

Notes of the meeting of the Storrington Air Quality Steering group held on 23rd April 2024.

Present: Cllr Mark Cramer (Chair), Cllr John Loney, Cllr Bill Aitkenhead, Clerk Lauren Hansing, Storrington & Sullington Parish Council (SSPC)
Cllr Paul Marshall (remote video link), Jamie Dallen, Pene Mather (WSCC)
Cllr Claudia Fisher, Cllr Emma Beard, Cllr Joan Grech, Thais Covre Delboni, Lee Money, Marc Rankin (HDC)
Apologies from Adam Bazley (WSCC)

Introductions

Introductions were made.

Actions from Last Meeting

Updates on actions were provided. These included:

- Cabin Design – as the cabin is now going to be made smaller the redecoration of this station was considered a moot point.
- Buses – JD would look further into the consideration of more environmentally ‘friendly’ buses; however, it was appreciated that there needed to be a case of balancing when considering ‘cleaner’ buses in regards to costs. Contacting schools directly was not considered the next appropriate step. It was noted that funds have been allocated for hydrogen buses but that this had yet to be expanded to those servicing Storrington & Sullington.
- The previous Clerk had circulated information regarding Walk to School/Active Travel Routes schemes but little headway had been made. Talks between the Clerk and PM would be resumed, which the Neighbourhood Wardens were interested in participating in as this had been brought at the Parish Council’s Youth Forum. PM noted the School Streets Project which was trialling the closure of roads outside schools during drop-off and collection periods.

Air Quality Monitoring 2023

TCD shared NO₂ monitoring data from 2023 which show that the worst location’s measurements (Manleys Hill) are below the Government objective, although exceeding the WHO’s limits.

The validity of these figures was queried as it was deemed not to represent the whole of Storrington as no continuous data from the High Street or West Street was available. Averaging of figures also prevented a true understanding of what the level of pollution was at peak times or times of heavy traffic. The frequent road closures (such as for utility companies’ maintenance) often results in slow-moving traffic. These emissions cannot be accurately reported when using annual averages (diffusion tubes). CF noted that the pollution was over 36, however government request that data has to be reviewed annually. It was appreciated that HDC were following national guidelines in their analysis, but it was strongly felt that this did not present an accurate picture of peak emissions and the resultant detriment to health, both physical and mental.

Storrington Monitoring Station

TD reported that the Environmental Agency would be taking over the Monitoring Station and that there were plans to downsize it. Members were sceptical that removing this monitoring from HDC’s department was the best course of action.

Update of Horsham District Air Quality Action Plan / Defra Air Quality Grant.

Whilst HDC’s bid to Defra¹ had been successful, LM and TCD informed the meeting that less than a month later the Air Quality Commissioner had cancelled all funding for Local Air Quality Grant

¹ The bid was made to fund a monitoring campaign to improve the evidence base to measure NO₂ levels on an hourly basis and for an ANPR survey to understand the contribution of through traffic to those levels. This survey would also provide information about the number of HGVs and HGVs over 7.5 tonne travelling through the AQMA.

schemes. Members of the Air Quality Steering Group were deeply disappointed and saddened by this news. They praised HDC, particularly TCD, for the bid that they had put forward and the success they had achieved. However, the withdrawal of the pledged funding of £78,543 was deemed irresponsible and short-sighted by the government minister.

Members noted the available S106 which had been earmarked for projects related to the Air Quality Management Area. That the plans being put forward could not be deemed as capital projects was strongly objected to. This is one aspect of an essential program that residents of Storrington & Sullington are adamant needs to be addressed. Appropriate applications for this S106 funding by SSPC Councillors or HDC Officers would be welcomed and supported, notably any application which continued to address the need to increase monitoring and refine accuracy of results.

Communications.

- Up to date information available on HDC's website.
- Continue to promote Sussex Air Website

Any Other Business.

No other business was raised.

Date of next meeting.

Unconfirmed.