



**Dacorum Environmental Forum  
Full Meeting Thursday 23.02.2017**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Gruff Edwards	Chair DEF
Steve Wilson	Vice Chair DEF
Cllr Janice Marshall	Environment Portfolio Holder, DBC
Danielle Newnham	DBC Scientific Officer
David Ashton	Herts Without Waste
Chris Ridley	DEF
Mike Ridley	DEF
Cllr William Wyatt-Lowe	HCC/DBC
Cllr Paul Harris	Great Gaddesden PC and DEF
Siva Niranjana	West Herts. Action Group and DEF
Cllr Tina Howard	DBC Apsley and Corner Hall Ward
Dennis Harvey	DEF
Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council

**Apologies**

Cllr Phil Hills	Tring Town Council
Cllr Ron Tindall	DBC

Meeting started at 7:30pm

**1. Apologies**

See above.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held 10/11/16**

No corrections suggested.

**3. Matters arising**

**Halsey Field**

**CR** reported as follows:

The field has a new management plan, supplied by Carol Lodge from the Herts and Middlesex wildlife Trust. This plan is simpler, but more ambitious than its predecessor, as it involves trimming 80% of the scrub, and cutting the grass once a year in the main central areas of the field. This trimming is to take place at different times of the year and the grass is to be cut at different levels to provide different heights of sward. The new management plan should appear on the DEF website in due course.

There have been three management sessions so far on the field this winter:

1. **5<sup>th</sup> November**, when friends of Halsey Field helped to cut back Ash re-growth, cut down some bushes in the main wild flower areas, strim the sides of the main footpath and scythe and rake some grassy areas, where we sowed some Yellow Rattle seeds.
2. **24<sup>th</sup> November**, when the Osborne property group held their team-building day on the field and helped us to cut down most of the remaining Ash trees and trim more bushes in order to widen the main footpath nearer the bottom of the field. The cut Ash trees were then treated with herbicide to discourage further growth.
3. **14<sup>th</sup> December**, when CSHCV joined the Friends to strim and rake more grassy scallops to encourage wildflower growth and cut down 80% of the bushes in two more areas of the field.

Two more management sessions are planned for the spring, on 26<sup>th</sup> of February and 26<sup>th</sup> March.

The information board is now designed and ordered, and should be installed during one of the above management sessions. Ecologist Steve Lings has kindly donated the logo he designed for the field.

The AGM of the Friends of Halsey Field is planned for Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30 pm. Amongst matters to be discussed will be a new constitution to facilitate Gift Aid.

Hannah Bailey from the Osborne property group has been working hard to encourage some local primary school Heads to use the Halsey Field for some of their pupils' science and art work. Hannah has offered to organise and supply the materials for these activities, but so far none of the schools have shown any interest.

**CR** recommended a visit to the Halsey Field Facebook page, at <https://www.facebook.com/The-Halsey-Field-Local-Wildlife-Site-Hemel-Hempstead-1106523336038066/>

It is proposed to re-instate Halsey Field as a project on the DEF Website. **GE** had recently acquired some web maintenance knowledge from Tom Aldridge, and would apply it to this task, after further consultation with **CR**.

### **DBC's Street Champions project**

**GE**, **MR** and **CR** as Street Champions were invited to and attended a "Christmas Bash" at the (old) Civic Centre on Monday 12 December 2016, courtesy of DBC.

On Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> **GE** had E-mailed Neighbourhood Support Officer Robert Smith requesting a pick-up by Clean, Safe and Green of some heavy wooden panels plus a (safety) glass door panel in the undergrowth that he had piled up near the entrance of the footpath opposite Great Sturgess Road at its junction with Varney Road during a routine litter clear. They had been removed by Dec 17<sup>th</sup>, following further clarification of the location. **GE** said that direct E-mails to a contact such as Robert were in his experience the most effective way of getting a dump cleared, besides creating a record for reference and reporting.

