

Minutes to the meeting of
Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)
held on Monday 8th August 2011, at Lowton Labour Club as per agenda.
<http://www.lendf.co.uk>

1. Welcome to Members, visitors and guests (45 people attended)
 - Also present PCSO Jane Tymon and Cllr James Grundy
 - *Apologies from Cllr Pam Gilliam and Cllr James Cowley*
2. Minutes from last meeting - not read due to volume of items to get through they are on web site
3. Ed Thwaite (Ed) (Chairman) explained background to LENDF including its previous existence as Hesketh Meadow Action Group and the village green hearing at which Wigan Council has spent a lot of rate payer's money trying to overturn our application. The Localism Bill coming into force made and to gain best advantage we set up LENDF. Ed emphasised that LENDF is non-political but encourages good debates and the chance for you to have your say. LENDF will communicate with the Council on your behalf, and strive for a better Lowton
4. Bank Balance Information - New account has balance of £1024 + £28.60 petty cash. At all meetings we pass round a collection tin.
5. Recent issues which have become known to the Chairman
Ed explained to the meeting that we may not get through all the items on the agenda due to new issues which have come to light.
6. Possible travellers Camp -St Helens. Travellers camp planning application is not Winwick Lane but on a parcel of land opposite The Bull. High fencing has been erected around the land and an application for 4 caravans, stables, plus a toilet block has been submitted. Ed has spoken to the Council regarding the process for objecting. If LENDF do a petition it would only be counted as one therefore LENDF will post info on its website to enable individuals

to object. Jackie reported that objections to the height of the fencing had already been put in. Ed had obtained a site plan of the caravan and stables and showed it to the meeting. Cllr Grundy followed up with info that the land maybe related to existing travellers site in St Helens. A similar situation had occurred in Pennington where an application was for a few caravans but now there are more than permitted on a regular basis. Cllr Grundy recommended residents submit objections. Details on how to object will be on LENDF website next week.

7. Braithwaite Road Residents Group - representative Louise Horsley brought attention to the Dr's Surgery application for extended hours at the pharmacy- currently being built- though there was a condition on the original permission that the opening hours were to match the Dr's hours. The practise have now applied to have extended hours of opening in order to provide specific services, i.e. methadone which is a drug substitute for addicts. **These hours will be Monday to Friday till 11pm & Saturday till 10pm.** Louise reported that the residents have started a petition to object to these hours as the location is unsuitable due to the high density residential environment and the children's play area opposite the site. Even the Chip Shop on Slag Lane has to close early because it is in a residential area! Louise asked for individuals to object to this app. Braithwaite Residents receive assistance from Cllr Pam Gilliam who had the deadline for objections extended to 24th August Cllr Gilliam also provide some funding for their campaign. Louise expressed her gratitude for Cllr Gilliam's assistance.
8. The meeting then developed into a discussion about the poor service that the GPs themselves give to the area, for example people have problems making appointments, never the same doctor. Some people reported that they had already left and re-registered elsewhere.
9. Cllr Grundy has also written to Joyce Redfearn submitting a objection. Golborne chemist covers this area with a late night every day service, and provides drug services this is 1.5 miles away from Braithwaite Road in the retail part of the town. Cllr Grundy

stated it was Council policy to stop methadone as it doesn't solve the problem - just prolongs it for life Cllr Grundy encouraged the need to object. One resident reported that her neighbour had moved from a similar situation due to uncomfortable environment at night. It was suggested that information should be placed in the local newspapers. Cllr Grundy thought the distribution of newspapers in Lowton was weak and therefore individual objections would be best. Ed reminded all that the LENDF website has copies of letter sent to the Council and Jan Johnston (Secretary to LENDF) would attach a document to the issue of the minutes which provide suggested words to assist individuals with their own objection letters. Ed stressed that only individual objections will count.

10. LENDF Leaflets Ed reported that all had been distributed also he had written to The Rt Hon Andy Burnham with a copy of the recent leaflet which had been distributed throughout the Lowton East Ward. A response has been received from his secretary. Ed also wrote to Joyce Redfearn regarding the Township Forums and to also inform her of the LENDF leaflet. Ed asked for support from the Council especially due to the Localism Bill.

11. Winter Flower Boxes Ed Statement

"As many of you are aware, we thought we were getting our winter flower boxes back, see minutes July 2011, unfortunately this is now not the case even though Golborne and Lowton are the only ward which will not be having these winter boxes on display. Ed received a letter from Wigan stating that an error had been made and they would not be returned.

Ed explained that Councillor Pam Gillian objected to Wigan giving us our flower boxes back. As it was out of procedure, and she subsequently got the decision to have the boxes reinstated, reversed. Both Pam and joint chair councillor Yvonne Klieve from

Golborne told cabinet they wanted the decision made by the forum not to have winter boxes, to stand.

Ed and Jan had a meeting with Pam this morning Monday 8th August, . They have asked that the members of the forum be called to attend an extra meeting to discuss the issue and take another vote.

We are sure that when all members realise that Golborne and Lowton are the only areas without the winter boxes, they will vote to have the boxes reinstated.

If this cannot be achieved we have requested that both Pam and Andrew Sharrocks, the Township Manager, attend our next meeting and explain why.

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- Three ladies present at the meeting were from Lane Head East Lanc Rd area. They reported that they had tried to get flowerboxes for the corners of the East Lancs/Newton Road , due to the austere look of all the safety railings but the Council had pointed out that they would block the view of drivers and this is could cause traffic issues. They would still like to have them and mentioned the design used in Astley as being suitable for Lane Head. Cllr Grundy reminded the meeting that the original choices of design had been made by each ward previously - he suggested it may be possible to use monies from the Brighter Borough Fund to make purchases of the alternative design or that a 'swap' could be arranged with another ward. Ed suggested that photographs be taken of the Astley design to assist with the process.
- Jackie asked about the money that supposedly had been saved by not having winter flowers boxes - where had this gone? Also in previous township forum votes it was always done by show of hands! The meeting then entered into a discussion

about the winter boxes in general and that we only see the benefit in spring. Cllr Grundy strongly voiced his opposition about the reversal decision. He thought it unacceptable that Cllr Gilliam had done this.

12. PCSO Jane Tymon Reported to the meeting that a motor thief had been caught who had been responsible for a number of incidents in the area. He was given a jail sentence. She reported that criminal damage and anti-social behaviour was noticeably down in incidents and all areas now have low rates! It was reported to JT. That people (including children as young as 3) had been seen sleeping on the Oaklands Road Park late at night/overnight. If this were to be reported JT would only be able to attend the next day and therefore the area would probably be clear by the time she arrived! Cllr Grundy noted that the previous system had been good and problems were generally from people outside the area. A new system of policing had been put in place when Insp Kennedy was away for 6 months and the area had now deteriorated. Insp Kennedy is now back and Cllr Grundy suggested that LENDF write to him asking for a meeting. JT asked for people to ring through any issues even though she can not attend until the next day. She would like information on all issues in Lowton. JT explained the way call are handling by the operator and that a 'grade' was given to the incident depending on the caller's information - therefore Grade 1 is high priority and a lower grade would be given to JT. Also calls may be diverted to a call-centre a long way outside of our area and a good description of the area is therefore essential as Lowton has a WA postcode and Cheshire Police would be given the incident rather than Leigh. Ed explained the need to ask for Leigh Police Station when they call and ask for a log number it is important to keep a note of this. 'Twitter' link - just type in 'gmpleigh'.
13. Assets of Wigan Council Ed reported a new website launched by the Government which is a trial site whereby Council's are to publish their assets. <http://publicassets.communities.gov.uk/> Fortunately Wigan Borough Council has done this and it is possible

to gain information about land. For instance at the last meeting, a resident of Spruce Close, reported men taking photographs of a parcel of land at the end of the close. They did not respond to questioning and left the area. Ed's research via the new website found it to be designated as 'community use - dedicated public open space'. Which means it is not for sale or planning use. The land from Rowan along the East Lancs to the Greyhound has had a change in its title! Colin read out an article in The Telegraph re the Government approving building on designated open space and asked Ed to post this onto the LENDF website. Cllr Grundy emphasised that the words 'infill' in the article were meant as designated for community only. He asked that judgement on the article be held back and he will research the facts and pass them to Ed. The Wigan UDP has now been voted on without any changes being made i.e. 1,000 houses in Lowton.

14. Cllr Pam Gillian voted in line with Labour policy on this planning to allow properties be built in Lowton, Cllr James Grundy voted against this proposal and Cllr James Cowley was recovering from an operation.

Another resident of Spruce Close, whose property is alongside this land, mentioned he had also investigated its designation to find that was 'amenity land' not only for Rowan Ave residents but also Gleneagles Close. Residents need to be vigilant about the Council building on such pieces of land as it would allow other similar areas of land to be built on too. Cllr Grundy suggested we investigate all parcels of land in Lowton Ward. Ed referred back to the proposal by WBC for low density housing, i.e. 4 bedroom detached, in Lowton and asked residents to be watchful of notices/activities spotted in the area and notify us. He had researched landownership and found it to be the Addamson and Leigh family own most of the land in our area who advised him that they had been approached by developers but they had refused to discuss their land with them. A member of group noted that a developer had been researching Stone Cross Lane too.

15. Airstrip near to Kenyon Hall Farm

A resident at the meeting reported that an light aeroplane club wanted to open a club and air strip on this land. Cllr Grundy reported that the owner of the land, Cliff Mort, has been in discussion with Lane Head residents and they had not been happy with the initial proposals but technically Cliff Mort does not need planning permission for the airfield only the buildings. Further meetings were planned included an open day for residents to view the site. Cllr Grundy will support whatever decision the residents take.

16. St Catherine's - Stan Walker requested the meeting discuss the 'possible' closure of St Catherine's but noted that the school will not be affected. Ed reported to the group that a special meeting was to be held the next day by all local Councillors, The Rt Hon Andy Burnham, and the congregation of St Catherine's, to discuss the decision to temporarily close the church due to a recent Health and Safety survey which had deemed unsafe for the public to use.

Transport for Leigh - Stan Walker also asked the meeting's to support transport for Leigh. To view proposals click on link on LENDF web site or visit www.transportforleigh.org.uk As the LENDF meeting was now running late Ed requested that this matter be discussed at the next meeting.

17. AOB

Dates for Diaries:

- Sunday 21st August - Lowton Alive @ The Rose Centre (Civic Hall)
A request was put the meeting for volunteers on the day -
Please contact Ed or Jan.

18. Next LENDF Meetings

- Monday 5th September at 7.30 prompt.
- Monday 3rd October at 7.30 prompt.

Should you find any omissions or discrepancies in these minutes, please let me know and I will do my best to rectify any errors.

Many thanks to Irene Thomson who took the minutes at this meeting and typed them up for emailing out to all members and the website.

Jan Johnston
Secretary
LENDF