

FUTURE EVENTS

- 15 March** Action against Kate Barker, Houghton Regis (Victoria 01525 385097)
- 20 March** Launch of Leighton-Linslade Town Plan (Steve Lakin 01525 631920)
- 26 March** Anoraks' Meeting 7.30pm at 41 Corbet Ride, Leighton Buzzard (Victoria)
- 26 March** Rally in support of Sustainable Communities Bill 7-9pm Westminster Central Hall (Ken 01525 372036)
- 27 March** Greening of Leighton Buzzard, Leighton Middle School 7.30-9pm (Victoria)[note change of venue]
- 2 April** A505 Wild Flower Planting (Victoria)
- 5-6 April** Campaign Against Climate Change Expose Exxon Day – Leatherhead (Michael 01582 606021)
- 10 April** Monthly Meeting 7.30 for 8.00pm at The Crown, North Street, Leighton Buzzard (Chris 01525 382343)
- 21 April** Wing Hill Roundabout Protest – 10.30am (Sean 01296 682280)
- 24 April** Green Fayre, Priory Middle School, Dunstable (Peter 01582 663915)
- 1 May** Visit to Oualtine Farm, Kings Langley (Alison 01582 662467)
- 2 May** Monthly Meeting 7.30 for 8.00pm at The Globe, Dunstable (Peter)
- 7 May** May Fayre, High Street, Leighton Buzzard (Ken)
- 14 July** Action against Tesco (Victoria)

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND THE MONTHLY MEETING ON 5 MARCH 2007

Present: Victoria Harvey (Facilitator), Suzanne Winder, Heather Fox, Albert West, Gladys Knight, Peter Hatswell, Michael Taylor, Andy Gayler, Sean Kelly, Ken Barry. Gladys Knight was welcomed as a new member.

Apologies: Chris Stevenson, Stella Goddard, Barry Metcalfe, Jane Brown, Alison Heywood

AGM

a. Co-ordinator's Report

Victoria outlined the previous year activities. The Group had been very active and was now a lot stronger than a year ago. Two main activities had dominated – the first being the Exemplar Sustainable Travel Site in a new development of 1500 houses in Leighton Buzzard. Victoria had spent a considerable amount of time and had set up lots of meeting between the developers, Arriva and the bus companies to agree the principles, first to “civilise” Billington Road (make it pleasanter to walk and cycle into town) high frequency bus services and real time information screens installed in the new houses. Due to our lobbying, with the help of Stephen Joseph of Transport 2000, £1 million had been offered from DCLG but there were had been serious problems from the audit department of the county council in allowing a contract directly between the bus company and the developer. Victoria had to threaten sit-in protests over

December and January in order to get the audit department to approve the package. The housing development is now going to appeal, however it should go ahead.

The second major issue had been the regional planning and housing proposals for both South East and the East of England. The group had taken part in the Examination in Public (before the Planning Inspectorate.) for both regions. We have still been lobbying for the implementation of the Joint Transport Strategy for Leighton Linlade (which was set up as a result of the anti-bypass protests). Victoria is the only non-councillor on the Energy Review Group of the growth area committee of SBDC. This is quite an honour and puts us in a very strong position to lobby for renewables and high standards of energy efficiency in the LDFs for the new house building.

This is very much due to all of Michael Taylor and Peter Hatswell's hard work over the last few years.

Other activities had involved working with Aylesbury Vale FoE on the threat of a Wing Bypass. We raised £2000 to employ a top transport expert who has advised the government, Denvil Coombe, to do a report on the Modelling that Bucks CC had done of the routes. This had some criticisms and as a result we raised another £2000 to commission Steer Davis Gleave, Independent Transport consultants to do a scoping report for an alternatives report. This will be a £40,000 report on a serious and credible alternative to the road option which will include serious improvements to walking and cycling and top quality bus services and will deal with the issues of congestion etc. Bucks CC had contributed £20,000 and we are in the process of raising the other £20,000 Work had also been carried out in obtaining a consultants report on the Luton Northern Bypass, criticising the lack of an examination of a sustainable transport alternative as instructed by the DfT. In response the joint planning and transportation committee agreed that there should be consultation on a sustainable transport alternative in the LDFs.

We have campaigned with Bedfordshire Councils Planning Consortium on biodiversity issues. We raised £1600 to employ Charlie Hopkins of Earthrights Solicitors to provide advice and to write to Go-East and the South East Regional assembly to advise them that they were not following the Habitats Directive.

We also campaigned successfully to improve the bus service in Linlade, by handing out leaflets with the numbers of county councillors so that people could contact the appropriate people. We also campaigned successfully to get the planning application in Millars Dairy turned down as it would make it much less pleasant to walk and cycle across the canal bridge. In addition we had arranged two successful palm oil demonstrations, one in Dunstable and one in Leighton Buzzard and had had successful stalls at the May Fayre.

Peter Hatswell and Michael Taylor organised stalls on the theme of climate change at Houghton Regis Carnival and the Dunstable Kite Festival.