Following requests by **CR**, Nigel Brant-Wilcock, Neighbourhood Support Lead Officer had provided posters, which were displayed in the local shops, and also sent out an E-flyer to advertise a Community Litter Pick in Gadebridge on Sunday 15 January, 10am – 12pm, meeting outside the Gadebridge Community Centre. Although on the day the weather was inclement, and **CR** and **MR** were the only volunteers, **CR** was able to comment afterwards to Nigel that they had made the most of the litter bag supplied, and could have done with two, as they had managed to collect 8 kg. of rubbish just in the alleyway between Galley Hill and Fennycroft Road, on their way back home.

**CR** had applied to join in a litter clearing event via the "Great British Spring Clean" Website, but had not found any events in Dacorum. The Gadebridge Litter Pick had not succeeded in bringing volunteers besides **CR** and **MR** - though the weather was a negative factor - and **CR** suggested that if refreshments were on offer,

more people might turn out. In any case all litter picking events organised by Neighbourhood Support Officers should be notified to all registered Street Champions. **JM** said that she would follow this up.

### **HCC transport policy up to 2050 – consultation**

**MR** said that the response from DEF to the HCC Transport 2050 vision that had been discussed at the November DEF meeting, with a few very minor typographic changes, had been sent off on December 10th by E-mail to get the 14th December deadline.

### **LA3 Housing**

**GE** had attended and spoken on behalf of DEF at a DBC Cabinet meeting (12<sup>th</sup> Dec), where the Examination (in October) Inspector's communication to DBC requiring them to bring LA3 forward by three years was discussed. This change was approved by Cabinet, with comments from Members such as the Environment Portfolio Holder's "We cannot ignore the Inspector – reluctantly support" and from the Council Leader "We are not complete masters of the process".

**GE** said that the main argument forcing the issue was clearly the imposed requirement to have a five year supply of traveller sites, and this is merely the "tail" wagging the "dog" of the requirement to have a five year supply of general housing.

The Council invited feedback on Modifications to its Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) , including this one. The consultation ended on Sunday 5th February 2017. **GE** said that he had not been inclined to provide further input as he had no new points to make. However he had received a copy of CPRE Herts.'s representation, which included their opposition to :

"the change to paragraph 6.3 to include Local Allocations (LA) 3 and 5 as sites to be brought forward for development before 2021, and to the specific wording that they, and site LA1, 'should be made available for delivery as and when required', without any formal procedure for determination of the meaning of the term '*as and when required*' or any consultation through the Local Plan process on such a procedure. "

(because) "These two changes would appear to be based to a significant degree on matters relating to provision for Gypsy and Traveller (G&T) site provision"

(and) "This ... does not take account of the revised policy issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government in August 2015 (entitled "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites") which is a significant new material consideration which has arisen since the SADPD was submitted for examination. .... The new policy document changes the previous definition of "gypsies and travellers" so that gypsies and travellers who have ceased to travel permanently no longer fall within the definition."

**GE** referred to the public consultation into the LA3 Master Plan which had been launched on January 24<sup>th</sup> (see [www.westhemel.co.uk](http://www.westhemel.co.uk)) and the exhibition at JFK school on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Unlike most DBC-sponsored consultations such as those on the Core Strategy, the consultation was notified via the press and not as E-mails to consultees of previous rounds, and feedback appears to be via E-mail or 'phone only and not structured within a system where all comments can be read. **SN** said that he and members of WHAG had attended the exhibition, and had queried why the number of dwellings was quoted as "up to 1100" as opposed to the Core Strategy's 900, but had not received coherent replies. **GE** had been contacted by Daniel Hayman, the director of a Reading-based agency used by Taylor Wimpey and Barratt / David Wilson developments to help with the public consultation and engagement with local groups, regarding sending a delegation to the Forum's May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, and had asked the same (1100 vs. 900) question, so far without reply.

**GE** had also sent Mr. Hayman reports of DEF's meeting with DBC re LA3, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2014, which had been facilitated by MP Mike Penning, who had concluded that it was a productive meeting. DEF observations made then included concerns about traffic generation and hydrology, which have been carried forward during consultation on the Core Strategy and Development Plan Document. Besides these DEF had recommended:

- Specifying a “Flagship Development” (in terms of best sustainable practice) which raises the profile and image of the town.
- Maintenance of the rural character of existing footpaths (i.e. pedestrian-only use, no tarmac, garage forecourts, urban pavements, playing field equipment or pitches)
- The wildlife corridor to link with Shrub Hill Common to be the strip of fields to the West of Chilterns Way, which would provide a radial pattern of open green-space based on long standing historical and ecological features, without the constraint of being very narrow at the boundary end.
- Any wildlife corridor (ideally this one) should be managed for maximum diversity for wildlife: i.e. mixed native hedges, long grass, wildflowers etc.

**GE** said that it was disappointing that there was as yet no evidence that any of these recommendations had been taken on board.

**JM** said that it was too early, the plans were still at a formative stage.

**CR** said that she had responded to the public consultation with a query about the installation of solar panels being the part of the housing/sustainability standard for the development, but had received no reply.

**SN** said that DEF's input to the plan should continue to refer back to the many environmentally sound objectives and policies in the Core Strategy.

### "Scarenation 2016 - Dr Carnevil and the Circus of Fear" in Gadebridge Park

**PH** said that he had contacted Simon Coultas, DBC Operations Manager - Clean, Safe & Green, regarding the resultant ground damage from this event, and that he had said that similar winter events in the Park "Must not happen again".

### 4. Review of DBC’s Air Quality Action Plan of 2014 - Danielle Newnham

**DN** gave a progress update on DBC's Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2015 - 2018 of December 2014, of which she was co-author. That plan was in fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. In June 2012 DBC formally declared three areas where it was likely that the air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) would not be met. These areas, termed Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were Lawn Lane, Hemel Hempstead, London Road, Apsley and High Street, Northchurch, where the data from the NO<sub>2</sub> and PM (particulates) analysers is uploaded hourly to [www.airqualityhertsbeds.co.uk](http://www.airqualityhertsbeds.co.uk)

An action plan AQAP was produced following these declarations. It recommended twenty measures for implementation, which were aimed at reducing levels of air pollution within the three AQMAs and improving air quality across the borough in general. The twenty measures had been assessed against a range of criteria in order to assess their suitability for inclusion and enable the most suitable measures to be prioritised. Reported progress to date is summarised by the following table:

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Progress as at Feb 2017</b>
<b><i>Package of Measures 1: Reducing emissions via strategic measures</i></b>		
1	Improve links with the Local Transport Plan	Action Plans are to be incorporated into LTP4 (2031 – 2050) which is scheduled for publication early 2018.
2	Improve links with the Local Planning and Development Framework	Require developers to undertake an air quality assessment in circumstances where a new development could have a negative impact on air quality, and provide an air pollution mitigation plan where necessary. Require developers to submit Construction Management Plans to control dust and emissions from construction and demolition. Continue to use planning conditions and legal obligations to require developers to adopt measures which will reduce transport emissions,

		<p>such as requesting travel and business plans, capping parking spaces, providing cycle parking facilities and installing electric vehicle recharging infrastructure.</p> <p>All the above information will be provided annually via the Air Quality Annual Status Report to DEFRA.</p> <p>North Herts District Council have produced an Air Quality Guidance Document which is available for all Herts and Beds LAs to use.</p>
3	Improve links with Public Health	<p>An Air Quality Strategic Plan for Hertfordshire was published in June 2015. Dacorum is invited to the Public Health Air Quality Planning Group, which discusses the delivery of the strategy.</p> <p>Dacorum was awarded £20,000 from HCC Public Health for Particulate Matter monitoring. A 'Fidas 200' monitor was bought, and commissioned in August 2015 in Northchurch.</p>
<b>Package of Measures 2: Optimising traffic flow through the AQMAs</b>		
4	Junction Investigations	The Lawn Lane junction and pedestrian crossing opportunities were included in shortlist for future scheme investigation. The Two Waters junction will be included in the highways aspects of the emerging Two Waters Master Plan.
5	Use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to determine the origin, destination and residence time of local traffic travelling through the London Road, Apsley AQMA.	No progress to report to date.
6	Congestion study: (1) Investigate whether a congestion study has already been done for the London Road, Apsley area. (2) Check the Hertfordshire County Council Congestion Action Plan for any schemes in the area of the AQMAs.	<p>(1) No progress to report to date.</p> <p>(2) Congestion issues in Two Waters Road are currently being discussed as part of the SW Herts Growth &amp; Transport Plan (GTP) and will form part of the work following the emerging Two Waters Master Plan.</p>
7	Road signage and satellite navigation improvements	No progress to report to date. There is an opportunity to cover these in the GTP.
8	Potential relocation of bus stops	Funding bids to pursue this action have been unsuccessful to date. Also there are material objections from local residents.
9	Determine significance of school traffic	Monitoring indicates that school traffic has a significant effect on hourly NO <sub>2</sub> concentrations at High Street, Northchurch.
10	Potential relocation of on-street parking	Funding bids to pursue this action have been unsuccessful to date. Also there are material objections from local residents. This is expensive to trial, and there are no obvious alternatives for relocating parking.

<b>Package of Measures 3: Reducing transport emissions</b>		
--	--	--

11	<p>(1) Communicate the benefits of EVs to residents and businesses. Publicise central government grants and tax incentives available.</p> <p>(2) Explore the possibility of providing local incentives, such as the waiving of car park charges or priority parking for electric (plug in and hybrid) vehicles throughout the borough.</p> <p>(3) Promote the presence and availability of existing EV charge points within the borough.</p> <p>(4) Explore funding opportunities for additional EV charge points within the borough. Aim to secure central government funding for replacing a proportion of the existing Council fleet with EV and install EV charge points at Council-owned buildings.</p> <p>(5) Promote and encourage the uptake of electric (plug in and hybrid) vehicles by staff via the Council's lease car and loan schemes.</p> <p>(6) Encourage the installation of EV charging points in new developments.</p> <p>(7) Promotion of the Maylands EV car club.</p> <p>(8) Investigate (further) possibility of E-Car Club for Council Staff and residents in Dacorum.</p>	<p>(1) The number of enquiries received about EVs is to be provided annually via the Air Quality Annual Status Report to DEFRA.</p> <p>(2) No progress to report to date.</p> <p>(3) DBC was awarded £9,000 following successful bid application for Air Quality Grant funding to install EV highway signage to promote existence of current charge points.</p> <p>(4) For the E-Car Club for Dacorum BC staff and residents there are now 3 x EVs and 1 x EV charge point outside the Civic Centre.</p> <p>(5) (6) (7) Information is to be provided annually via the Air Quality Annual Status Report to DEFRA.</p> <p>(8) The scheme has been approved by the Corporate Management Team (CMT). There are current uncertainties around the funding from HCC.</p>
----	---	--

12	Promote car share schemes	The number of registered members is now reported annually via the Air Quality Annual Status Report to DEFRA
13	Green incentives for taxi drivers	There have been initial discussions with the DBC Licensing department and also other Local Authority Licensing departments. Such schemes have been successfully implemented elsewhere, however the fees and charges may not offer a big enough incentive in Dacorum. Further discussions are required.
14	Reducing emissions from goods vehicles within the AQMAs	No progress to report to date.
15	<p>Reducing emission from Council fleet</p> <p>(1) Continue to consider fuel consumption figures and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during the procurement process.</p> <p>(2) Utilise business mileage data and trends to identify opportunities for fuel usage reduction across Council services.</p> <p>(3) Explore the possibility of amending current business mileage rates to remove financial benefits in relation to engine size.</p> <p>(4) Support the adoption and implementation of a corporate travel plan for the Council.</p>	<p>(1) All new vehicles purchased now have to meet Euro Emission Standards Euro 6 (2014) standards.</p> <p>(2) (3) Processing of DBC salaries has now been outsourced to SERCO who will not release mileage information, so there is no way of continuing this.</p> <p>(4) A Sustainable Travel Plan has been produced for The Forum by Aecom. This needs to be converted into a practical plan for Dacorum Borough Council. An Environmental Sustainability Officer has provisionally been</p>

	<p>(5) Replace proportion of existing Council fleet with EV and install EV charge points at Council-owned buildings.</p> <p>(6) Promote and encourage the uptake of electric (plug in and hybrid) vehicles by staff via the Council's lease car and loan schemes.</p>	<p>nominated to co-ordinate this. Three pool bicycles are to be available to Council staff as of March 2017.</p> <p>(5) The E-Car Club for Dacorum Borough Council staff and residents (3 EVs) will involve the installation of an EV charge point outside the Civic Centre.</p> <p>(6) EVs and hybrids are now part of the lease car offering to employees.</p>
16	Encouraging smarter driving	No progress to report to date.
	<b><i>Package of Measures 4: Promoting sustainable transport options</i></b>	
17	<p>Promote travel planning</p> <p>(1) Continue to work with local businesses, schools, developers and individuals by promoting sustainable travel through travel planning.</p> <p>(2) Investigate whether all schools within the vicinity of the three AQMAs have travel plans, and get any old travel plans refreshed.</p> <p>(3) Support the creation of a corporate travel plan for the Council.</p>	<p>(1 and 2) Annual reporting of the number of travel plans produced are to be incorporated within the Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report to DEFRA.</p> <p>(2) The HCC Schools Team is to co-ordinate this.</p> <p>(3) See Action 15</p>
18	<p>Promote walking and cycling</p> <p>(1) Support and promote local walking groups.</p> <p>(2) Support and promote the Council's 'Cycle to Work' and 'Cycle Loan' schemes.</p> <p>(3) Support and promote various national and local events such as 'Cycle to Work Day', Hertfordshire's 'Year of Cycling' and 'The Big Herts Cycle Challenge'</p> <p>(4) Encourage Council employees to walk/cycle to work.</p>	<p>(1) No specific involvement from Regulatory Services to date.</p> <p>(2) (3) (4) An Internal promotion undertaken by the Environmental Sustainability Officer and the Communications department. The figures to be reported within the Council's Air Quality Annual Status Report to DEFRA.</p>
19	<p>Promote the use of public transport</p> <p>(1) Support Hertfordshire's Bus Strategy.</p> <p>(2) Promote available public transport discounts.</p> <p>(3) Support and promote existing bus routes (e.g. ML1 and ML2).</p> <p>(4) Investigate gaps in bus service (routes and timetabling)</p>	<p>(1) No contribution from Regulatory Services to report to date.</p> <p>(2) (3) (4) No progress to report to date.</p> <p>Re (3) . ML1 is still operational with a revised route. ML2 has not run since around 2015.</p>
20	<p>Promote TravelSmart projects</p> <p>(1) Publicise the results of the Hemel Hempstead TravelSmart project.</p> <p>(2) Explore opportunities for further TravelSmart projects within the borough.</p>	<p>(1) The results of Hemel Hempstead TravelSmart project were not as positive as previous projects (e.g. Watford and St Albans). However, the Active Travel Map produced for the TravelSmart project was the first walking/cycling map ever produced for Hemel Hempstead.</p> <p>(2) Sustrans have tried to get funding for work in schools. Subject to this Sustrans would like to run another TravelSmart project in a few years. Sustrans were also working on another relatively small project called 'Active Explore' to reward people who travel by foot and cycle to certain locations in the Hemel area.</p>

**GE** thanked **DN** for her informative presentation, which he acknowledged covered a huge range of topics. Questions and comments were invited from attendees, and were as follows:

**SN** The presentation was focused on Transport, but what about air pollution from businesses?

**DN** The air quality problem in Dacorum is predominantly a result of emissions from road vehicles. Industrial emissions are controlled by the Environmental Permitting Regulations. Based on the source apportionment analysis, ambient background concentrations contribute the largest individual proportion to existing NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (approximately 80%), followed by emissions from cars and good vehicles on local roads.

**GE** suggested that ambient background concentrations meant traffic pollution generated outside the Borough.

**DH** The Air Quality Action Plan was up to 2018, but under Measure 1 it was linked to the Local Transport Plan which was up to 2050.

**DN** The Action Plan covers a 3 year period (2015 to 2018) to enable regular reviews and updates. Not all measures are to be completed within this timeframe, others (e.g. Measure 1) are ongoing and will roll over.

**DH** Originally only NO<sub>x</sub> was monitored and addressed. With the installation of a particulate monitor in Northchurch should not the plan be changed to address particulate pollution also?

**DN** Although the focus of the Action Plan is NO<sub>2</sub>, the measures contained within the plan will also bring about reductions in concentrations of the other transport-related pollutants (Particulates and Carbon Monoxide). In reference to Particulates, there is currently only a national air quality objective for PM<sub>10</sub>, which is not being exceeded at High Street, Northchurch.

**DH** Why has monitoring in Lawn Lane ceased?

**DN** Monitoring continues here.

**SW** are there enough monitors to ensure that pollution reduction can be implemented? There are differences between valley bottoms, where the preponderance of monitors are, and higher areas. Also there is more stagnant air in winter.

**DN** Dacorum has approximately fifty monitoring sites, which is a large number compared with other Local Authority areas.

**TH** Despite the measures undertaken to date, air quality in Apsley is continuing to deteriorate.

**WW-L** Stressed the importance of introducing a pedestrian phase at the Lawn Lane/Durrants Hill traffic lights, for the sake of pedestrians waiting to get across.

**GS** The monitoring figures for Northchurch are better than expected.

**DN** Agreed - The annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations within the High Street, Northchurch AQMA are not significantly elevated above the annual mean objective.

**GS** Should attention therefore be more focused on Lower Kings Road? Particulate monitors are available for private use indoors, so why are they not more widely used by DBC?

**DN** Dacorum, like most other Local Authorities, uses diffusion tubes to monitor NO<sub>2</sub> in addition to the real-time air quality monitoring station, which monitors NO<sub>2</sub> and PM. NO<sub>2</sub> is used as a benchmark for all traffic-related pollutants. The real-time air quality monitoring station is not readily mobile – it requires permanent connection to an electricity supply, sufficient space to position the large enclosure and also access for fortnightly calibration and service visits. A number of new diffusion tube monitoring sites have been commissioned in Berkhamsted in the last few years.

**DA** Nano-particulates (less than PM<sub>1</sub>) are the most harmful to human health. The monitors do not detect below PM<sub>1</sub>. The assurance that individual business emissions are within permitted limits tells us nothing about their combined effect.

**CR** The Plan as a whole does not "have many teeth". In particular the Planning Guidance requiring air quality assessments for some developments should be more widely enforced.

**DN** The monitoring equipment available does not have the capacity to measure below PM<sub>1</sub>. The PM analyser was purchased using money awarded from HCC Public Health who are primarily concerned with monitoring PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations (related to their public health indicator). Air Quality Assessments are requested at the planning consultation stage if considered necessary. In this, the cumulative effect is a consideration. There are plans to introduce the Herts and Beds Air Quality Planning Guidance and template memo to ensure all Herts and Beds Local Authorities are approaching air quality and planning in the same way (Measure 2 in the action plan).



**MR** It is surprising that the pollution levels in Berkhamsted High Street are not higher, given the tailbacks of traffic approaching the Lower Kings Road lights. Possibly the pollution drifts down Lower Kings Road.

**DN** Pollution Levels are moderated in the assessment according to the locations of the nearest residences, particularly ground floor ones, and there are few such residential properties near that junction. The long-term diffusion tube monitoring site on High Street, Berkhamsted has exceeded the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> recommended level in the past. However the "objective" is only exceeded if this occurs at the façade of the nearest residential dwelling, and this has not been exceeded. A number of new monitoring sites have been commissioned in recent years in Berkhamsted where air pollution is considered likely to be a problem. The results are to be reported annually to Defra and action is to be taken if deemed necessary.

**PH** Re Measure 19, Arriva already run electric buses in Milton Keynes (*later note: see DEF minutes for 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014*), so why not Dacorum?

**DN** This remains a possibility

**PH** Re Measure 13, where have green incentives for taxi firms been successful?

**DN** Chilterns District, using reduced licence fees.

Documents supplied by **DN** in connection with this topic will appear on the DEF Website alongside these minutes.

## **5. Update on Friends Gadebridge Park projects and funding.**

**SW** reported on the preceding Tuesday's meeting of Friends of Gadebridge Park, attended by DBC officers and representatives from Affinity, when proposed plans for the Park were discussed. He presented a large and well-illustrated (paper) map of the proposals. The objectives were to attract more people to the Park, at the same time enhancing it environmentally. There were four main proposals, which it was hoped would be implemented during 2018/19:

1. A Splash Park on the site of the present Crazy Golf course. This would be funded to the tune of £1M set aside in the DBC budget.
2. Restoration of the White Bridge. Similarly funded, £0.5M.
3. Affinity proposed altering aspects of the course of the river between Gadebridge Lane and the East-West Link Road, and the removal of overhanging trees, in order to enhance its function as wetland habitat.
4. Affinity proposed changing the course of the river in the main park area, running it closer to the valley bottom.

At the meeting **SW** had expressed reservations regarding changing the course and width of the river. In addition to the need to take regard of the underlying gravel layer, and the need to maintain water on the surface, there was the question of what would happen to the present channel. One suggestion was a cycleway. Others were a wild area where vegetation (reeds etc.) would clean up the road run-off before it entered the Gade, and a rough walkway with some duck boards winding through this area, to create a circular path for children to 'explore'. There were safety concerns because there would now be a greater area of park between the river and the Leighton Buzzard Road, so a greater chance of children running into the road. He said that the current 50mph speed limit for that section would need to be lowered.

Regarding the top (north of Gadebridge Lane) end of the park, the environmental improvement sought would be impeded by the volume of silt, polluted by road run-off, that was currently entering the river, and this silt would need to be trapped and removed.

## **6. Any Other Business**

David Ashton from HertsWoW raised the matter of Veolia's current proposal in 2016/17 for a waste incinerator at Ratty's Lane in Hoddesdon, Herts. He and John Webb had previously addressed DEF in September 2014. At that time a plan for an incinerator at New Barnfield near Hatfield had just been refused by Eric Pickles, Secretary of State at Communities and Local Government. David's key local points for Dacorum had been that it was best practice to collect all dry recyclables together to get maximum household recycling capture, and that DBC were about to launch this approach in the Borough which was great news locally.

The contractor Veolia Environmental Services now proposes to build and operate an industrial plant designed to incinerate waste materials and produce steam to drive turbines for generating electricity. It has submitted a

planning application to Hertfordshire County Council. The Council is running a public consultation up to 31st March 2017 to gather views on the proposal before it decides whether to grant planning permission. **DA** said that unlike the previous proposal there were now no plans for on-site reprieve from incineration and diversion to recycling.

From HertsWoW's perspective, the main drawback would be the existence of a huge incinerator financed in such a manner as to need feedstock – from anywhere – to keep it running near to capacity for 30 years minimum. That would be hugely destructive and run counter to all efforts to build a 'circular economy' of materials.

**DA** called for DEF to support HertsWoW by responding to the public consultation on the planning application. He and John Webb had sent a draft set of points for DEF to make, which included:

"We should all be promoting a 'circular economy' of materials with minimal or no destruction of them. Counting energy generation from incinerators as 'renewable', 'sustainable' or part of a 'circular economy' is misleading, while the extraction of metals from incinerator bottom ash rather than from collected waste for 'recycling' is wasteful."

"The residual materials (from local sorting) should be put through local facilities of cleaning, sorting and baling. Organic wastes should feed composting and anaerobic digestion plants, with their by-products of heat, electricity and gases. This would promote local employment."

While most present agreed that recycling was better than incineration, **JM** pointed out that incineration would continue to be necessary for non-recyclable material.

**MR** said that most of the non-recyclable material was not burnable as it was inert, since all the burnable stuff that an incinerator needs is potentially recyclable or compostable. All inert materials that are not recyclable can be landfilled safely.

**SN** said there should be incentives to minimise the use of "grey" (=black) wheelie bins by households.

**CR** said that building another incinerator was not a good idea, because particulates coming out of it are a danger to health and because it would seem to discourage recycling and the production of biodegradable packaging. We should continue to encourage companies to reduce packaging to a minimum, which should be made biodegradable.

Supporting documents supplied by HertsWoW, including advice on how to respond to the consultation, will be circulated with these minutes, and will appear alongside the minutes on the DEF website.

*Later Note: There was not time to clarify a DEF consensus, so individual members (who will include **GE** "as Chair") are encouraged to give some thought to this important issue and act accordingly.*