

## LANE HEAD SOUTH RESIDENTS' GROUP MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

- Chairman – Ann Lowe, Deputy Chairman – Denis Eubank, Secretary – Gill Dickinson, Treasurer – Howard Cooper, Minutes Secretary – Marie Cooper
- Number of attendees: 29

**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES:** The Chairman wished a Happy New Year to all and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Councillor Ed Houlton, Ed Thwaite, Jayne Dickinson, Irene Thomson, Richard & Sue Guest. The three guests: Dan Matthewman, Alexis De Pol and Richard Evans were welcomed and asked to speak to the group about Diggle Green.

Dan Matthewman and Alexis De Pol were introduced they are Town Planners working for De Pol Associates on behalf of Mr. Broster. They are supporting Mr. Broster's planning proposals to expand the tonnage from 35 to 75 thousand tons. The original proposal was rejected by Warrington Council and Mr. Broster is appealing, with the help of De Pol Associates. Mr. Matthewman went on to explain the virtues of using green composting waste and heat treated food waste which Mr. Broster uses on his farms. With regard to speeding tractors and trailers, Mr. Broster has spoken to his staff and reminded them of their personal responsibility for driving standards. He also met with the Cheshire Police Road Safety Partnership who committed to tackling driving offences by drivers who have no links whatsoever to Diggle Green Farm. He went on to say that even if the extra tonnage is approved by the Council there will be no extra traffic travelling to and from the farm. Mr. Matthewman acknowledged that there had been many complaints with regard to odours but went on to explain that on only three occasions had investigating officers identified any offensive odours in the area. On only one of these instances was the odour found to have originated from Diggle Green Farm. Mr. Matthewman stated that in the last two years, in his opinion, things have continued to improve and that Mr. Broster says he is committed to dealing with any genuine and proven odour complaints. Residents, however insisted that the source of the odours is the Diggle Green facility and that no complaints of odours in the area were made prior to the commencement of operations at Diggle Green.

Members of the group then spoke regarding their concerns which had not been addressed by Mr. Broster. These include: the increased tonnage and thereby vehicles both HGVs and tractors and trailers using the farm; importing waste from beyond the 20 km radius which had not been granted in the initial planning application; the numbers of complaints by residents who are affected by the odour, both coming from the site and on the trailers being pulled into and out of the site. The question was raised if this is only garden compost why is the smell so dreadful – food and animal waste is now put into green bins collected by Wigan Council. Mr. Broster has bought a site in Todmorden which treats food waste and it is thought this is being brought into the farm. Mr. Matthewman explained that this is brought to Diggle Green as semi-mature compost and as such it is an agricultural product outside planning control. The initial planning was granted for Mr. Broster to use the composting on his own farms – when some is actually being delivered to other farmers. When the further planning application was proposed LENDF and LHSRG did not oppose because they had been reassured that a number of issues raised by Dan Matthewman when he was working as Enforcement Officer for Warrington Council would be addressed by way of attaching robust enforceable conditions to any planning consent. However, the case officer recommended approval without many of the conditions suggested by Mr. Matthewman. In the event the Planning Committee members refused to approve the application on green belt grounds and because waste material is imported from beyond the 20km radius contrary to local planning policy. The appeal will therefore be strongly opposed by LHSRG. It was generally felt that to put a site of this magnitude in the middle of an area where potentially thousands of households are affected by odours has to be objected to.

Richard Evans, the Planning Enforcement Officer for Warrington Council explained how the Planning Appeal process works and that the Planning Inspector will determine the outcome. Objections from the public and support by the independent planners will be put forward. A report will be compiled prior to the meeting and copies will be made available.

The Chairman thanked the guests and they left the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2015 had been circulated by email.

**UPDATE OF LOCAL ISSUES:**

**Winwick Lane:** Gill Dickinson gave the latest update. A meeting had been held with Croft Parish Councillors who objected to the de-priming of Winwick Lane as it was felt that HGVs would go through Croft. The wording of the Highways Agency with regard to using roads off Winwick Lane will be looked at more closely. A further meeting was held with Andy Burnham who is in favour of de-priming and a meeting of the three Council officials has taken place with Wigan supporting the issue but Warrington and St. Helens objecting. The next meeting will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

**Solar Farms:** The Planning Application for a solar farm in Croft has been refused by Warrington Council. The firm proposing the solar farm on Dickinson's farm is currently looking at alternative funding as the Government has recently cut subsidies.

**Winton Road:** It is hoped that a traffic survey will be carried out in the new financial year.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** This was available for anyone wishing to look at it. The sale of calendars proved very successful and approximately 190 were sold.

**DATES FOR DIARY:**

Monday 8th February 7 for 7.30pm – Epiphany Trust 'Charity Curry Night' at the Eastern Revive, Lowton, price £16.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:**

A litterpick will be organised in March.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Open Gardens Day:** Sunday 19th June was suggested but then discounted as it clashes with Fathers Day. {Three new dates have now been suggested Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June or Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.} All those wishing to take part please let the Chairman know which is most convenient.

**Bowling Competition:** Les Bagshaw cannot commit to organising this at the moment.

**Flooding:** The area outside Lime House is prone to flooding and this has been reported to the Council by Councillor Kath Houlton.

**Rail Issues:** At the last LENDF meeting it was reported that more and quieter trains will be using the Manchester to Liverpool line. Crossing this line will then become a dangerous issue and a footbridge over the lines may be required. Councillor Kath Houlton will investigate. Ray Bent will have the new timetables which he will be talking about at a LENDF meeting.

Councillor James Grundy reported that as a member of the Greater Manchester Transport Authority he has requested that they look at the issue of residents being able to use their passes to access the train from Newton-le-Willows for free rather than only from Patricroft. Also to look at joining the Liverpool and Manchester bus timetables so buses can run to Leigh after the 6.00pm cut off. A member of the Authority will be coming to speak to LENDF in June.

**AGM:** The Chairman reported that the AGM will be held at the next meeting on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March. She announced that it is her intention to retire and asked for nominees to come forward to take up the position.