

Better Environment Thematic Group of West Lancashire LSP

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 7th June 2011

Present: Richard Small (Chair) – Liverpool John Moores University
Tina Iball – WLBC, Environment
Lindsay Beaton – Wildlife Trust
Steve Kent – WLBC, Leisure
Joanne Hudson – LCC, Environment
Dominic Carr – WLBC, Planning Policy

	Action
<p>1. <u>Introductions and apologies</u></p> <p>RS welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from:</p> <p>Dominic Rigby – LCC, Countryside Dave Dunlop – Wildlife Trust Tim Graham – Wildlife Trust Gillian Whitfield – WLBC, Planning Policy Laura Gee – WLBC, Housing Pat Burgess – WLBC, Waste and Recycling Pam Brandwood – Edge Hill University</p> <p>Georgina Fellows from the Environment Agency has kindly agreed to contribute to the group via email and minutes but is unable to attend meetings due to pressure on staff resources.</p>	
<p>2. <u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></p> <p>The minutes of the last meetings were agreed to be a true record.</p> <p>Second Homes Fund update:</p> <p>The final report from Groundwork Pennine Lancashire regarding the West Lancashire Climate Change Programme was well received by the LSP Executive at their last meeting. This project successfully secured Second Homes Funding in 2009/10 and delivered workshops and advice to 29 target groups (schools and community groups) and provided 16 organisations with further advice on funding to implement identified actions. The value of the grants secured from this work totalled £82,421, far exceeding the £10,000 target.</p> <p>The group agreed the project has been a success and that a letter of thanks should be sent to Groundwork, with an invitation to consider scope for further work in 2011/12.</p>	<p>TI</p>

The interim report of the Community Food Growing project was also well received and highlighted the good work being done to increase the number of plots available and accommodate the very high demand.

The two funding bids submitted to the last round of the Second Homes Fund included the Wildlife Trust's application for works at Mere Sands Wood and the British Waterways application for the Sparks Lane picnic area. These bids have unfortunately been unsuccessful in this round, however the Executive felt that they are very worthy projects and would like to see them given an opportunity to be reconsidered this financial year. Notwithstanding this, allocation of the Second Homes Fund is currently undergoing a review so it may be some time before further clarity on the success of the bids is known.

West Lancashire Council is to produce a borough wide Sustainability Strategy to aid delivery of low carbon projects and opportunities across West Lancashire. The Strategy framework received initial support from Members this week and work with stakeholders is to start imminently. A draft Strategy should hopefully be ready for public consultation by the end of summer.

3. **ETG Action Plans 2011-12 and Progress Updates**

Please see Progress Report February 2011 to May 2011 for details of progress made over this quarter.

Other issues discussed include:

Joanne Hudson raised the issue that Lancashire County Council will be using action plans such as this to identify projects that tie in with their objectives for inclusion in their work programme. Therefore she would encourage members of the group to include aspirational actions that might currently have no resources or funding.

If members of the group have any projects or ideas not currently included in the action plans please contact Tina Iball.

All

Steve Kent informed the group of two new projects he would like to add:

1. **Douglas Linear Park:** proposals to develop a linear park between Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, on the West Lancs side of the river. The land is currently underused and the public access is not ideal. A working group has been set up, with great support from the Parish Councils, and a feasibility study undertaken but lots of further work is needed. Some funding has been allocated for phase 1 of the project which includes overcoming land ownership and access issues. This work is to start soon. It is hoped this can be developed more fully in subsequent years. This links in with work currently ongoing through the Core Strategy.

2. **Burscough Community Woodland:** proposals to develop a community woodland area on the landfill site at Platts Lane, Burscough. An OGM (Organic Growing Medium) working group has been formed to facilitate the large quantities of green waste that will be required and investigate the feasibility of a woodland scheme being implemented by 2015, if sufficient funding can be found. Funding has currently been secured for initial ground investigations. The benefits of the project are woodland creation, with associated carbon savings, public amenity and the re-use of green waste. The land is Council owned and the project is fully supported by the Parish Council. A second site at Mill Dam Lane may also be investigated at a later date.

4. **LDF Core Strategy Update**

Dominic Carr informed the group of the Council's work on the Core Strategy. This is an overarching document which sets out a vision of how we would like the Borough to look in 15 years. The Preferred Options document is currently out for consultation until the 24th June.

The document can be viewed [here](#) and your comments are welcomed. They can be submitted online or through the post. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the LDF team on LDF@westlancs.gov.uk.

5. **Mere Sands Wood Management Plan**

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Lindsay Beaton informed the group that the 5 year management plan for MSW is currently being revised and seeking stakeholder consultation.

The main questions being asked are:

- What is MSW's socio-economic role in the area? How high a priority should this be given in the management of the Reserve? Should we be aiming to change our socio-economic role?
- What is the primary value and purpose of MSW (e.g. reserve; connectivity; education)?
- The founding vision for MSW was that it should include examples of all types of habitat found in West Lancashire. Should we retain this as the vision for MSW? If it should change, how and why? What are the benefits of sticking with this vision?
- What role does MSW play in the ecosystems of the area?
- Should the purpose of the current management change?
- What are the primary habitats and species MSW should be managed for?
- Are there specific habitats / species/ features of MSW that are especially vulnerable and need focused attention?
- MSW is designated SSSI in respect of its geology. What more should we do to protect and promote the geological features of MSW?
- What historical features of MSW should we aim to preserve and promote?

The group discussed their opinions in response to these questions. The main points raised highlighted that MSW is seen as an oasis of high importance for wildlife which provides a very important landscape and example of a true nature reserve. MSW currently has lots of small habitats for a diverse range of species but maybe it should focus on it's main strengths i.e. water habitat and less so on others i.e. sand dune habitats. A focus could also be those species without the ability to move through expanding habitat and improved links with Martin Mere. Other values are in recreation and tourism and maybe there is scope for more partnership working with schools across the borough. However this requires funding for works such as improved visitor centre and overflow car parking.

If you would like any further information or have any comments or ideas please contact Lindsay directly on lbeaton@lancswt.org.uk.

All

6. **Any other business**

No further items were raised.

7. **Date of next meeting**

TI to arrange electronically for Mid September.

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