

DUDLEY BOROUGH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Tuesday, 24th September, 2013 at 6.00pm in Committee Room 4
at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley

PRESENT:

Ms T Boothroyd (Chair)
Mr R J Brooks (Vice-Chair)
Mr R Burgess, Mr P Greenaway, Mr N J Williams, Councillor Woodall and Ms S Yeadon.

Officers:

Mr D Jacobs – Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation), Mr D Keeley – Countryside Manager (Both Directorate of the Urban Environment) and Mrs K Taylor - Democratic Services Officer (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mr D Bates, Mr A Cutler, Ms J V Lea, Ms A Nicholls and Ms A Smith.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms S Yeadon, Mr R Burgess and Mr N J Williams declared an interest in Agenda Item Number 4 – Coombeswood Green Wedge as the Chair of Friends of Coombeswood Wedge and as a Member of Friends of Coombeswood and Coombeswood Canal Trust respectively.

19. MINUTES

AGREED

That the Minutes of the Forum held on 16th July, 2013, be approved as a correct record.

20. COOMBESWOOD GREEN WEDGE

Mr D Keeley, Countryside Manager gave a brief verbal update in relation to the Coombeswood Green Wedge advising that the conservation land had been transferred from St Modwen, however it was anticipated that the money would not be transferred until the new year.

Mr Keeley further stated that following conversations with the Park Warden at Leasowes Park, a number of tasks would be undertaken in the near future.

Mr R Burgess informed the Forum that a Countryside Management Plan was being developed with a view to presenting it to St Modwen.

It was further noted that the issue surrounding liability insurance for volunteers had now been arranged.

Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, (Traffic and Transportation), confirmed that he had walked the paths that he wished to make definitive on the Coombeswood Green Wedge with Mr Burgess. He also stated that he had been invited to attend an interview in relation to the obstruction on path H26.

Mr Jacobs stated that should the path be re-instated immediately then the costs would be significant to the Council, and Mr N Williams suggested that if the interview was not successful then a strong written letter be sent to the landowners.

Following comments made, the Chair agreed to contact Dave Clarke, Enforcement Officer, on behalf of the Forum, for an update in relation to Pottery Farm, following the aforementioned interview.

AGREED

- (1) That the information reported on at the Meeting, be noted.
- (2) That the Chair be requested to contact Dave Clarke, Enforcement Officer, on behalf of the Forum, for an update in relation to Pottery Farm.

21. ANNUAL REPORT

A draft report by the Chair in relation to the Annual Report of the Forum was submitted.

The Chair gave a brief outline in relation to the Annual report of the Forum and commented on the article submitted by Sue Bowl in relation to Cotwall End.

Mr Keeley stated that Natural England had amended the form and therefore incorporated information and additional comments received by members into the new pro-forma.

AGREED

- (1) That the Annual Report of the Forum, be noted.
 - (2) The Chair be requested to send a copy of the Cotwall End article to Ms Yeadon; Mr Williams; Mr Brooks and Mr Greenaway.
-

22. DEDICATION OF PUBLIC PATHS AT LEASOWES

Mr Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation gave a verbal presentation in relation to the dedication of public paths at Leasowes.

Mr Jacobs stated that he had investigated the possibility of updating ordinance survey maps, and reported that he had been informed that maps were updated upon requests made. He also reported on the benefits of using a Walkers Scale as it identified permissive ways.

It was noted that although there was a definitive path identified from the Canal by Manor Way, there was a debate how to get from the west side of the Canal to the Warden site. Mr Jacobs stated that following a walk through Leasowes, a path had been identified which he would recommend to be definitive, which was located off Kent Road alongside the Golf Club. All members agreed to the proposal made.

There followed a discussion by members in respect of the misleading sign that had been erected at Leasowes Park by the owners of the adjoining Golf Club. It was agreed that the Chair and members would undertake a site visit to investigate the signs, and an invitation sent to Marian Dillar.

In responding to a question asked by Mr Burgess; Mr Jacobs confirmed that the Stour River path had been identified on the map as definitive. He also stated that he would submit a further report to the next meeting of the Forum in relation to the dedication of paths.

AGREED

- (1) That the information reported on at the Meeting, be noted.
 - (2) That a site visit be arranged to view the signs erected by the Golf Club, and that the Chair, Mr Williams, Mr Jacobs, Ms Yeadon, Mr Burgess; Mr Brooks and Marian Dillar be invited.
 - (3) That Mr D Jacobs, Project Engineer, Traffic and Transportation, be requested to submit a further report in relation to the dedication of paths to the next meeting of the Forum.
-

23. LOSS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

A report by Mr R Brooks was submitted in relation to the Loss of Public Open Space.

Mr Brooks referred to two recent articles in the local newspaper notifying the public of a sale of public open space, and raised concerns at the cumulative effect of the loss of space. He stated that it would be beneficial if the Council was recommended to arrange a land swap, or where that was not possible a fund be created into which the proceeds from any land sale be put, in order that new open space could be purchased when opportunities arose.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that it would be beneficial for Mr Brooks to contact Robin Whitehouse, Senior Planning Policy Officer or Gill King, Principal Property Manager, to ascertain where the funds were kept once an area of land had been sold, and report back to the Forum.

AGREED

- (1) That the information reported on at the Meeting, be noted.
 - (2) That Mr Brooks investigate where funds were kept once an area of land had been sold, and report back to the Forum.
-

24. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

Following a discussion in relation to the complex nature of Section 106 Agreements it was :-

AGREED

- (1) That the Chair contact Helen Martin, Planning, directly to invite her to a future meeting of the Forum to explain Section 106 Agreements in more detail.
 - (2) That Mr D Keeley, Countryside Manager, be requested to circulate a copy of the model agreement in relation to Community Infrastructure Level, which was to replace Section 106 agreements, to members of the Forum.
-

25. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Although it was noted that no new Planning Applications had been received, Mr Jacobs informed the Forum that Mr D Bates had submitted a planning application, the outcome of which was unknown.

AGREED

That the information reported on at the Meeting, be noted.

26. ACCESS/RIGHTS OF WAY ISSUES

It was noted that there were none to be considered.

27. GATING ORDERS

It was noted that there were none to be considered.

28. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

It was noted that no items had been raised.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that no items had been raised.

30. DATES OF AGENDA PLANNING MEETINGS

It was noted that the remainder of the agenda planning meetings had been cancelled, and that members agreed to replace the dates for these, with deadline dates for reports for future meetings.

AGREED

That the Democratic Services Officer be requested to update agendas for future meetings by deleting the dates of agenda planning meetings and replacing them with deadline dates for reports for future meetings of the Forum.

31. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted, that the future meetings of the Forum would be held on:-

- Tuesday 3rd December, 2013
- Tuesday 18th February, 2014
- Tuesday 29th April, 2014
- Tuesday 15th July, 2014

and that all future meetings would be held in Committee Room 4 at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN