Meeting of the Environment Committee
Wednesday, 08th April 2026 at Buxford Hall, Buxford Pavilion starting at 16:00

Present: Cllrs Peter Barker, Dave Gathern, Steve Herring, Barry Mercer, and Malcolm Wiffen
Also Present: Aniko Szocs (Clerk), Cllr Sally Gathern (ABC) 2 MOP

The meeting started at 16:00

1. **Apologies for Absence**
   None to note.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   None

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
   The minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 04th March 2026 were duly approved.

Proposed: Cllr Wiffen	**Seconded: Cllr Mercer**	**In Favour: 5**
Vote against: 0	**Vote Abstain:** 0	**Motion carried**

4. **Allotments**

The committee received an update on allotment activities. The Barrow and Spade Brigade held their AGM, which was attended by Cllrs Wiffen and McClintock. Both councillors commended the committee for their effective management of the allotments.

Funding is available via the S106 agreement for improvements to the allotments. Although this funding was initially offered to the neighbouring Parish Council, they do not have any allotments, and the sum has now been offered to our Parish Council. The S106 team requested that, should plots be available, priority be given to residents of Shadoxhurst. The Clerk will forward the relevant documents to the committee so that all information can be completed and returned to the S106 office.

The Chair of the Barrow and Spade Brigade reported misuse of the container and requested council support for the removal of improperly stored tools. The committee agreed to support this action.

Proposed: Cllr Wiffen	**Seconded: Cllr Gathern**	**In Favour: 5**
Vote against: 0	**Vote Abstain:** 0	**Motion carried**

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5. **Heron Walk Community Garden**
   There is nothing further to report. The raised bed remains under cover, ready for planting. This is also an excellent opportunity for the apprentice to become involved.

6. **Tree Trail**
   The committee agreed to organise a walkaround to identify potential trees to be added to the route. In addition, areas suitable for additional signage will be identified during this walk.

7. **Singleton Lake & Buxford Meadow**
   The committee noted that the Public Space Protection Order has been renewed and is now in effect from 01/04/2026.

   It was reported that the raised path has been damaged following a tree being uprooted during recent storms. Although a barrier remains in place to close the path, it has been moved and members of the public continue to use the route.

   Ashford Angling Society continues to lease the lake from ABC. The society raised concerns about the poor maintenance of fishing swims, which negatively impacts their activities. With the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation, there is apprehension that neglect of this important site may persist. Additionally, the committee noted insufficient upkeep around Buxford Meadow, which has large areas inaccessible on foot. The lake was described as appearing tired and in need of maintenance.

8. **Ashford Community Woodland**
   The committee acknowledged the resignation of the Co-chair of Ashford Community Woodland. Members discussed concerns regarding the potential impact this may have on the group's future direction.

   The committee noted a complaint from a resident about trees from Ashford Community Woodland overhanging their property and causing difficulties. The resident has been advised to contact Ashford Borough Council and refer to their Tree Policy for guidance on tree maintenance as the land comes under ABC ownership.

9. **Signs**
   The committee considered the proposal to install signage throughout the parish, similar to those found in Victoria Park. It was suggested that these signs could display walking times to various destinations and highlight notable locations within the parish. It was agreed that possible sites for the signs would be identified during the upcoming walkaround.

10. **Air Quality Monitoring**
    The committee was informed by Councillor Sally Gathern that DEFRA will install an air quality monitoring device in Ashford. It was noted that various devices monitor different pollutants. The council agreed that responsibility for air quality monitoring should remain with the designated authority.

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11. Items for information or agenda for next meeting

- Allotment
- Heron Walk Community Garden Project
- Singleton Lake and Buxford Meadow
- Tree Trail
- Ashford Community Woodland
- Signs
- Front Garden Competition

12. Date and venue of next meeting.

The date of the next scheduled meeting 6th May 2026 starting at 16:00 at Buxford Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 17:20

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