

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

**2.00 pm on site then at Moreton Village Hall  
26 September 2012**

**Present:** Cllr W Breare-Hall, Environment Portfolio Holder (Chair) (WBH)  
 Susan Stranders, Drainage Manager, E&SS (SS)  
 Cllr Tony Boyce (TB)  
 Abigail Oldham, Country Care (AO)  
 Cllr C Thompson, Moreton Bobbingworth & the Lavers PC (CT)  
 Cllr R Schwier (RS)  
 Lee Savill, EFDC Resident Engineer (LS)

**Notes:** Stella Forster

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>1. Apologies: Kim Durrani</b>            Cllr Squirrel's resignation was noted, and the new elected representative, Cllr Robert Schwier, was welcomed to the Group.</p> <p><b>2. Draft notes of last meeting 28 March 2012 - agreed</b></p> <p><b>3. Matters Arising</b>            CT: P1 'killer' pothole - this has now been patched, but is already beginning to sink again.             P2 watering of the elm - a tap has now been positioned close by which has solved the problem of watering the tree.</p> <p><b>4. Terms of reference</b>            The revised terms of reference had been sent to the Safer, Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p><b>5. Budget</b>            SS: Following the recent trial, it has become apparent that the purchase of a small tractor is not a viable option as it takes too long to cover the site, and the £37k that remains in the capital budget would be better utilised elsewhere.            Discussions on sharing resources to deal with the flood retention schemes as well as Bobbingworth are to take place with Theresa Brown.             Consideration is now being given to contracting the grass cutting work out on an annual basis, which could be a more efficient option. The unique nature of the site means that grass and weeds grow at different rates at various locations. As it has only been open since June last year its development is still in the process of being monitored and understood, and at present there can be no set regime. A contractor would need to be flexible, be expected to cut 2-3 times per year and be aware that they could be called in at short notice.             3-4 companies have been asked to quote for the grass cutting work. TB said that two obvious candidates would be the farmers whose land borders the site. They could be available at short notice, except at harvest time, and know the location well. RS said that he does not own a grass collector but the other farmer, Andrew Gemmill at Wood Farm, is to purchase a mower with a collector attached.             SS: The procurement system is a protracted one and the process could take up to a year. It would be sensible and more cost effective to incorporate within the contract the maintenance of other areas in the district, e.g. flood storage areas,</p>	

reservoirs etc.

AO and her team of volunteers work hard at maintaining the site but there are some tasks, which they cannot undertake. LS said that a contractor has been organised to carry out a close cut of the site this year, including strimming between the trees, which will prepare it for a new contractor to come in next year. Ideally a contract will be in place before the first cut, possibly in May/June, although because of the weather conditions this did not take place until the end of July this year.

In response to WBH's query SS said that the £37k capital money is not time limited and has been rolled over for a few years now. The revenue budget is £36k per year, and there is no indication at this that this will be overspent. However, this very much depends upon if anything goes wrong on the site. Veolia is paid approximately £2k per month and any extra works are added on when necessary. The Council is tied in to a 7 year contract with them, at the end of which it may be possible to take over the maintenance of the site in-house if the expertise and resources are available.

## 6. Update from Officers

### Operation and maintenance

SS: No breaches have occurred.

DSEAR Regs - Veolia has yet to finalise their investigation into what the gas levels are on the site. A decision on what signage to use will be delayed until the results are known.

LS: As explained on the tour, parts of the reed bed are dying back and it remains to be seen if the affected areas grow back next year. If not part of the budget will be used for replanting.

The pumps are being continually monitored, and although some spares are held, Veolia are very efficient at refurbishing old ones, which saves a lot of money. The life expectancy of a pump, depending on its position on the site (they need more maintenance in areas of heavy iron) is about 3 years. The original pumps cost £400 each, but other models are now on the market at around £275-300. Different products will be trialled over time but they may prove to be of inferior quality to the originals.

SS: Following several occasions when samples taken by Thames Water showed higher levels of zinc than those regularly taken by EFDC, a test was carried out whereby the two parties met on site and took duplicate samples. EFDC's were within the limit, Thames' were higher. This would appear to verify that their laboratory analyses were incorrect, and nothing further has been heard from them. If it had been proved that the zinc levels were above the limit EFDC would be liable to be fined, but the systems are highly controlled and officers were confident they were working efficiently. SS wished for the amount of work LS does behind the scenes and in his own time to be recognised by the Group.

CT said that having now experienced two extremes since the site was opened, very dry weather followed by heavy rainfall, the drainage system has coped very well with both. This proves that the design was correct, and the maintenance and monitoring regime is being well managed. There are seven different geological strata at the site, each with its own problem to deal with, including two water tables at different levels at either end. AO and her team and LS recently gave the local horticultural society a tour of the site and they were very impressed with the engineering work behind it.

