks, these included fixing a gate, reinforcing the noticeboard, and carrying out general tidying work in the orchard.

11. Gardening Competition

The Clerk informed the committee that 8 entries have been received for the Front Garden Competition. The committee was pleased with the number of submissions, especially as this is the first time the competition has been held. All gardens will be judged on 25th June 2025.

12. Items for information or agenda for next meeting

- Allotment
- Heron Walk Community Garden Project
- Singleton Lake and Buxford Meadow
- Tree Trail
- Gardening Competition- Best Front Garden

13. Date and venue of next meeting.

The date of the next scheduled meeting is **27th of August 2025** starting at 16:00 and a walkaround on the **13th August 2025** starting at 2.00 pm from Singleton Environment Centre.

The meeting closed at 17:45