**ENCLOSURE 4**

# KTC Climate and Nature Group

Tuesday 4th August 2026

**Minutes**

In attendance:

Cllr David Bailey; Cllr Roy Minto; Cllr Mark Stevens; Cllr James Kennedy; John Dearing; Henry Lucas; Steve Krikler; Fern Arnold; Kate Carpenter; Kathryn Parsons; Toby Arnold; May Lau; Sue Law; Julia Hart; Craig Franklin; Katy Stokes

Apologies:

Cllr Alison Insley; Cllr Neil Eaton; George Martin

## 1. Introduction

Remit of the group: The Climate Working Group was set up on 1st August 2019 tasked with producing a detailed roadmap that will help to encourage and enable public and community-led carbon reduction schemes within Kenilworth. The Kenilworth Climate Action Roadmap was approved by Council on 27th February 2020. Following the Council's strategic review in early 2026 it was agreed that the Climate Working Group would evolve into the Climate & Nature Group absorbing several other *ad hoc* groups that had been established. The Group will continue to meet regularly to share information, consider requests for support and engagement, review progress and report to full Council meetings.

The current drought serves to emphasise the importance of addressing climate breakdown and nature depletion in every way we can. During the meeting a beautiful rainbow was visible from the Council chamber!

## 2. Election of Chair

Cllr James Kennedy was elected as chair of the group.

## 3. Update on the Finham Brook project

3.1. The Finham Brook trail is now with the designers. Funding agreed with the Town Council for printing. Thanks to Sue Law for historical research and editing and to Cllr Alix Dearing for starting it off. Potential launch on 18th September (see 3.3 below).

3.2. May Lau has been working intensively on water testing in the Brook with a team of volunteers and has also agreed with Clinton School that they will take part. Monthly

results are entered in the FreshWater Watch Platform. Full details available from May. Volunteers welcome.

3.3. May has set up the **Blessing of Finham Brook** and has invited Mayor Alison Insley and Leamington Mayor Sarah Boad; blessing ceremony to be held by Sam Black.

> **Date**: Friday 18th September 2026
> **Time**: 09:45 to 11:00
> **Location**: Forge Road Bridge
> Inviting Independent Journalist from Local Storytelling Exchange
> **Contact:** May Lau text/WhatsApp to 07983338708 or email: fbwta.kenilworth@gmail.com

3.4. Himalayan Balsam removal. Toby has been working with local groups (Friends of Abbey Fields, Kenilworth Allotments Tenants' Association and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust) to clear this invasive weed during the growing season. Need for more engagement from owners of properties along the banks, particularly on the stretch between Castle Farm Leisure Centre and Abbey Fields.

3.5. Animal flea medicine danger. (Highlighted on BBC Radio 4 Today Programme on the morning of Wednesday 5th August: they must have been monitoring our meeting.) Fern has researched and developed a public information poster outlining the problem and possible solutions. This is now with the WDC biodiversity team, and we are waiting for their approval to consider an awareness campaign across the District.

3.6. Finham Brook signs on bridges. Outline funding agreed by Town Council. Permission still needed from County Council for highway bridges. Mark as County Councillor will explore how to get this approval.

**4. Tree planting 2026**

Mark described the problem that WCC is no longer happy to work with volunteers (who have in the past included councillors and the High Sherrif of Warwickshire as well as our enthusiastic tree wardens) to plant street trees, thus increasing the cost to £350 a tree. Mark with fellow County Councillors Tracey Drew and Richard Dickson will explore how to get this policy reversed in view of the benefits of street trees and local volunteer engagement in planting. Fern shared details from Coventry City Council where they are asking residents to contribute £150 to a tree outside their house. A programme of street tree planting will go ahead during the coming winter, though sadly with limited numbers due to the high cost.

**5. Update on the Cherry Orchard green space**.

Plans to manage the area for biodiversity and amenity. Two outstanding problems:

> (a) uncertain legal status of public access: notices say access is forbidden, but dog-walkers and others use it regularly.

(b) complex requirements if we want to get volunteers involved in management.

Mark will continue to explore with WCC but this may be something that needs to wait for the constitution of the new South Warwickshire Council which will bring together the WDC and WCC responsibilities – and ownership as most of the land is WCC, but part is WDC owned. Update on 6th August: the Cherry Orchard site has been mowed, reducing the fire risk, and is remarkably litter-free.

**Update 21st August**

Cherry Orchard has recently been designated a Local Wildlife Site. The designation itself doesn't necessarily change anything in terms of public access or day-to-day management of the site. LWSs can be privately owned and there is no automatic right of public access as a result of designation.

The citation records the ecological interest of the site, including its habitats and species, as well as relevant management information and recommendation for maintaining and enhancing its biodiversity. These recommendations provide guidance to the landowner, but the designation itself does not necessarily impose a specific management regime on them.

In terms of planning protection, the current Warwick District Local Plan includes specific policy protection for LWSs. The emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan also proposes to protect and enhance locally important biodiversity sites, including LWSs.

**6. Kenilworth School Climate Action Plan 2026-29**

Kathryn reported that the Plan is now complete but is waiting sign off and the appointment of a champion from the new Senior Leadership Team, anticipated in September. Ambitious plans will involve students and staff in activities including:

- Auditing carbon usage, waste and energy use
- Environmental understanding integrated into the curriculum, for example looking at subjects as diverse as rivers and fast fashion
- A focus on encouraging active and sustainable travel to the school for all students, working with the Town Council and KMAT team leading on this.
- Encouraging careers in sustainability, with a Green Careers week planned 2nd – 6th November.

The School will work with the community to take this forward and the Town Council should consider inviting the school to brief this Group and / or the full Town Council once the Action Plan has been launched.

**7. Green corridor in the land East of Kenilworth**.

Discussions with WDC officers show that there is an almost continuous green corridor through the land East of Kenilworth from Crewe Lane to the Leamington Road. The parcels of greenery are however in at least four different ownerships with potentially four different (and possibly incompatible) management plans. James Kennedy is working with Cllr Will Roberts Portfolio Holder for Green Spaces and officers at WDC to explore how the whole corridor can be brought under a single management plan and be developed as a green corridor to support nature recovery and provide amenity for the residents of all the new developments.

**8. South Warwickshire Local Plan**

The plan is now in its final consultation stage. The details of the consultation can be accessed here. Of particular relevance to this group is Chapter 6 of the plan, Achieving a Climate Resilient and Net Zero South Warwickshire.

**9. Friends of the Earth report on how to improve the environment in Warwick District.**

Members of the group were invited to read this short report.

**10. Any other business**

May recommended a Permaculture Course she had recently attended. "More than a course, this is an opportunity to immerse yourself in a different way of living. A week of growing food, sharing meals, learning alongside others and experiencing what a regenerative community can feel like. Details of the next opportunity can be found at: https://snappytickets.co.uk/event/permaculture-immersion-returning-and-deepening/

**11. Proposed date for the next meeting**

Tuesday 24th November 2026 at 7.00 pm in Jubilee House.

Cllr James Kennedy
6th August 2026

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- Current drought – climate and nature more critical than ever – flooding also an issue!
- Information sharing
- Requests for support and engagement
- Feedback to the Town Council

Reminder – TC has limited funds and limited capacity, but can convene.