

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

Held at

2.30 pm 28 March 2012 Conference Room, Civic Offices

Present: Susan Stranders, Drainage Manager, E&SS (SS)
 Abigail Oldham, Country Care (AO)
 Cllr C Thompson, Moreton Bobbingworth & the Lavers PC (CT)

Notes: Stella Forster

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies: Cllr T Boyce, Cllr C Squirrell, Q Durrani. SS agreed to chair the meeting in Cllr Knapman's absence.</p>	
2.	<p>Draft notes of last meeting 02 November 2012 - Agreed. The agreed notes to be sent to the SCG Panel.</p>	SS
3.	<p>Matters Arising P1: Two 'killer' potholes were filled by ECC, but the third is dipping slightly again. SS to contact ECC to report that this is potentially dangerous as drivers are swerving to avoid it on the narrow road.</p> <p>CT wished it to be recorded that the planting of the Elm tree was very successful. Six school children carried out most of the work as part of a wider project sponsored by the Rotary Club. They impressed everyone present and were well informed about Dutch Elm Disease. Some photographs were taken but the local press, who were not present on the day, would not print any that included the children, even though the head teacher had indicated it would be permitted if their full names were not given.</p>	SS
4.	<p>Terms of Reference SS had received confirmation from Democratic Services that changing the wording from 'two elected Members' to 'two representatives' would not constitute a significant amendment. The revised Terms of Reference are attached.</p> <p>CT: It was always hoped that Ongar Town Council would become involved in the Bobbingworth development but they showed little interest. They claimed not to have been informed of the plans, including the 70 daily lorry movements.</p>	SS
5.	<p>Budget SS: CSB spend was within budget this year and there is £27k of capital remaining which is hoped will be allocated to a new tractor. There are no other significant costs to be taken from capital for new installations or equipment. The site is fully planted, and good quality information signs and notice boards have been installed. SS and Lee Savill have been tasked with preparing a capital component list to cover the renewal or breakdown costs of existing plant.</p>	
6.	<p>Update from officers <u>Operation & maintenance</u> (i) DSEAR - It was agreed at the last meeting to make an assessment of the levels of methane gas present on the site and to erect appropriate signage for visitors. Darren has advised that he needs to carry out further monitoring before deciding on the type of signage to use. No communication has been received from Veolia.</p> <p>(ii) Leachate quality - dispute with Thames Water. A meeting was held with</p>	

Thames concerning the high levels of zinc, and samples have been sent to various laboratories for testing. No responses have yet been received. A final conclusion from Thames is awaited.

Landscaping and future maintenance programme

Snow clearance - after investigations into the various costs involved in using snow brushes attached to grass cutters, as suggested by JK, this is not considered a cost effective exercise bearing in mind the logistics of clearing a 10 sq. mile expanse of land. The expense of insurance etc. is prohibitive, and the type of tractor which is being planned to buy would be too slow for road use.

However, after analysis by SS, LS and AO, the tractor purchase is considered a sensible spend, but before committing to spend £25k on it, as AO and her team have passed their tractor driving test they intend to carry out a trial run with a hired tractor at the end of April, which is when the next cut is due. Equipment can be hired to fit at the rear of the tractor to collect the grass, which will be taken to the compost area. This should give an indication as to how cost effective a tractor would be, although saving money is not the only consideration. The flexibility and control of a Council-owned tractor should be of equal importance. There are three sites in North Weald where it could also be used.

CT said that the two neighbouring farmers are opposed to the purchase of a tractor, and recommend contracting the work out as and when required. However, decisions about cutting have to be made within a few days and it may be difficult to hire contractors at short notice as they would have to fit the work in between their main jobs. The procurement process would also be time consuming. It was agreed to leave the final decision until after the trial run.

Ecology and wildlife On two visits this year AO had identified 15 species of grass and wild flowers, all of which had appeared on the list sent out to the group with the last minutes. There is a problem with thistle growth, especially on either side of the pathways. However, with regular cutting the grass should grow in eventually. Sowing grass seed would not help this process.

There is also a problem with goats rue in some areas, which AO and her team were unable to dig out last year as the ground was too hard. It was therefore strimmed, and continuing this treatment would weaken it in time. However, AO may designate digging the roots out a future volunteer task. This plant does have some positive uses as it can be used in herbal remedies.

