



**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 19th January 2012**

MINUTES

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Jason Williams	Hemel in Transition
Paul Harris	Great Gaddesden Parish Councillor
Gruff Edwards	Vice Chair DEF
Gordon Godfrey	Northchurch Parish Councillor
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Emma Norrington	Sunnyside Rural Trust
Phil Pennington	Boxmoor Trust – Chair
Sheila Pilkinton	Markyate Parish Council
Simon Deacon	Markyate Parish Council
Alan Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Councillor
Hazel Johnson	Green Party
Steve Wilson	Himself, Hemel Lib Dems
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature

Apologies

Sheila Doyle	HHGM Action Group
Cllr Wyatt Lowe	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Julie Laws	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Alan Sweetman	Groundwork Trust
Martin Hicks	Herts ERC
Marion Baker	Transition Town Berkhamsted
Lizzy Staincliffe	Dacorum Borough Council

Meeting started at 7:30pm

109	Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 20 October 2011 There were no corrections to the minutes
110	Matters arising <u>Local Development Framework</u> – A submission was made by DEF on time. Gruff Edwards co-ordinated the submission. DEF now have a planning user account for comments on future planning consultations. Gruff confirmed that the DEF's submission had received an auto response receipt.

	<p>Phil Pennington reported to the Forum that DEF had been contacted by the press regarding high carbon emissions in Apsley, and had referred the query to Dennis Harvey. Dennis confirmed that he had quoted extracts from the DEF response to the Local Development Framework. It is not believed that the information was used in any press article.</p> <p><u>Incineration Plans</u></p> <p>The meeting was reminded that the campaign against the proposed waste incinerator is being co-ordinated by Herts. WithOutWaste (HertsWOW). Proposals were due to go to a Public Inquiry in November 2011. Gruff Edwards reported that DEF had responded to previous consultations.</p> <p><u>Dacorum Food Initiative</u></p> <p>Emma Norrington reported that there would be a day conference on the 25th February 2012 at the Ashridge College. The day will build upon the successful conference last year. The conference is open to food producers and users. There are only 10 spaces left. Those interested should contact Marion Baker on 01442 874732 or e mail: info@dacorumlocalfood.org.uk</p> <p><u>Proposed Milk processing plant in Aylesbury Vale.</u></p> <p>Paul Harris reported that that the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government has approved the plans for a milk processing plant in the Vale of Aylesbury.</p>
111	<p><u>Implications for HS2 for Dacorum</u></p> <p>Phil Pennington welcomed to the Forum Allison Doggett (Chair of the Chiltern Society). Allison gave a talk covering the Chiltern Society views on HS2.</p> <p>A summary of the views of the Society were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HS2 is fundamentally flawed ● That the route should not go through any part of the Chiltern Hills ● That the proposals are obsessed with speed “A Bugatti rather than a Rolls” <p>She explained that the origins of the proposals were from the previous Labour Government. She suggested that the Coalition Government will introduce a Hybrid Bill in Parliament before the next election as the Government will need to attract more votes in the West Midlands.</p> <p>Environmental concerns include that the route goes through the Chiltern AONB – and the legislation protecting AONB regions is being ignored. Chilterns are historically important with a rare historical landscape. This is not recognised in the HS2 consultation</p> <p>That there is no attempt in the consultation to put a monetary value on the cost of environmental damage.</p> <p><u>Public Opinion</u> – Allison reported that results of the Government consultation showed that 90% said no to HS2, 8% said yes to the HS2 and</p>

	<p>2% said they did not know yet the Government said that ‘careful consideration’ was given when deciding to go ahead with the project</p> <p><u>Globalisation and HS2 –</u> HS2 would not provide the same level of connectivity between the east and west of UK as with the rest of Europe. There will be an improvement in connectivity between the departure and the destination points but not necessarily with the areas the route passes through. She suggested that the line would increase the growth of the larger city at the expense of the small city. The lack of a station in central Birmingham will negate any time saved on the HS link. The link will be slow in its development taking many years to complete. She posed the questions; will it cure the North/ south divide? Will it ever get to the North? At best it will connect the 3 richest cities (London, Birmingham, and Manchester).</p> <p><u>The future</u> There could be legal challenges against the proposals– Was the consultation process flawed? Where the environmental regulations followed? Allison concluded with the following points If it must be built it must be built well. That it is proposed in a policy vacuum – that there is no national transport policy in the UK. No evidence that alternative routes were ever considered. Blight – There will be claims of compensation for many years to come.</p>
	<p><u>Questions</u></p> <p>Phil Pennington – Asked about the impact that HS2 on freight. Allison said that more freight will be used but it might not be as much as projected. She pointed out that HS1 was running at 30% of its capacity. Well below the levels predicted in the appraisal models Paul Harris suggested that there was no over arching government strategy for transport. Garrick Stevens – Said that the business case was flawed. He said the Treasury was dragooned into agreeing to the adoption of HS2 – That there was a political force behind HS2 Gruff Edwards –If not against HS2 what would the society support? Allison said that no alternative routes or options have been properly considered. Dennis Harvey – What is the Chiltern Society’s advice. Allison said that we should look to support the campaign even if it outside our area. The HS1 route ended up a long way from the proposed route. That the tunnels proposed could end up in Dacorum. Remember that ‘knowledge is power’. Jason Williams – asked whether there was a way to design away to reduce the need to travel? Simon Deacon asked who will fund the £30 billion project and will it lead to more jobs? Allison suggested that the tax payer will fund HS2. Airport expansion is likely to be funded with sovereign funds such as Dubai and China. She was also not convinced by the jobs argument. Steve Wilson suggested a national strategy does not work with privatisation and the HS2 is going ahead because it is wanted by big business</p>

