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**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 20th January 2011**

MINUTES

Attendance

Cllr Herbert Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Phil Pennington	DEF Chairman
Paul Harris	Friends of the Earth/Green Party
Jason Williams	Hemel in Transition
Gruff Edwards	DEF Vice-Chairman
Sheila Doyle	Friends of the Earth
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Marion Baker	Transition Town Berkhamsted
Rudolph Kirst	HM GM Action Group and Kings Langley Biodynamic Group
Jean Blackman	Friends of the Earth
Adrienne Gear	Community Action Dacorum
Roger Hands	DEF Water Group
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature
Emma Norrington	Groundwork/TBCC
Lizzy Staincliffe	Dacorum Borough Council
Alison King	Dacorum Borough Council
Hazel Johnson	Green Party
Alan Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Council/Green Party
Cllr Carole Paternoster	Aylesbury Vale District Council

Apologies

Cllr David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Martin Hicks	Tring in Transition
Sylvia Davidson	DEF Water Group
Mary Dyson	Lions Club, Berkhamsted
Peter Thring	CPRE Herts

The meeting started at 7.30 pm

Fire instructions were read out and Members notified of exits in the event of having to leave the building.

100. Minutes of Meeting held on 14th October 2010

These were agreed.

101. Matters Arising

101.1 P Harris stated that with reference to 97.2 of the last minutes he had written to Tiger Line about developing a bus route between Hemel Hempstead and Leighton Buzzard. They have responded stating that they will keep it in mind.

101.2 Cllr G Stevens asked whether DEF had received a response to their letter, with reference to 99.1 of the previous minutes. P Pennington confirmed that they had received a response from Cllr Chapman and the Steering group had dealt with it. He asked that E Staincliffe send around a copy of the letter with the minutes.

Action: E Staincliffe to send around Cllr Chapman's letter with the minutes.

102.3 P Pennington announced that due to changes in her role at the Council, E Staincliffe was no longer able to support DEF to the same level as she had been to date. He commented that as the Council faced funding cuts it would be down to the 'Big Society' to keep DEF going. Over the next few months DEF Steering group will work out how to cover the administration.

102. Dacorum's Air Quality

102.1 A King, Environmental Health Officer at Dacorum Borough Council, conducted a presentation on air quality in Dacorum. The presentation is attached to the minutes. Following an explanation of how they measure air quality in the Borough, she highlighted the requirements to declare three air quality management areas within the Borough. She also highlighted a free service that is offered to Dacorum residents that provides an early warning system for poor air quality: Air Alert <http://www.airalert.info/HertsBeds/>

102.2 P Harris asked whether pollutants from the aviation industry were monitored.

A King stated that Luton Airport conduct their own monitoring and although Markyate is relatively close to Luton Airport it is not something that they get involved in.

102.3 Cllr G Stevens asked how widespread the Council's monitoring sites were.

A King stated that they are widespread across the Borough in both areas near busy roads and residential areas. She reported that they had recently installed an air quality measuring machine in Northchurch which will take hourly readings of air quality. They are just awaiting the electricity supply to it to be connected.

102.4 E Norrington asked whether there was a deadline for developing the action plan

A King stated that she hoped to attend Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the next 4-6 weeks and then take the proposals to Cabinet soon afterwards. She proposes to undertake a letter drop to those residents within the Air Quality Management Areas

(AQMA) and provide an information pack about air quality to local Councillors. Once all this is completed the date for the order will be set and then the action plan will be developed over two years.

102.5 D Harvey asked how long it takes, once the tubes have been sent to the lab for analysis, for the data to be provided.

A King stated two weeks. She stated that the information is available and she hoped to improve the DBC website to make the data more accessible.

102.6 D Harvey asked how much over the threshold the air quality is in the areas identified.

A King stated that the limit is 40mg. In Northchurch it is 41-42mg, in Lawn Lane it is 68-70mg and in London Road it is 60-70mg.

102.7 J Williams asked given the proposal for the extension of the Manor Estate is there a reason why air quality has not been considered for s.106 money.

A King stated that the planning application was originally submitted before the area had air quality problems but as the consent has lapsed they now need to reapply. She stated that she has asked for a full air quality impact assessment but has big concerns about the potential impacts and is not sure what the developers will provide to reduce the potential impact.

102.8 H Johnson asked what the readings were like at the traffic light junction at Two Waters.

A King stated that monitoring is not undertaken there as there is no residential areas within close proximity or places where people would be for longer than 8 hours a day. She went on to add that as part of the action plan they will be looking at road layout design. There are tubes in the area of the Magic Roundabout but there are no problems with air quality at the moment as the area is very open and pollutants are able to disperse.

102.9 Cllr F Guest stated that she noted the presentation with interest and looked forward to it being brought to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She asked whether the information going out to Councillors could provide a wider explanation of air quality.

AK agreed that this was possible.

102.10 D Harvey stated that if you can't move buildings or reduce traffic what can be done?

A King stated that they can do something about traffic: change road design, control traffic to prevent lorries and buses using certain routes.

102.11 J Williams commented that the problem was the commercial areas and people driving to the retail areas.

A King agreed.

102.12 P Pennington thanked A King for her informative presentation and asked that she let the Forum know if she can help to input into the action plan.

103. Proposals for Dairy at Dacorum's border

103.1 P Harris introduced Cllr Carole Paternoster from Aylesbury Vale District Council who had been invited to speak about proposals by Arla Foods (a Danish/Swedish milk processing company) to build a large milk processing plant at Aston Clinton, close to the Dacorum border.

