

YCC Steering Group Meeting

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), 8th November 2024

Attendees: Kate Ravilious, Jenny Kent, Shaun Gibbons, Sarah West, Katy Brooke (Minutes), Andy D'Agorne, Holly Hennell, Georgia Ramsay, Issy Burkitt, Jamie Sims, Sam Perry, Johan Kuylenstierna, Vicky Blakey-Archer, Adrian Lovett, Paul Kissack, Stephen Levett, Penny Bainbridge

Apologies: Peter Roderick, Sarah Rafferty, Alex McCallion, Dael Robinson, Jonathan Dent, Louisa Page

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

- Shaun and Issy are awaiting the final designed version of the Climate Change Action Plan, which will go to Executive Member Decision session on 19th November.

Actions:

- JENNY:** Ask Jonny Stokeld - jonny@yorkcommunityenergy.org.uk if he would like to lead the Energy WG.

2. UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUP CHAIRS

- Georgia gave an update on the **York Educators for Climate Action WG**.
 - Hosted a meeting as part of York Environment Week to connect different educators across the city.
 - Working with Lynda Dunlop at the University of York to organise a Schools Climate Conference next year.
 - Leadership breakfast in January to generate interest and gather support from educational leaders for the upcoming Schools Climate Conference.
- Issy gave an update on the **Waste and Circular Economy WG**.
 - Dael Robinson confirmed as new Chair for Waste Working Group.
 - Meeting organised for 19th November.
 - Potential to collaborate with Food group - a decision is being made as to whether to link the two groups.
- Jamie provided an update on the **Buildings and Retrofit WG**.
 - Meeting on 15th November.
 - Sent four representatives to a retrofit strategy planning workshop organised by the new combined authority.

- Jamie and Sam have discussed the idea of requesting the combined authority to recognise the Climate Commission as a strategic partner in the retrofit strategy process.
- Shaun and Johan mentioned that York's retrofit one-stop shop "YorEnergy" officially launched in late October. All York residents are eligible for free home energy assessment and retrofit support.
- Holly provided an update on the **Connecting with Green Spaces WG**.
 - Meeting on 15th to review recent events hosted as part of York Environment Week and plans for next year.
 - The York Cares Big Community Challenge took place in Sep/Oct. Had over 500 volunteers on 33 sites over 48 sessions. Worked with 28 partners and 18 employers. Planted 17,800 plants of which 12,000 were native wildflowers.
 - Floating ecosystem was launched into the River Ouse.
 - Lots of positive feedback from volunteers.
 - York Cares' 20th anniversary next year.
- Andy gave an update on the **Transport WG**.
 - Meeting on 20th November.
 - Need to decide how best to engage with and promote travel conference in July next year.
 - Volunteers have been conducting traffic counts at Blossom St junction, with a view to improving pedestrian flows.
 - Transport strategy going to the executive next week.
 - Aim to engage with various interest groups, including the Civic Trust.
- Sam gave an update on the **Future Economy of York WG**.
 - Ran a York Environment Weeks event which went well.
 - Started the process of compiling a dossier of recommendations for green businesses. Plans to report back on progress and findings at the annual event.
- Adrian gave an update on the **York Good Food Alliance WG**.
 - Plan to reconvene the group with a meeting in December.
 - Overall aim to develop a York Good Food System that actively and practically supports the growing, distribution and use of local food.
 - Would like a collaborative cross-sector approach both within York and with neighbouring authorities.
 - Focusing on Napton field growing project as a starting point for developing local food initiatives.
 - Exploring ways to scale up projects like Planet Food, Food Circle and existing food hubs.
 - Seeking funding for a project leader or project coordinator.
 - The concept of "good food" was a significant topic at Merchant Adventurers Day. Decided to use the term flexibly to encompass many aspects aiming for the best achievable combination in each meal.

3. YORK ENVIRONMENT FORUM

- Penny Bainbridge from York Environment Forum has proposed running joint events with the YCC and would like to explore collaborative opportunities.
- Could host a meeting each month focusing on one of the YCC working groups. Representatives from each working group would be invited to present.
- Holly suggested that members of the YEF attend YCC meetings, as it's difficult to schedule meetings due to everyone's tight schedules.
- Kate stressed that managing capacity is crucial due to voluntary nature of members' contributions.
- Affirmed that working groups are open and would welcome extra members.

Actions:

- Working Group Chairs:** Invite YEF to attend future group meetings.

4. STEERING GROUP ROLES AND PROCESSES

- Jenny thanked everyone for their input into the new Chair advert – we need someone to take over from Matthias by January.
- The previous Commission operated as an informal group without established governance or processes.
- Jenny proposes delegating the appointment process to a small number of steering group members, depending on who's available to do interviews. Going forward next year with new chair/co-chairs in place, review and establish formal governance structures.
- Sam fed back to Jenny that he felt that the commission was functioning effectively without a Chair and questioned the necessity of appointing one. He suggested appointing someone already on the Steering Group instead of someone external.
- Jenny clarified that advertising for a new Chair does not obligate the Commission to appoint someone. All options are still being considered.
- The only formal governance in place is that CYC nominates the Executive Member for Environment and Climate to sit on the Commission. Moving forward, the only link with CYC will be through the Executive Member for Environment.
- Having an independent Chair could help avoid the uncertainties associated with changes in the Executive Member position.
- As an original member of the Commission, Paul highlighted the importance of having an independent Chair who takes responsibility for organising meetings, coordinates activities and ensures follow-ups on action points.
- Paul clarified that the Chair does not have any executive power – the role is primarily convening and facilitating.
- Jamie suggested that if the Commission doesn't appoint a Chair due to timing issues or a lack of suitable candidates, we could consider appointing an interim Chair.

- Jamie – the Chair should play an outward-facing role and build networks with the rest of the region. Need to be clear about who will make the final decision on the Chair appointment.

Actions:

- JENNY:** Identify steering group members available in early December to be on Chair recruitment panel.

5. ANNUAL YCC EVENT

- Merchant Adventurers' Hall booked for Thursday 9th January.
- Proposed as 4-hour event: 9.30am – 1.30pm
- Invite all attendees from the previous event (approximately 100 people)

Event Structure:

1. Opening Segment: Each working group will have a 10–15 minute slot to present their recent activities and achievements. This aims to:
 - Showcase the work each group has accomplished.
 - Inspire new attendees to engage with existing working groups.
 - Encourage cross-collaboration by inspiring ideas across groups.
 - Also opportunity to introduce the new chair (if appointed by the event date), who could outline the YCC's direction and priorities for the upcoming year.
2. Presentations and Talks:
 - A series of talks will follow the initial presentations.
 - Sam plans to present findings on "Greening York's Businesses" and discuss the Climate Action Pledge.
3. Working Group Showcases and Lunch:
 - Each working group will have a dedicated table (possibly in a downstairs area) for displaying information and engaging with attendees.
 - Space will be provided for working groups to hold informal meetings.
 - May have to bring own lunch, as the venue's kitchen/café will not be open.
4. Afternoon Planning and Reporting Session:
 - Before the event concludes, each working group will have time to discuss their goals and priorities for the coming year.
 - This will culminate in a brief report-back session where groups can share their intended focus and objectives for the next 12 months.

Actions:

- KATY:** Check capacity of venue for maximum number of attendees.

6. CLIMATE & NATURE HUB (JAMIE SIMS)

- Jamie gave an updated presentation on the Climate and Nature Hub.

- He asked the Commission to consider formally endorsing the project in support of an upcoming bid to the National Lottery. This follows a successful approach by Leeds in a similar project, and endorsement would strengthen the bid.
- The National Lottery's new deadline is now spring 2025.
- Jamie highlighted project transparency, listing current partners and engaging community groups. He also noted the focus on asset-based community development.
- Jamie shared that support from various organisations, including SEI (with Sarah assisting in bid writing), has begun.
- Ward selection is being refined, balancing socio-economic diversity to avoid skewing project evaluations.
- Compliance with Lottery requirements, such as non-climate focused fund-holding partners, is underway, though additional support is sought for evaluation, public engagement and climate partnerships.

Actions:

- ALL:** Let Jamie know by early December if YCC can endorse the Climate & Nature Hub.

7. JOINT COMMUNICATIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS CITYWIDE (JENNY KENT)

- Jenny proposed establishing a city ambassador role to promote environmental initiatives and counter negative public feedback.
- Noted negative reactions to projects like long verges and wildflower meadows in York, with some residents viewing them as making the city look untidy.
- Proposed that members of the Commission, steering group and associated organisations serve as neutral ambassadors.
- Advocated for rational and civilised promotion of environmental agendas without engaging in political conflicts.
- There's interest in having Y-PERN sponsor a trial of the ambassador role initiative.
- Sam suggested forming a Comms Working Group for improved communication within the Commission. This would need to be led by the Chair.

Actions:

- JENNY:** Collaborate with Jonathan Dent, Johan and Y-PERN to explore the possibility of piloting the ambassador role initiative in York.

8. MAILING LIST AND NEWSLETTERS

- Due to time constraints, discussion deferred until the next meeting.

9. AOB

- Adrian proposed establishing a Rivers working group, given the recent flooding events and pollution issues in the region. The group could work with external partners to address both flood mitigation and pollution.
 - Kate recommended involving local researchers and organisations like the Foss River Society.

Actions:

- SARAH:** Invite Citizen Science researchers to next meeting for River working group discussion.
- KATY:** ~~Send out Doodle Poll to schedule next steering group meeting for December (include 9th and 13th in poll).~~