

Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)

Contact Email Address: lendf99@gmail.com

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 10 June 2024 at Lowton Social Club

Chair:	Prof. Graham Wardle (GW)
Secretary:	Liz Brown (LB)
Councillors:	Mike Smith (MS)
Apologies:	Irene Thomson (IT) Treasurer Julie Shawcross (JS) Deputy Secretary Gill Turner (GT) Minutes Secretary Jenny Gregory (JG) Councillor Garry Lloyd (GL) Councillor

No. of attendees = 18

1. Welcome and previous minutes

Minutes not read out at meeting, but copies have been sent out by email and posted on the Facebook page and put on the LENDF website. New visitors and guests were welcomed to the meeting. Many thanks were given to **Kath Houlton (KH)** for being such a hardworking and committed councillor in her 9 years in the role as a Lowton East Councillor. New Councillor **Mike Smith (MS)** was congratulated and welcomed as her replacement, and we all look forward to working with him.

2. Presentation from the Fly and Odour Action Group (Culcheth)

Hilary Heywood and **Carole Conroy** spoke about their group's progress regarding issues with black house flies and odour from the **Diggle Green Site** on Wilton Ln. The Site is just the other side of Lowton East, in the Warrington Borough. Parts of Lowton and Culcheth have suffered from bad smells/many flies over a number of years that seem to coincide with the turning of the green food waste on Diggle Green. Three quarters of the waste is transported in via lorry from their sister site in Todmorden. These lorries frequently travel down Kenyon Lane. The group has complained to both Warrington Borough Council (WBC) and the Environmental Agency (EA). WBC has confirmed that Diggle Green is the source of the smell, and the EA produced a CAR report demonstrating a direct link to the flies. As of November 2023, Diggle Green did **not** have a Pest Management Plan or an Odour Management Plan: these are plans that should be in place and followed to minimise smells and flies. They have, however, started to do some spraying. The EA are responsible for regulating Diggle Green's activities but have not done so. The group have now had their complaint about EA inaction accepted by the Ombudsman, but it will be 6 months before a caseworker is allocated. The group's detailed presentation notes are: <http://www.lendf.co.uk/CFAG%20PowerPoint%20Jun24%20Meeting.pdf> LHSRG will also liaise with Hilary & Carole.

ACTION: Hilary and Carole asked Lowton East residents who are affected and Councillors to write to Wigan Borough Council's Environmental Health Department: Ask them to investigate a potential health breach by Diggle Green, and to also ask them to apply pressure on the EA to do its job. In addition, please write directly to the EA and to your new MP.

3. Update by East Leigh Junior Football Club

James Ridyard spoke about progress since his last visit to LENDF. They are changing their name to **East Leigh AFC** and becoming a limited company. They are also registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) and now have about 750 local players and about 50 different teams including 3 inclusion teams. Players are aged from 5 to 50 years old as they have introduced 3 men's teams and 1 female team. Unfortunately, due to better facilities, the female team have been poached by another club. Changing and restroom facilities continue to be an issue. They have been asked to take on an **additional site in Higher Fold called Queensway** and have £250,000 to develop it. They are concentrating on developing this site first as it is a smaller site than Hesketh Meadow and hence easier to manage works and gain experience in site development.

In addition to pitch maintenance, they are going to move forward on some changes to the Hesketh Meadow field. Once they have negotiated a 25-year lease from Wigan Council, they will be spending about £1.2 million on **expanding the carpark**, putting a **path around the outside of the field**, installing **new signage** and some gates. They have had problems with off-road bikes and think they are coming on from the Redrow end of the site, so a **gate** is going there. The path will mean the inclusion teams (and the general public) can access the site more easily. The current stone carpark will have stones removed and a larger area of plastic grid will be laid to allow grass to grow through it. The two old apple trees may have to be removed, one is diseased, although the other is OK. They are hoping to sow a wildflower section near the carpark.

4. LaGTAC & GMP's Community Speed Watch (CSW) within Lowton and Golborne

GW said that throughout the Wigan Borough there were currently 11 CSW volunteers wishing to become GMP-PSVs (Police Support Volunteers) with 4 volunteers coming from Lowton East – they will all be fully trained by July/August. A minimum of four more additional volunteers from Lowton and Golborne had indicated to Graham that they were willing to take part once the GMP recruitment portal reopened (date TBA). **ACTION:** For further information please contact Graham by email (lagtac.data@gmail.com or lendf99@gmail.com) with the header '**CSW-volunteer**' or view the GMP website.

All potential CSW locations have to be risk assessed by the police Safer Transport Team before they can be speed-watched. LaGTAC (GW and KH) met with GMP's safety assessment and enforcement unit recently and five initial sites have been identified with more to be assessed at a later date. LaGTAC's own programme of speed assessments on 50 local roads (now in its 4th year) continues to run in parallel as normal providing data and intelligence gathering to our Lowton and Golborne community (who are demanding action on dangerous speeding) and to GMP.

One example of the relationship between LaGTAC and CSW activities has been shown for the notorious stretch of Sandy Lane (20mph Zone). Over the period 2020 to 2023 LaGTAC assessments indicated an average speed of approximately 30mph with >95% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit and 30% exceeding the speed limit by more than 15mph. The high-vis GMP-CSW study in May 2024 revealed a drop in the average speed to 22mph with 60% of vehicles exceeding the speed limit but with no drivers exceeding 35mph. The registered owners of five speeding vehicles have been sent letters. A week later the speeding returned to the pre-CSW values albeit there were now only 15% exceeding 35mph. The indication is that Sandy Lane will likely be

targeted for further CSW studies and possible formal enforcement by GMP at random times if excessive speeding is not curbed. [see **Appendix A attached** for further details]. Remember CSW is passive and for increasing driver awareness - it is not punitive! Formal enforcement is however undertaken by GMP's Road Traffic Policing unit where persistent excessive speeding is encountered.

5. Questions for local GP surgeries

LENDF had hoped that a local Dr (GP) from a Lowton East practice could attend the 10th June meeting to make a brief presentation and undertake a Q & A session on the engagement of patients with their local GP practices. This has now been deferred to the 12th August LENDF meeting.

Many patients report issues with respect to; (i) Booking appointments with their doctor, (ii) Prescriptions (and non-stocked items), (iii) On-line services, (iv) Delays in appointments with hospitals and (v) General patient/medical services communication issues. These issues have become more prevalent post-Covid and local residents want answers to some fundamental questions.

ACTION: To help our local GP when making their presentation and in their Q&A session. LENDF members who wish to ask questions please email LENDF (with the heading "Questions for GP Practices"). Graham will collate your questions and forward them to the GP in advance of the meeting – Thank you.

6. Councillors Business

Although Jenny (JG) and Garry (GL) couldn't be here tonight, they have sent through the following information: Wigan have passed the final plans for the **play areas** Pond Street (http://www.lendf.co.uk/wpimages/wp1b7ae738_06.png) and Winton Rd (<http://www.lendf.co.uk/KOMPAN%20-%20Appendix%20A%20-%20Winton%20Road%20Play%20Area%20-%202D%20&%20Elevation.pdf>). GL has asked that the Oaklands Road plan is looked at again as he thinks more can be delivered.

The '**Our Town**' **clean-up** is for a few days from the **28th October**. The week before a clean-up councillors and council officers will walk around some of the problem areas to decide what needs sprucing up. Golborne's was last week. If there are **things that are more pressing** such as hedging blocking pathways, then contact one of the councillors and they will ask for it to be looked at sooner.

JG had contacted the Environmental Authority regarding Diggle Green and she would be happy to speak to Hilary and Carole about progressing it further.

7. Updates/Questions:

Potholes: McColls carpark is getting worse, and a metal rod has appeared in the increasingly large pothole. McColls is now owned by Morrisons, but Morrisons rent the shop and land from a private landlord called Chet. No-one wants to claim responsibility for the state of the ground at the front of the shop. At present there is an insurance claim being put through so Morrisons is getting two quotes to get the hole filled properly. Who will pay for it is still in debate. If you have had an accident regarding a pothole then Martin Lewis's site is worth looking at: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/reclaim/pothole-claims/> And yes, they have had plenty of time to get the pothole fixed. Meanwhile, be careful if parking at McColls.

Sewage issues: * A speaker from **United Utilities** will give a presentation and be here to answer questions at our LENDF meeting on the **14th October 2024**. *

Cabbala Plaque: Last seen in Ed Thwaite's house – more investigation needed.

The dwindling pubs of Lowton: The StoneCross Pub is being turned into more rooms for the hotel next to it. The Church Pub near St Mary's Church is being refurbished.

Pennington Flash Nature Event last week:

Was a success although rain stopped play on Sunday. On Saturday there was lots to see and do. Would recommend the event next year. Met the volunteers from **Leigh Ornithological Society** who, with the aid of Lancashire Wildlife Trust, help to maintain the Flash Nature Reserve for (bird and human) visitors. They are always on the look out for more volunteers, if you are free on an occasional Wednesday morning then email leighos.webmaster@gmail.com to find out more information about extreme gardening! It's good fun, LB volunteered last week for Balsam Bashing! They also provide free talks and field trips for schools and youth groups.

Next meeting:

Mon 12th August 2024 at 7:30pm
at Lowton Social Club