As well as the more common birds, woodpeckers can now be heard all over the site, and CT had seen a tree creeper. The plastic covering has been removed from the slowworm encampment. It is to be replaced by asphalt mats, which are longer lasting and better at retaining heat. The sight of slowworms underneath the covering has proved very popular with children visiting the site.

The current method of watering the new elm tree is not ideal as there is no standpipe on the site. SS suggested putting a tap in a lockable enclosure at the leachate treatment plant. CT recommended using large plastic bags which fit into wheelbarrows and hold 40-50 litres each. They are fillable by hosepipe, and could be left in the lockable enclosure. It was agreed to explore different options of watering the elm, but AO would meanwhile ask for it to be placed on the regular patrol route, so it can be watered at least once a week.

Information boards AO confirmed that several plaques have been put up, and the boards have information in them which is regularly updated.

AO also reported that the Countryside Code does not require dog waste to be

AO

	<p>placed into dog bins. As most visitors deal responsibly with their dog waste, and there is not too much of a problem at the moment (although stray dogs have been spotted on the site), it was agreed to monitor the situation over the summer before deciding on what extra signage, if any, to put up.</p> <p>CT suggested labelling selected trees, particularly those close to the path. It was agreed that this would enhance visitors' observations of the trees, and to place small plaques close to the ground when the trees are a little more mature.</p> <p><u>Rabbit control</u> AO and the warrener made two visits to the site in the winter, working on the farmer's side of the fence. However, due to the Marketplace procedure, the warrener could not start before January and only 30 rabbits were destroyed. It is hoped this process will be easier next year. It is important to prevent the rabbits burrowing through the landfill cap, but although they forage all over the site their burrowing is confined to small areas, particularly next to the paths, and there is no evidence yet of the cap being damaged.</p> <p><u>Countrycare/volunteers activities</u> AO had held three volunteer days since the last meeting, when the following tasks were completed:</p> <p>8 November (with Veolia): compost bin, pond work, strimming between the trees, tree planting, erection of post for the mirror;</p> <p>24 January (with children): compost bin, elm planted, dog bins placed;</p> <p>27 March: compost bin, interpretation boards, benches etc. varnished, interpretation board post erected, goat's rue dug.</p> <p>CT had publicised the volunteer days on notice boards at the Parish Council. AO to advise the group of future dates, when known.</p> <p>Prohibited activities and wording of signs</p> <p>7. The car park is not well used at present, and it was not considered necessary to put up extra signage to warn drivers that they park at their own risk as disclaimers are already present. However, additional information could be added to the boards.</p> <p>No complaints of noise or visual intrusion have been received since the site first opened. The neighbour who was offered a willow screen to shield his property did not respond until this week, when he accepted the offer. However, as the optimum time to plant willow is the autumn, SS to advise him that work cannot begin until October/November this year.</p> <p>Queen Elizabeth Field Designation</p> <p>8. SS: The award has been granted and the draft deed of dedication is awaited from the QEII Trust. This must then be approved by Legal, and it is to be hoped it will all be finalised before the Jubilee bank holiday. SS to chase up.</p> <p>Although there is no obligation to hold a Field Day, it would be appropriate to hold a public commemorative day in the Jubilee period. It was suggested to invite the children who planted the elm, and to make it a PR opportunity by involving the press. When it arrives, it was agreed to locate the 40 cm dia. plaque central to the mound, or on the finger post where the paths converge. Information could also be placed on the boards at the site entrance and elsewhere.</p> <p>Grants</p> <p>9. SS and AO had independently spent some time exploring the possibility of</p>	<p>AO</p> <p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
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securing grants. CT had also investigated grants which might be available to the Parish Council. Funds had been granted for various projects in the area by BAA Stansted, the scheme first mentioned by Cllr Sartin, but this has to be for specific projects, and does not cover maintenance. It was concluded that Bobbingworth is not eligible for grants at the present time. This item to be removed from the agenda until an application for grants can be justified.

Any other business

10. SS: Lee Savill had raised the point that the car park gates were too often closed, and the procedure for locking them should be revisited. This is particularly important for the Easter and summer holidays. CT said that the gates had been kept closed for longer periods whilst there was the threat of traveller incursion, but now this is a low risk and complaints are being received the default position should be to leave the gates open. The locking process is an onerous one, the post being the major difficulty. It was agreed to investigate alternative locking devices, but meanwhile to leave the gates open unless a problem arises.

Date and place of next meeting

11. Wednesday 26 September 2012 2.0pm on site. CT to book the village hall.

CT

D R A F T