



Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 21st November 2013

MINUTES

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Gruff Edwards	Chair DEF
Steve Wilson	Vice Chair DEF
Chris Ridley	Local resident
Dorothy Jackman	Local resident
Maureen Flint	Cllr for Gadebridge
Paul Harris	Green Party
Suzanne Watts	Green Party / private interest
Val Tyne	WHAG
Rebecca Tyne	Imperial College
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Martin Hicks	Hertfordshire Ecology
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Norman Jones	Ramblers
Emma Norrington	HMWT / local resident
Mike Ridley	Local resident
Nicole Jackson	Local Food Coordinator, SRT

1. Apologies

Phil Pennington	Box Moor Trust
Cllr Julie Laws	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Anne Bacon	Bourne End Village Association
Siva Niranjan	West Hemel Residents Association
David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council

Meeting started at 7:30pm

2.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 22 August 2013</p> <p>West Hemel LA3 proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision to minutes: 900 houses not 951 • Update and clarification: traffic surveys were undertaken across the Borough. Richard Blackburn has confirmed that this included Fishery Road. <p>ACTION: Gruff to update previous minutes and upload to website</p>
----	--

3.	Matters arising – none raised that are not dealt with elsewhere in the minutes
4.	<p>West Hemel LA3 housing proposals update</p> <p>Val Tyne gave an update on activity by WHAG, a local opposition group. WHAG has had discussions with local Cllrs, Mike Penning MP and a planning lawyer in St Albans. Planning lawyer has suggested they could challenge the plan but the group does not have the funds so this is not an option. They are instead looking to oppose and challenge on specific issues such as flood risk, drainage & possible damage to River Bulbourne (chalk stream). Former Housing Minister Mark Frisk had visited and is consulting with St Albans Cllr & the new Housing Minister about what should happen next.</p> <p>Cllr Maureen Flint reported that the issue was discussed at full council; the Leaders of both DBC and SADC, MP and the Minister have met but the preparation of the SADC core strategy is much behind DBC. This is likely to mean that the document will not be ready in time to contribute to discussions such as looking at alternative locations for the development e.g. the former Lucas site.</p> <p>Cllr Garrick Stevens said that despite resistance it is important to recognise that the current housing plan in Hemel is working on the bare minimum of housing numbers – the Office of National Statistics state that they are not sufficient for demand. DBC adopted their Core Strategy on 26/09/13, since when a developer has lodged a complaint that the Strategy is not sound as the area needs more housing. SADC are also likely to come through with reduced figures & are resisting Greenbelt development. All of which means the process is going to be difficult and long.</p> <p>DEF agreed to write to Richard Blackburn to make clear points around reconciling any housing development with wildlife and sustainability concerns and to inform Master Planning ahead of public consultation early 2014. Gruff had emailed DEF membership for contributions but none given. Chris & Mike Ridley have a list of points to include.</p> <p>ACTION: Gruff E, Chris R, Mike R, Paul H and any others who express an interest to Gruff will work together to develop a draft</p>
5.	<p>Little Hay Golf Course proposal updates</p> <p>Representatives from Bourne End Village Association could not attend the meeting. Updates were instead sent by Anne Bacon and John Mawer on the planning proposal to re-landscape the golf course by importing inert waste.</p> <p>Anne Bacon – the proposal for vehicle access via upper Bourne End lane has been refused for safety reasons and DBC is waiting for traffic analysis from Herts Highways. Sean Wells from HCC Spatial Planning suggests that the developer may well withdraw the current proposal and submit an alternative plan in the new year.</p> <p>John Mawer – concerned that too much focus on vehicular access issues could deflect from significant landfill and waste disposal issues. DBC officers, CPRE and the Environment Agency have questioned the purpose of the project. He suggested that DEF members read the proposals and comment on line. A link to the ‘Planning, Design and Access Statement’ for the project is available at http://www.dacenvforum.org.uk. Full planning application details are available on the DBC website.</p>

	<p>Norman Jones commented that it is difficult to find information about applications like this from HCC. Emma Norrington explained that the planning application is made to DBC and available on their website, while the waste import application is separate and made to HCC.</p> <p>Cllr Maureen Flint reported that she had had a briefing meeting with representatives from SportSpace (responsible for Golf Club) & DBC legal team. Key points to report were that the planning process for this project will be a long one and that any income derived from waste disposal through the scheme will be split between SportSpace and DBC.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>‘Roman Snail Field’, Gadebridge</p> <p>Chris and Mike Ridley gave a report about a field on the edge of housing in Gadebridge which is home to a number of vulnerable species including Roman Snails and pyramidal orchids which are suffering due to a lack of appropriate management. The site is owned by Herts County Council and the responsibility of their Property Department. They have been recording species and approached Herts Biological Records Centre and Countryside Management Service for advice. They are seeking support from DEF to</p> <p>Emma Norrington has spoken to CMS and they have approached Natural England for further management advice, and offered to advise Herts Property on how to manage the site for the benefit of wildlife. No response from HCC yet and Emma has said she will update CMS following this meeting.</p> <p>Martin Hicks confirmed that Herts Biological Records Centre had been consulted. Despite key species being present, the site needs a formal habitat survey to assess whether it can be given wildlife site status. He advised that Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust be approached to carry out any surveys but this can only take place with HCC Property consent. Local pressure is needed to attract positive support for the site, stating its local value and requesting assessment for wildlife interest.</p> <p>Cllr Maureen Flint reported that Dennis Furnell had been involved in trying to promote the project. They have written twice to Councillor Terry Douris explaining the value of the site, local interest and need for action but have had no response.</p> <p>Agreed that DEF would write to HCC Property (copied to local Councillors and MP) in support of the project and to request assessment and action.</p> <p>ACTION: Emma N to find a direct contact at HCC Property and to draft letter in support of habitat survey</p> <p>ACTION: Martin H to email Gruff E with key points to state importance of site and need for management – Gruff E to send to Emma N</p> <p>ACTION: Chris and Mike R to arrange a DEF site visit in the Spring.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Fresh Local Accessible project update</p> <p>Nicole Jackson, Local Food Coordinator, gave an update on the first 8 months delivery of the Fresh Local Accessible project which is funded by Esmee Fairbairn and hosted by Sunnyside Rural Trust. Dacorum is one of three pilot Local Food projects being supported by professional consultants, f3.</p> <p>As well as researching local producers and developing new partnerships, a large part</p>

of the work has been a Dacorum-wide survey seeking to identify the attitudes, current activity, barriers and aims of the local population around local food production and supply. Nicole ran through the key results which included:

- Choice of local food and support for independent shops, local producers and markets = high importance for responders
- Strong local support for wanting to buy local food
- There is a lot of information about local producers and supply but responders identified a lack of information as a barrier. Key point to address in Year 2.
- Lack of response in Hemel. Keen to develop this in Year 2 including a more localised, neighbourhood approach.

All results will be available at www.dacorumlocalfood.org.uk following the project's next Workshop Event on 30th November. A representative of Co-op is attending the event and they have shown an interest in connecting with local producers. The event will be reporting on Year 1 activity and the survey results, and then focussing on developing a work plan for Year 2.

ACTION: all DEF members wanting to attend the workshop on 30th November needs to contact Nicole in advance – fla@sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk

New local projects include:

- DBC land in Tring possibly to be made available for a community growing project
- Town Clerk in Tring has approached FLA to work on local growing project
- Balls Pond Farm – HCC owned site near M25 is for sale; Transition in Kings has secured funding to start a food related project there if they are able to purchase the site
- Growing Futures – Nicole & Martin are working on new project to grow 5000 apple trees from seed working with local schools and Sunnyside Rural Trust

DBC Core Strategy does refer to local food action & education which will be a useful tool with which to approach the Council for planning, strategic and financial support. DEF agreed to support the ongoing project

Gruff E asked if there was an issue with supply & demand for local food – Nicola explained that the current problem was more demand than supply particularly with fresh fruit and vegetables. This is an ongoing problem which needs to be addressed through education of farmers to enable sustainable competition with land value for other things (housing and 'horsiculture').

DEF agreed to send a letter to Andrew Williams and a number of Cllrs and Officer asking them to acknowledge the importance of the need for local food supply, pointing out the social, environmental and economic issues, and urging them to take action and support the FLA project's second year of delivery and ongoing projects.

ACTION: Martin H to send key points to include to Gruff E who will coordinate submission. Agreed to wait until after the FLA Workshop on 30th November to submit, so that any new actions/projects can be included.

	ACTION: Nicole to ask Julie Laws who at DBC (Cllrs and Officers) should be included
8.	<p>Friends of Gadebridge Park update</p> <p>Steve Wilson, Secretary, gave an update of the group which has re-focused its aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to address flooding in the park • to enhance biodiversity, and • to be a local community lead pressure group to act for the park and the people that use it <p>To date they have brought together the Leader of DBC & the Environment Agency and are making progress; a management plan is in place and work has been carried out on the site including a volunteer party lead by the Wild Trout Association with positive results; the group is putting a plan together for a project to carry out wildflower planting in a specified area; they have secured £5,000 to support their projects.</p> <p>The group will hold a meeting on 3rd December at 7.30 in the Hemel Civic Centre. DEF members are invited to attend and also to get involved in ongoing volunteer activities.</p>
9.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>DEF Water group – next meeting on 27th November at 7.30 at Berkhamsted Civic Centre. All DEF members invited to attend and contribute. For more information about the group : http://www.defwatergroup.org.uk/</p>
	The meeting closed at 9:30pm