

**Minutes of the Little Bowden Neighbourhood Forum meeting at 6.30pm on
Thursday 21st September 2023 at Meadowdale School.**

Introductions and apologies for absence

Present: Beverley Brown (Chair), Alex Beltrao, Phil Baildon, Cllr Peter James (HDC), Pete Urmston, Cllr Barry Champion (LCC), James Ward, Jonathan Davies (minutes)

Apologies from: Josephine and Gary Brown, Sally and David Lax, Deb Greatorex-Sanderson, Julie Hilliam, Simon and Lucy Hobbs, Kay Hillier, Jan Turner, Janet Lee, Stuart Finan

1. Approval of minutes of the last meeting on 17th August and matters arising.

Report from Simon:

- I have received acknowledgement from Network Rail regarding the lighting and ramps on the footbridge at the end of Glebe Road but they say that LCC also needs to be involved. I have therefore forwarded this request to Cllr Champion and have received acknowledgement that the County Council have received the enquiry. [BC confirmed that he will chase this up]
- East Mercia Rivers Trust and Environment Agency met with Don West (Arden Forum) to discuss the vegetation on the Welland. They are looking into who might be responsible for removing it. Could a volunteer group with guidance from EMRT or EA do this? TBC
- I've written to Market Harborough and the Bowden's Charity to ask advice about funding improving or replacing the fencing on the green – St Nicholas Church.

Last month's action points:

1. PJ is continuing to chase the flood issue – hopefully be able to report next meeting. BB confirmed that there has been work in Little Bowden Rec – removal of tree root to facilitate drainage.
 2. History of the sheep field: Josephine is away, but confirmed in the Green Spaces meeting that she will be working on it.
 3. Fencing on the green – see above in Simon's report
 4. PJ hasn't received any new notifications of environmental work that needs doing. Most of the problem areas do not belong to HDC. Sainsbury's car park is owned by the company with HDC as a tenant; there is work that needs doing with the surface and HDC are in touch with a Sainsbury's contact. The boardwalk from Lidl to the station is a problem – the wood is rotten (health and safety issue?), but some vegetation has been cleared. Again, it is a private owner. PJ is hoping that someone on HDC will be given responsibility for coordinating these issues. BB - need to understand who will be POC in HDC for this/other similar issues so that we can follow up accordingly.
- BB has suggested that we include a short news update in each of our meeting from the monthly **Hub meetings**. PU to assist here – (next meeting 04.10.23). How about news from other forums too?
 - There is a blockage with the funding path because of issues in setting up a CIC, but we can still apply for money in the meantime but we need to understand how?
 - PJ said we could circulate Hub minutes to LBNF participants - ACTION.

2. No new declaration of interest.

3. Working group reports.

- BB: we really need to start getting details from the groups to put into our **Local Plan**. There's a template from Burton Overy which gives an idea/template and it is not too complicated. However this would only be our "first" draft – we will need professional support.

- PU: we really need an expert to help us with the Plan which will cost. However we can do an amateur version ourselves. We need something that isn't too complicated, that avoids duplication (e.g. with things already in the Local Plan) and is in plain language. There is a toolkit: <https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/plan-making/neighbourhood-plans/dclg-neighbourhood-planning-case-studies/engaging-local-5#:~:text=It%20offers%20advice%20for%20smaller,if%20they%20wish%20adapt%20for>
Most of the policies apply to us, but we need to fill in our local issues and cut out anything that doesn't apply. It is important that everything is evidence-driven – that's what we need the expert for. Ab – showed us this on screen.

a. **Social and community group.**

AB: we didn't meet, but have been looking into **defibrillators**. AB showed a map that he has compiled of where they are in the town, but only one or two have been checked to find out whether they are available all the time or just in office hours. The map shows an area of 250metres around each defib; that relates to the time it takes to find the defib and bring it to the person in distress. The map illustrates the problem in Little Bowden – there are large areas with no coverage. Coverage in town centre is much better. They all have to be centrally registered to obtain a location code. [JD post-meeting research: the British Heart Foundation keeps a register of locations called 'The Circuit' which it shares with East Midlands Ambulance Service]

BB: even once we know coverage, we need to understand management of the unit – I have experience of Welland Park through weekly parkrun. They cost £1,000+ and there are on-going costs for new pads after use, periodic battery replacement, etc.

JW: they are usually locally funded, by charities, etc. Should the skate park have one?

PB: the new community centre on Clack Hill should have one.

BC: there really should have been a standardised type of location so they are easy to find, for example, everyone can see/knows the location of post boxes.

We decided that this is a town wide issue – take back to The Hub

AB: there's always **anti-social behaviour** to discuss, but it's difficult to draw conclusions from hearsay.

PJ: Little Bowden Rec hasn't been so bad recently.

JD: CCTV may be having an impact.

b. **Flooding and green spaces group.**

PJ is trying to get an update on what the multi-agency groups are doing in terms of **flood relief** discussions. Bruce Durham has done a lot of work in mapping the drainage of the area. We need to be able to model where flooding may occur and try to avoid duplicating the work.

PU: there's an Environment Agency map showing where flood events have occurred.

AB: had Bruce's database and will share what he finds from that. AB has been working to establish a drainage map; he has been in touch with LCC who are chasing Anglian Water who should have one, but it is slow.

JW: there are blocked drains down Kettering Road and elsewhere which are a problem. LCC was working the Davidson Homes to get them cleared, but no progress yet.

PJ: there are sandbags in the Council car park; people can take two each.

AB showed a **map** he has downloaded from HDC **of the green spaces** in Little Bowden. The map is incomplete, but he can add to it to show the location and use of any green spaces. ACTION

JU: the map should include spaces suitable for rewilding.

JD: John Comont also mentioned a national scheme to create green corridors to allow movement of wildlife. These are being mapped nationally and include areas like rivers. The Brampton Valley Way would be suitable.

PJ mentioned the space opposite the Methodist Church. Things are beginning to happen to change that space; HDC has applied to fell six trees – some have a preservation order but are diseased. The intention is to open the space up and maybe put some seating in.

c. Built Environment group

PU: regarding the point above about **tree felling**, the open space will allow the back of Sainsbury's to be seen. PB: there is a tree called Japanese Holly that could be used for screening.

PU: pressure needs to be maintained on the developers at Overstone Park to ensure the **walking/cycling path** is delivered, therefore the path should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

PB has reported that there is an application for change of use of the **former Phoenix building** on the corner of Springfield Street and Northampton Road. There is concern about traffic emerging from any sort of development on this site.

PU: It was decided to recommend that the current **draft Little Bowden Review document** should be put forward into the Neighbourhood Plan with no substantial amendments apart from the addition of location maps. However it may need to be re-formatted and re-written in parts to conform to the eventual NP presentation style. While parts of the review can be incorporated into the body of the NP document, the group recommends that it should also be presented as a separate addendum document for independent use as guidance to prospective developers.

PU: there was discussion about the issue of **upward extension of bungalows** which is a loss of amenity for the older population.

PU: "**Non-Designated Heritage Assets**" to be identified. So far the Victorian post box outside the old post office on Scotland Road. Also, although strictly outside our area, the old gas lights on the Kettering Road bridge.

PU: With regard to the proposed **community facilities at the Overstone Park development**. The group recommends that LBNF press HDC and the developers to publicise the availability of this up and coming facility more vigorously to interested parties and organisations to ensure that it is realised in full as part of the development. The group also recommends that, if it proves difficult to secure permanent occupation of the proposed retail units then the developer should consider a more flexible space and facility that could accommodate pop up retail, markets, workshop and hospitality uses. The group further recommends that LBNF endeavour to establish direct communication with the developers to feedback community comments and ideas.

PU: **Little Bowden signage project**. The group recommends that LBNF instigates a program for the project to decide locations, form and design (including the possible involvement of local groups and schools), permissions and costs. It is acknowledged that no funding is yet available but that firm proposals for presentation to the council and others may help in the securing of future interest and funds.

PU: **The Lidl roundabout**. The group recommends that LBNF should lobby for the incremental visual enhancement and maintenance of this entrance to Little Bowden and that enhancement work to this feature should be included in the Little Bowden NP. BB Can the RAB be reduced as this can be a huge bottleneck at busy times and no room for 2 cars to pass safely

PU: The group recommends that LBNF invites **a planning officer** to a future meeting to answer questions on the planning department's attitude to future development in Little Bowden. Likewise, the group recommends that LBNF invite **a community officer** from HDC to a future meeting to discuss the councils approach to the new community facilities at Overstone Park. It was noted that there is no secular dedicated community facility in Little Bowden and that the Overstone Park centre will be of great importance to the whole area.

d. Transport group

JW: the group hasn't met, but there are some things to report. Leicestershire is lagging behind with its **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)** but things seem to be moving now and there is a chance that work will begin on the Kettering Road cycle route soon. However the developer will always go for least cost solution which may not be the most desirable for residents. Gema Barley, the LCC LCWIP Project Manager has asked for a contact name at each Neighbourhood

Forum for a database of consultees they are compiling. **Agreed** that initial contact name will be James & Beverley/Jan.

The first public consultation exercise on the LCWIP will start in the next few weeks. It will be an online event with the ability to post comments on their website. However Gema has also said that she's happy to accept proposals from the NF's in whatever format we choose, so we need to get that to her. Harborough has a lot of S106 money to spend.

JW: the proposed cycle route down Kettering Road could link to the station by going along the path by ATS, then over the Welland (a bridge would be needed) and through the flood arch under the railway.

BC: concern at **Little Bowden school** over road markings which Barry has chased up. There are also a lot of people sitting in cars with their engines running, waiting for children. They are sometimes doing so for a long time. There is a LCC group who come into schools to try to alleviate that issue.

BC: **speeding** on Kettering Road won't be dealt with unless there's evidence. Drivers can't be prosecuted unless it's a Police speed trap.

PJ: There's also a problem with the 20mph limit along Scotland Road – the limit is currently unenforceable because there isn't the regulation signage.

4. City of Leicester housing.

PJ: 18th September Council meeting has deferred the decision about accepting the request from Leicester City until 6th November to allow for gathering of information. The City council says it hasn't got enough brownfield sites, but there is uncertainty over whether they have really worked to identify them. Legally, adjacent councils have a 'duty of cooperation' which has led to other councils in Leicestershire except for Hinckley and Harborough agreeing to take some of the City's load of new houses. However, the legality is a grey area because after 2024 the law will change; Neil O'Brien knows this and is campaigning against Harborough district building more houses that necessary. The problem is that if HDC don't agree to help the City, our local plan might not be approved and if that happens, HDC has no control over where developers apply to build. We've actually exceeded our allocation of new houses in Harborough district in recent years and people are concerned about medical appointments and traffic as a result of increased population.

BC: this is all going to be in the long term. The houses that are being argued about won't be built for a long time – probably decades. The housing is supposed to be for people who work in the city.

5. Meeting closed at 8.30pm. **Date of next meeting: Thurs 19th October 2023**

Action	What	Who	By when	Comment/outcome
1/0923	Tell Alex anything you know about green spaces and drains so he can add to the map	Anyone	Next meeting	Ongoing
2/0923	Send photos of overgrown paths, etc, to: p.james@harborough.gov.uk	Anyone	Next meeting	Ongoing
3/0923	James Ward to put his name forward to Gema Barley (LCC LCWIP) as LBNF contact. With Beverley/Jan	James	Next meeting	James becomes point of contact with Gema Barley
4/0923	Alex to forward the latest cycling and walking plan and any schedule of improvements to James.	Alex	Next meeting	James can forward it to Gema Barley

5/0923	Amend the order in which working groups present to the meeting	Simon	Next meeting	Agenda has groups in a different order
6/0923	Are there any more heritage assets that people can identify? (see item 3.c. above)	Anyone	Ongoing	Notify Pete U to add to list.