

Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)
Minutes to the Meeting held on Monday 6th June 2016 at Lowton Social Club.

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

Present:

- Chairman – Ed Thwaite (Ed T), Secretary – Irene Thomson (IT)
- Cllrs J Grundy, K Houlton and E Houlton

Apologies:

Brian and Audrey Lobell

No. of Attendees = 51

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. Police

PC Mick Aspinall and PCSO Jane Dagger attended the meeting to give an update on recent criminal incidents – Theft from a Motor Vehicle (7), Distraction Burglaries (2), Burglaries (2), and Supply of Drugs (1) which lead to an arrest.

The meeting was then opened for a discussion on the recent incursions of travellers in the Lowton area. Many residents are unhappy that the police have not been acting quickly enough to their concerns over the behaviour and predictable devastation that these encampments can create. PC Aspinall explained that they have limited powers with regard to Civil Law and can only effectively act if they have committed a ‘Criminal’ offence. He fully understood the frustrations of local residents and wanted to reassure residents that everything that they ‘can do’ is being done.

LENDF’s Chairman reported that a meeting with Andy Burnham is due to take place on 10th June and all the resident’s questions will be put directly to him. Lowton’s councillors have been compiling the ‘cost to the Council’ to deal with these issues i.e. cost of height barriers, cost of boulders/bollards, cost of clean up, court costs to arrange eviction notices. The total sum could be over £20,000.

The current law and ‘powers’ available to both the Police and local authorities needs to be strengthened and Lowton’s Councillors will ask the Leader of Wigan Council to approach Central Government and make enquiries.

3. Amanda White, Head of Rail, Transport for Greater Manchester

Amanda White gave a presentation on the plans and future proposals of rail transport for the North West and especially the Greater Manchester area.

A major public consultation exercise of the TfGM 2040 Transport Strategy will take place in the coming weeks and this will followed by a 2026 Rail Plan later this year, again open to consultation. From this TfGM are developing a 10 Year Rail Plan which is at the evidence gathering stage and is due to be made public towards the end of this year.

The 2040 ‘Transport Strategy’ will build upon the 2040 ‘Vision’ which was launched last summer: <http://www.tfgm.com/2040/Pages/default.aspx>

TfGM cannot comment upon Mersey travel’s plans for rail which have been set out in their Liverpool City Region Long Term Rail Strategy: <http://www.merseytravel.gov.uk/about-us/media-centre/news/Pages/Liverpool-City-Region%E2%80%99s-30-year-rail-future-detailed-in-new-strategy.aspx#>

Question	Lowton has a rail line but no station. Kenyon Station could be created to provide a local station, plus a bus link to Leigh centre would enhance the transport options for many residents from the wider area. Could this be considered?
Answer	As part of the study all lines and commuter patterns are being researched and that evidence will feed into future proposals.
Question	GMPT train passes can not be used at Newton-le-Willows station as it is within the Merseyside jurisdiction. The distance from the Lowton boundary is approximately 200m. Also the times of trains and buses do not synchronise which makes planning journeys very difficult. Are there any plans to make improvements to both these issues?
Answer	A Smart Ticketing System is being developed at the moment but it may only come into effect in the next few years.
Question	How can we make comments on future plans?
Answer	A Public Consultation is due to take place and details of this will be widely circulated and hopefully the feedback received will help to improve the services. LENDF have agreed to assist with the circulation of the details, all of which will be available on TfGM's website in due course.

4. Malcolm Jones, Chair of OMRA

LENDF want to send their best wishes for a speedy recovery to Malcolm who has been seriously ill recently.

5. Sandy Lane – Housing Application (again)

In 2014 an application for housing on land between Bodden Street and Brook Street (both off Sandy Lane) was refused by the Council as this portion of land is designated as Green Belt.

A new application has been submitted which appears to be exactly the same as the first one. The land in question has not changed status and therefore it should again be refused. The application number is A/16/82462/MAJOR and objections have been sent to the Council with regards to this 'repeated' application.

6. Fracking

A meeting has been arranged by Frack Free to discuss fracking licence in the Wigan Area.:

7pm on Tuesday 28th June – Leigh Miners Club, off Twist Lane.

7. Mount Tabor

The public footpath through this wonderful area is being maintained and looked after by local residents so that all can enjoy the varied wildlife and vistas from this location. The saplings planted in 2012, to create the Jubilee Wood, are now shoulder/head high and hopefully future generations will appreciate the efforts done by today's residents of Lane Head and Lowton.

8. Bellway Homes

The application for this development will be determined by Wigan's Planning Committee at their meeting tomorrow (7th June) at Wigan Town Hall. Cllr James Grundy will speak on behalf of the residents and put forward their objections to this development. It is though known that the Planning Officers have put forward a recommendation that the Committee give permission for this development. It is known that there are 3 ponds on this land which all contain Great Crested Newts and Natural England would have to give a special licence for the animals to be relocated/catered for. They may not do this.

[Post Meeting Note: The Committee voted to grant planning permission]

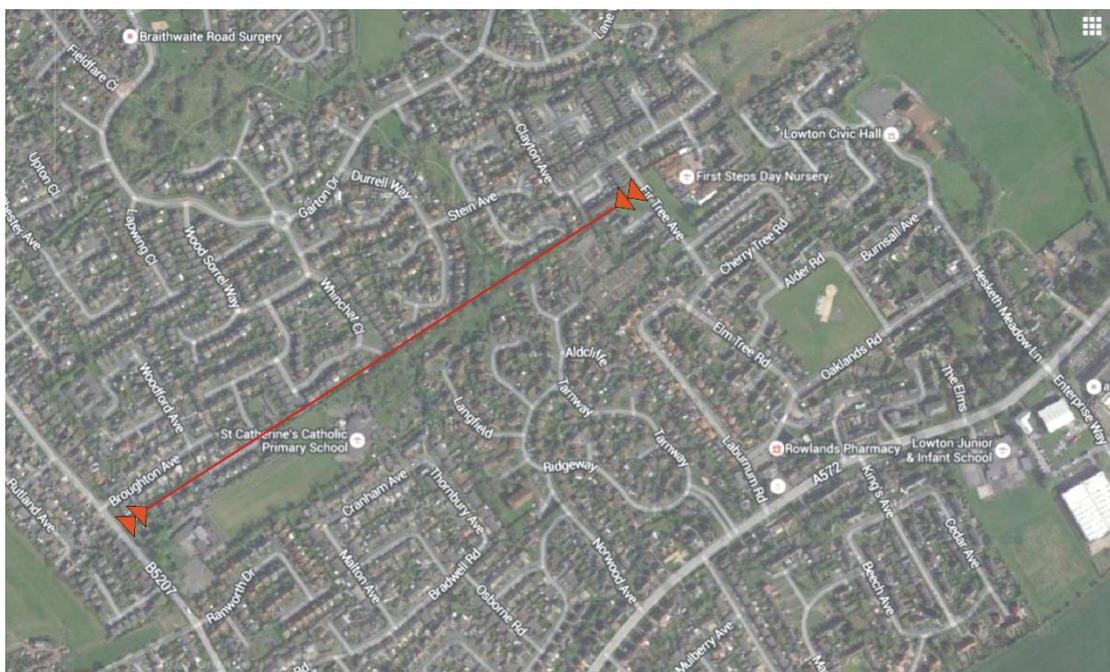
9. Bloor Homes

The application for this development is due to be heard by the Planning Committee later this year.

Wainhomes have submitted an objection to Bloor Homes' proposals as the development would 'benefit' from the infrastructure put into place by Wainhomes without Bloor Homes making any cost contributions. Cllr James Grundy is in communication with Wainhomes regarding the implications of changes to the Bloor Homes' application.

10. Litter Pick

LENDF propose a litter picking event to be held on Monday 20th June at 7pm. See image below for the two meeting points at either end of the footpath which links Church Road to Fir Tree Avenue (the path passes St Catherine's School and Fir Tree Allotments). Each team will be given litter pickers, gloves and bin bags and hopefully meet in the 'middle' of the route where Irene will gather the 'full' bags for disposal.



11. Lancashire Aero Club

The latest application from LAC is due to be heard by the Planning Committee. Richard Ward has been investigating all the background documents associated with the history of this site and the club's use of it for flying activities. A number of anomalies and inconsistencies have been unearthed by Richard and as yet Wigan Council have not been able to explain them all. As Brian Lobell is currently caring for his poorly wife, Richard has agreed to step in to present the '4 minute objection' once the application is before the Committee. Brian wishes it to be noted that he appreciates the effort and support that Richard has shown for this issue.

12. Pensioners' Parties

All bookings of the room hire, caterers and artists have been confirmed. There will be one special party for the Centenary of WW1 and this is open to all. More details to follow soon.

13. Any Other Business

- Parkside Action Group (PAG) recently held a meeting which was well attended. PAG are now monitoring St Helens Council and shall act when any proposals appear.

- Diggle Green – please continue to report any ‘smells’ to the Environment Agency on their free phone number 0800 807060.
- Dog Country Club – The public footpath is still closed due to repairs being made because of historical flooding issues and also it is being made secure due to the nature of the Club’s activities i.e. loose dogs.
- Winwick Lane – No longer a primary route for HGVs and should disappear from satnav options over the coming months (or when individuals update their systems).
- Deal In Action – Wigan Council have organised an event to take place at the Rose Centre on Wednesday 22nd June starting at 5.30pm. The event will begin at 5:30pm for residents to look around the information stalls followed by a Q&A with Donna Hall (Chief Executive of Wigan Council) and Lord Peter Smith (the Leader of the Council) [*to be confirmed*], where residents can ask questions about their local area.

Extract from the council’s website:

“The Deal in Action is about taking ‘The Deal’ and our pledges out into Communities and in return providing residents and businesses an opportunity to play their part too. The Deal in Action has visited various parts of the borough where Wigan Council staff, elected members, community groups and local residents have come together to help create a better borough. Early in 2015 Deal in Action concentrated on improving the environment and street scene, but as interest in the initiative has grown and the demand to get involved has significantly increased, there is a move to ensure that the focus widens and becomes sustainable. In more recent Deal in Action areas, more services have come together to work in partnership.”

14. Next LENDF Monthly Meeting

Monday 18th July 2016 @ 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