

Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LEPDF)
Minutes to the Meeting held on Monday 13th January 2014 at Lowton Social Club.
<http://www.lendf.co.uk>

- Chairman – Ed Thwaite (Ed T), Secretary – Irene Thomson (IT)
- Welcome to members, visitors and guests

Apologies – Cllr James Grundy, Brian Lobell

No. of Attendees = 45

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.
2. **Bank Balance** – on display.
3. **HS2**

Also on display were images of the HS1 double tracks which shows that a service road is needed to run alongside the tracks. Therefore the width of 'cuttings' and slopes of embankments may be more than we have seen at HS2 consultations!

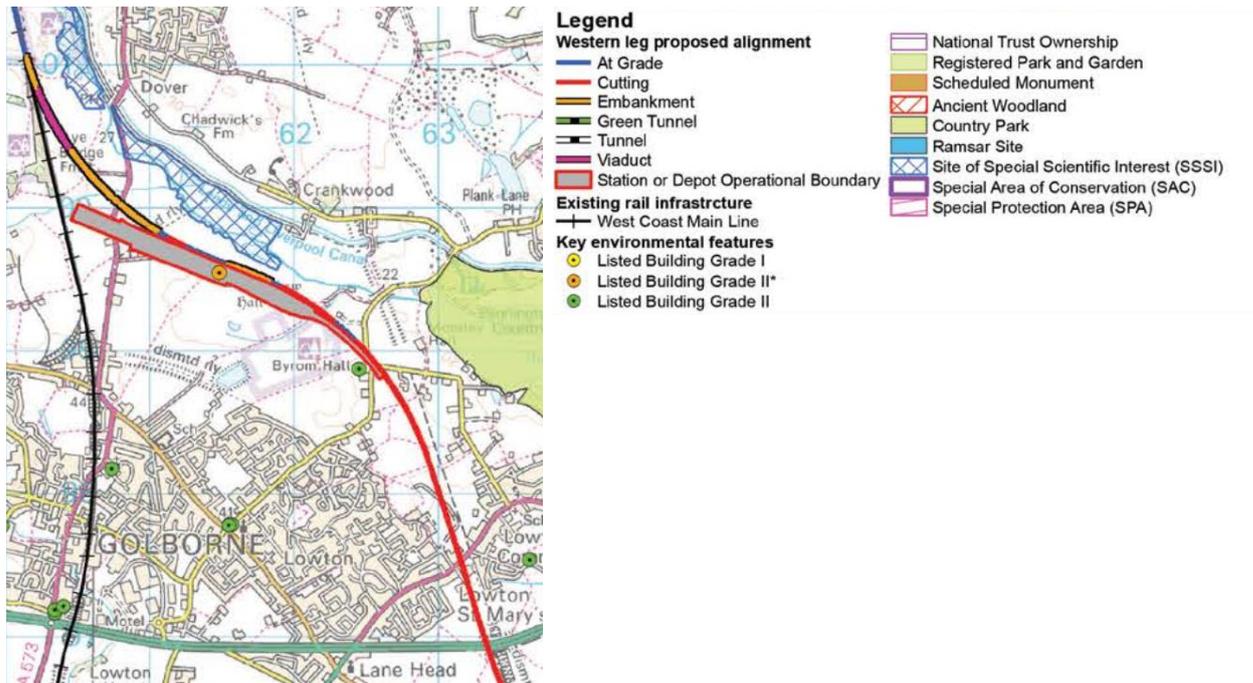
Ed T and Ann Lowe (Chair of LHSRG) met with Malcolm Hitchen, ex Railtrack Manager West Coast line, who took them on a tour of the proposed route up to Bamfurlong. Malcolm directed them to the old Bamfurlong siding and suggested the Maintenance Depot could be located here instead of north of Slag Lane, Lowton.

Ed T has also made enquiries re the route of HS2 with Warrington Borough Council. Their Leader Mr Terry O'Neill gave permission for the council's Transport Department to speak openly with LEPDF. Warrington Council are opposed the route which runs from Warburton to Bamfurlong as they want the HS2 compatible trains to service Warrington. The Council are also opposed to Transport for Leigh's proposal for an interchange station off the East Lancs Road.

With regard to Kenyon Junction, Warrington Council have stated they have never been approached with any suggestions or enquiries regarding its feasibility of being opened up to provide a service to both Manchester and Liverpool. Ed T asked if a 'communication' could be started to investigate this option, though the need for bypass would be a key feature. Warrington Council agreed.

Further to the meetings last week a 'working group' (consisting of 2 Golborne Councillors, 2 Lowton Councillors, key residents' group leaders and experienced/knowledgeable members of LEPDF), will have their first meeting on Thursday 16th January to address the need to put forward an opposition to the Maintenance Depot. There have been a couple of suggestions of alternatives for this site which it is felt would have less impact and these need to be presented to HS2 as part of the consultation.

The deadline for this is 5pm 31st January 2014.



Extract from Warburton to Bamfurlong consultation leaflet
 To see this document in full please [click here](#).

To see more details of the Depot and the line itself [click here](#).

For those of you have not yet made any comments on the consultation, we shall be adding some additional information onto the website as an aide to how you can respond. You can also gain information and find the online form (and email and postal addresses) from <http://www.hs2.org.uk/phase-two/route-consultation/document-library> Both HS2 Ltd and Andy Burnham MP stressed the importance that each resident make their comments and to especially put forward your local knowledge of the area as all suggestions of alternatives would be taken into consideration (!). One of the members of the HS2 Consultation Team has agreed we can give out his email address in case anyone wishes further clarification on a point (or two): Brendan Gallagher brendan.gallagher@hs2.org.uk

One thing is clear, Lowton needs a solution to its existing traffic congestion problems especially at Lane Head/A580 junction, and also the volume of HGVs which use Winwick Lane. The recent announcement of the proposed redevelopment of Parkside as a 'major rail freight terminal' will also have an impact on Winwick Lane.

On 2nd December members of LHSRG had met with representatives from 3 councils (Wigan, Warrington and St Helens), Highways Agency, Cheshire Police and Andy Burnham MP. The meeting was to discuss Winwick Lane and the request by residents for the lane to be de-primed to reduce the quantity of HGVs which use it. Notes of the meeting can be [viewed here](#)

4. Diggie Green

We have had confirmation from Andy Burnham that he will give assistance with the issue of 'smells'. At the moment the problem seems to be less due to reduced activity in the winter months. Mr Broster informed Ed T that he is working with the Environment Agency to find a solution to the cause of the smells (which apparently are occurring at other waste recycling depots throughout the country). An update is due to be issued by the Environment Agency shortly. In the meantime it was agreed by all to give Mr Broster a chance to cure the problem. So we have asked Andy Burnham to do nothing for now.

5. Lowton Civic Hall

On 13th December LENDF sent a Freedom of Information to Wigan Council with regard to the responsibility of maintenance, covenants on the use of the land and building.

On 20th December their response was as follows:

Thank you for your recent e-mail which Donna Hall has passed to me and asked me to respond to on her behalf. I think it is important to make clear that the fundamental decision taken by the Council was that the Civic Venues lost money and the Council could no longer support financially their operation, and so they should be closed. The Council did, however, take the view that if someone else was willing to take on these venues and run them without any subsidy from the Council, then it would consider such a proposal rather than closing the venues and disposing of the sites on the open market. Eighth Wonder made the offer which gave the Council not only the best price for the taxpayers but also relieved them of the ongoing costs of maintaining and operating the venues which has saved the Council over £450,000 since they took over the operation of the venues. As Eighth Wonder are taking a transfer of the freehold of the property they take all the responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the venues so the Council has saved money in this area also. The Council never intended to impose any obligations on the purchaser as to how they operate the venues and they are now for all intents and purposes private businesses. Any concerns as to the way they operate need to be taken up with Eighth Wonder.

Covenants were placed on the properties restricting their use to leisure and community use however this was done to ensure that the properties could not be closed and sold on for a lucrative alternative use without the owners having to account to the Council for any profit they make as a result. They do not give the Council power to dictate to the operator how they should maintain or decorate the premises.

Although it has taken far longer to complete the sales than envisaged I am satisfied that the agreement with Eighth Wonder has achieved the best deal for the taxpayers for the borough in that it has already saved the Council a significant amount in running costs as well as keeping the venues open.

Regards

John Mitchell

Assistant Director - Legal

We have been communicating with Andy Burnham's office to keep him updated on this issue.

6. Any Other Business

- Lowton Allotments Association – The rents have been trebled by Wigan Council !! Therefore the Association want to be 'self-managed' but in order to do this they have to pay the Council £600 for the freehold. They would need to set up a Committee, Constitution, Bank Account, H&S Policies, etc. Ed T put it to the meeting that LENDF could help them if they needed 'monetary' assistance with an agreement to pay it back. Therefore a proposal was put to those present that LENDF, if asked, would loan them £200. The proposal was seconded by Howard Cooper and all agreed.
- Transport for Leigh – Recent email (7th Jan) from Ged Tyrell has indicated that the proposals have now been updated to show that the bypass road would have the capability to carry HGVs....

We have now received a draft from TfGM with regard to their plans for the connection to HS2 and also the Liverpool to Manchester extension. For a number of reasons, they are sighting the station next to the East Lancs Road as per our original proposal. However, what has come about is that the funding for different elements will be coming from different sources. On this basis, HS2 is expecting a proposal from Transport For Leigh, covering all aspects and funding sources and stakeholders. With this in mind, we are therefore able to present the case for what we see as being important for the area as a whole, including the input from

LENDF. This means that we have free reign to put forward the best possible solution for the area. Therefore, I can now confirm that we will be upgrading the link road to a bypass for all vehicles on our plan. The funding for this element, over and above the cost of the link road, will come from Wigan Council, which we shall identify in the final report from us. Obviously none of us can be certain to secure any of this, including funding, yet what we can do is put forward a proposal that best benefits the area as a whole, which includes a full bypass as per your request.

- LENDF Website – Needs an tidy up ! We intend to ‘move’ all the documents relating to the Core Strategy as this is now a ‘Past Issue’ This will be done by the end of the month to give folk chance to download any documents they wish to keep for their own records. Any material which might be removed from the website will be kept on LENDF’s computer media i.e. CD, USBs.
- For Your Information – Persimmon have submitted a planning application for 50 houses off Nook Lane, Golborne. As Wigan Council’s Core Strategy has fixed the number of house to be developed over the next 10 years we shall have to monitor that they do not go over this figure !
- Senior Citizens – Jan Johnston has worked with a number of organisations in Lowton/Golborne area to provide social activities for OAPs and she has agreed to help LENDF to provide events specifically to suit them. Ideas currently include a ‘Tea Dance’ once a month, with a hot meal and game of bingo. Also a special themed concert to commemorate the centenary year of WWI. We will try for grants to assist with the costs. Tim Demore has contacted the Western Front Association as they do "living history" from World War I. They have a Lancashire East and a Lancashire and Cheshire branch. Tim will report back any significant ways in which they could help/support us. We shall of course be asking for volunteers to help with ‘all of the above’.
- Wind Turbine, Kenyon Lane – The single turbine which has been installed by a farmer on his land off Kenyon Lane does have a visual impact on residents who live close by (especially when it is turning), but noise impact has surprisingly not been significant.
- St Catherine’s Church – No change in the status of the church i.e. ‘unknown’.
- Eastern Revive (potential Tesco) – Ed T recently spoke with the restaurant owners who seem to be confident that they will be remaining in the premises and continuing business as usual.

7. Next LENDF Monthly Meeting

10th February 2014 @ 7.30pm (Lowton Social Club)

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

Irene Thomson – Secretary, LENDF