

**NOTES OF THE
BOBBINGWORTH FORMER LANDFILL SITE
LOCAL LIAISON GROUP**

**Held at
2.30 pm 25 May 2011
Conference Room, Civic Offices**

Present: Cllr John Knapman, Environment Portfolio Holder (Chair) (JK)
 Qasim (Kim) Durrani, Assistant Director, E&SS (QD)
 Susan Stranders, Drainage Manager, E&SS (SS)
 Abigail Oldham, Country Care (AO)
 C Thompson, Moreton Bobbingworth & the Lavers PC (CT)

Notes: Stella Forster

Apologies: Cllrs Tony Boyce, Peter Gode & Carol Squirrel

		Action
1.	Notes of last meeting - Agreed	
2.	<p>Matters arising SS: P3, Para 2. EFDC engineers believe that the road subsidence is consistent with badger/rabbit burrowing, but it could be due to wear and tear. They have sent photographs to ECC Highways, who are responsible for this road, along with photographic evidence of the poor sight lines when egressing the site. Their reply is still awaited.</p> <p>JK suggested using the ECC Highways on-line pot hole reporting system which may speed the process along, but asked that he be informed if no response has been received within two weeks. He gave SS his contact details.</p>	SS
3.	<p>Terms of reference. The news that CT will continue attending meetings, but as a representative rather than a Member, was welcomed by the Group. It was agreed to alter the Membership wording in the Terms of Reference from Two 'Members' from Moreton, Bobbingworth & the Lavers PC to two 'Representatives'.</p>	SS
4.	<p>Budget SS: Approx £49k remains in the capital account. £25k has recently been spent on the footpaths, with some minor groundworks, easement, administration costs and legal agreements outstanding.</p> <p>JK agreed that any funds remaining could be allocated to goods or services to help manage the site. He also confirmed that the annual maintenance budget of £36k is unlikely to change in the future.</p>	
5.	<p>Update from officers <u>Operation and maintenance</u> SS: The operating systems put in place to maintain the site appear to be working well. Darren attended a site meeting on 24 May in preparation for the opening. He reported that the reed beds, previously thought to be dying back, were recovering well. The results of tests on leachate chemical levels were also encouraging, as the ammonia concentrations are definitely decreasing. The lack of rain would not have had an effect on these results.</p> <p><u>Footpaths and benches</u> AO: The wooden benches will be purchased at a cost of £300, which will be taken from the capital budget. A third of the path has now been laid and the remainder will be completed within the next two weeks. The benches will be sited at each passing point, and the effect of the curved pathway</p>	

	<p>which will climb the mound looks attractive. The path will be finished in a good quality crushed gravel.</p> <p><u>Ecology and landscape</u> The grass will be cut in the next few weeks. The site totals 7 hectares and roughly 75% of this will require cutting. The remainder, in between the trees, will be strimmed. Although the grass is short due to lack of rain, the thistles and dock have to be cut down before they set seed. Pearl, a local contractor, has carried out the work in the past at a cost of £2,500-£3,000 and SS reported that two other quotes were being sought, but this was proving a difficult task. JK will give SS the contact number of the landscape company which manages the Chigwell area, as they do an excellent job. CT and AO will also contact local farmers who may be willing to take this work on at a more reasonable cost.</p> <p><u>Information Boards</u> JK agreed to the purchase of one lectern and two information boards in good quality oak, all at the larger size, at a price of £5,000, to be allocated from capital. They are unfortunately unlikely to be in place before the opening.</p> <p><u>Rabbit control</u> AO: It is necessary to control rabbit numbers due to the risk of hazardous material being brought to the surface when they burrow in the soil. The warrener is to return to the site on several occasions in Oct/Nov time and will use ferrets to chase them from their warrens, when he will destroy them. As he knows the farmer, he will have access to both sides of the fence.</p> <p><u>Countrycare/volunteer activities</u> AO: A volunteer day has been organised for 23 June to prepare the site for the opening. The volunteers, plus pupils from Passmore Secondary School, will spend the day tidying up, mulching etc. JK undertook to keep the day free to join in.</p> <p>Although CT felt that the reserve will be used primarily by dog walkers, it was agreed that the costs associated with installing, emptying and maintaining dog bins would be prohibitive. It was suggested that it is made clear to dog owners, via notice boards, that they are responsible for removing their own dog waste. This will continue to be monitored, as the soil can be damaged by an excess of dog faeces and if the site is well used by families the problem will need to be addressed.</p> <p>6. Monitoring birds and wildlife AO: Although there are no plans for formal monitoring to take place, wildlife numbers are checked by site users on a regular basis. The presence of a number of slowworms, which have a hibernaculum on site, indicates that the reserve is a good habitat for wildlife.</p> <p>CT has observed peewits and a pair of buzzards, as well as the more common birds and ducks, and has heard cuckoos for the first time. Although a stony area has been prepared to attract ring necked plovers back to nest, there is as yet no sign of them. The bog area should appeal to other species. The site is an important wildlife sanctuary, as there are so few others in the vicinity. JK confirmed that it will be acceptable to monitor the reserve on this informal basis for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>7. Opening process 15 July 2011 at 11.00 am <u>Formalities etc.</u> Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens has been asked to open the event in his capacity as Chairman of the Council. SS has contacted Tom Carne, PR officer, who has offered advice on the formalities and the invitation list.</p> <p>It was agreed to limit invitations but to include all members of the Liaison Group,</p>	<p>JK CT/AO</p> <p>JK</p> <p>AO</p>
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	<p>members of the Parish Council and local residents. AO will also contact John Hall from Essex Wildlife to ask if the Trust would like to be represented. A formal invitation will be sent to all except the Liaison Group and QD suggested that Pat Seager could be approached to help with this.</p> <p>It was considered inappropriate to invite children from the local school, Moreton, due to the lack of toilet facilities, but they could have their own school day at a later date. However, JK asked that the Headmistress be invited so that he, as Portfolio Holder, can discuss with her how the children can best be involved in the project. Although Chris Neilan's assistance with the tree project is appreciated, it was decided that he and other Council officers would not be invited to attend.</p> <p>In view of the current financial situation, it was agreed that the supporting events previously planned by the Group would not now form part of the ceremony, and that the day would be kept as simple as possible by following the opening with a walk around the reserve. This should take no longer than 1½ hours.</p> <p><u>Publicity</u> Tom Carne can arrange for the event to be publicised and will provide a photographer. CT will advertise in the two village magazines so that interested local residents, who have waited over 30 years for the site to be developed, are aware that their presence would be welcomed.</p> <p>SS to copy JK in on all correspondence concerning the opening ceremony.</p> <p>8. Queen Elizabeth II Field Designation CT: A presentation was given at a recent Local Councils Liaison meeting by the QEII Field Trust. As part of the Queen's Golden Jubilee year, any common land used by local communities can, upon request, be designated a Queen Elizabeth Field. Although the concept is simply an accreditation, no financial commitment is involved and it would give added status to the new reserve and may offer it some protection from future development.</p> <p>SS has sought advice from Legal Services on how to proceed with the designation procedure. Their advice is still awaited, but JK confirmed that if a positive response is received from them he, as Portfolio Holder, would give his approval to go ahead with the designation process, and that a formal report should not be required.</p> <p>9. Grants JK suggested contacting the Grange Farm Trust, who are able to allocate a maximum grant of £30,000 to worthy community projects within the London and Epping Forest districts. This grant is generally under used and it may cover items such as benches, signs etc, but not maintenance costs. JK to let SS have the contact details.</p> <p>JK also advised contacting Cllr Richard Morgan who has represented Epping Forest on the BAA Stansted Grant Committee for many years. Grants are rarely requested for this district, and JK felt that a request to enhance the local area would be well received. JK to again supply SS with further details.</p> <p>10. AOB Chris Neilan had informed AO that only oak trees were on offer free of charge, and a specimen elm would have to be purchased separately if still required. However, since the planting season has now been missed, even the oaks may not be on offer in the autumn. He would also prefer to have a group of trees on the mound, rather than just one.</p> <p>CT had researched a nursery which is producing Dutch Elm disease-resistant</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>JK</p> <p>JK</p>
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trees. Although more expensive than oak (a single elm of 10cm girth, 5 years old, would cost £184), it would be very pleasing to plant one when so many had been lost to the disease in the district. AO to check with Chris Neilan that the mound is a suitable site for growing an elm tree. If so, JK gave his approval for an elm to be purchased and planted, and informed AO that he would find the funds to pay for it.

AO

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 2 November, 2.30 pm, was suggested.

(Post meeting note - the Conference Room has now been booked for this date and time).

D R A F T