



<http://www.dacenvforum.org.uk>

**Dacorum Environmental Forum  
Full Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**MINUTES**

**Apologies received from:**

Cllr Neil Harden	Dacorum Borough Council
Mary Dyson	Lions Club Berkhamsted
Richard Blackburn	Dacorum Borough Council
Rudolph Kirst	HH GM Action Group & Kings Langley Biodynamic Group
Nicky Flynn	Dacorum Partnership Development Officer
Paul Harris	Friends of the Earth
Tim Vaughan	Tring & Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign
Peter Thring	CPRE Hertfordshire

**Attendees:**

Cllr Herbert Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Carol Green	Dacorum Borough Council
Brian Scott	Dacorum Borough Council
Chris Taylor	Dacorum Borough Council
Roger Hands	Water Group/Box Moor Trust
Sheila Doyle	Friends of the Earth
Douglas Walker	Resident
Cllr David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Emma Norrington	Groundwork/TBCC
Fleur Tucker	Berkhamsted Town Council
Gruff Edwards	New Conservation Society and DEF Vice-Chairman
Adrienne Gear	Community Action Dacorum
Katie Barker	Hemel in Transition
Jason Williams	Hemel in Transition
Lizzy Staincliffe	Dacorum Borough Council
Martin Hicks	Herts Biological Record Centre
Jean Blackman	Friends of the Earth
Phil Pennington	DEF Chairman
Sylvia Davidson	DEF Water Group
Veronica Allan	Tring in Transition
Chris Hopkins	Tring in Transition

**78. Minutes of the last meeting & matters arising**

- 78.1 Although R Kirst sent his apologies for the meeting, he sent a request for the correction of minute 76.3 to change “Six global companies own 80% of world seed” to “Six GMOs promoting global companies own 80% of world seed”
- 78.2 P Pennington asked if the action from minute 75.6 had been undertaken. Cllr Chapman requested the opportunity to update the Forum on the Council's position. He stated that the Council currently provide 15 allotment sites. He reported that due to lack of interest in previous years, a site at Bennetts End had become overgrown. With

the resurgence in the interest in allotments, the Leader of the Council is trying to find funds to reinstate the Bennetts End site to good use. He reported that the Council also put forward land at Grovehill for development into allotments on the understanding the Hemel Hempstead Allotment Society would gain funding from the Lottery to develop them. He reported that the Council is currently in a difficult financial situation and at this time do not have the resources to invest in allotments. He stated that the Council would welcome volunteers coming forward to assist with development of allotments.

- 78.3 D Harvey stated that at the last meeting R Blackburn had asked for clarification as to whether the Council had a statutory duty to provide allotments. If the Council did have a statutory duty, he said that the Council saying that they are limited by funds is not good enough.
- 78.4 Cllr Chapman stated he understood D Harvey's point but the Council had to find great savings and he believed that starting any new projects at this time would be reckless. The Council has a number of statutory duties and it is trying to ensure that it can keep all current front line services. He stated that the Council were unable to commit to any additional allotments at this time.
- 78.5 V Allan asked for clarity on minute 75.5, where K Kenney referred to the probation service. Cllr Chapman stated that although he had not been at the previous meeting, he considered it to mean those who had been convicted of minor crimes would conduct work as part of their community service. Cllr Chapman stated that the Council was considering this.
- 78.6 P Pennington thanked Cllr Chapman for his answers. He went on to mention the Green Spaces Strategy consultation that had been sent out by email the day before. He asked whether the Forum would like to develop a joint response. R Hands stated that it was important that people responded both individually and as part of DEF. It was agreed later in the meeting that if DEF members would like to respond as part of DEF they should send their responses to L Staincliffe by **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May** so that she may collate them to send on as a DEF response.

## **79. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

- 79.1 E Staincliffe reported that she had received 6 nominations for P Pennington to remain as Chair and G Edwards to remain as Vice Chair, she said unless there were any other nominations from the floor, if P Pennington and G Edwards were willing to remain in their positions they would be re-elected. No further nominations were put forward. P Pennington & G Edwards agreed to remain in their positions and were re-elected. They both thanked the Forum.

