



www.dacenvforum.org.uk

**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 15th October 2009**

MINUTES

Attendance

Phil Pennington	DEF Chairman
Veronica Allan	Tring in Transition
Emma Norrington	Groundwork/TBCC
Brian Jones	Northchurch Parish Council
Richard Blackburn	Dacorum Borough Council
Sylvia Davidson	Water Group
Sheila Dillon	Friends of the Earth
Norman Jones	Ramblers Association
Mary Dyson	Lions Club Berkhamsted
Gruff Edwards	New Conservation Society and DEF Vice-Chairman
Roger Hands	Water Group/Box Moor Trust
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Dorothy Jackman	Hemel in Transition
Alan Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Council
Hazel Johnson	Green Party
Rudolf Kirst	Hemel Hempstead GM Action Group
Cllr David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Cllr H Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Lizzy Savage	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Fleur Tucker	Berkhamsted Town Council
Paul Harris	Friends of the Earth
Jason Williams	Hemel in Transition

65. Apologies

Cllr Neil Harden	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Tim Vaughan	Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign
Adrienne Gear	Community Action Dacorum

Mike Peters

Dacorum Borough Council

66. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising

- 66.1 R Kirst asked for a change to be made to minute 63 Any Other Business. He stated that Canada had refused to grow GM wheat as it would contaminate the whole national crop, not just the organic wheat.
- 66.2 P Harris made a reference to the LDF consultation and questioned why DEF were not given copies of the countryside plans at the meeting. R Blackburn stated that they were made available. P Pennington stated that they were also available on the website.
- 66.3 GEdwards made reference to the LDF consultation and reported that he had received an invitation to a public consultation meeting regarding the East of England Plan. The meeting is on Monday 9th November at 7pm at the Fielder Centre in Hatfield.
- 66.4 R Blackburn provided more information on the East of England Plan Consultation. He reported that the Regional Plan is currently being reconsidered by the Secretary of State due to the growth issue at Hemel Hempstead. He had no further news relating to that. Regarding the current consultation the Regional Plan is being reviewed and has four growth scenarios for the region, two low and two high growth rates. The high rates are 10000 homes or 12000 homes between 2011 and 2031. These rates are lower than the original plan for 17000 but still considered high.

The plan review also notes developer proposals for land at East Hemel Hempstead, Boxted Farm in West Hemel Hempstead and South-East Berkhamsted. He reported that a number of policies are also under review – climate change, renewables and infrastructure.

The closing date for the consultation is 24th November 2009 and R Blackburn reported that a draft plan is on target to be produced by April 2010. He reported that Dacorum will be responding and there is likely to be a countywide response.

G Edwards stated that he thought DEF should respond and should publicise it.

P Pennington asked for interest in coming to a separate meeting to develop a response to the consultation. He reported that E Staincliffe would send a date around for a meeting to those that were interested.

Action: E Staincliffe to arrange meeting for planning consultation and send date around to members of DEF.

R Blackburn reported on the LDF consultation. He stated that they had received 2200 questionnaires and have undertaken citizens panels, business workshops and consulted with Gypsies and Travellers. He reported that it would take a while to analyse the responses, but stated that he had taken a look at the DEF response and there was some useful comments that they would use. He explained that the consultation document was a draft approach and appreciated DEF's response.

The Core strategy is a strategic document on which the detail would be added later so it could not cover everything in detail but hopefully would have the right hooks. He stated that they have to take care over how policies can be delivered or they will not get past the planning inspector. He stated that some things may be more appropriately incorporated into the Sustainable Community Strategy.

He stated that the next steps would be to analyse the consultation and complete further evidence. DBC are in the process of tendering for a Water Cycle Study. R Blackburn stated that the timing of the reconsideration of the Regional Plan will have an impact, as might a General Election.

- 66.5 G Edwards referenced the minute 60 Climate Change Partnership. He stated that the new indicators were interesting. He had visited Dacorum BC's website and was interested in NI186 - per capita CO2 emissions. The 2006 figures state that Dacorum uses 6 tonnes per capita. He questions whether this includes everything and referred to the following article:

Sustainable Energy - without the hot air by David MacKay
For a synopsis visit: <http://www.withouthotair.com/Synopsis.html>

P Pennington asked E Staincliffe to comment. She stated that there had been questions over the accuracy of this indicator because it is collected centrally and reported that Hertfordshire were looking at an alternative method of assessing work to reduce CO2 emissions locally.

- 66.6 R Kirst asked for more information about the minute 63 Any Other Business. V Allen confirmed that on 2nd November Patrick Holden, Chair of the Soil Association will be speaking at High Street Baptist Church, Tring at 8pm. The talk has been organised by Tring in Transition's food group.

- 66.7 Cllr G Stevens reported that he had attended Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee and that although the committee supported Eco Teams in principal they had asked E Staincliffe to conduct a feasibility study and report to the committee in November.

