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**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 16th July 2009**

MINUTES

Attendance

Phil Pennington	DEF Chairman
Veronica Allan	Tring in Transition
Jean Blackman	Friends of the Earth
Marion Baker	Transition Town Berkhamsted
Richard Blackburn	Dacorum Borough Council
Sylvia Davidson	Water Group
Sheila Doyle	Friends of the Earth
Cllr Cassie Dullea	Markyate Parish Council
Mary Dyson	Lions Club Berkhamsted
Gruff Edwards	New Conservation Society and DEF Vice-Chairman
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Roger Hands	Water Group/Box Moor Trust
Cllr Neil Harden	Dacorum Borough Council
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Martin Hicks	Herts Biological Records Centre
Chris Hopkins	Tring in Transition
Dorothy Jackman	Transition Town Hemel
Alan Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Council
Hazel Johnson	Green Party
Rudolf Kirst	Hemel Hempstead GM Action Group
Cllr David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Paul Sandford	Dacorum Green Party
Lizzy Savage	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Fleur Tucker	Berkhamsted Town Council
Tim Vaughan	Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign
Bridget Wilkins	Berkhamsted Transition Town
Jason Williams	Friends of Shrubhill
Adrian Whyte	Interested Party – Resource Efficiency
Michelle Anderson	Dacorum Borough Council (minutes)

56. Apologies

Cllr Alan Anderson	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr H Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Norman Cutting	Berkhamsted Citizens Association
Cllr Green	Dacorum Borough Council
Emma Norrington	Groundwork/TBCC
Peter Thring	CPRE Hertfordshire, Chiltern Society
Douglas Walker	Resident

57. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 March 2009 were agreed.

Councillor Garrick Stevens noted that he had carried out further research as requested at the last meeting, before presenting to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 July 2009. A grant was available from DEFRA for global action planning and this would pay for the website and facilitation of a training session on beginning the project, the cost of this was £1200. Alternatively members could attend a workshop on the 1st of September 09.

Rudolph Kirst noted that lots of work was being done on the local sustainable food strategy and he would feed back any information to this forum. Rudolph would liaise with Marion Baker.

58. Water Group update

Roger Hands gave the following report:

Water Framework Directive Response

Preparing for the formal response by 22 June was a very challenging period. The directive was a 1300 page document giving great details on a variety of topics. DEF Water Group was represented at many workshops arranged by the Environment Agency (EA) within the Thames Valley basin each with differing emphasis such as water resources and abstraction and biodiversity.

Bulbourne, Gade and Ver fishery Action Plans

The DEF Water group has been addressing this issue for many years and is now at the consultation stage at the same time as the Water Framework Directive. All three rivers are Chiltern Chalk streams and are of very high national and international environmental status. The Gade Sustainability study has been passed back to the EA in order to finalise the financial support to be provided for the implementation of the selected options that have been identified. The biodiversity of invertebrates of the Gade are very important and as such are being investigated.

Countryside Management Service (CMS)

The crucial technical support of the CMS was acknowledged. It was important that the DEF Water Group has a wide variety of support from many organisations, such as Chiltern Society, British Waterways and the EA.

Public Consultations such as Core Strategy etc.

This appears to be an ongoing process such as SFRA's and Cams to which the DEF Water group will continue to respond as and when required.

Phil Pennington noted that the Fishery action plan and the Water Framework directive had all come together.

Councillor David Nobbs asked if the CMS still provided support.

Phil Pennington noted that the budget to provide support was available for one year.

Rudolph Kirst thanked Roger Hands and the Water group for all of the work carried out.

59. Consultation on Core Strategy

Richard Blackburn gave a presentation to the forum, highlighting the following points:

- Consultation was taking place on the Emerging Core Strategy and the East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan – Issues & Options
- Core Strategy has two parts which look at
 - Borough vision & objectives
 - Borough Themes
 - The Places – there would be a separate strategy for each town/large village/countryside
- The consultation does not cover detailed development sites, Gypsy & Traveller sites, Development Control policies or a major Green Belt review at Hemel Hempstead. If the issue of housing growth is reintroduced the Council would undertake further consultation.
- The East Hemel Hempstead Area Action Plan covers Buncefield, Employment Strategy, Diversifying & Servicing Maylands and other issues
- The consultation is 30 June – 28 August 09
- Consulting through adverts, website, Dacorum Digest pull-out, drop in sessions, press releases and posters
- DEF member's role – Feedback on general policy direction, advice on the missing environmental components of responding to climate change and water cycle management and assisting in raising profile of consultation locally through individual membership.

Roger Hands asked whether the Green Belt at Hemel Hempstead would be reviewed now and whether green spaces in the town would remain safe.

Richard Blackburn noted that they may need to look at Green Belt in Hemel Hempstead however this was not currently being proposed. Green space would remain but there could be debates in the future about minor changes.

Veronica Allan asked if the affects after peak oil had been considered and the use of renewables.

Richard Blackburn explained that DBC would be considering the effect of carbon emissions in response to climate change. He added that the Council acted on advice given to it as an authority and that the Regional Energy Policies were due to be reviewed in September.

Gruff Edwards said that the forum had previously responded to previous consultation and the majority of this response was focussed on the Green Belt.

Jason Williams asked if the Local Development Framework would give more details and go into more depth on issues such as the reducing the use of the private car.

Richard Blackburn said that the main focus in the core strategy was on broad policy direction and the council would act in a supporting role to the County Council (the highway authority).