SS added that it had been a challenging and expensive scheme to set up due to the number of environmental issues involved. LS said that different areas are more heavily contaminated than others but can be managed individually. The amount of water that goes into each section to flush out contamination is carefully controlled, and will depend upon rainfall levels.

#### Landscaping & maintenance

AO: The landscaping projects are all but completed and the work on site is now mainly maintenance related, carried out mostly by Countrycare volunteers. There have been two volunteer days since the last meeting, one at the end of May and another in July.

In May, volunteers strimmed between the trees and raked up what had been left after the tractor trial. A compost area was built to contain this material. They also took plastic down from the slow worm compound. In July they tackled goats rue, strimmed between the trees and revarnished the boards. There is to be a third day on 4 October, when another compost bin will be built, the hedge along the end of the site will be trimmed, and the site will be generally tidied up before the winter.

CT wished it to be noted that the volunteers are a willing, hard working group from the community and have proved to be a very valuable resource.

#### Ecology and wildlife

AO was pleased to report 84 different species of grasses, wild flowers and weeds. Only 2 of the 8 or 9 originally planted were identified, the rest (some of which are not wanted) have seeded themselves. Although it was unplanned, different areas were cut at different times, and this has proved beneficial to the wildlife on site. This flexibility should be built in to the new contract.

There was some concern about the condition of the elm tree, but after leaf samples were sent to the nursery it was confirmed that the tree was in good health.

Slow worms are still present in good numbers, and there have been welcome sightings of reed buntings, a species that the RSPB report is on the amber list and has been declining for 25 years. Red kites and skylarks were sighted on one of the volunteer days, and the buzzard can also still be spotted occasionally.

Since the last meeting two classes of 30 children each from Moreton School took part in an Education Day, and as mentioned by CT, AO, LS and Kevin took the Moreton Horticultural Society on a tour of the site.

#### Information boards

These will be cleaned up during the next volunteer day.

#### Rabbit control

The procurement for the warrener that AO found last year took three months to complete, and left time for only one visit last season. Unfortunately he is now emigrating to Australia and the process must begin again.

An offer to carry out this function free of charge has been made by a local person, but there are a few concerns about using such a resource. It was agreed that there should be no problem as long as the Council issues a disclaimer, the individual works at his own risk, he uses ferrets and not guns, and he informs the Council when he intends to begin. RS added that the rabbits from the site are destroying crops and any method of controlling their numbers would be welcome by the farmers.

<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Queen Elizabeth Field Designation</b>  The group was shown the plaque received from the QEII Trust, and were most impressed with it. A location was identified during the tour of the site, as well as a possible position for the Royal Oak sapling.</p> <p>The agenda item for grants was removed after the last meeting due to the nature of the site and the restrictive nature of funding available. The Trust indicated there may be some funding but on further investigation it was confirmed that no grants were available for sites within Essex, as the Trust has not had any success in obtaining funding in the area. However, at the moment no project has been identified that might require such funding.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Complaints</b>  No complaints.</p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Any other business</b>  CT: (1) On the original design for the site there were plans for the Parish boundaries of Moreton and Bobbingworth to be demarked by a line of hedges. The space is currently rather uninteresting and it is wide enough to be divided by some form of hedging.</p> <p>LS: The problem would be maintaining both sides of the hedge. There was some talk of putting marker stones down but they would get lost in the foliage. There is possibly a case for planting small species of hedging, which will not penetrate the cap, broken up at intervals to allow the passage of a tractor.</p> <p>AO will investigate which plants may be appropriate, possibly using some of the species which have already been successfully planted elsewhere on the site.</p> <p>(2) CT felt strongly that as Darren Cole has worked so tirelessly on the Bobbingworth project his efforts should be rewarded by naming the viewing mound after him. He suggested either 'Darren's Barrow' or 'Coles Hill' as possibilities.</p> <p>The group was in agreement that Darren's hard work was very much appreciated, but that the project would not have been successful without CT's drive, determination and commitment to it over the past 30 years and some recognition for this would be well deserved. It was therefore agreed that the viewing mound would in future be referred to as "Colin's View'. Information about how and why the name had been changed will be placed in the interpretation boards or at other locations on site and celebrated in an appropriate event in the future.</p>	<p>AO</p>
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Date and place of next meeting</b>  Next meeting to be held at the Civic Offices in March at the later time of 3.30 pm. SS to suggest some suitable dates.</p> <p>The following meeting will again be held on site and at the village hall.</p>	<p>SS</p>