## **80. Greening Business in Dacorum**

- 80.1 C Taylor introduced herself as Dacorum Borough Council's Hemel 2020 Senior Manager. She stated that although this role was mainly about regeneration the majority of her experience was within economic development. She guided the Forum through the briefing paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting and is attached to the minutes. She stated that she did not have expertise in the environment but facilitated the projects and provided a number of documents for DEF members to look at at the end of the meeting.
- 80.2 G Edwards thanked her for her illuminating talk and asked about the technologies proposed for the Green Energy Centre. C Taylor apologised and said she did not have the expertise to answer but referred G Edwards to the documentation she had brought along.
- 80.3 J Blackman asked about the biomass boiler that was proposed for the Maylands Business Centre, she asked if the trucks bringing waste had been considered. C

Taylor stated that the biomass boiler was not fuelled by waste but wooden pellets. The boiler would be used to heat 50 small business units and they are working to develop links with a company that recycles wooden pallets who are able to convert them into pellets.

- 80.4 D Harvey asked about the Resource Efficiency project for small businesses. He asked whether given the number of businesses operating in Dacorum, the 25 businesses currently involved in the project was representative and how could they judge if its money well spent? C Taylor stated that she had received funding initially for 50 businesses (which is the target for the year) but the pack they had produced is “timeless” so it can be used again and again. She stated that when the new business centre opens, she is hoping that it will be a condition of the lease that a business has to go through the training programme. She said they are encouraging business by demonstrating the cost savings that could be made, she stated that one business on the programme had already saved £6000 a year by changing its electricity tariff. She stated that they needed more case studies like this to encourage other businesses to get on board. D Harvey asked whether they would promote green tariffs. C Taylor stated that they would but that the outcome for business needed to be cost based rather than environmental based.
- 80.5 Cllr Stevens stated that the project with businesses was very similar to the Eco Teams project they are undertaking with householders, as over time they are tracking reductions. He stated that like with households if savings can be demonstrated over time more businesses will come on board.
- 80.6 RH stated that as Chair of the Water Group he was pleased to see the promotion of Hippo Water Savers but he stressed that there are many other things that could be done to conserve water. C Taylor stated that she had used the Hippo as an example but that one of the monthly sessions will be focused on water use and look at more that can be done and on also other initiatives they were doing with businesses to reduce water consumption, particularly with the two day environmental audits they are offering to larger businesses.
- 80.7 V Allan asked about business recycling up at Maylands. C Taylor said that she understood that the Council’s Environmental Services department had undertaken a 6 month commercial recycling pilot up at Maylands but she understood that this had not been too successful as businesses have to pay. She said they were working at ways to improve commercial recycling.
- 80.8 P Pennington thanked C Taylor for her presentation. C Taylor offered to come back to the Forum at a later date to feedback on some of the outcomes of the projects.

## **81. Dacorum Partnership**

- 81.1 E Norrington fed back from the last Board meeting. She stated that DEF had joined together with the Community Involvement Forum and the Learning Partnership to put a bid in for the performance reward grant. The bid proposed actions to create community environmental and financial resilience. The environmental part of the bid focussed around food growing and promoting information. At the Board meeting this project along with three others were shortlisted. Work will now be undertaken to make sure the projects fit the budget and provide the best outcomes for the community. A final decision on spend will take place at the June meeting of the Board. She stated that they had also had an interesting presentation of the work that the Council had been doing to alleviate fuel poverty and she reported that there had been some really positive results. She said that if the Forum was interested she could ask if the presentation could be brought to the Forum.
- 81.2 E Staincliffe stated that there were plans to refresh the Sustainable Community Strategy that was published in 2008. The plan was to publish the new document in

January 2011 and so between now and then there will be a number of opportunities for DEF to shape their objectives. There will be a conference on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at Hemel Hempstead School. The conference will be an opportunity for all the forums to input. DEF have been allocated 10 places. The Steering Group will take some of the places but the rest will be given on a first come first served basis so if any of the Forum are interested in attending she asked that they contact her. Before the conference, the Forum is required to review its current objectives so that they can be taken along to the conference. E Staincliffe stated that she would arrange a separate meeting for those that were interested in getting involved.

- 81.3 P Pennington presented the paper that had been circulated before the meeting and that is attached to the minutes. He asked the Forum to provide comment on the three options within the paper.
- 81.4 G Edwards stated that he is starting to understand the Dacorum Partnership but considered it is probably best to have a separate group of the forum who are interested and willing to get involved with the Partnership. R Hands stated that he thought the Partnership is important and needs more support but mentioned whether there should be a specific meeting to look at DEF and the Partnership. He was reluctant to create more meetings.
- 81.5 E Norrington stated in the first instance there was a need to get a group together that would be willing to work on the strategy refresh. D Harvey stated that there was an urgent need for a group to meet and work on the refresh and the name of this group was irrelevant.
- 81.6 P Pennington suggested that those that were interested in getting involved in the refresh could come forward and we would use this a pilot for a restructure. He asked for those that were interested in being involved to come forward and E Staincliffe made a list of those in attendance that were interested. E Norrington suggested extending the invitation to those that do not usually come to DEF but deliver environmental work in the Borough and might have something to input e.g. Environment Agency. The Forum agreed with both P Pennington's and E Norrington's suggestions.

**ACTION:** E Staincliffe to send around date for meeting to refresh strategy. Those that were not at the meeting but are interested in being involved in the refresh, contact E Staincliffe.

- 81.7 D Walker asked if the refreshed objectives would be brought back to the Forum before they were adopted. P Pennington stated that there would be an item on the agenda at the July meeting.

## **82. Waste Action Group update**

- 82.1 G Edwards reported on the work that the waste action group had been undertaking since its formation:
- Development of waste group section on the website
  - Letter to MP questioning the promoted environmental credentials of the car scrappage scheme
  - Return to sender labels – downloadable from the website
  - Investigation of PAS2050 a standard to determine the carbon footprint of goods and services
  - Responded to waste strategy consultation
  - Made links with various local and national organisations including WasteAware and Keep Britain Tidy

He stated that at the current time he was reluctant to re-establish the litter warden scheme as he did not have confidence in the DBC website's method for reporting large objects.

82.2 Cllr Green stated that in Berkhamsted there were a number of volunteer groups that undertook litter picks in their own areas. G Edwards stated that he had been the organiser of a scheme in the past.

82.3 Cllr Stevens stated that Berkhamsted also have a town warden to which they can report fly tipping and this gets dealt with quickly. G Edwards stated that he had made contact with an enforcement officer which made it easier to report fly-tipped waste.

### **83. Eco Teams**

83.1 Cllr Stevens reported that a successful training event had taken place on 6<sup>th</sup> February. 22 people attended the session including people from Berkhamsted, Tring and Hemel Hempstead. There had also been interest from another nearby Transition Town, Chalfont St Giles.

83.2 Cllr Stevens stated that the purpose of the training was to provide people with the skills and tools to facilitate setting up an eco team. He said that DEF now have a number of people that know what is involved and a few teams have been set up. He stated that being involved in a team himself, he had learnt more than he would have if he had been doing it on his own and he has already seen a significant reduction in his waste.

83.3 G Edwards asked if there were any technologies provided to help with the measuring. Cllr Stevens reported that they weighed their waste and used meter readings to measure electricity and gas. He stated that the GAP website provided a useful dashboard on which you could enter your measurements and track progress.

### **84. Any Other Business**

84.1 E Staincliffe read out a note from R Kirst:

Roundup Update: France's highest court upheld two false advertising convictions against Monsanto for claiming that Roundup is 'biodegradable' and 'left the soil clean'. Neither is true apparently. Look at your containers of Roundup.

84.2 J Williams promoted Apsley Green Fair, organised by Hemel in Transition, which is taking place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May, between 11am and 2pm at Two Waters Primary School.

84.3 V Allan promoted an open meeting organised by Tring in Transition on June 15<sup>th</sup> at High Street Baptist Church Hall at 7.30pm. Talks will be by Herts WasteAware and Cawleys Waste on waste recycling and disposal for both domestic and commercial users.

### **82. Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre.

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

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm