

Minutes to the meeting of
Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)
held on Monday 3rd October 2011, at Lowton Labour Club as per agenda.
<http://www.lendf.co.uk>

- Chairman - Ed Thwaite (ET), Secretary - Jan Johnston (JJ)
- Welcome to Members, visitors and guests
- Also present and Cllr James Cowley (JC), Cllr Pam Gilligan (PG) and Cllr James Grundy (JG)
- *Apologies received from Cllr Kevin Anderson, 'Environment & Committees', WBC Timothy Demore, Stan Walker, Transport for Leigh, David Baxter, ...Inspector Kennedy, Great Manchester Police*

No. of Attendees = 35

1. Minutes from last meeting - not read at meeting but copies had been sent out by email and paper copies were available, also copies on website.

ET invited members to check the LENDF website regularly as there is now additional information regarding the closure and re-opening of Lowton High School and the proposal to amend the Leigh Boundary.

2. Council Statements/Responses

PG passed on apologies from Cllr Kevin Anderson who had provided a statement regarding work undertaken by local councillors, to be read out to the meeting. JC duly read the statement and this will be uploaded to the LENDF website.

PG also read out an email sent to her from Cllr James Winterbottom, Head of Policy and Programmes, regarding the new process for township procedures for funding requests by the elected members of the community. PG has requested a meeting with Andrew Sharrock, together with the Golborne and Lowton councillors, for confirmation of this process. This email will also be uploaded to the LENDF website.

3. Oaklands Road Park

Play Area - The rope race slide and stanchion was recently damaged and d by older children and this has now been repaired. The situation will now therefore be monitored. Graffiti has been noticed and reported to WBC.

The recycling bins have now been removed from the car park at the back of the Drs Surgery.

4. Oaklands Meadows Residents Association (OMRA)

Malcolm Jones, Chairman, and Tina Poole, Secretary, voiced concerned over various issues i.e. damaged telephone box opposite Londis, unreadable road signs, broken fencing.

PG reported that repair work had been done to the guttering, concrete walls, etc, on the footpath behind the garages and shops following a request by the local Residents Group.

Also requested meeting with PG to discuss these issues as well as improving the environment to the footpath from Newton Road to car park behind Drs surgery. PG agreed.

A Lowton resident raised a question with regard to graffiti to private property as she had contacted WBC only to be told that it could only assist in the clean-up if it was 'racist'. JG said council policy was to assist if it is deemed 'offensive' in whatever format that may be. He offered to visit the location (The Grove, off Slag Lane) and discuss the issue further with the resident.

5. Flowerboxes

On a positive note it was reported that the Council were to deal with issues leftover from the previous Townships Forums. This was an 'interim measure' and JG reported that he had spoken with Darren Barton, Forum Manager, who confirmed that monies from last year and this year totalled approximately £16,000 and this would be made available for the flowerboxes and other projects. A meeting is planned for next week where all matters will be formally confirmed. We have formally requested the reinstatement of the flower boxes and a vote from our local councillors will be required to secure the boxes and PG, JC and JG all said they would vote yes. JG suggested that ET contact the Golborne Councillors to request their support. OMRA requested funding for a tarmac footpath to be installed diagonally across Oaklands Road children's park next to the play area. OMRA have been successful in their application for Lottery Funding of £50,000 but there is currently a 'hold-up' at the Council with the release. JG asked OMRA to provide a plan of the proposal and a covering letter, to be sent to the Council for consideration.

6. Local Democracy Week

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CouncilDemocracy/LocalDemocracyWeek/>

Various events will be occurring between 11th-15th October. Click on website link to view details or telephone 01942 244991.

PG and JC left the meeting at this point due to another meeting commitment.

General discussions took place with regard to the loss of 'community voice' until the issue of the Township Forums is resolved or reinstated. Residents concerned that there is no longer a direct route through to the Council. ET to wait until the flowerbox vote has taken place and then write to the Council asking for a 'community representative' to be provided. He stated that LENDF is non-political and meeting minutes are always recorded accurately and in full. Nothing is excluded from our information either on the website or in the Minutes. . Jackie wants the 'bottom-up' decision process to be put back into place rather than what appears to be happening now which is the 'top-down' process. JJ requested that Jackie Roberts write to Andrew Sharrock outlining her experiences and put forward her objections to Councillors being the only ones allowed to make decisions.

JG stated he would put forward a proposal to Andrew Sharrock that the budget for Lowton and Golborne should be split and the Councillors held responsible and accountable to residents. He reminded those present that the Local Democracy Week was an opportunity for Q&A to Council !

7. Bank Balance

ET reported that balance was currently £1,026.

8. Braithwaite Road

A representative of the Braithwaite Road Residents Group was present and she reported that the licence for a late-night dispensing chemist has been withdrawn. Cohen Chemist on Crow Wood Road will be moving into the Braithwaite Road Surgery.

It is still important to be vigilant of applications being submitted as the original applicant may try to find a new location for the late-night service.

On Sunday 16th October from 11am to 4pm there will be a consultation day regarding the play facilities on Braithwaite Road. The day is supported by Groundwork Trust and donations have been received from the Co-op on Church Lane of £300 for children's food and drinks, and a total of £650 from PG, JC and JG for other entertainments.

9. Freedom of Information requests

ET read out a request which has been sent for information regarding Lowton and Golborne Forum Accounts. Various questions have been raised and a response is awaited.

ET reported that a response has been received regarding the FOI request in respect of the road signs which show Wigan's bid for the Rugby League World Cup 2012. The cost to the Council of these signs was £9,000 which came from the Highways Budget. These signs have a 'removable' section which can be used

for other 'messages' in the future. Each time the section is redone it will cost £547 though this cost is paid from the Department or Association gaining the most benefit from the signage. i.e. Sports clubs, Greenheart etc.,

10. Police Issues

Inspector Kennedy has sent his apologies as he can not attend tonight's meeting but will endeavour to attend the next one.

Malcolm reported to the meeting that an incident occurred near to the Play Area on Oaklands Road. A black car containing 4 men aged approximately 18-19 yrs old tried to approach 2 young girls by offering them sweets. The girls refused and moved away from the park and went to a nearby house to report the men. The police were informed but as yet have not contacted the parents of the girls for a statement.

JG reported that bogus salesmen who had been seen operating on Rowan Avenue have been caught and sent for trial. A no cold calling status is to be implemented on the estate.

11. Cliff Mort - Lancashire Aero Club

<http://www.lancsaeroclub.co.uk/lac/index.php>



The grass strip used by the club is indicated by the green line on the photo above.

Cliff Mort gave a presentation to the meeting to give a background to the Club's history at Barton Airfield and its new operations from Kenyon Hall.

The Club is currently open 28 days per year for flights but is considering applying for permission to open for 365 days a year. Not all days will be appropriate for flying due to weather conditions - for example this year they have only opened on 20 of their allocated 28 days.

The mirco-light club is not part of LAC and operates from their own site on the other side of Winwick Lane but they are not excluded from LAC.



Red lines indicate north-east to south-west approaches/takeoffs.

Another image on the website shows red lines in reverse to show south-west to north-east approaches/takeoffs.

A number of residents of Newton Road area reported to the meeting and CM that they had experienced the noise of planes flying over their properties, and the care home Lime House, on numerous occasions. This was not acceptable and if LAC were to apply for permission to increase the number of days for flying then they would object. JG supported the residents and voiced his objection as well to the increase in days. JG asked CM to implement disciplinary measures to pilots who do not keep to agreed flight paths. Various questions regarding the details of the club were asked i.e.

- Future fuel on-site - None
- number of planes and helicopters visiting on /fly in days - response: 3 days per year with up to 28 aircraft visiting
- how many aircraft on site - response: 12 but not all in air at same time
- how many members - response: 130 - many share one plane

CM informed the meeting that if an application were to be prepared it would not contain hangars for aircraft storage and it will remain an open site. Residents asked about safety to walkers as the site is bounded by 3 public footpaths and even though signage is present, the site is not fenced. Also aircraft activity can affect wildlife especially birds of prey. Another point raised was that the

use of greenbelt land for a grass airstrip is not a 'necessary' use if it were to go to planning application stage.

ET suggested an open day at the site but residents present at the meeting reported that the last one had not been worthwhile. The residents invited CM to experience a 'flyover' at their properties on Newton Road. CJ asked if arrangements could be made for the club to return to Barton Airport, would they go. CM responded that he wants to progress with the Club at Kenyon Hall.

CM was thanked for attending and at this point he left the meeting. Discussion followed and members were asked to vote on this proposal and the decision was made that we would object to any future proposals and also JG announced he would also be objecting on behalf of local residents.

12. Sports England (Wigan website)

ET reported that the playing fields adjoining The Rose Centre (Lowton Civic Hall) are now registered as 'Sports England' which means they should be protected from future building development.

Originally Rose Leisure said they would provide a 'sports club' when they purchased the buildings but following the recent news LENDF have asked them what are their new intentions?

ET has sent a reminder to Wigan for a response to the FOI request for information on the sale to Rose Leisure of all 5 venues. JG reported that a councillor from Hindley Green Cllr Brierley has told him that the sale is not yet complete!

The concern now is that the covenants attached to 'The Rose Centre' will not be strong enough to protect the buildings and land for the community.

13. Wigan Core Strategy

ET recapped on the processes involved in putting forward this 10 year plan by Wigan Council. He noted that all areas nominated for building on by this plan have been passed as possible building land and for possible development. The meeting then evolved into discussions on housing and objections. For example the new Plank Lane development will accommodate 600 houses and therefore produce a significant increase of traffic on Slag Lane and Plank Lane as these are the main approaches to the development. And yet it will be built!

There was concern raised over the existing condition and problems with the sewage pipes in the area, and any new development would not include this work to be re-done and could cause even more extensive problems with flooding and

sewerage waste, in the area as the existing system cannot manage to cope with existing waste let alone adding to the problem by building more properties.

It is possible that a total of 1,000 houses at various locations around Lowton may go ahead and this will include all the necessary infrastructure to accommodate them. Any profits made from land by Wigan Council will not come back to Lowton and yet this area generates the highest amount of council tax for Wigan Borough.

Any monies received from Building Companies, formally known as 106 money has been designated to be spent in Wigan Town Centre, so Lowton would receive no financial benefit from any future building developments.

JG stated that we do still have plenty of opportunities to object in the future to each application if and when they materialise.

14. Participatorybudgeting.org.uk

<http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk/>

Item to be carried forward to next meeting.

15. Boundary Changes

Item to be carried forward to next meeting.

16. Any Other Business

- Lowton Bridges was nominated for an award at the Wigan Cultural Partnership and won a certificate for Youth and young people. . Congratulations to all involved. JJ has also organised a free concert to be held at Rose Centre (Lowton Civic Hall) with entertainment by Vera and Gary Aspey, Louise Fazacklery and DJ Dennis Hammond, on Tuesday 11th from 1pm till 4pm at The Rose Centre. Admission tickets available from JJ There are some tickets available, please contact Jan Johnston to check availability.
- Wigan History opposite Town Hall, now have in stock a new CD, which was only released earlier this month of Wigan Heritage and history with elements of Lowton and its characters (Alex Hughes appears and shares his knowledge. 88 minutes long great Christmas present for relatives. Covers old and new footage from Astley pit, Chowbent Chapel, Atherton, Standish Church, Stubshaw Cross etc.,. Cost £10 excellent value.
- Red Lion Bowling Green Children's Club - has ceased some time ago thought due to lack of funding! JG stated it was not actually funding which stopped the activity but the new teacher at Lowton High who does not have an interest in bowling. It was suggested the club contact the Headmaster at Lowton High. JJ will also speak to him on their behalf.

17. Next LENDF Meeting

- Monday 14th November 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