103.2 Cllr Paternoster reported that the proposed site was within her parish and her ward. Arla have a site of 150 acres between the Grand Union canal and the A41 at Aston Clinton. The milk processing plant will take up 65-70 acres and the rest of the site will seek outline planning for two distribution warehouses at a later date. Arla reportedly own Lurpak, Anchor and Cravendale and bottle milk for supermarkets.

103.3 Cllr Paternoster reported that Arla anticipate 800-1000 HGV movements a day and she stated that half of these are likely to use the A41 to get to the M25, therefore passing through Dacorum and causing more traffic. The proposals are not contrary to planning policy but will require the Secretary of State to grant approval.

103.4 Cllr Paternoster reported that Arla propose that the dairy will create 600-780 jobs, of which 350 will be HGV tankers driver. She stated that the planning application is due to be made at the end of February and she will let DEF know so that they may be able to object if they wish.

103.5 P Harris added that the site will be operational 24 hours a day causing noise and light pollution to the nearby area. He reported that Aylesbury Vale District Council state they would prefer it in an industrial part of Aylesbury instead.

103.6 D Harvey asked whether Arla own the land

Cllr Paternoster stated that they have bought the options on the land but the farmer has not received any payment.

103.7 G Edwards made an observation that when the A41 bypass was proposed, the case was made that it would relieve pressure on the old A41, but as soon as it was built industry developed nearby and soaked up all the relief. New roads bring new traffic.

103.8 M Baker asked where Arla were based and why they need this additional dairy.

P Harris stated that he believed their UK headquarters to be in Leeds. Milk would be coming from across the country to Aston Clinton.

J Blackman raised a concern about the treatment of the cows.

P Pennington commented that milk production in the UK was decreasing.

103.9 D Harvey asked Cllr Paternoster whether she thought that given the local need for jobs whether on balance the Council would approve the application.

Cllr Paternoster stated that the Council would need to think long and hard about the environmental price is too high for these jobs.

J Williams commented that when you drill down are the jobs all going to be local. There is currently a surplus of HGV drivers and so they won't train anyone new and Arla would probably bring in their own management team so it might not be the figure they quote.

103.10 M Baker asked whether the site was in the AONB.

Cllr Paternoster stated that it wasn't but was only a couple of miles away and could be seen clearly. P Pennington asked if the Chiltern Board was aware. Cllr Paternoster confirmed that they were.

103.11 P Pennington thanked Cllr Paternoster for bringing the issue to the attention of the Forum. The Forum agreed to support the objection to the dairy.

104. Dacorum Partnership update

104.1 E Norrington reported that the Partnership structure was going through some changes and it was not yet clear what it would look like in the future. She stated that the next meeting was on March 9th where the structure would be discussed further. She stated that the Partnership was still very important and it was even more important that the environment should be highlighted.

104.2 She also reported that E Staincliffe, with the help of the Energy Saving Trust, had organised a climate change workshop for the Partnership for March.

104.3 E Norrington reported on the Passport to Go project, the overall aim of which is to help people who have been most affected by the recession. Groundwork is leading the part of the project that aims to bring the Bennetts End allotment site back into use with the help of volunteers. She hopes that they will be up and running by March.

104.4 E Staincliffe reported the requirement for DEF to refresh their action plan and the requirement to pick 3 indicators they would like to be monitored by the Dacorum Partnership Board. E Staincliffe presented a draft action plan which contained actions she knew were going to be undertaken. At the moment it has a lot of information about what the Council will be undertaking and she asked that other organisations linked to the Forum let her know what they are planning. The action plan will help the Forum and the wider partnership understand what action is being planned in the Borough and also promote it.

104.5 R Hands reported that the chalk streams project had just been published by the EA and that it should be included. E Staincliffe asked him to send her the information to include. E Norrington added that if any organisations were planning campaigns these should be included to be promoted.

104.6 H Johnson asked whether fair-trade could be included. E Staincliffe stated that she didn't see why not if the information could be sent to her.

104.7 D Harvey asked who would monitor the action plan. E Norrington stated she would clear this up with the Dacorum Partnership and report back to the Forum.

Action: E Staincliffe to send around draft action plan for it to be added to by the Forum by 11th February. R Hands to send E Staincliffe information about chalk stream project. E Norrington to investigate monitoring of the action plan.

105. DEF website

105.1 P Pennington stated that they had run out of time to look at the website and it would be deferred to the next meeting. He asked if M Baker had anything quickly to say about the website.

M Baker stated that if anyone had any ideas about how to change or improve the website, please let her know.

106. Any Other Business

- 106.1 M Baker reported that she had organised a local food workshop to be held in February. The workshop was by invitation only as was aimed at getting relevant stakeholders to discuss how they could improve the growth and use of local food.
- 106.2 R Kirst reported that he had recently been attending the High Court of Justice to observe a judicial review regarding the addition of fluoride into the water supply in Hampshire. He emphasised the case's importance for the environment, health and human rights.
- 106.3 E Staincliffe highlighted the potential for the DEF quarterly newsletter and requested information to be sent to her for inclusion. The deadline for submission would be 15th March 2011.
- 106.4 P Pennington reminded everyone that the April meeting would be the election of the Chair and Vice Chair so asked everyone to start thinking about who they would like to nominate.

107. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 7th April 2011 at 7.30pm at the Civic Centre.

Note: The Agendas and Minutes from the Dacorum Environment Forum meetings can be found at www.dacenvforum.org.uk

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm