

Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)  
Minutes to the Meeting held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at Lowton Social Club.

<http://www.lendf.co.uk>

Present:

- Chairman – Ed Thwaite (Ed T), Secretary – Irene Thomson (IT)
- Cllr Ed Houlton
- Cllr Kath Houlton
- Cllr James Grundy

Apologies: Brian and Audrey Lobell

No. of Attendees = 38

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1. **Minutes from last meeting** – Not read at meeting but copies had been sent out by email, posted onto Facebook, and paper copies were available. LENDF Bank Statement on display during the meeting.

2. **Rose Centre (Civic Hall)**

The recent encampment by travellers/gypsies on the car park of the Rose Centre and also the wanton devastation caused to inside the centre when they broke in, has caused a tremendous amount of anxiety and distress to local residents.

The lack of action/response from the police has also been frustrating. The UK law does indicate that they could have been moved on sooner:

*The Police may activate their powers under section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to require gypsies/travellers to leave.*

*The Police are able to activate these powers where they are satisfied that two or more people are trespassing on the land, and the landowner has taken reasonable steps to make them leave (and they have failed to do so). In addition, one of the following also has to apply:*

- *damage has been caused to the land or property, or*
- *threatening / abusive / insulting behaviour has been used against the occupier, his family or agent, or*
- *the trespassers have six or more vehicles.*

*Any enforcement of section 61 requires considerable resourcing and consideration has to be given to having sufficient police officers available etc, which may in itself take some time to arrange.*

Local Councillors are concerned by this poor service from the police and feel that it is unacceptable. Therefore a meeting has been requested with Tony Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, to discuss why his officers did not deal with the situation swifter and therefore prevent criminal damage to the Rose Centre and give protection to local residents. Also a Traffic Officer should have been sent to check all the vehicles. LENDF's Chairman Ed Thwaite to also attend this meeting.

Questions will also be put to Andy Burnham MP regarding the Council's lack of action (even though the Rose Centre building and car park is privately owned, the land surrounding it is the Council's responsibility), and to raise the issue of low police coverage of the Lowton area.

Rose Leisure Ltd's insurance company have been to assess the damage and the repairs have begun – it will possibly be open by the weekend of 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> April.

Regarding prevention methods:

- Wigan Council's Legal Dept are reviewing their procedures so that they can respond quicker i.e. bailiffs rather than eviction by court order which can take a week to be prepared.
- Sites throughout the borough are being made 'inaccessible' to caravans i.e. Howe Bridge, Robin Park.

Uniqwin are a Warrington firm who have the legal ability to tow caravans off a site which is being illegally occupying. Uniqwin also provide a number of other security and enforcement measures i.e. concrete boulders.<http://www.uniqwin.co.uk/trespass-eviction-management/>

Rose Leisure and Wigan Council are putting together preventative measures at the Rose Centre i.e. height restriction barriers (2) and concrete bollards (23). These will be installed on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April.

In late 2013 arc4 was commissioned to update the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the Greater Manchester Authorities of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan ("the authorities").  
<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Housing/Gypsy-Traveller-Accommodation.pdf>

### **3. Mount Tabor, Lowton**

Two horses are being grazed in a fenced off area next to Mount Tabor on land which is 'not on the Land Registry' but it is known that a Deed of Ownership does exist but the Council can not locate it at this moment in time. These are gypsy horses and the people tending to them have stated that they are being 'fattened up for Appleby Fair'. The horses are well looked after with a bath being used as a water trough and are being fed haylage every day. The land though is getting churned up and muddy. It may be possible to get the RSPCA to review their health and 'accommodation'.

### **4. Bellway Homes – Pocket Nook Lane/Crompton Way Housing Development**

A full planning application has been submitted for 119 houses. The number of houses proposed will take the Lowton area over its allocation which was agreed with the Government Inspector back in 2013 at the Public Inquiry.

Comments on this proposal must be submitted to the Council using the Ref A/16/82102/MAJ and be sent via email to [planningrepresentations@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:planningrepresentations@wigan.gov.uk). Also a proforma letter has been created for residents to complete with their own comments and send direct to the council. This is available on the LENDF website. Many thanks to those residents who have been encouraging the people in the area to complete a letter – these will now be passed to the Council.

### **5. Bloor Homes – Heath Lane Housing Development**

A full planning application has been submitted for 130 houses using access off Heath Lane. This application site is to the south of the Wainhomes' development and both developments would effectively be 'neighbours' with only a small green corridor to divide them. Again this number of houses will take Lowton over its agreed allocation.

Comments on this proposal must be submitted to the Council using the Ref A/16/82233/MAJOR and be sent via email to [planningrepresentations@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:planningrepresentations@wigan.gov.uk). A proforma letter will be prepared and made available shortly. There is also a need to inform residents around the Stone Cross area about this application so we shall require volunteers to help with this exercise. Update to follow shortly.

There is plenty of time to get comments/objections into the Council regarding both the Bellway and Bloor Homes' applications as the next Planning Committee meeting is set for June.

## 6. **Big Borough Clean Up – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April**

LENDF are asking for volunteers to join in with a Spring Clean Litter Pick on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April.