Rudolph Kirst highlighted that the group had worked on action plans and had identified objectives. He asked if these had fed into the new plan.

Richard Blackburn said that the action plan had been taken into consideration, however members of the forum should raise anything that had been missed.

Outcome

A meeting of interested parties would be held in August to discuss and coordinate the forum's response to the Core Strategy.

Those involved in this meeting would be: Gruff Edwards, Dennis Harvey, Jason Williams, Rudolph Kirst, Sylvia Davidson, Mary Dyson, Adrian Whyte & Sheila Doyle.

Lizzy Savage would email those involved, suggesting possible meeting dates.

60. Climate Change Partnership

Lizzy Savage gave a presentation to the forum, highlighting the following areas:

- Herts Forward agreed a group to be set up, which was established in July 2008
- Partnership chaired by University of Herts and membership includes local authorities, the NHS, the police, utilities, voluntary organisations and business representatives
- The aim was to develop a climate change strategy
- The Strategy sets out seven key objectives: Carbon management, Adaptation, Economy, Development, Community, Global responsibility, Diversity and is supported by a series of statements of commitment for action. The framework approach offers organisations the opportunity to incorporate these objectives into their own strategic planning and has the potential to allow a wide range of partners to work towards commonly agreed goals.
- Consultation runs from Monday 6 July - Friday 2 October 2009 and responses should be submitted to climate.change@hertsc.gov.uk.
- Following the consultation, it is anticipated that the Hertfordshire Climate Change Strategic Framework will be launched towards the end of 2009.
- Dacorum partnership published the document 'Towards 2021' in January 2008
- Cross-cutting theme – Acting on Climate Change
- In March 2009 – report presented to the partnership Board which agreed development of a local sub group
- The Dacorum Climate Change Partnership (first meeting early September) would look at both mitigation and adaptation, understand the national and regional picture, find out what is already going on locally and the gaps and co-ordinate action
- The Climate Change National Indicators included:
 - NI 186 – per capita CO₂ emissions
 - NI 185 – CO₂ emissions from the Council's estate
 - NI 194 – NO_x and PM₁₀ emissions from the Council's estate and operations
 - NI 188 – Planning to adapt to climate change
- Lizzy Savage highlighted that information about what the Council was doing on climate change was now available on the website: www.dacorum.gov.uk/sustainability

Marion Baker asked what power the forum had to implement the strategy and objectives.

Lizzy Savage explained that all recommendations would need to go through the board.

It was noted that funding would need to be sought in order to implement any adaptations.

61. Dacorum Partnership

Phil Pennington announced that the new Dacorum Partnership member was Emma Norrington.

Lizzy Savage explained that the Dacorum Partnership had help from 'Aspire to Perform', which helped people work together. A gap analysis was currently underway of all authorities and an improvement plan would be rolled out.

The main focus was on the credit crunch and therefore an economic sub group had been set up. Communication issues had been discussed and as a result a poster had been produced listing helpful numbers for the public e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau. If members of the forum had any ideas as to further locations for the poster to be displayed, please contact Lizzy Savage.

The Learning Partnership have recently submitted a BID to use one of the empty units in the Marlowes to run training courses such as I.T and Literacy and members of the forum were asked to contact Lizzy Savage if they were interested in being involved.

62. Action Group & EOSC update

Phil Pennington noted that the Water group had been very successful in its work and now a further three groups had been set up:

1. Transport group – run by Paul Harris
2. Waste Group – run by Gruff Edwards
3. Bio-diversity Group – run by Martin Hicks

Each of the groups had met at least once and would report back to the forum on a rota basis, however each would give a short update at the next meeting.

Councillor Garrick Stevens reported that he will be attending the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on Wednesday 22 July 2009. He will be giving a presentation on Eco teams – as previously seen by the forum. It was hoped that the committee would endorse setting up Eco teams and have a Climate Change champion.

Marion Baker reported that she had attended the last Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting to discuss the Sustainable Food Strategy, which they fully supported and passed to the Environment Portfolio Holder to progress. The Chair of the DEF would contact the Portfolio Holder for an update.

63. Any Other Business

Rudolph Kirst gave an update on GM foods, and noted that Canada refused to grow GM wheat as it would contaminate organic wheat. He also noted that Monsanto had tried to introduce a GM crop into Germany but they had banned it. Monsanto launched a court case but lost.

Lizzy Savage announced that Tring in Transition were holding a 'Community Action for Energy' training course in October, which DEF members were invited to. Further information on this would be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

Members of the forum were asked to inform Lizzy Savage of any events taking place, so details can be circulated.

Veronica Allan, Tring in Transition, announced that the Eco Fair at Victoria Hall would be held on Saturday 10 October 2009, 10am – 4pm.

Phil Pennington said that the Terms of Reference for the forum would be discussed at the next meeting.

Dennis Harvey asked if anyone had a copy of the West Herts Urban Transport Plan. Lizzy Savage would look into this.

Chris Hopkins from Tring in Transition announced that Patrick Holden was coming to speak on 2 November 2009.

Adrian Whyte announced that he had brought reports from his organisation 'Resource Efficiency' and were available to members to take away.

64. Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 15th October 2009 at 7.30pm in the Bulbourne Room, Civic Centre.

Note: The Agendas and Minutes from the Dacorum Environment Forum meetings can be found at www.dacenvforum.org.uk

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm