

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

**Held at  
2.30 pm 02 November 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)  
 Cllr Tony Boyce (TB)  
 Abigail Oldham, Country Care (AO)  
 C Thompson, Moreton Bobbingworth & the Lavers PC (CT)  
 Carol Squirrel, Moreton Bobbingworth & the Lavers Pc (CS)

**Notes:** Stella Forster

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies:</b> Cllr Peter Gode</p> <p><b>Draft notes of last meeting 25 May 2011:</b> Agreed</p>	<b>T</b>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b>            Most matters arising to be covered on the agenda.            P1 Item 2: The subsidence was filled as a temporary measure but is now dipping again. County are aware of the situation and an investigation by them is still awaited. JK gave details of ECC's £4m increased budget for potholes, and stressed that they should be chased up.</p> <p>Terms of reference: SS had contacted Democratic Services but has heard nothing further.</p> <p>P3 Grants: SS has not yet investigated the possibility of obtaining grants but will do some research within the next quarter.</p> <p>JK felt that the site meets all the criteria for a £30k annual grant, payable for 3 years, from the Grange Farm Trust and suggested contacting the clerk, Nick Gadsby. Although the Trust is not permitted to donate funds directly to local authorities, it may be possible to set up some form of trust to claim the money, or possibly link it to the QEII Field Designation. Having briefly explored this SS had been informed that the site is unique and would not qualify for a grant. JK to approach NG for advice. He has also asked County for details of a EU grant (possibly retrospective) for tree planting. He will report back to the group once he receives further details</p>	<b>SS</b>  <b>JK</b>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Budget</b>            There is still £5k remaining in the revenue budget, and SS is optimistic it will be sufficient this year. £38k has been spent on paths, benches and technical items, which leaves £31k in the capital budget. Investigations are taking place to purchase plant for maintenance of the site, subject to further approval.</p> <p><u>Dog bins</u> It was agreed at the beginning of the project that the installation and emptying costs of providing dog bins was prohibitive, but that the situation would be monitored. Requests have since been received from Parish and Town Councils to supply them, and there does appear to be a problem. David Marsh has indicated that there will be capacity within the waste budget to absorb collection costs. The charge for installing two bins (£350 each), to be positioned at each entrance point, and ongoing collections would be free of charge. It was</p>	

	<p>agreed to proceed.</p> <p>JK is aware of a scheme to equip grass cutters with 'Stiga' snow brushes to clear the side roads, hills etc. not currently on ECC's gritting round. If a grass cutting tractor for the reserve is to be purchased (to be covered later on the agenda), consideration could also be given to buying one of these attachments, at a cost of £2½ -3k. The brush fits to the front of the tractor, and gritters can be fixed to the back, thus broadening the use of the tractor to the winter season. It could be used to clear snow from the entrances and paths, and also possibly the side roads in Moreton. This would help the community generally and allow access to the park in the snow. ECC have stated that they would cover labour costs. CT said that Peddlars End, a steep hill, would benefit from snow clearance. It was agreed to investigate further and SS will report back.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Update from officers</b></p> <p><u>Operation and maintenance</u></p> <p>(i) Dangerous Substances &amp; Explosive Atmosphere Regs (DSEAR)  SS: Leachate treatments are going well, and although a level of zinc in the treatment plant was reported the Land &amp; Water Quality officer feels this was an error and is looking into it further. Technical operations generally are working smoothly, but due to the previous use of the site and presence of methane gas the consultants have advised that DSEAR regulations must be followed. Although this is considered a low risk site there is an obligation to provide signage to make visitors aware of the presence of gas. So as not to alarm visitors unduly, the smallest sign possible will be used, and information boards will make it clear that, given its history as an ex-landfill site, a small amount of gas is inevitable, and the use of naked flame in any form is prohibited.</p> <p>(ii) Unauthorised occupation: Because of the potential influx of travellers from Basildon it was thought prudent to place huge pipes across the entrances to the car parks. The risk is now considered small enough to remove the pipes.</p> <p>(iii) Highway safety mirror: At the request of Thames Water, and with the agreement of the landowner, a mirror will be erected at the egress point of the site on volunteer day. Thames will provide the mirror.</p> <p><u>Landscaping and future maintenance programme</u></p> <p>Potential purchase of plant from capital: SS: There is a significant weed problem on the site, and this can only be managed effectively by regular mowing. This discourages plants that are not wanted and encourages those that are.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with AO on the possibility of using the remaining capital allocated to the project to purchase a tractor, with Country Care carrying out the grass cutting work. After some initial research by EFDC engineers a quote for a good quality tractor has come in at £25k. Currently £1600 is being spent per cut, with another £3,000 for three other sites. This does not include removal of the grass. If used 4 times a year to cut and collect just one site, the tractor would pay for itself within 4 years.</p> <p>However, there are still other issues to consider, e.g. insurance costs, how to transport the tractor from site to site (it is too slow to drive on the road), and secure storage. JK thought that a limited use licence, costing around £55, would cover insurance. A trailer would be an added expense, but Country Care has a vehicle available to tow it on the road. AO confirmed that there would be storage space at the depot in W/A but this would require refurbishment to make it secure. SS suggested keeping the tractor nearer to site, possibly in the leachate treatment compound, and TB and CT offered to contact farmers whose land adjoins the site as they may be willing to assist with storage.</p>	<p>TB/CT</p>

JK gave his approval to proceed with exploring the principle of purchasing the vehicle, even if no great savings were anticipated as it was always preferable to keep control of operations. He said that as Cabinet has already agreed the money for capital expenditure and given the Group a free hand as to how it is to be spent, it would not be necessary to seek approval again unless the budget were to be exceeded. Once the tender process has been followed, a report to the PFH would suffice. In view of the possibility of purchasing a snow brush a decision should be made before the weather worsens. SS to take forward.

SS

Ecology and wildlife:

AO: A recent survey of the site found 52 different species of grass and wildflower in the meadow area. Apart from a few alien species, these are consistent with plants to be found on waste ground. This is very encouraging, as is the increase in insect populations as the plants act as hosts to many different species. No weed spraying will take place. The grass should be cut on a regular, continuous basis, at least 3 times a year over the next few years, to encourage the beneficial plants to dominate. Having the tractor would be helpful in managing this process. The soft ball games area will be cut twice a year and the car parks and entrances every month or so. A strimmer is to be purchased to deal with the area in between the trees. However, at the request of CT, pockets of weed and long grass will be left in these areas as bird food during the winter.

12 plant species were found in the pond; as only 8 were planted this is good progress. Some pond work is required as a few alien species are becoming dominant, crastula (swamp monster), being one. Volunteers have managed to remove some of this recently. Bullrushes, although beneficial in keeping the water clean, are becoming overgrown and are to be thinned out shortly.

It was agreed for AO to order the disease resistant elm tree for the mound. Although the size of the tree will make planting difficult, Pearls have loosened the soil in the area which should help the process. This has to be completed within the next 3-4 months.

AO

CT: As well as the more common birds, 3 buzzards have been spotted on the site, also sparrow hawks and a kestrel. A grass snake was seen on the boundary. AO reported that the slow worms are doing very well, and was pleased to report the sighting of a baby adder a few weeks ago. However, it was agreed that a sign warning visitors of adders was a little premature.

AO stated that, overall, the nature reserve is progressing better than expected after a period of only 2 years as most of the species found arrived of their own accord. She undertook to provide JK with a summary of the current ecological and wildlife position at the reserve, which will form part of his environmental report to Council on 13 December.

AO

Information boards

SS: The boards and lectern have now been installed, and the Parish Council is to have the use of the right hand side of the boards. Information for the left hand sides and the lectern has yet to be prepared.

It was generally agreed that the boards are of high quality and suit the environment well. AO confirmed they will be painted on volunteer day.

Rabbit control

AO: It is now the season for this work to begin, and as well as the usual warrener another supplier has also now been found. AO is currently going through the Marketplace process. Warreners use ferrets and nets to eradicate the rabbits, and are paid by the day, currently around £130. It is difficult to predict how many days' work will be necessary, but with ongoing control measures the problem will