The Council are providing equipment i.e. litter pickers, gloves, binbags, and we have asked for a skip to be located at the frontage of St Luke's School on Church Lane.

We can meet at 10am and then spread out from that point to do as many different areas as possible. Some teams will start at other parts of Lowton and we shall collect the full binbags and transport them to the skip ☺ We also want you to keep the litterpicking items for future events.



## 7. **HS2 / HS3**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/506022/NE\\_S\\_Report.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506022/NE_S_Report.pdf)

Observations by LENDF's Chairman on HS2 Report (how to continue Scotland):

- Three options considered: one up the west coast and two up the east coast.
- On the face of it the west coast looks favourite it can achieve the 3 hour journey time to both Glasgow and Edinburgh. It will cost max £34 billion.
- On the east side a route west of Newcastle would cost max £29 billion. A route east of Newcastle would cost max £30 billion.
- The two east side route's would only get to Edinburgh in 3 hours however they would both serve York Darlington, Durham and Newcastle.
- The train would split just before Edinburgh and enter stations on existing lines avoiding any extensions to platforms.
- Up the west coast Wigan would be missed and an interchange station would be created at Preston, the line would also serve Lancaster and Carlisle.
- West coast line would split at Carstairs making two 200meter trains one each to Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- Both lines would need power upgrading.
- Both lines would use compatible trains 400 meters long with 1,100 seats.

- Congested line sections would be by-passed.
- West coast line quicker but higher cost. East coast reduced cost and would serve a greater population.

## 8. Any Other Business

- Community Speed Watch – a few residents have already applied to the council to take part and are awaiting their training. Please contact the Council on 01942 489309 or email [traffic@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:traffic@wigan.gov.uk) if you wish to join in.
- Congratulations to Kathleen Johnson who is now the Chairperson of Lane Head South Residents Group.
- [Spring Samara Appeal](#) – Local resident Gill Dickenson has sent out this message to all .... *“Our Community of Lowton certainly has its "issues." Whether it's disgusting litter requiring litter picks in the pouring rain!; foul smells from Diggle Green; the threat of HS2 cutting our village in half... yet again; more houses adding to congestion; disruption from low flying planes; vandalism at the Civic Hall ... I could go on!! What, however, we read in our papers and see nightly on the news in The Middle East and Eastern Europe, pales our "issues" into insignificance....As the community of Lowton I hope we feel some solidarity with other communities across the world. The heinous situation in Syria and Iraq is widely accepted to be on a par with the aftermath of WW2. To assist effectively we need volunteers who will act as hubs for the collection, sorting and packing of goods. If anyone feels they would like to be part of this appeal please click on the link above. If you still feel you could help please get in touch and I will forward you the details. Kind Regards Gill Dickinson 07545 782608 ”*
- Articles from the Culcheth Life magazine were read out to the meeting:



## Council opposes air strip expansion plan

CROFT Parish Council has lodged a strong objection to a plan to increase the use of a private air strip off Winwick Lane, Lowton.

The Lancashire Aero Club wants permission to use the landing strip at Kenyon Hall Farm on any day of the year compared with the 28 days a year for which they currently have planning consent.

But their application is being opposed by Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum.

The air strip is close to the M6 motorway, the Liverpool-

Manchester railway line and numerous other smaller roads and footpaths. It also lies adjacent to Highfield Moss – a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest.

It is also subject to flooding.

It has been used by the Lancashire Aero Club since 2002 – and least one crash has been reported there, in 2012.

Cllr Les Hoyle said: “Our objections relate to the increased use of the airstrip. Aircraft taking off and landing are obviously a safety issue and also cause a noise problem.

“There has been a suggestion that it could result in the landing strip developing into something like Barton Aerodrome.”

The aero club is also seeking to provide a car park and to widen the access to the airfield from Winwick Lane.

They stress that although they are seeking permission to use the airstrip every day, this would not in fact happen because of weather considerations and the fact that members are at work most days.

# Village 'drop in' session to discuss traffic

CROFT Parish Council is to hold a "drop in" session on Saturday, April 9 to give local residents an opportunity to air their views on traffic conditions in the village.

The event at Croft Youth Centre will take place between 10am and 2pm.

Items up for discussion will including the de-priming of Winwick Lane which many residents fear will lead to a big increase in heavy traffic in Croft, proposals for a road freight terminal on Green Belt land on the site of the former Parkside Colliery at Newton-le-Willows and the possibility of installing a Zebra Crossing in Smithy Lane.

But there will also be an opportunity for residents to raise other issues.

Concern about increasing traffic problems has been growing in Croft for some time – with Smithy Lane, New Lane and Lord Street all regarded as hot-spots.

Borough council highways chiefs say Smithy Lane does not meet the criteria for a Zebra Crossing but residents have raised the possibility of local people raising money towards the cost – and this could make a difference.

The parish council has already voiced its opposition to the road freight terminal on the former Parkside Colliery site on the grounds that it would lead to increased traffic in Croft.

## **9. Next LENDF Monthly Meeting**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 @ 7.30pm (Lowton Social Club)**

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Should you find any omissions or discrepancies in these minutes please contact me on [lendf99@gmail.com](mailto:lendf99@gmail.com) and let me know as soon as possible and the errors will be rectified.

Irene Thomson – Secretary, LENDF