



**Dacorum Environmental Forum  
Full Meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance**

Michael Barwise	Resident
Paul Harris	Friends of the Earth / Green Party
Mary Harris	Hemel Hempstead Society of Allotments and Gardens (HHSALG)
David Moore	H. H. S. A. L. G
Paul Maison	British Waterways
Adrienne Gear	Community Action Dacorum
Emma Norrington	Groundwork
Lizzy Staincliffe	Dacorum Borough Council
Phil Pennington	Chair – Dacorum Environmental Forum
Louise Dolphin	Dacorum Borough Council
Councillor Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Jean Blackman	Friends of the Earth
Roger Hands	DEF Water Group
Rudolf Kirst	H.H.G.M Action Group and Kings Langley Biodynamic Group
Sylvia Davidson	Friends of the Earth
Jason Williams	Hemel in Transition

**Apologies**

Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted TC
Alan Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Council/Green Party
Hazel Johnson	Green Party
Douglas Walker	Resident
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Gruff Edwards	DEF Vice Chairman
Norman Cutting	Berkhamsted Residents Association

The meeting started at 7. 30pm

**93. Minutes of Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

These were agreed.

**94. Matters Arising**

- 94.1 The Chair confirmed that Item 3 from the Agenda would be postponed and dealt with at the next meeting which will take place in June. The Chair added that it was within the Forum's terms of reference to hold annual elections of Chair and Vice Chair, but he was aware that the Parish Council's had raised concerns over holding the DEF election before the local elections. He reiterated the fact that DEF's elections would take place at the next meeting.
- 94.2 The Chair also mentioned that with reference to the last meeting's matters arising, a copy of Councillor Chapman's letter had been sent out by Lizzy Staincliffe.
- 94.3 P Harris referred to the situation surrounding the Dairy and informed the Forum that this would be dealt with after the local elections had finished.
- 94.4 The Chair mentioned that the Forum had been given a spring newsletter to look at. He said that if there was anyone who had not received a copy it could be found on the website or if additional copies were required to contact L Staincliffe.

**95. Allotment Review**

- 95.1 With regards to the situation surrounding the Allotment Review in Dacorum, the Chair informed the Forum that there had been ongoing discussions over the last two years.

L Staincliffe highlighted that Overview & Scrutiny were having a review surrounding the Allotment Review at the next meeting which was being held in June. Councillor Anderson had asked if Members had any comments that they would like added.

The Chair told the forum that Katy D'Souza, the officer that manages the Council's allotments was unable to attend and had asked for feedback.

**ACTION ALL**

- 95.2 L Staincliffe and Emma Norrington, DEF representative on the Dacorum Partnership Board gave a presentation surrounding the Allotment Review. The presentation is attached to the minutes. .
- 95.3 E Norrington mentioned that there was a project being run on the allotments in Grovel Hill site with plenty of volunteers which was proving to be very successful. She also mentioned that the residents of Grovehill had developed the allotments by themselves along with the Council which was also successful. The allotment sites in Bennetts End are also being regenerated with help from funding from the Performance Reward Grant which was up and running.

It was brought to the Forum's attention that there would be an Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting taking place on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011. At this meeting the Allotment Review would be discussed. L Staincliffe said that the DEF Steering Group considered

that it would be a good opportunity to discuss and feed comments from this Forum meeting to the Committee and both her and E Norrington began a discussion session. The discussion was capture on flip chart paper and written up. The comments are attached to the minutes.

- 95.4 As Katy D'Souza was unable to attend the meeting she had sent L Staincliffe an email in advance with some key points to consider, which L Staincliffe read out:
- The current Portfolio of sites - gauge DEF's thoughts on the need for more allotment sites
  - Charge higher rents on allotment sites – There may be possible discounts for those over the age of 65 and those on a low income.
  - The need to assess demand and allotment site waiting lists
  - There was more demand for allotment sites in Boxmoor, Chaulden and Warners End. It was indicated that there is a shortage of plots was found in Bovingdon as there is no provision there.
  - Wardens to have more involvement in allotment sites and the running of them.
  - Sites that are not being used to be turned into plots

### Discussions and Questions

95.5 Michael Barwise felt that all new allotments were not suitable as habitats for local wildlife. He said that the Council had ignored several requests to consider the state of new plots for local bees on any of the sites.

95.6 David Moore, H. H. S. A. L. G said that he was very disappointed that allotments holders had not been given the opportunity to participate in the this discussion.

E Norrington, DEF representative on the Dacorum Partnership Board said that she had notified Vanessa from the Hemel Allotment Association and had asked that everyone get involved.

D Moore stated that he agreed with M Barwise's comment on the importance of having bees.

95.7 Sylvia Davidson from Friends of the Earth suggested that a letter should go out to allotment holders to educate them about the importance of how to maintain a healthy allotment site. She said that there had been evidence of poison and pesticides being used on the allotments in the past and people need to be encouraged in the basic law. The letter should offer advice and clearly state the dangers of using pesticides and poisons and the effects it has on the allotment a whole.

95.8 Roger Hands from DEF Water Group said that he had an allotment and a vegetable garden all his life and welcomed the comments that had been put forward on the maintenance and the importance of having allotments in today's society.

95.9 Paul Harris from Friends of the Earth / Green Party reported that the demand for allotments has changed significantly over the last 20 years partly because of advertising on radio, television and word of mouth.

96.0 Mary Harris of Hemel Hempstead Allotments and Gardens said that she was surprised that there wasn't an increase in rental charges for allotments as the Council had increased their charges on most things.

