

Minutes of the Little Bowden Neighbourhood Forum meeting on Thursday 27th July 2023 at Meadowdale School.

Introductions and apologies for absence

Present: Beverley Brown, Sally Lax, David Lax, Pete Urmston, Janet Lee, Alex Beltrao, Josephine Brown, Gary Brown, Deb Greatorex-Sanderson, Simon Hobbs, Phil Baildon, Cllr Peter James (HDC), James Ward, Peter Randall, Jan Turner, Rev Alison Iliffe, Jonathan Davies (minutes)

Apologies: Kevin Millard, Cllr Barry Champion (LCC), Keith Nixon, Matt Bills (HDC).

1. Approval of minutes of the last meeting on 27th July: matters arising.

- AI: St Nicholas' churchyard, HDC is responsible for cutting grass and trees. Volunteers also help to maintain the area around the church. The yew hedge is the western boundary of the churchyard; beyond that, it is the responsibility of others (HDC? House-owners?) to maintain the path and green space.

PJ: HDC is up-dating the website which shows the land owned by HDC, but it's a work in progress.

SL: some green spaces in the area aren't designated as such.

- July meeting actions taken:
 - SH: re the defibrillators, Martin Fagan has not yet been contacted. Simon has details of the 'London Heart' charity which might help with funding.
 - SH will meet with Bob (Harborough Transport Action) and Barry (LCC) next week.
 - SH has spoken to David Rose re a ramp and lights for the railway footbridge and has subsequently submitted a request via Network Rail website.
 - SH has written to HDC Environmental Services

2. Declarations of interest

- Councillor Peter James from HDC has declared in previous meetings
- Rev Alison Iliffe as incumbent for St Nicholas

3. Priorities Statement Summary

SH has produced a summary table which will be circulated by email. Much discussion ensued (summarised below), leading to the decision to ask working groups to work on the issues that have been allocated to them on the table.

BB: (in response to a question) we have four working groups, each with a lead. We normally have report from each working group at each meeting.

Consultations with the public at the Carnival and the Fête show that the sheep field is the issue about which the most people are concerned.

- Flood alleviation discussion:
 - GB: dropped kerbs can make it easier for floodwater to enter properties. Sand bags could be provided around the district.
 - PJ: there is a small store of sandbags in the Council staff car park. It is the Council's responsibility to provide them.
 - SH: will speak to Bruce Durham (Harborough Flood Hub) re prime locations and numbers needed. There is a document which identifies areas where there have been flood incidents and Bruce is involved in this issue on a town-wide basis.

- PJ: we know what Bruce is doing, but there's no coordination between other parties: LCC, Env Agency, Anglian Water. We need to get these bodies together to coordinate physical changes such as improving retention ponds so we are prepared for the next flood event.
- SH: Bruce has a meeting with Cllr Maggie Wright (Blaby) of LCC regarding flood issues next week.
- Sheep field discussion:
 - PJ: there is protection on the sheep field to stop building and enclosing.
 - JB offered to do some research into the history of the field.
 - PU: should we approach the Council for the Protection of Rural England?
 - JW: in Enderby residents have tried to protect a park with a Deed of Dedication, but this requires the landowner's agreement to keep land for public use.
- Social and community discussion:
 - GB: there's nothing about Police on the priority list. Anti-social behaviour is becoming a problem.
 - JB: drink drivers leaving the Cherry Tree – there needs to be an occasional Police presence.
 - PJ: Little Bowden Rec isn't as bad as it was a couple of years ago, but we do need to look at anti-social behaviour. There is still CCTV in the rec. Little Bowden will have a massive population increase, but do we have medical facilities and staff for them? Should the Built Environment group look into new facilities to cater for expanding population?
 - JD: the medical centre is shortly to undergo expansion.
 - JT: what happened about plans to promote the skate park. Jude Jones did very well in recent competitions: <https://olympics.com/en/news/madrid-urban-sports-2023-jude-jones-wins-men-bmx-freestyle> SH has been looking for a contact with local skaters but hasn't found one yet.
 - JW: two community centres need looking at, one at Airfield Farm and one at Overstone Park. If nobody takes on the organisation of these, we will lose them because there's a set time after which the developers can shelve them.
 - SH: someone from HDC needs to take the lead on them.
 - PJ: don't know who that would be, but we have to watch Davidson's because they will use planning laws to their advantage.
 - JW: transport group has done a lot of work e.g. cycleways and looking at speeding.

Group membership:

- SH to circulate lists of members, but others are welcome to join.
- PU: groups can bring in experts
- SL: but no money for them at the moment.
- SH: there is funding via the HUB, but we don't have a mechanism for claiming funds yet.

Agreed that the groups should use the table as a framework to develop ideas and statements to provide clarity about what exactly is planned to be done.

- SL: for example, what exactly are we aiming to do to alleviate flooding or to safeguard the sheep field?
- PU: we have to provide details in order to inform the Local Plan which is what we are working towards. And if there are town-wide issues, we need to take them to the Hub.

4. Any Other Business

- SH: Bruce is looking into an App to report flood events

- SH: fence on the green next to the river is in poor repair. There was some new fencing by the pre-school play area.
 - AI says it is the church's responsibility to maintain the green, but they don't have funds for new fences (and the fence may not be their responsibility anyway).
 - SH to ask MH & The Bowdens charity.
 - Might also get funding from MHBS or LCC.
- SH: community orchard (off The Longlands) managed by HDC. It needs more management. There is a newt colony there. There will soon be a meeting at Beaumanor Hall about community space.
- SH: there had been discussion over there being too much vegetation in the Welland in the town centre, but this may not be a problem. The Environment Agency is responsible for flood management.
- SL: some footpaths are also overgrown.
 - PJ: please send him photos and a location pointer: p.james@harborough.gov.uk
- PR: graffiti hasn't been mentioned as a problem, but it is in places.
- PB: can we pressure HDC so they stop allowing people to convert bungalows into two-storey homes? It's reducing the housing stock for those who need bungalow-type accommodation.

Action	What	Who	By when	Comment/outcome
1/0823	Call LCC, Environment Agency and Anglian Water to a meeting to discuss flood alleviation. Also involve Bruce Durham.	PJ	Next meeting	Ongoing
2/0823	Begin to explore history of the sheep field.	JB	Next meeting	Ongoing
3/0823	Contact MH & The Bowdens charity re funding for fencing on the green.	SH	Next meeting	Ongoing
4/0823	Send photos of overgrown paths, etc, to: p.james@harborough.gov.uk	Anyone	Next meeting	Ongoing
5/0823	Get groups to meet to discuss/develop the points in the table that Simon included in July minutes.	Working group leads	Next meeting	Ongoing

5. Date of next meeting: 21st September 2023