	<p>diminish over time. Although few rabbits have been sighted recently, there is a considerable problem in the area near the sewage works. The warreners also take responsibility for disposing of the rabbits; with the risk of myxamatosis there is no call for wild rabbit meat.</p> <p><u>Countrycare/volunteers activities.</u>  AO: The next volunteer day is 8 November. The tasks to be carried out include strimming, castula clearance, painting information boards, some tree planting behind the mound, weed removal, placing compost bins between the trees, erecting a highways mirror and the relocation of a bench.</p> <p><b>6. Prohibited activities and wording of signs</b>  SS: There are a number of activities that are not wanted or allowed, and some complaints about ball games have been received, mostly from residents living close to the site. SS circulated copies of signage that has been prepared which is aimed at parents and worded in such a way as to discourage organised team games, but to allow simple games with young children.</p> <p>SS also circulated a second proposed sign, prohibiting the use of cycles, roller blades etc. Again, common sense should prevail and the use of small bikes for children should be permitted. Motor bikes, which could prove to be a big problem, would have to be covered by a separate piece of legislation. At the beginning of the project it was established that bye laws could not be applied until a problem had been proved to exist. The situation will be monitored and if difficulties persist the introduction of bye laws will be considered.</p> <p>The use of both signs was agreed. They are not intended for the information boards, but will be put up separately.</p> <p>SS then distributed signs to be placed in the car parks, informing visitors that the car park gates are opened and closed by representatives of the Parish Council. . It was agreed to add two contact telephone numbers to the sign, CT's (01277 890394), and the Parish Clerk's (01277 890304). There is pedestrian access at all times but CT reported that the pedestrian gate appears to be locked when it is in fact on a latch. It was suggested that the bolt be removed altogether.</p> <p>SS had been asked if it was thought necessary to create a disclaimer of Council liability sign. Highways do not believe this is required, but Legal's opinion has been sought. JK cautioned against a preponderance of signage, and said that his preference would be not to put any signs up that are not obligatory.</p> <p><b>7. Queen Elizabeth Field Designation</b>  SS: An application was sent on 31 August, and an acknowledgement has been received. The information is available to view on the website. SS made contact again before the meeting and was told that as long as the site meets the basic criteria, there are unlikely to be any issues. The deeds would be prepared once representatives have visited the reserve, and SS asked if the technical team could meet them on site. If all goes well a plaque stating that the site has been designated a QEII Field to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee would be presented, and it was suggested that this would make an excellent PR opportunity. This is not the only request in the district; Loughton Town Council have made applications for two sites, and AO is considering whether any other Country Care sites would qualify.</p> <p><b>8. Complaints</b>  SS: (i) One neighbour complained that a bench had been sited in full view of his property. This has been upheld and an alternative position for the bench has been identified. It will be moved on volunteer day.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
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	<p>2) Another neighbour maintains that he was promised solid fencing at the beginning of the project, but as this is not an ideal solution some alternatives have been offered. AO has suggested relocating some willow from elsewhere to put closer to the boundary, but as this has not yet been agreed by the residents this work will not be carried out on Tuesday.</p> <p>CT mentioned a complaint about subsidence received some time ago and SS confirmed that this was dealt with by advising the complainant that his insurance company should contact Veolia directly. No further action has been taken by the complainant. CT stated that Veolia had undertaken to survey all the properties but appear to have lost the data.</p> <p><b>9. Grants</b> - Covered above.</p> <p><b>10. Any Other Business</b>  TB's idea for an fund raising activity, perhaps on Halloween, to search for the 'swamp monster' was well received, and AO suggested expanding this by having a nature trail to search for other alien species. A regular events calendar could be placed in the information boards.</p> <p>CT: No deer have yet been sighted on the park, although there are several in surrounding areas. As they can do a huge amount of damage this was welcome news.</p> <p>CT wished it to be noted, as this was the first meeting since the Opening Ceremony, that the day was a huge success. The weather was glorious and all went according to plan.</p> <p>CS asked if a template for a volunteer day flyer was available, so that the details could be filled in and then posted around local areas. AO undertook to devise one, and suggested putting details in the information boards. Volunteer days are held at approximately 3 month intervals, and details would be available 1-2 months before the date. CT said that he would make a point of mentioning volunteering when reporting about the park at a policy meeting later this month. CS 'volunteered' her husband, who as a tractor driver is well qualified to help.</p> <p>SS: AO had liaised with Moreton Primary School who wished to use Bobbingworth for their project on landfill sites and contaminated water on 26 October. This is a prime example of extra curricula work which can be included in the sustainability and project leaflets yet to be prepared, and having the school involved on a regular basis would be very welcome.</p> <p><b>11. Date of next meeting</b>  It was agreed that it would be interesting to make a site visit and to hold the meeting to in the village hall afterwards. 2.30 pm on site on <b>Wednesday 28 March</b> was confirmed. TB to book the village hall.</p> <p>Once investigations are complete a Portfolio Holder report on the tractor purchase to be sent to JK.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; color: orange; opacity: 0.5;">DRAFT</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; color: orange; opacity: 0.5;">T</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">AO</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">TB</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SS</p>
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