Councillor Chapman said that there had to be a balance on the needs of people living in Dacorum and on what they could afford with regards to the allotment sites. He said that he would like any views or recommendations put forward to him to take to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be discussed.

**ACTION ALL**

96.1 E Norrington noted that all allotment contracts will need to be reviewed in the future with regards to costs.

96.2 L Staincliffe asked the forum how they would react if the costs were increased.

Councillor Chapman reported in Markyate allotment holders set their own rent with most having pride in the appearance in their sites as they are all voluntary run and not paid for the upkeep of the sites. Councillor Chapman also highlighted the fact that there is a need to have allotment sites developed nearer to people's homes as there is lack of parking on most of the sites which is inconvenient to most of the allotment holders.

96.3 D Moore pointed out that there is a need to have new sites developed however it has not yet happened in Grove Hill as mentioned by the planning officer in the last meeting. He felt that the legal fees would need to be reviewed. He also reported that he had written to British Waterways to ask for opportunities for allotments on their land but had received no response.

Paul Maison from British Waterways apologised to Mr Moore that he had not received a response from his earlier letter. He asked how many school children had visited an allotment or knew anything about them. Education is a vital role in enabling children to understand the importance allotments have on our society. Mr Maison highlighted the fact that it would be far easier to educate the younger generation as it would sell better.

96.4 D Moore said that he had written to schools in Grove Hill to see if they would be interested in getting involved learning all about allotments. 50-60% said that they would be interested. However, the schools stated that once the fence was up they would be keen on getting them all involved.

96.5 Councillor Chapman said that it was very important for the future for allotments to survive. He mentioned that there had been some problems in Bennetts End as the site had become derelict due to the fact that no one was looking after them.

#### **Outcome:**

96.6 L Staincliffe confirmed that an email will be distributed to everyone in the Forum for comments with regards to the presentation just shown.

96.7 This was agreed by the Forum.

#### **97. Dacorum Partnership and DEF Action plan update**

L Staincliffe gave a presentation on The Sustainable Community Strategy, DEF & the Partnership update. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes and a copy of the action plan is presented at the end of the minutes.

She reported that most of the actions within the action plan were for Dacorum BC as she had received little input from other members of the Forum about what they were

planning to do. She reported that the Steering Group had agreed to report on progress with the action plan at each meeting and asked that if any other organisations wanted to add actions it would remain a working document.

**ACTION: ALL to feed into action plan where possible.**

**98. Any Other Business**

- L Staincliffe reported that this year's Herts Quality of Life Report had been published. She offered a number of summary documents and informed the Forum that there would be further copies available upon request if required.
- M Barwise reported his concerns about the destruction of hedgerows and long grasses in the Borough by Dacorum Borough Council. Councillor Chapman agreed to speak to the relevant officer to arrange the meeting Mr Barwise was awaiting.
- Rudolph Kirst reported on the Government's decision to allow Council's to sell their farmland and asked whether Herts CC may be considering this. P Pennington asked him to investigate on DEF's behalf.
- L Staincliffe presented a leaflet highlighting the new charges for leaflet distribution in libraries in Hertfordshire.

**99. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2011 at 7.30pm.

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 9.20pm

**DEF Action Plan 2011**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>How will we measure success</b>	<b>Target</b>
Increase local food security and independence	Increase the number of allotments available for use through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport to Go,</li> <li>• Projects developed by DBC Residents Services</li> </ul>	Groundwork DBC	July 2014	Increased % of allotments in use within the Borough.	<b>Increase the number of available allotments by 10 plots per year.</b>
	Host a local food workshop	Dacorum Local Food Initiative	February 2011	No. attendees to workshop	
Maintain and improve biodiversity	Publish the BAP website	DEF Biodiversity group	December 2011	Website live	<b>Change in areas of recognised wildlife habitat importance – No (zero) net loss</b>
	Monitor the retention of designated open land	DBC	Ongoing	Zero loss of designated open land in hectares	
	Monitor change in areas of recognised wildlife habitat importance.	DBC	Ongoing	No Net loss	
Manage and live within our natural resources	Start monitoring the carbon savings from new development	DBC	July 2011	Tonnes of carbon dioxide	<b>Percentage of household waste recycled and composted – 49% by April 2013</b>
	Start monitoring the number of new homes built with on-site generation of renewable energy	DBC	July 2011	Number of new homes built with on-site generation of renewable energy (for heat and electricity)	
	Increase the rate of household recycling and composting	DBC	April 2013	49%	
	Promote waste awareness to residents	DBC	Ongoing	Number of campaigns	
	Hold litter picks	DBC	Ongoing	Number of litter picks	
	Start monitoring the number of new homes with reduced water consumption.	DBC	July 2011	Proportion of new homes designed to reduce water consumption to 105 litres per	

Objective	Action	By Whom	By When	How will we measure success	Target
	Develop increased access to cycling through DBC park project	DBC	TBC	person per day Length of available cycle paths/ number of cycle racks installed	
Minimise pollution and harmful substances	Develop Air Quality Management Area action plan	DBC	February 2013	Action plan developed	<b>Complete air quality action plan by April 2013</b>
	Continue to monitor the air quality within the Borough	DBC	Ongoing	Change in extent and air quality of Air Quality Management Areas	
Increase public engagement and awareness	Co-ordinate environmental campaigns.	DEF	Ongoing	No. of campaigns organised. Events attended	