

Minutes of the Little Bowden Forum Neighbourhood Forum meeting on 16th March 2023 at 6.30pm Meadowdale Primary School. Chaired by Peter Urmston

Present: Pete Urmston, Jan Turner, Jonathan Davies, Simon Hobbs, Cllr Peter James, Phil Baildon, James Ward, Keith Nixon, Janet Lee, Lucy Hobbs, Mike Davies.

Apologies: Beverley Brown, Cllr Barry Champion, Cllr Peter Critchley, Julie Hilliam, Matt Bills, Neil Hadkiss, Maggie Hadkiss, John Comont, Sally Lax, David Lax, Kev Millard.

1. Minutes of previous meeting were approved as a true record with minor amendments: Parking on pavements can be reported to Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Laura Bolton. Can also report crimes, issues and incidents at <https://www.leics.police.uk/report-online> Traffic or parking incidents [Report a parking problem | Leicestershire Police \(leics.police.uk\)](#) Sign up online to the police Neighbourhood Link at: <https://www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk/#SignUp> Other methods of reporting street issues (blocked drains, broken trees, streetlights etc) is via the 'Love Clean Streets' app [Love Clean Streets](#) or 'Fix my Street' [FixMyStreet](#)

2. Working Group updates

a. **Transport Group:** JW gave an update. Aldi planning application – only interested in a cycle path along Gores Lane and back along Rockingham Road. Councillor Champion still looking into cycleway on Aldi site.

PJ gave update on meeting organised by English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) regarding potential for reopening Market Harborough to Northampton line. PJ put a motion to council to undertake feasibility (unsuccessfully). Two main issues: preserve Brampton Valley Way and the Lamport heritage railway. PJ facilitated a meeting of 37 people at Methodist Hall which concluded unanimously that a feasibility should be undertaken. Could be good for MH local economy. Still 1000 houses to be built in Market Harborough. This is not included in the Little Bowden Priorities Statement. Watching brief.

JW explained that the Cycling study document required a peer review and so it was passed onto Bob Bellm at Harborough Transport Group. JW gave a brief overview. Plan is for HTA to engage with Transport working group before passing to Cllr BC. SH and JW to meet Rachel Wigginton of Blaby group. Active Travel England has had its grant funding greatly reduced. HDC does not have access to this.

JW explained that Cllr Champion was trying to get LCC to engage with the Forum (and local groups). A neutral consultation part of the process so proposals and priorities need to be publicised. Neighbourhood Priorities Statement - To pursue the improvement of the cycling routes throughout the Little Bowden area.

b. Social and Community Activity – nothing reported. Skateboard/scooter display still proposed.

c. Flooding and Greenspaces – LH reported that no further meeting had been held but that a conversation has been had with a local resident giving some background of the landownership. It was a view to include protection of the Sheep field in the Neighbourhood Priorities Statement. It is a historic piece of land which is an integral part of Little Bowden's character. JD pointed out there is some protection from development under the current Local Plan. Possible to approach land-owner to suggest a volunteer group to help maintain the area in its current form.

A flood walk is planned for Friday 7th April 10.30am where the group will be led by Bruce Durham to discuss pinch points and catchments, starting at the Football/Rugby ground car park. LH to inform other members of the group.

PJ updated the group on the Jubilee Gardens, the proposal for which was accepted by the council. Resolution is that the council commission further investigation into the proposal and the Scrutiny panel will report back. PJ encouraged the Greenspaces group to talk at the meeting. Date to be confirmed.

d. Built Environment – PU reported that a design and guidance statement had been put together to act as a consultative document. Includes various proposals for the Neighbourhood Priorities Statement (attached). It gives a short history of key buildings and shows good and bad points about Little Bowden. It also includes some transport-related themes.

JW pointed out that if a Parish Council were formed, the community could access funding more easily to fund some of the priorities being raised (such as the signage). Funding is currently limited. JD asked what the demographic spread of the members of the Forum and whether all of the Little Bowden estates were represented. There are representatives from Ashley Way, Coleridge Way, but the new development on Blackberry Grange (Eady Drive) is not currently represented. MD pointed out that tree planting helps reduce noise, acts as a windbreak etc in developments. PU noted how he is keeping a watchful eye on planning applications coming in, such as the application for three dwellings on the site of 116 Scotland Road, which have recently been withdrawn. Overstone Park (Bowden Oaks), Blackberry Grange (Eady Drive) and the Aldi development are also being monitored.

[Section 106 Grant Fund | Community Capital Grant Fund | Harborough District Council](#)

Built environment group has split but PU suggested that a specific steering group be formed to deal with the development of the Community Centre. SH asked if anyone else would like to join this group. JW suggested that the Forum could be part of a committee or a board of trustees. PU suggested that the community needs to be consulted as to what is required for the use of the centre (bearing in mind the existing facilities in MH). Questionnaire developed by Built Environment group could be used to ascertain public opinion at a suitable time.

PU, JW and SH would initially form the group to meet. **SH to make enquiries** regarding meeting with developers and planners.

3. Social media and engagement with community

SH updated the group re website and a proposed meeting with a web designer through the Harborough Town Hub.

Presentations to the community could be put together for presentation at the Little Bowden Church Fete on the Green on 17th June. **SH to investigate**

4. AOB

Proposed Social get together at the Cherry Tree on a Tuesday evening in May. (Tuesday 23rd?)

PJ – Gave update on flooding. LCC have responded to his emails-

“The Council (LCC) continues to progress the Surface Water Management Plan for Market Harborough and working with key stakeholders on both the ‘North’ and South’ project,. The South project is however more progressed at this stage with the emphasis being on Natural Flood

Management element of that project at this time. As part of data collection for these two projects, the Council has also distributed *letters to a large number of properties in Market Harborough. There has been only a few returns so far which is disappointing. I have also liaised with the EA regarding the trash screen at Rugby Close and we are working together to look at the concerns raised about this further”.

*No one in the Forum members in attendance had received a letter.

PB – asked that no Shipping containers can be sited at the new Community Centre.

PJ – Speeding on Kettering Road is still occurring. Cllr Champion is aware and liaising with LCC.

5. Date of next meeting 20th April – Deputy Secretary, JD to stand in for SH.
Future meetings to be arranged for third Thursday in the month.

Meeting closed – 8.08pm

Little Bowden Forum – Draft Neighbourhood Priorities Statement

For discussion -

- Assist with setting up of management of new Community Centre at Overstone Park.
- To pursue purchase of the Sheep field with a view to protecting its future.
- To pursue the improvement of the cycling routes throughout the Little Bowden area, especially on Kettering Road and Gores Lane area.
- Identifiable village centre – to include signage to improve Little Bowden’s identity.
- Greenspaces to be managed and maintained effectively.
- Flood alleviation in Little Bowden to be supported.
- Enterprise areas in new developments such as workspaces and community workshops
- Planting of trees and spinneys in new developments rather than individual trees.
- Ensure the looks of new developments blend with the current standards.
- Allow more space for self-build housing projects.
- No more high-rise buildings.
- Aesthetics of the roundabouts and access to Little Bowden eg top of Clack Hill, Lidl roundabout, Rockingham Road.
- Available spaces for squares or piazzas.
- Nominations of buildings as Assets of community value.

- Engagement with Skateboarders and scooter riders to arrange some kind of demonstration.
- Assess further requirement for Defibrillators.