	<p>A Heathrow Gatwick link will make an effective single airport hub. "Boris Island" will not work for many reasons. The proposals need to tackle how to handle people quickly at the departure point and the destination point.</p>
	<p>Gruff Edwards proposed that DEF endorse the position outlined by Dacorum Council to oppose HS2 running through the Chiltern Hills. This was accepted, and it was agreed that that a copy of the Council's statement should be sent out with the minutes, the mailing list for which includes all DBC Councillors. The accompanying E-mail should highlight DEF's support of DBC, and should call for any additional observations on the topic. A similar E-mail, with copy of the Minutes and DBC's statement should be sent to MP Mike Penning with a request that he support the Council's view to oppose HS2.</p>
	<p>The Forum thanked Allison for attending the meeting and gave her a round of applause.</p>
112	<p><u>Water Group Update</u></p> <p>Roger Hands was not at the Forum to present the Water Group Report.</p> <p>Steve Wilson said that his own measurements had shown that rainfall was cyclic and that at the moment we were at a low point in the cycle. He had predicted in Jan 2011 that the Gade might dry up again. Veolia finally suggested the possibility of a drought in Dec 2011 (reported in the Gazette Dec 14th). He had received river flow and abstraction data from the Environment Agency, his analysis of which showed that Veolia abstracted almost the same amount each year, irrespective of rainfall and river flow, and that in some years the amount abstracted could be five times the amount discharged by the river. He expressed concern that the local authorities were making decisions that would impact on water demand without being aware that water demand was currently of outstripping supply, leading to an emptying of the water aquifer. He reported that SW Herts. has the highest usage of water per head in the county and concluded by saying that not only did we need a much improved and informed national policy but that we needed a more informed local council that took these issues more seriously.</p> <p>Sheila Pilkinton reported that her council had responded the Veolia Consultation by saying that the Veolia Drought Policy was 'completely inadequate'. She also stated that the 'Veolia long term strategy, which does nothing but increase abstraction from the aquifer as necessary, will destroy the finite resource, the Dacorum rivers and chalk streams and their wildlife.</p> <p>Phil Pennington suggested that Steve Wilson should contact Roger Hands from the Water Group and urged Steve to become a member.</p> <p>Garrick Stevens said that Dacorum produce an Annual Monitoring Report but that there was no reference to water resources in the report. Perhaps this omission could be looked into on the context of DBC Policy 104 on Nature</p>

	Conservation in River Valley. The Forum would consider whether this could be an issue that could go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
113	<p><u>Suggestions for DEF campaigns/projects in the coming year</u></p> <p>It was agreed that DEF would highlight issues related to Water, The local Food Initiative and be more demanding for information from DBC</p>
	<p><u>Volunteers required</u></p> <p>Phil Pennington reported to the Meeting that Lizzy Stancliffe was no longer paid by DBC to service the Forum. She had organised rooms for future DEF meeting for the coming year but DEF had no minute secretary and were relying on volunteers and no press officer. If anyone would like to volunteer for either role the please let Phil know.</p>
114	<p><u>Dacorum Partnership</u></p> <p>Emma Norrington reported that the Dacorum Partnership had been disbanded by the Council and was being replaced by a smaller board whose remit would be to consider the economic well being of the Borough. The community input has been removed from the committee. In future the only input will be through an annual conference with the Board. The only community rep on the committee is thought to be Mark Mitchell from Community Action Dacorum. Phil Pennington thanked Emma Norrington for attending the meetings and reporting back to DEF.</p> <p>In response to a query on what the Dacorum Partnership had been working on Emma Norrington highlighted the Passport to Go Project, within which DEF with the Groundwork Trust had organised the reinstatement of allotments at Bennetts End offering volunteering and training opportunities.</p>
115	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>On Thursday 15th March Hertfordshire's CPRE and Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Council are hosting an evening called – Plan your Place – in the Council Chamber in Dacorum Civic Centre. Start time is 6:30pm for a 7:30pm start in the Dacorum Council Chamber - Google ' "Plan Your Place" CPRE ' for further details (booking required)</p>
	<p><u>Publicising the Forum</u> – The Forum discussed how we should promote DEF. Notice of Meetings could be included in the Gazette within the Club and Communities Section. Gruff Edwards suggested sending copies of the meetings minutes to the Gazette.</p>
	The meeting closed at 9:30pm