



**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting Thursday 22.02.2018**

MINUTES

Attendance

Name	Organisation
Gruff Edwards	Chair DEF
Steve Wilson	Vice Chair DEF
Duncan Jones	Hertfordshire Waste Partnership
Dennis Harvey	DEF
Chris Ridley	DEF and Friends of Halsey Field
Mike Ridley	DEF and Friends of Halsey Field
Cllr Gordon Godfrey	Northchurch PC
John Webb	Herts WithOut Waste
Cllr Janice Marshall	DBC
Cllr Phil Hills	Tring Town Council
Cllr Tina Howard	DBC and HCC

Meeting started at 7:30pm

1. Apologies

Cllr Paul Harris, Siva Niranjana, Adrian Whyle, Cllr Ron Tindall

Adrian Whyle and Ron Tindall had both recently been in hospital, and the meeting expressed its best wishes for their speedy recoveries.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting held 9/11/17

No corrections suggested.

3. Matters arising

DBC's Street Champions project

GE said he had reported dumped items along the Chiltern Way footpath between Long Chaulden and Fields End on Nov. 14th to neighbourhood.action@dacorum.gov.uk as advised by Sandra Mogan of DBC (Lead Officer – Active Communities Neighbourhood Delivery). This was mainly cleared within a couple of weeks, but there was no acknowledgement or other indication that it was DBC who had done it.

He had heard (12th Feb.) from Nicky McIntyre, DBC Active Communities Officer, Neighbourhood Action regarding the Great British Spring Clean which is running through February and March. Would-be participants, please see: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/environment-street-care/clean-safe-green/love-where-you-live/great-british-spring-clean>

Halsey Field Update

CR reported as follows:

Three events were planned on the field at the beginning of this year, including work parties on 21st January and 18th February, and a Small Mammal Survey on 27th January. The first work party was postponed because of bad weather, but a few members volunteered to stay on the field after the Small Mammal Survey, to do some mowing and tree popping (root removal). The work party on 18th was very successful, with 13 people attending. Work so far has concentrated on cutting down or tree popping bushes and saplings in the northern, overgrown area of the field, and single bushes in the main wild flower areas. We have also used our new brush cutter, supplemented by a BBOWT cutter, to mow scallops of grass either side of the main paths, and to control areas of spreading Blackthorn, Brambles, and *Brachypodium Sylvaticum* (a type of grass). All the cuttings have been removed by raking (to lower the fertility) and made into habitat piles.

The small mammal survey in January was extremely successful and 10 out of 11 traps set were triggered, catching 7 Wood Mice (3 Male and 4 female) and 3 Field Vole (1 male and 2 female). All looked very healthy, and the young mice were extremely lively; all were released back on to the field as soon as photos had been taken. Evidence of Bank Vole holes and runs was found at the bottom of the slope, but none were caught in the traps.

The Friends of Halsey Field have now joined Support 4 Dacorum to recruit more volunteers to help with the field maintenance, and this has gained us two new volunteers so far.

Negotiations are continuing about cattle grazing on the Halsey field. Peter Sampson and Peter Ablett walked round the field with members of the committee in January. They are very supportive of the Halsey Field project, and Peter Sampson offered to lend us three Belted Galloway cattle in the autumn/winter months, until the ground becomes too wet for grazing. It was suggested that we should enlist the support of Martin Hicks of the Herts Biological Records Centre and a County Councillor, before approaching Herts County Council to seek permission to have grazing on the Field. Emails were written to Fiona Guest, who has been very supportive of our project, and to Martin, and a letter was also sent to the Mayor of Dacorum, who had expressed a wish to be as supportive as possible. Pending a reply from the Mayor a backup letter and E-mail were sent to County Hall. **JM** offered to liaise with Cllr. Guest concerning a reply from her.

LA3 Master Plan and sustainability

GE said that he had received no communication to date resulting from an offer by the West Hemel Action Group to notify DEF of all new planning applications that they monitor, in particular on the LA3 Master Plan.

