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**Dacorum Environmental Forum  
Full Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance**

Cllr Herbert Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Phil Pennington	DEF Chairman
Paul Harris	Friends of the Earth/Green Party
Douglas Walker	Resident
Jason Williams	Hemel in Transition
Gruff Edwards	DEF Vice-Chairman
Sheila Doyle	Friends of the Earth
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Cllr David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Rudolph Kirst	HM GM Action Group and Kings Langley Biodynamic Group
Jean Blackman	Friends of the Earth
Adrienne Gear	Community Action, Dacorum
Roger Hands	Box Moor Trust
Martin Hicks	Tring in Transition
Jim Kenney	Chelsfield Solar
Lizzy Staincliffe	Dacorum Borough Council
Simone Sullivan	Low Carbon Development Initiative

**Apologies**

Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Emma Norrington	Groundwork/TBCC
Sylvia Davidson	DEF Water Group
Hazel Johnson	Green Party
Alan Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Council/Green Party
Nicky Flynn	Dacorum Partnership Development Officer

The meeting started at 7.30 pm

Fire instructions were read out and Members notified of exits in the event of having to leave the building.

**93. Minutes of Meeting held on 14 April 2010**

These were agreed.

**94. Matters Arising**

None were raised.

**95. Maylands Green Energy Project**

95.1 Simone Sullivan of Low Carbon Development Initiative (LCDI) gave a presentation outlining Government Feed in Tariffs and how working with Dacorum Borough Council, they are developing a project in Maylands to provide solar power to businesses. A copy of her presentation is attached to the minutes.

95.2 P Pennington asked how the project had been received by DBC's planners.

S Sullivan stated that the project was not currently at the stage where any particular sites have been chosen to take forward but LCDI have been in preliminary discussions with planners. When the sites have been chosen, planning would become formally involved. Also it's possible the installation of solar panels on some buildings in Maylands would be considered permitted development. Dacorum and LCDI are also looking at the possibility of establishing a Local Development Order to remove planning uncertainty.

95.3 G Edwards asked about the cost of installation.

S Sullivan stated that LCDI were investigating bringing a financier on board to pay for the installations. The occupants would then benefit from lower cost electricity. J Kenney stated that for solar PV installed on houses, there are a few companies that offer the installation for free but he warned consumers to be wary as a number of them are subject to 'Which?' investigations. The feed in tariff payments go to whoever owns the equipment.

95.4 G Edwards stated that he had four potential issues with the PV installations: unsightliness, safety of installation in high winds, expense and disruption due to wiring.

J Kenney stated that all installations should be installed to relevant building codes. He stated that there have been 2000 systems installed since 2001 and to his knowledge there have been no incidents relating to the safety of the installations. He stated that depending on the size of the system they take about four days to install and the internal disruption is negligible. To qualify for Feed in Tariffs, installers must be MCS accredited.

95.6 Cllr Stevens stated that he was aware of a Community Interest Company that was set up in Barnet using the feed in tariffs for community benefit. He asked whether this was something that was being looked into for Maylands. S Sullivan stated not at this time.

- 95.7 R Kirst asked about the biomass plant.  
S Sullivan stated that a lot more research needs to be undertaken to find a suitable supply. Cllr Stevens stated that he considered it too late for Herts as he understood that at a county level the development of an incineration plant for the county's waste was about to be agreed. G Edwards hands stated that biomass plants did not necessarily have to be supplied with waste. J Williams reported that Rothamsted Research is currently undertaking a project to determine the best willow for biofuel.
- 95.8 R Hands asked for clarification about eligibility for FITs of systems that were installed prior to the commencement of the FIT scheme.
- S Sullivan reported that there was a cut off point for feed in tariffs and if they were installed before this date they were not eligible. She also stated that systems installed between April 2010 and March 2012 would benefit from the highest tariffs..
- 95.9 Cllr Guest that she had noted the report with interest.

*Cllr Chapman left the meeting.*

#### **96. Dacorum Partnership Update**

- 96.1 E Staincliffe presented an update relating to the Dacorum Partnership's refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy and DEF's role within the process. She also reported the results of the Membership questionnaire and presented the new DEF newsletter. She reported that over the next few months she would be looking for volunteers to help her with developing the action plan for DEF. Her presentation is attached to the minutes.
- 96.2 P Pennington stated that Richard Blackburn had recently left DBC and he gave his thanks to Richard for all of his support and expertise over the years. He also thanked E Staincliffe for the newsletter, stating it would save a lot of time in any other business.
- 96.3 D Walker thanks E Staincliffe and contributors for producing the newsletter.
- 96.4 G Edwards asked whether the Dacorum Partnership would be one of the quangos the Government would be looking to cut. E Staincliffe explained that the Dacorum Partnership was separate, however she did report that the Partnership would be reviewed to some degree, given the constraints on Local Government who administer it.

#### **97. Transport Group Update**

- 97.1 Paul Harris, Chair of the Transport Group gave an update on the group's activities. He reported that Herts CC's Local Transport Plan 2001-2031 was currently out for consultation and he was positive about the sections about sustainable transport. He reported that he would be attending a meeting in Welwyn in November to find out more about the plan.
- 97.2 He reported about a new bus service operated by Tiger Line between Amersham and Hatfield. He reported that the operator was also interested in looking into a route between Hemel Hempstead and Leighton Buzzard.
- 97.3 P Harris reported that we had a good network of cycle routes and public footpaths but that they needed to be publicised more. He mentioned a project between Herts CC

and Sustrans that encouraged St Albans schools to cycle. The project indicates that 2/3 children involved now cycle. P Harris had approached Herts CC to run a similar project in Dacorum but there is no funding.

- 97.4 He reported that a member of DEF had expressed their pedestrian crossing lights changing too quickly. P Pennington asked who controls pedestrian crossings. The forum agreed that it was Herts Highways.
- 97.5 Cllr Stevens asked if the plan mentioned Car Clubs and stated that DEF should persuade the Borough to investigate them. E Staincliffe stated that car clubs had already been looked into by the Council as part of the Dandara development of the Kodak Tower, but the Car Club operators were concerned that there was not the critical mass in Dacorum to make it viable in comparison to large cities. She was aware that St Albans had previously set up a Car Club but that the operator had folded. A Gear stated that there was a community bus operating between Kodak and Hemel Train Station to resolve parking issues.
- 97.6 G Edwards reported about parking on pavements and that he had spoken to the Police and they had stated that there had to be enough room left on a pavement to allow a wheelchair through.
- 97.7 Cllr Guest stated that she had noted the report, particularly parking on pavements and car clubs and would report back to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, of which she is Vice Chair.

## **98. Dacorum Food Strategy**

- 98.1 Martin Hicks presented a brief update on a draft food strategy for Dacorum, which was developed as a result of the review of the DEF strategy page. His presentation will be attached to the minutes. The strategy outlines a list of potential projects that will allow us to understand our local food resource and how to increase it.
- 98.2 M Hicks also promoted Tring Apple Fayre which is taking place throughout October.
- 98.3 R Hands stated that in his neighbourhood, residents had planted fruit trees in a series of fruit trees and although it was not technically an orchard, it brought many similar benefits.

## **99. Any Other Business**

- 99.1 P Pennington reported that DEF Steering group had written to Cllr Chapman regarding Dacorum's allotment provision and that Cllr Chapman will be responding in writing.

## **100. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at 7.30pm at the Civic Centre.

Note: The Agendas and Minutes from the Dacorum Environment Forum meetings can be found at [www.dacenvforum.org.uk](http://www.dacenvforum.org.uk)

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm