



**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 27th November 2014**

MINUTES

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Gruff Edwards	Chair DEF
Steve Wilson	Vice Chair DEF
Chris Ridley	DEF
Mike Ridley	DEF
Paul Harris	Green Party
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Phil Pennington	DEF
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Nigel Crawley	Tring in Transition

1. Apologies

William Wyatt-Lowe	DBC and HCC Councillor
Graham Elliot	DBC Councillor
David Austin	DBC Neighbourhood Delivery
Emma Norrington	HMWT
Norman Jones	Ramblers West Herts. Group
James Dixon	Flamstead Parish Council
Rachel Biggs	Bourne Valley Village Association
Anne Bacon	Bourne Valley Village Association
Siva Niranjana	West Hemel Action Group

Meeting started at 7:30pm

1.	Apologies (See above)
2.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting (Sept 4th 2014) William Wyatt-Lowe had suggested an amendment. He wrote: “Re the minutes - and my comment about Veolia. I was not at a cabinet meeting, but was told that the attitude of HCC cabinet to the Veolia situation is that they would expect (i.o.w. politely insist) that Veolia find another way of delivering the required level of waste disposal.”</p> <p>Gruff said he would amend the minutes accordingly, but WW-L has subsequently E-mailed him saying that he does not feel that an amendment is necessary.</p>
3.	<p>Matters arising Little Hay Golf Course : (Email from Rachel Biggs, Bourne Valley Village Association 21st Oct) “On Friday 17th October 2014 the spatial planning unit at Hertfordshire County Council informed us that the Little Hay Application has now been withdrawn. I would like to extend my personal thanks you to all of you for all your hard work on our behalf.” Also received: Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment of</p>

Hertfordshire county council to the Development control committee meeting on Oct 21st. The report, which led to the refusal, concludes with the following headings:
“i) No very special circumstances have been demonstrated for development within the Metropolitan Green Belt that clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm.
ii) Impact on landscape character
iii) Impact on ecology- losses of secondary grassland and no net gain for biodiversity
iv) Impact on amenity of users of UBEL/ local ROW network
v) Non-sustainable waste management and impact upon restoration of mineral sites requiring restoration material. “
The full report will be circulated with these DEF minutes.

Halsey Field:

Subsequent to the DEF tour on June 8th, the Herts. & Middlesex Wildlife Trust surveyed the site in July and had a meeting on Nov 6th to discuss the result of the survey, and make recommendations for protective status and subsequent management. However, Judith Cox, from HMWT has informed DEF that, as the land-owner must be the first person to be informed of any decisions about the land, and there is still some necessary administration that needs to take place before HCC can be informed of the decision made, it will be a couple of weeks before DEF can be informed about any decisions made about the site.

LA3 Housing:

Following DEF’s meeting with DBC re LA3 which was on August 6th 2014, DBC sent us their write-up of the meeting on Nov 11th. This version largely concurs with DEF’s meeting report which was sent to DBC planners and DEF participants at the meeting on Sept 10th, together with more detail on our proposals for a wider, dedicated Wildlife Corridor in support of Shrubhill Common Nature Reserve. DEF incorporated this into their response to the Public Consultation on all the Local Allocations, which closed on Nov. 5th. Our response documents were sent out with the Agenda for tonight’s meeting. On the question of a Wildlife Corridor, and how wide it should be, we said that

“The ideal corridor would be the swathe of land between the two hedgerows to the west of HH20/Chiltern Way, currently designated as H1, H2, H7 on the draft Master Plan,” failing which that “a strip of land (. . . no less than 15 metres wide . . .), parallel with and immediately to the west of the existing HH20/Chiltern Way western hedgerow should be so designated”, though we understand that the Council Planners will be primarily guided by input from statutory consultees such as the Herts. Biological Record Centre. HBRC’s Martin Hicks responded to Gruff (E-mail, Nov. 12th): “I also put this in my comments . . . it seems a reasonable width to enhance the Green Lane in a meaningful way.”

Dennis Harvey said that he had used DEF’s ideas and notes to make a personal response to the Public Consultation on LA1. He explained that the main thrust of his contribution was to support the idea of a wildlife corridor running north-south from Margaret Lloyd Park, and said that he had liaised with Martin Hicks and the Wildlife Trust before submitting his comments.

He remarked that very few other people had contributed comments to this consultation.

Zero Waste Dacorum

Regarding the presentation by John Webb and David Ashton of Herts. Without Waste (Herts. WoW) and subsequent E-mail correspondence (see minutes of Sept 4th) Gruff said that there had been no response to date to the invitation, contained in those minutes, for DEF members willing to take forward the suggestions raised to contact him. He asked if anyone present would like to research the topic of sustainable localised waste management, and if so, to please let him know.

Cllr Garrick Stevens said that he had looked at some links on the Web about incinerators, and found that they produce dangerous dioxins. There are consequently many campaigns in America against the use of incinerators.

4	<p>Reducing Litter in Dacorum</p> <p>Mike Ridley presented ideas for reducing litter in Dacorum. He explained that litter is less likely to be dropped in areas which are free of litter, Please see attached document for the full presentation.</p> <p>Christine Ridley recounted she had applied to be a street Champion in Hemel Hempstead twice, since moving into the area two years ago, but so far her offer has not been taken up. She also said that she had reported a case of someone dumping raw food products (a bag full of chicken drumsticks and a bag of raw red meat) into a local pond, to the police, but was told this was not fly tipping and therefore not illegal. Dennis Harvey advised her to approach an organisation called 'Fixmystreet' if she experiences any further problems, as they are very effective.</p> <p>Cllr Garrick Stevens said the Street Champions group in Berkhamsted are very active.</p> <p>Steve Wilson remarked that a litter warden could be paid for out of the money from the fines, if enough people were prosecuted. Several football teams have recently been fined for leaving litter at match venues.</p> <p>Dennis Harvey thought that volunteers clearing litter was the most effective way to tackle the problem.</p> <p>Steve Wilson stressed the importance of education, as people who are brought up not to drop litter never do.</p> <p>Nigel Crawley said that machinery could be put in place to clear litter, but Dennis pointed out that money is very tight at the moment, so expensive measures would not be implemented.</p> <p>Mike Ridley also showed the group a letter he had drafted to Andrew Williams, the Leader of Dacorum Borough Council with ccs to other key people, containing ideas and possible actions to reduce litter in the area.</p> <p>Gruff suggested that the letter should be circulated amongst the DEF membership with a request for further ideas, or amendments, though Steve maintained a short deadline should be given for members to respond and that the letter should be sent as soon as possible. Phil Pennington said the letter should be sent to three councillors, so that it couldn't be ignored.</p> <p>Gruff suggested future action should be threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter to the councillors • A press release • Encourage DEF members to become Street Champions <p>The letter should be sent ASAP to Leader of Council, with ccs to the Chief Executive and Environment Portfolio Holder and to the two officers who had been in contact prior to the meeting, Dave Austin and Joe Guiton. The letter to be drafted by Mike, then sent by Gruff to DEF membership (subsequent thought – possibly just the Steering Group) for additional comments within a short time frame</p>
5	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Transition town</p> <p>Nigel Crawley explained he was representing the organisation 'Transition Town',</p>

who were looking for ways to liaise with local authorities. At present it was felt that there was a lack of communication, and the organisation was lacking an on-going dialogue with the local council.

It was agreed that as 2015 is election year, it is a good time to interest councillors in coming to meetings, as they were likely to take more interest in local groups. Gruff agreed with the need to strengthen the connection between 'Transition Town' and DEF, and try to encourage more councillors to be involved in meetings.

Air quality

Dennis Harvey explained that he had recently been to a meeting and workshop/consultation about air quality in Berkhamsted.

Air quality is being regularly monitored, using tubes which are analysed and a live monitoring site in Northchurch. These only measure NO_x, not particulates, as in the past the particulates were not found to be as bad as the NO_x. It has been noted that the amount of carbon monoxide in the air peaks at the time of the school run.

However, although the results of this monitoring are extremely worrying, the Borough feels powerless to do anything about it.

Dennis subsequently reported that the report is going to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th December and then to Cabinet, and that apparently the result of the consultation that he attended will be included in the report.