DBC 2017 Local Plan Consultation

GE had sent in DEF's response, which had previously been circulated for comment by interested parties within DEF, and which can be viewed on the DEF website under "Consultations etc." He had subsequently produced a reduced 8-page version, which was sent to Dacorum's two MPs and to members of the DBC Strategic Planning and Environment Committee and substitutes.

David Gauke MP had sent an acknowledgement, and Sir Mike Penning MP had sent a letter attached to a copy of a letter of his to Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for a response to two points that DEF had made, namely Code 6 building standards (or equivalent) for housing and the way housing demand is calculated.

There had been one response (Stewart Riddick) from the DBC Planning and Environment Committee.

MR and **CR** had also responded to the consultation.

GE said that Paul Harris, chair of Great Gaddesden Parish Council had told him that he had responded to Laura Wood (DBC Strategic Planning) saying that an increase of 15,000 to 18,000 in the Parish's population by 2036 was "completely unacceptable", particularly as the proposals encroach on an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Waste management and fly tipping in Hertfordshire,

SW took the chair for this item

Duncan Jones, MCIWM (Member of the Chartered Institute of Wastes Management), Partnership Development Manager, Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP), gave an illustrated presentation that was divided into two main topics, Waste Management and Fly Tipping.

Waste Management

DJ said that The HWP had no authority over individual services and instead considered matters of strategic importance and opportunities for joint working. It made recommendations about the long-term development of waste services in pursuit of targets detailed in the 2007 Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (due for an update), objectives and principles detailed in the HWP Agreement signed in January 2012, and in response to legislative changes.

Concentrating on Household Waste, **DJ** said that Herts County Council (HCC) were responsible for waste disposal and Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) for waste collection. However, in Dacorum the contents of blue-lidded ("Recycling") bins were handed on to recycling companies under contracts negotiated directly with them. Other Local Authorities (LAs) had similar but not identical arrangements. More co-operation and standardisation between LAs would lead to greater efficiencies, but so far this had only been achieved between East Herts. and North Herts. The UK depends on chains of UK-based recycling companies striking deals, some overseas, where a proportion of waste is turned into product for export back to the UK, so it would be virtually impossible to produce an audit trail for this closed (true recycling) loop. As widely reported in the media, China was tightening up the quality requirements for wastes that it would accept. At the same time it was prevailing upon neighbouring countries to take more. In consequence large, world-leading recycling plant in China was becoming under-utilised. The UK as a whole could not currently sustain a "closed-loop" economy in recycling. It was desirable that it should be able to, and more co-operation between LAs would make it more achievable.

"Residual wastes" (the contents of black/"grey" bins) go to HCC's Waterdale waste transfer station, near the North Orbital/M1 intersection where they are trans-shipped to larger vehicles and go out of Hertfordshire to landfill and Energy-from-Waste sites in neighbouring counties. **DJ** said that one way of reducing the current system's economic and environmental deficiencies would be by Hertfordshire having its own Energy-from-Waste sites (see contribution from **JW** below).

By contrast, most organic waste (Green bins and caddies) is dealt with mainly within Hertfordshire. 45% of LAs in the UK charge for the collection of garden waste, and **DJ** foresaw that this trend would soon be followed in Hertfordshire.

DJ said that 2018 could bring legislative changes significantly affecting waste management and arising from:

- DEFRA's Resources & Waste Strategy 2018
- The EU Circular Economy Directive - possibly affected by Brexit
- Government's Industrial Strategy White Paper "Building a Britain fit for the Future" (Nov. '17)
- Government's 25 year 'Environmental Plan' with pledge to eliminate "avoidable plastic waste"

MR asked how we could know, in the international context, how much "recycling" was genuine, and how much was simply landfill or other disposal.

DJ said that the fact that intermediate companies were paying for the waste that they took was some sort of guarantee. Much depended on the degree of trust the LA had with the companies it dealt with.

DH asked why Collection was delegated to Local Authorities. Would it not be more efficient for HCC to do this as well as disposal?

DJ Yes it would, but for LAs Waste Services are an important component of the overall budget, of the order of 50% in some cases. Removal of this responsibility could lead some people to question the need for LAs.

SW questioned the rationale of only having fortnightly blue-lid bin collections in Dacorum. Some people put recyclables into their black/grey bins after filling the blue-lid bin.