We arranged a children's activity day in the summer.

A Greening Group had been set up jointly with the Town Council and South Beds FoE in Leighton Buzzard which in turn had helped Heather Fox and Ken Barry to set up with the Greensand Trust the Friends of Linlade Woods and Chris Stevenson to set up with the Greensand trust the Friends of Clipstone Brook group.

A number of successful working parties had been arranged.

The New Members Meeting on housing had received an overwhelming response.

We had also held a demonstration in support of buses in Dunstable, and had spearheaded the campaign to save Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable markets.

Stella has kept the website updated and full of information for the last year and we have had very good feedback about the website.

b. Election of Officers

It was agreed that the role of Co-ordinator and Facilitator be combined. The following officers were elected:

Co-ordinator/Facilitator: Victoria Harvey proposed by Ken, seconded by Suzanne

Treasurer: Ken Barry proposed by Victoria, seconded by Heather

Membership Secretary: Chris Stevenson proposed by Heather, seconded by Peter

Climate Change Activist: Peter Hatswell proposed by Michael, seconded by Victoria.

c. Treasurer's Report

Ken presented the Summary of Accounts for 2006. These showed a loss of £109.46. The current financial position showed a total of £2,639.64 but this included a total of £2,504.54 ringfenced for the Habitats

Directive, Luton Northern Bypass campaign, Wing Bypass campaign and the Save the Markets fund. This left a remainder of £135.10 for general expenses. The accounts were accepted.

Wing Hill Bypass Roundabout Protest

Sean reported that the roundabout as now planned had no facilities for walkers and cyclists. Bucks CC had originally proposed that a bridge be built at the site but could no longer afford this, so had proposed a pedestrian refuge in the middle of the dual carriageway. There had already been one fatal accident at the site and it was agreed that the site was a potential death-trap for walkers and cyclists. Sean had attended a Wing village meeting and all present had been appalled at the lack of a bridge. An event had therefore been planned to draw attention to the problem. This will be at 10.30 on 21 April. It was proposed to organise a spoof sponsored cycle ride and to leaflet motorists. Sean will email details to Chris Stevenson and Ken will liaise with the Ramblers Association.

Campaign to Save the Markets

The solicitors had sent a “letter before claim prior to judicial review” to SBDC on behalf of Leighton Linslade Town Council, Market Traders Association and South Beds FoE. A press release would be issued asking for SBDC to wait to sign the contract with Wendy Fair after their court case in which they are being prosecuted for the aiding and abetting of the sale of counterfeit goods.. £40,000 will need to be raised for the judicial review. It was reported that Dunstable Town Council had now indicated that they supported Wendy Fayre and had turned against the market traders. Victoria will try to persuade LBO and the Dunstable Gazette to support the campaign.

Energy Grants and New Development

Michael had applied for a grant to install photovoltaic cells but had missed the deadline of 1 March because of problems with the website. He will be re-applying before 1 April. Victoria reported that the Sustainable Travel Site is going to public inquiry. The developer wants Eco-Homes Very Good standard but SBDC want Eco-Homes Excellent. Paul Brown had suggested that utilising ground heat pumps was the most effective method, but these are more expensive than photovoltaic cells which require less maintenance. The cheapest method is solar panels combined with good insulation. Peter will send Victoria details of the Eco-House at Watford.

Green Fayre

Peter has booked Priory Middle School for 24 April. Victoria will ask SBDC to provide a speaker on recycling with opportunities for questions. Peter will talk on energy saving and will ask Roger Pepworth to introduce the speakers. Victoria will approach FoE for a speaker on food, or else will enquire with Beds CC for a speaker to promote local food. Heather agreed to do some research on local wines for the event. Peter will arrange for Fairtrade tea and coffee for refreshments.

Waste Action

This will be action against Tesco and packaging. Suzanne will contact Becky Slater at FoE for information. It was agreed that action will take place at Leighton Buzzard Tesco on 14 July, and will involve buying and removing unnecessary packaging in the shop and taking photos while also having a demonstration outside.

Dates

- a. Ovaltine Farm visit. This will be on 1 May at about 6 or 7pm – Alison Heywood to arrange.
- b. May Fayre – 7 May. To be discussed at next members meeting.
- c. Anoraks Meeting: 26 March at Victoria’s house.
- d. Monthly members meeting: 2 May in Dunstable.
- e. Kate Barker is threatening to speak in Houghton Regis on 15 March – Victoria will email members regarding possibility of a demonstration.

Other Business

- a. Peter produced a plan of the new Parkside Site in Houghton Regis. This consisted solely of houses with no infrastructure.
- b. Peter reported that the route of the Dunstable Northern Bypass had been approved and included a new Junction 11A on the M1, but no feeder road to the industrial estate and no mention of de-trunking the A5. It is feared that this will cause more traffic in Houghton Regis.

- c. Sustainable Communities Bill. Ken reported that there was a rally in support of the Bill on Monday 26 March at Westminster Central Hall at 7-9pm.

CONTACTS

Officers

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