Cllr G Stevens reported that things had moved on since July and due to DEFRA funding the training was now free of charge and a number from Dacorum attended the training in London in September. There is a possibility that training could be provided locally if expenses could be paid for. P Pennington asked how much the expenses were likely to be as DEF might be able to fund it. Cllr G Stevens said he was not sure but could find out. He reported that the first eco teams meetings will be taking place this month.

67. Terms of Reference

P Pennington reported that the Steering group had revisited the terms of reference and asked that if any members of DEF had any comments to send them to E Staincliffe before the next steering group meeting.

Action: DEF members to send any comments relating to the Terms of Reference to E Staincliffe by 17th December

68. Transport Action Group Update

P Pennington stated that following the development of the new action groups we would be receiving updates from each group on a cycle.

E Norrington reported that relating to cycling there was good news. Dacorum Borough Council has adopted the cycling strategy. She stated that there was some update needed but the Council would use the strategy on an advisory basis, increasing cycling as a priority.

D Jackman asked if it was available on the Council's website. She stated that a Hemel Hempstead Cycling Campaign is being set up and asked would they have a chance to feed into the strategy.

R Blackburn stated that as soon as the maps had been scanned they would be put on the website. He could not confirm about the strategy as the officer that had been dealing with it had been on sick leave. He reported that the cycling strategy had been used in developing the Hemel Hempstead Transport Plan.

P Harris reported on the plans of the Transport Group. They will be campaigning for a bus route to be developed between Leighton Buzzard and Hemel Hempstead reducing congestion in Water End. He stated that they were going to speak to the transport unit and Arriva. He also mentioned the threat of the closure of the 32 bus route between Hemel Hempstead and Nortchurch.

Cllr B Chapman stated that he would be chairing a meeting about traffic at Water End in the next few weeks and he would put the suggestion of a bus route on the agenda as a bus could reduce some of the smaller traffic.

69. Reports from Westminster

R Kirst reported on three events that he had attended recently. He tabled reports that are attached to the minutes.

69.1 All Party Parliamentary Environment Group

The group was set up 12 years ago to strengthen public policy and debate on the environment. The group's membership includes 220 MPs and 200 associate members. R Kirst attended the annual lunch at which the discussions were on The Future of EU Environment Policy. He reported on the highlights of the meeting; these included:

- Environmental Policy is the success story of the EU. Today the EU has some of the most progressive environmental policy in the world and has improved the environmental standards of Member States.
- Concentration of nitrates in waters from farmland run-off presents one of the biggest challenges.
- The chemical sector provides 3.2 million jobs within the EU and chemicals are one of the EU's most successful exports. The production, use and disposal of chemicals link to environmental and health problems and there is insufficient knowledge of the hazards of the 10000 substances that were placed on the market before 1981, 99 of which are available today.

- Soil and its protection is cause for concern. 16% of land in the EU suffers from soil erosion, 19% is contaminated by pesticides and 18% is contaminated with nitrates and phosphates. There are 3.5 million contaminated sites in the EU and in Western Europe the figures are higher.
- Current spending on the environment is not sufficient.

R Kirst reported that the document that was produced at the lunch did not touch upon nuclear and GM and he has written to the author.

69.2 **GM Freeze**

R Kirst reported that a French Professor, Seralini, had been invited to speak at the House of Commons regarding the toxicity of the widely used herbicide Roundup. The French Professor also researches the human health impacts of GM seed. He tabled a summary of the professor's research and asked whether Dacorum BC use Round Up for combating weeds.

69.3 **Westminster Food & Nutrition Forum**

R Kirst observed 13 presentations at the recent forum from various experts and provided a summary of the presentations. He tabled a report he had written for the forum on Food Security. He stated that food security was the most pressing issue for the Core Strategy and that without a local contribution to food production we would face food shortages in the future.

70. **Dacorum Partnership**

E Norrington reported that there had been changes to the criteria for projects to receive the performance reward grant with a focus on getting Dacorum through the recession. She would like to organise a meeting with interested people to develop a suitable project proposal that would be in with a chance of receiving funding. She asked that if people were interested in being involved to contact E Staincliffe and a meeting would be organised.

E Staincliffe reported that as part of the Partnership's improvement programme they were looking at the cross-cutting themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy to see where there were gaps in work. She stated that she had been asked to arrange a meeting where some consultants could talk to members of DEF about the cross cutting themes. This meeting has been arranged for Monday 9th November at 7.30pm in the Civic Centre. All members of DEF are invited to attend. Unfortunately this clashes with the Public consultation meeting in Hatfield but the date is unable to be changed.

Action: E Staincliffe to send around the dates of the two above mentioned meetings to interested parties.

71. **Any Other Business**

R Kirst reported that a talk was taking place on 25th November at the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons – Green Energies – 100% Renewables by 2050.

E Norrington reported that Groundwork are currently undertaking a volunteer project in Dacorum and they are looking for volunteers to assist with gardening for people who can't manage their own gardens. The volunteering sessions take place every Wednesday. They are also looking for people's gardens that could benefit so she asked if DEF members knew anyone that might benefit to contact Groundwork.

72. Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 21st January 2009 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, 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 9.20 pm