



**Dacorum Environmental Forum  
Full Meeting Thursday 12.05.2016**

MINUTES

**Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Gruff Edwards	Chair DEF
Steve Wilson	Vice Chair DEF
Vivienne Adams	Flaunden Parish Council
Jill Saunders	Flaunden Parish Council
Nigel Brant-Wilcock	Neighbourhood Support Lead Officer, DBC
Susie Mercer	Ashridge Estate (presenter)
Emma Norrington	Transition Towns Berkhamsted
Chris Ridley	DEF
Mike Ridley	DEF
Cllr Janice Marshall	DBC Environment Portfolio Holder
Cllr Phil Hills	Tring Town Council
Cllr Paul Harris	Great Gaddesden PC and DEF
Martin Hicks	Hertfordshire Ecology
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council

**Apologies**

Roger Hands	DEF, Boxmoor Trust, etc.
Norman Jones	DEF
Siva Niranjana	West Herts. Action Group and DEF

Meeting started at 7:30pm

**1. Apologies**

See above.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held 25/2/16**

No corrections suggested.

**3. Matters arising** (*Paragraph numbers from the previous minutes are in Italics*)

### **3      *Reducing Litter in Dacorum***

See Item 5 below

### **3      *LA3 Housing***

**GE** reminded that following the Examination in Public of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (which includes LA3) and subject to the Inspector's rulings, Master Plans for LA3 etc. would be produced for public consultation.

The Examination's Programme Officer (29/3/16) had confirmed to **GE** that he had DEF listed as having made comments to the key consultations and that he would be in touch directly as soon as arrangements for the Examination were in place. He had said that following initial queries the Inspector would determine dates for the Examination Hearings and provide representors (including DEF) with Guidance Notes and a set of Matters and Questions which would form the basis of both the discussions at the hearing sessions and provide a framework for the submission of any further evidence.

It remained DEF's intention to approach the developers again regarding the Master Plan. When last invited to field speakers at DEF Benjamin Coles of Taylor Wimpey had said that he would "very much welcome the opportunity of engaging with the Forum at a pre-application stage in the lead up to a planning application, which will be prepared assuming the Inspector endorses the Council's Local Allocations and following adoption by the Council."

### **3      *Hatfield Incinerator Refusal***

**GE** had heard from John Webb of HertsWoW (Herts. Without Waste) that the HCC Cabinet Panel recommended on March 4<sup>th</sup> that the latest Veolia proposal (ERF – Energy Recovery Facility) at Rye House should be accepted in principle. This was approved by the main HCC cabinet on March 14<sup>th</sup>. On March 11<sup>th</sup> John Webb had asked DEF (via **GE**) and other contacts to lobby HCC Council leader Robert Gordon not to approve, since the new proposal did not aim to recycle any of its input. However, **GE** had not acted on this in time.

### **4      *Halsey Field (Roman Snails etc.)***

**CR** reported that fourteen people attended the Inaugural meeting of The Friends of Halsey Field meeting on Tuesday 19th April. The constitution was accepted, and a chairman, secretary, treasurer and three committee members were elected. It was decided to open a bank account with the Metro bank, as they have the facility to handle charity accounts.

**CR** and **MR** had also had a stroke of luck, as the benches in Gadebridge Park were being replaced, and it was decided that they could have four of those in the best condition for the field. Herts. County Council had already given permission for an information sign and a bench to be placed in the field, and **CR** had now sent a bid to the Boxmoor Trust, asking for a grant to cover the cost of some signage and some tools to facilitate its management.

Benefits from the winter management sessions were already apparent, as there were more cowslips than ever growing in the field this year, and the thickest clump was where the brush cutter trimmed some of the brambles in the western section of the field.

**CR** said that she would like information on Halsey Field to be included on DBC's website, and **JM** offered to provide the necessary contact details.

#### **5. *River Gade in Gadebridge Park***

**SW** said that DBC were still in the process of developing a Master Plan for Gadebridge Park. The consultation meeting at which he will present a paper on the Upper Gade had been postponed twice. He handed **GE** a copy of the paper.

#### **6. *HCC transport policy up to 2050 – forthcoming consultation***

In response to Cllr William Wyatt-Lowe's request for ideas to feed into this consultation (Jul – Sept '16), **PH** and **MR** had produced a document to send on **DEF**'s behalf to **W W-L**, following any further comments from **DEF** members

#### **4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

No nominations had been received, but **GE** and **SW** were willing to continue in their current posts. Both were proposed by **JM**, and the seconds were **PH** and **MR** respectively.

#### **5. Dacorum Borough Council's Street Champions project.**

**GE** welcomed Nigel Brant-Wilcock (Neighbourhood Support Lead Officer, DBC) who had kindly agreed to come and talk about recent developments in the Street Champions project. **GE** said that since **DEF**'s meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup> last year, attended by Council Leader Andrew Williams, when "Litter in Dacorum" was a main item, a few members of **DEF** had become Street Champions, and that more recently, through co-operation with Nigel and other Neighbourhood Support Officers, clear-ups had been achieved at several locations including Clover Way (from Fennycroft Road to Gade Valley School), woods adjacent to Pulleys Lane and the public footpath from Rowcroft, Chaulden to Pouchen End Lane.

**N B-W** told the meeting that the Street Champions project had now been running for at least five years, and was an offshoot of the Neighbourhood Action scheme. Some Champions participated actively in clearing certain areas themselves as individuals or in groups, while others used the scheme in order to report problem areas for clearing by Clean, Safe and Green or other resources (such as workers on "Payback" schemes). Some Street Champions also led local enhancement projects such as street planters. Initially Street Champions were expected to look after just their own street, but they were now invited to report on problems anywhere within the Borough. Some local businesses (MacDonald's Apsley and Bourne End and Tesco at Jarman Way) also provided their support and their staff conducted clear-ups. In his view these outlets were not to blame for their packaging etc. being dropped as litter - it was the customers.

A provision for Street Champions to be supplied with an ID so that they didn't need to enter full details each time they reported something online was to be further promoted. Regarding feedback (keeping a Street Champion informed as to progress on a clear-up) and in order to facilitate

reporting the locations, DBC's IT department were looking into developing a GPS-assisted mobile 'phone "app." Another initiative, the "dog stencil" had recently been introduced with some success. It consisted of stencilling an area of (typically) footway with white, non-lasting paint with a message that it had been cleared of dog faeces and requesting dog-owners to prevent their pets from re-fouling the area.

**EN** asked whether the Scheme applied to the whole Borough.

**N B-W** Yes it did. A hundred or so people had volunteered as Street Champions. While he hoped that the number of Champions would grow further, this needed to be at a manageable rate.

**PH** asked whether Town Clerks could be a contact point for the scheme.

**N B-W** Yes, this was already the case.

**CR** Said that she preferred communal to individual volunteer litter picking. How easy was this? She had tried to arrange a group litter pick in Gadebridge, but no others volunteered to join this so it had to be cancelled.

**N B-W** It should be quite easy, any Street Champion can assemble a group, suggest location and date and ask for appropriate support in terms of equipment via the Scheme. In the case of Gadebridge he said that CR could have another try. No date was suggested.

**CR** Asked whether stencils similar to "dog stencils" could be used after clearances of general litter.

**N B-W** Said he would consider it. He asked **CR** to email him with her suggestion for a stencil to say that the street champions had just cleaned an area, which could be painted on the pavement, but would wash off with time.

**MR** Asked whether, when highways were closed for litter clearance, signs explaining the reason for the closure could be displayed, as it might persuade some motorists and passengers to change their habit of discarding litter out of vehicles. This would be at minimal extra cost since the (very expensive) road closure was happening anyway, and it might even prove a saving in the long term if it persuaded enough people.

**N B-W** Said he would consider it.

**SW** said that Friends of Gadebridge Park conducted regular litter clearances of the park, and he judged that an improvement had been made, since the number of bags collected had fallen from 23 to 9.

**JS** Said that when 'phoning the Council to report fly tipping in Flaunden it was difficult to get through to a human voice in order to explain the location. This sometimes resulted in a waste of resources when Clean, Safe and Green turned up and couldn't find the spot.

**JM** Advised that if one says "Customer Services" in response to the first question asked by voice-recognition telephone answering system behind DBC's main telephone number, they will be transferred to a human being.

**GE** Said that in his experience of using the online fly tipping reporting system on the DBC website there was no effective or reliable feedback or follow-up, that he had had better results from E-mailing individual Neighbourhood Support Officers, and that pending a proven, improved automated feedback system, that is what he would recommend to others.

## **6. 'Ashridge: the next five years'**

**GE** welcomed Susie Mercer, General Manager, Ashridge Estate who had kindly agreed to come and talk about current and proposed projects for managing the National Trust's property. She gave an illustrated presentation about the Trust's workplan, including the provision of better surfaced car parking and deer management. At her invitation the presentation was interspersed with questions, which resulted in some discussion amongst those present. She has subsequently

indicated that she does not wish the item to be minuted in any greater detail, and this has been respected.

## **7. Any Other Business**

**SW** said that he had attended a meeting of the DEF Water Group recently, and that Minutes would be available in due course. See also item 3.5 above.

**GS** said that defibrillators were available for public use at Marsworth Village Hall, and that it would be useful if DEF members suggested the same for other localities, via their Councillors.

*Later Note: there is connection between the provision of local health facilities and the environment because potentially it reduces the demand for road transport.*

**JM** said that on Saturday 14 May at 10am at Bunkers Park, Hemel Hempstead there would be a ceremony at which Clean, Safe and Green, working with Boxmoor Trust, would release Belted Galloway cows from the Boxmoor Estate. The Mayor of Dacorum would cut the ribbon.

It was also announced that on the same date there would be a special open day at Pitstone Windmill, which would be open from 2.30pm – 3.30pm.