

Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)

Contact Email Address: lendf99@gmail.com

Minutes of meeting held on
Monday 11 December 2023 at Lowton Social Club

Chair	(Currently vacant)
Secretary (Chaired the meeting)	Liz Brown (LB)
Covering Chairperson/Treasurer	Irene Thomson (IT)
Minutes Secretary	Gill Turner (GT)
Deputy Secretary	Julie Shawcross (JS)
Councillors	Kath Houlton (KH) Jenny Gregory (JG) Garry Lloyd (GL)

No. of attendees = 20

1. Welcome and previous minutes

Minutes not read out at meeting, but copies were emailed, posted on our Facebook page, and put on the LENDF website. The LENDF financial report was available at the meeting for people's perusal.

New visitors and guests were welcomed to the meeting.

Kathy Johnson, Chair of LHSRG, gave a farewell tribute to **Peter Hatfield**, one of the founding members of LHSRG. His funeral is Friday, 15th December at 11am at St Mary's Church. His family have set up a website with more information <https://peterhatfield.muchloved.com/>

2. Updates:

a. PA system and Father Christmas outfit!

LaGTAC purchased a PA system with portable battery back-up via Brighter Borough Funding. The unit is available to other community groups to borrow, contact Graham Wardle. There is also a Father Christmas outfit (XL) that can be borrowed from LHSRG.

b. Double yellow lines on 2 junctions on Hesketh Meadow Lane

Lines of 10m will be put around the corners of Hesketh Meadow Lane/ Oaklands Road/ Burnsall Avenue around the 14th of December. This is despite residents objecting to the fact they extend too far onto Hesketh Meadow Lane, preventing residents parking outside their own houses.

c. Section 59 signs

The signs will allow Police to confiscate vehicles driven unsafely, without a further warning. Signs will be erected around Lowton and include Hesketh Meadow Lane, Laburnum Road, Church Lane and Highfield Moss. Councillors asked residents to inform them of any other problem areas and residents mentioned Byrom Lane/Sandy Lane/Pocket Nook Lane.

d. Litter pick and tulip bulb planting near the fire station.

Red tulip bulbs (120) have been ordered for the front of the Fire Station and (60) 'Little Beauties' for opposite Pocket Nook Lane on Newton Road. Volunteers are requested for w/c Monday 18th Dec (afternoons) onwards to help plant and litter pick, email LENDF if you can help.

e. Christmas activities.

- *Events just gone:* 26 November light switch on at St Luke's was good fun, as was the 3 December light switch on at Lane Head organised by LHSRG. We would recommend both events next year.
- *Events to come:* Saturday 16 December Leigh Town Hall 'Festive Family Fun' 10:00 to 13:30 free booking <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/festive-family-fun-day-tickets-761097772927> . Also Saturday 23 December free 'Brass Band in the Park' 14:30 in Pennington Park.

f. Byrom Hall Wood – good news.

Forest England had consulted on their plan to manage the wood as reported at our last meeting. As a result of residents letters and an on-site meeting of Forest England, James Grundy (MP), the DEFRA minister Trudy Harrison, Linda Graham and other residents, the more drastic management processes will be removed from the plan. Thanks to all involved.

There will be a volunteer session at the wood in Jan/Feb, all welcome.

g. GMP's Community Speed Watch Scheme (CSW).

LaGTAC have been working with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the last 4 years to develop a Neighbourhood speed measurement and enforcement scheme. The resulting CSW scheme is now up and running. A few residents have already applied and are awaiting formal training in the coming weeks, however we really need **more** residents to apply. Having more volunteers will make our roads safer as we can monitor more roads for excessive speeding and traffic volumes.

Graham Wardle has asked GMP to re-open their vacancies portal for additional residents to join. Please click [here](#) for the online application. The closing date has been extended to **Sunday 14th January 2024**.

Roughly 31 sites in our area have been speed monitored in the last year. We are hoping to include traffic counts in the future to help evidence the external sources of congestion in Lowton.

h. Notice of Park improvements – Oaklands Road and Pond Street S106.

These parks will be improved with Section 106 monies in 2024. Martin Smith from Wigan Council will attend our February meeting with potential plans.

i. Notice of LENDF AGM – 12 February 2023

This will take place at the beginning of our normal meeting. There will be a vote for all committee roles. Anyone interested in any of these roles please contact the LENDF email.

j. Other updates.

- Councillors are looking into **pedestrian safety when crossing near the Red Lion Pub**. The matter has been raised previously but at the time the council said there wasn't enough footfall in the area to justify a dedicated pedestrian crossing. However more people now live in the immediate area.
- **Crossing Church Lane by St Luke's school** – this has been an issue for a while. The good news is the Lollipop lady will be back in January 2024. There will also be an on-site meeting with traffic planners to discuss relocating the bus stop to allow a zebra crossing to be put in place. (Append: Incident on Wed 13th Dec – children and parents verbally abused by a driver while they were trying to cross this busy road)
- **Water Quality** – in the summer months residents checked and reported quality of the water supplied by United Utilities and informed Councillors Garry and Jenny. They met with United Utilities who reported water was from the reservoir at Rivington but also from the Lightshaw water bore hole behind Golborne High School. Some residents paid for tests and reported high levels of lead in the water. **Residents not satisfied with water quality are asked to** report any issues to United Utilities initially by telephoning 0345 672 3723 (select option 1) and quote project number 80065253. To escalate the issue contact the Drinking Water Inspectorate on 0330 041 65501 or email dwi.enquiries@defra.gov.uk Supplies of water for Pocket Nook Lane estates are mixed with water from under the hill near Walter Brown's property and other bore holes in the local area.
- **Golborne Station** – there is a meeting at Golborne Parkside Sports and Community Club on Thursday 4 January 2024 at 18:30 – all welcome. Please go and ask how Lowton residents can access this station.

3. **Police: A message to children, schools and parents**

At the last LHSRG meeting our local PCSO reported that youths are riding around the area on scooters/off-road bikes with no helmets, including some who are pushing drugs. Drug dealing is becoming much more common in the area. Drug pushers use mobile phones to recruit and our children are particularly at risk of being sucked into this lifestyle if their phone security settings for particular Apps are open.

The Police are going into primary and secondary schools to raise awareness, as dealers are targeting young children (some under 10 as Police cannot stop and search under 10's) Please check with any relevant school to see when they are visiting and ensure you are aware of their advice.

For example: WhatsApp is being used and a child's mobile telephone number can be added by a friend to a large what's app group without consent. Young people's telephone numbers are then on display to these groups. Drug dealers message them as 'friends'. Once involved, it is harder to get children out of these situations.

The Police cannot chase anyone on a scooter/bike who is not wearing a helmet for safety reasons, and this is one reason that youths are not wearing them. The drugs are primarily cocaine and ketamine at present.

4. Wigan Local Plan:

- a. Open discussion about consultation meetings in Leigh and Golborne.

Wigan's local plan is for the next 15 years regarding 7 major topics: jobs, transport, housing, town centres, people, environment, places.

LaGTAC and the local community groups have submitted a 30 page document to Wigan councils planning policy department (doc ref: LaG.CGs.Wigan Local Plan Doc 12.12.2023)

There have been face to face consultation meetings in Golborne and Leigh (but none for Lowton) so it is **vital** to have your say via the website link.

<https://participate.wigan.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/options-and-preferences>

You need to create/use an existing login and then scroll to the bottom of the page to view to document. This large document is Wigan wide so just choose what is relevant to comment on, you can search on Lowton for instance. Once logged in, to make comments, click on the 'Question Mark' icons within the sections you wish to comment and then click the small blue 'reply' text.

- b. The deadline to have your say is one minute before midnight on Monday 18 December 2023 and we would advise you don't leave it to the last minute as you can keep going back and adding another comment on another section.

5. Transport

- a. Local Transport Plan consultation.

Wigan Council have also published an online document DRAFT WIGAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY 5 year plan – Closing date 18 December 2023.

<https://participate.wigan.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/transportstrategy>

You can comment in a similar way to the Wigan Local Plan. Try to at least comment on the new road onto the AtherLeigh way from the potential new builds off Pocket Nook. This strategy makes no reference to solving Lowton's congestion problems although Lane Head's air pollution is a concern:

Local air quality around the borough is closely monitored. There is a GM-wide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which is reviewed centrally by GMCA which carries its own Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

Within the borough there are two locations where nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels in 2022 were recorded to be higher than the 40µg/m³ legal threshold set by government; at A579 Winwick Lane (Lane Head) and Wallgate (Wigan town centre). The council has put in place Air Quality Action Plans (AQAPs) to address these issues and it's planned that further consultation with residents on options will take place in 2024.

Graham Wardle has written to Paul Prescott (Portfolio holder for Transport and Environment) asking for a meeting to discuss a revision to the draft to include the bypass issues in the final proposal document (due in Spring 2024). Graham is awaiting a response.

b. Lane Head left hand turn update S106.

There is still an impasse with Wigan Council with reference to the non-legitimate consultation process regarding Section 106 funding of proposed road infrastructure projects. The council have failed to meet the Gunning and Nolan principles. All our complaints about the process of their 'consultation' have been ignored, with Wigan Council effectively saying "if you wish to take this matter further, then go to litigation.

Graham and James Grundy (MP) have/are writing to the Local Government Ombudsman and Secretary of State. James fully backs the local residents of the service Road adjacent to the A580.

A letter has been sent from Wigan Council (4 December 2023) stating that they wish to have their **first** consultation with the local residents affected, in summer 2024, a year later than they had last specified. In the letter they are still adamant that the A580/Newton Road junction modifications will go ahead, they just want to 'consult' on the details.

c. Bypass update.

Meetings have taken place with reference to reducing congestion and air pollution around the Lane Head area. Participants have included GM Mayor Andy Burnham, two local MP's (including James Grundy) local Councillors, Local Authority officials (from Wigan, Warrington and St Helens), officers from TfGM and local community groups LHSRG and LaGTAG. No details have yet been provided by the working party as they have been classified by TfGM and the local authorities as confidential due to work in progress.

James Grundy and Andy Burnham are to meet with the Government's Roads Minister to discuss funding in the near future. The most important task is to secure "in principle" funding for the solution. Once that is in place various options may be considered.

It was reported that if the bypass is to go ahead it would be at least 8-9 years in the future.

Weight limits, cameras and speed reduction on Winwick Lane will be applied to the Wigan side of the Lane but Warrington Council are not in a position to do the same on their side. If they do, it may impact other roads around Warrington!

6. **AOB.....**

• New defibrillator on Garton Drive/Lane Head Avenue.

Department of Health and Social Care, AED Grant Team in association with London Hearts Charity offered defibrillators free for the first 100 applicants and a 50% charge for next 1900 applicants.

Graham applied and was one of the 1900 and the funding was matched by the three Lowton East Councillors (Jenny Gregory, Garry Lloyd and Kath Houlton) were glad to support this good cause via Wigan's Brighter Borough Funding. Thanks to LENDF's Irene for chasing up all of the financial paperwork.

Once all of the registration paperwork is completed, the unit should be fully functional early in the New Year. This will be placed on the side of a house on the junction of Garton Drive/Lane Head Avenue. If needed, dial 999 and you will be given the code to open the box.

- A list of defibrillators <https://lowtonandgolbornenews.co.uk/?s=Defibrillator>
- It was reported vehicles were driving on the grass on **Oaklands Road park** and some vehicles parked in the area are not taxed/insured.
- Flooding on various sites were discussed, Pennington Flash entrance, outside Lane Head car showroom. This week Winwick Lane had areas within Wigan boundary flooded and reported to Kath Houlton.
- The new builds around Leigh were discussed, Westleigh Waterside around Plank Lane (possible access near the Nevison Inn) and all these will impact traffic through Lowton to access motorways.
- The proposed 238 new builds behind Leigh Fire Station off Pocket Nook were discussed and its proposed access road onto the Atherleigh Bypass. This will impact traffic and it is rumoured an island being to put at the junction with A580 – nothing confirmed. Would the bridge have to be reinforced? Each side of the A580 currently has standing traffic waiting to turn down onto Atherleigh Way during the evening rush hours. Please comment on this in the consultation documents from item 4 and 5 above.

**Next meeting including AGM:
Monday 12th February @ 7:30pm
at Lowton Social Club**

S106 – monies collected from house builders, given to the council to improve the local infrastructure close to new housing. About £6,000 per house.