DJ said that the size of bin was also a factor. He gave the example of Three Rivers DC who have a smaller black bin collected every two weeks and a bin for recyclables collected every week. He said it encouraged people to recycle more, which was borne out by the fact that Three Rivers has the highest recycling rate in Herts.

GE said that advice on the DBC website was that excess recycling can be put in a "sturdy container" next to the blue-lid bin.

JW said that cans and plastic bottles could be flattened to make more room.

SW said that from his experience volunteering at Leverstock Green Cricket Club there was a large amount of potentially recyclable waste going to landfill and that this could be captured by changing the designation of the club (and similar sports and social centres) in some way.

DJ said that such clubs were not currently designated as "households" and so fell outside the Household Waste recycling targets. However, the little-observed European Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) says that any waste collection services, be they by LAs or private companies, and including collections from flats, must offer a recycling option.

CR said that charging for Green Waste collection would lead to more dumping. **GE** said that from his experience along footpaths and bridleways within Hemel Hempstead dumped garden waste was already a major problem and it was reasonable to assume that it would increase if charging were introduced.

DJ said that where charges had been introduced this had not happened.

DH that he had visited the Greatmoor Energy-from-Waste (EFW) plant in Bucks and although at its heart there was an incinerator, the "I" word was not used. Use of terminology could have a bearing on public perceptions of the proposed Energy Recovery Facility at Ratty's Lane, Hoddesdon. Greatmoor is owned by Bucks CC. In commercial terms it has a 10 year payback period and a lifetime of 30 years.

DJ said that the Ratty's Lane scheme had enough 'headroom' to be compatible with an 80% recycling target.

JW who had addressed and been supported by DEF on the topic at their 4th Sept. 2014 meeting, said that Herts. WithOut Waste would take part in the forthcoming Planning Inquiry into the application by Veolia now that the Secretary of State had called in the application. . (Application no: 7/0067-17),

TH asked how many LAs provide a collection service for medical wastes.

DJ Very few. There are commercial outfits who do it by incineration or specialised treatment.

CR asked whether whole recyclable waste shipments could be diverted to landfill because of contamination by non-recyclable materials.

DJ said that it was very rare for this to happen. Also rarely, contamination can be caused by spontaneous combustion during transfer or storage. On average 6.3% of collected "recyclables" were contaminants.

Fly Tipping

DJ, one of whose responsibilities is as Chair of the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group, said that over the last six years the number of reported fly tipping incidents ("moving annual average") had at first risen from around 850 p.a. to 1260 p.a. (in 2016), then fallen to 1050 p.a. Much depended on the definition of fly tipping, though in fact even a bag left outside a closed charity shop would count. Such success as had been achieved was due the more effective pursuit of offenders, featuring a greater use of Fixed Penalty Notices, multi-agency cooperation and better preparation of cases that went to court. Documenting the case appropriately was crucial, as was sharing prosecution logs, subject to the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

In Dacorum a publicity campaign to dissuade potential tippers was due to be launched on March 14th and run until May. Although the Fly Tipping Group currently dealt only with fly tipping on public land, future issues to be tackled included "Engaging with Private Landowners".

GG said that there was a problem with using waste disposal agencies who advertise by various means including Facebook. How could they be trusted not to dispose by dumping?

DJ agreed, the customer of the disposal service had a "Duty of Care", but in practice it was difficult to fulfil. The public were in general unaware that contractors must be licensed.

CR asked for advice on how to tackle dumping in a pond off Fields End Lane that she had helped to clear.

DJ said that the landowner, who could sometimes be identified from a public register, should be contacted. Legislation existed requiring landowners to keep their land "clean". However, defensive measures might be ineffective against 'professional' fly tippers. **DJ** offered to supply register contact details to **CR** via **GE**. (*He has subsequently done this*)

MR asked how much a Fixed Penalty was.

DJ £300, with a discount for prompt payment. **MR** thought that this would not be much of a deterrent.

SW said there were anti Fly Tipping notices around advertising much higher sums. **DJ** said that such sums could be imposed for cases that went to court.

5. Any Other Business

None.