

**Notes of the meeting of the DOVER NORTH Neighbourhood Forum held on 15 July 2009 at the Pines Calyx, Bay Road, St. Margaret's Bay at 7.00pm.**

**Present:**

Parish Councillor                      David Hart      outgoing Chairman

District Councillor                  David Lloyd-Jones   incoming Chairman

Kent County Councillor          Stephen Manion

Other Councillors, officers and members of the public.

1. Chairman's welcome

David Hart, the outgoing Chairman, welcomed those attending the meeting, thanked officers who had supported the three years of Neighbourhood Forums, congratulated the newly elected County Councillor Steve Manion, and stated his belief that the Forums were beginning to have an influence on the District and County Councils. DDC Cllr David Lloyd-Jones was introduced as the new Chairman and the previous Chairman of the Forum was thanked for her contributions.

2. Notes of the previous meeting and matters arising

David Hart was invited to update the meeting on responses to his letters to KCC Highways and the then Minister of Transport, Geoff Hoon, in respect of HGVs using laybys on the main transport routes around Dover and the picture this gave to tourists arriving in the UK. 36 photos illustrating the rubbish and detritus had been sent to the DfT and the reply eventually received was read out to the meeting; in summary government had determined not to impose any charges on lorry drivers under a vignette scheme. David Hart had subsequently spoken to the owner of a Dutch transport company who explained that goods transported in the UK were either bought or sold in the UK and were not in transit to other countries as was the case in Germany for example. A reply from Michael Howard MP had referred to KCC's proposals for an HGV park at Sellinge which was in his constituency and therefore he was unable to support the Forum's views. With regard to the A258, full credit should be given to those who signed petitions which resulted in about £1m spent on the route. Great improvements had been made but no legislation could control bad driving which had been the cause of previous accidents.

3. Mr Alistair Gould, Chairman of the Bay Trust, spoke of the need for environmental education to focus on the next generation, the links with Rippledawn Education Centre for practical skills in low carbon building techniques and the positive evidence provided by the Pines Calyx building itself. A short video of a Danish community was shown illustrating how, over a period of about 20 years, the 45,000 inhabitants had achieved economic, elegant and sustainable energy systems. The UK had more wind and wave power available than any other European country, recent government initiatives were driving down from the top and needed to be met by local and community issues from the grass roots. St Margaret's was one of 6 low carbon villages

in Kent and the Parish Council was leading initiatives such as a strategic study of options for village energy production and identification of land within the village to be used for a community farm producing local food.

4. Rosie Rechter of Deal With It Campaign, explained that the group had grown from a Neighbourhood Forum meeting 2 years ago and encouraged individual sustainable actions in order to achieve large scale changes. The group had organised films, meetings, exhibitions, stalls and lobbied politicians to raise awareness. Brochures were available listing some of the actions which could be undertaken and giving contact details and a blog address. The first campaign to ban single-use plastic carrier bags had resulted in 60-65% of local retailers reporting a reduction in use of the bags. Other achievements had been a meeting with Caroline Lucas MP, a future meeting with Michael Meacher MP in October, a Green Matters column in the local Mercury newspaper, objections to the Local Development Framework and lobbying MPs. A blog site had been set up, links forged with other groups to bring in younger members and an event was planned for October in the Landmark Centre. A carbon audit of the district was possible and Ed Milliband's recent new schemes for individual contributions to the National Grid could be feasible and advantageous. Local schemes for insulation, collecting organic rubbish for composting, an energy audit of government buildings and local government procurement policies should be undertaken. Human beings were ingenious and could come up with ingenious solutions to global warming; home production of energy could overcome the 30% of energy lost between the generating station and the home.
  
5. Jack Williams, Head Prefect at Dover Boys' Grammar School and Green Footprint Group Managing Director told the meeting that of 21,000 schools in the UK only 9,000 were 'eco' schools and 400 of those were in Kent. The Green Footprint Group had been set up by himself and five other teenage students at the school who wanted to raise awareness and their project had received a silver award. Subsequently they had given support and advice to other secondary schools, held an Eco Business conference for 100 local businesses to help overcome 'marketing myopia' and focus on making savings plus good marketing, and organised an Eco Primary Day for young children. The 6 teenagers had found it hard but wanted to keep the momentum going; they had entered the Young Enterprise Scheme, along with 3,000 others, with a 100% unbleached cotton carrier bag production and sold 3,000 nationwide, involving Tradecraft and Chambers of Commerce. Their company won the Dover, district, and regional rounds, became the top team in England and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the UK in the 2008 finals. To be directors of a company at the ages of 17 and 18 felt quite surreal! The company had a low profit margin and had now developed an Eco Button USB device which would switch a computer into 'eco-mode' which is more economical than conventional standby, thus saving energy, money and CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. The button retailed at £14.99 and had won the Most Innovative Green Product Award in 2008.

While the government supported householders in achieving energy efficiency, the education system was lagging behind: why was there no support or funding for installing wind turbines on all school buildings? Given the Boys' Grammar School location on the top of a hill, they would be bound to generate energy by this means!

This should be a policy for all government buildings and would encourage local communities.

6. Question and answer session

- Why are KCC and DDC not supporting green villages? This could link to the Local Development Framework and the whole District could be self sufficient. DDC should insist on all houses being built to correct standards and KCC should insist on eco-lighting on roads plus efficient road surfaces. Cllrs Ian Ward and Steve Manion advised that energy efficiency was a matter for Building Regulations rather than Planning; DDC had installed a wind turbine; energy efficiency is a financial imperative; and the collection of kitchen waste was being investigated. These initiatives had to be balanced against Council Tax and while DDC's progress on recycling had been slower than some other authorities it would be sustainable in the long term. Alistair Gould believed that lessons should be learned from Europe and the rest of the world with more integrated solutions being applied. The UK used an older standard for house building than Europe and government needed to take action to remedy this. Italy and Germany were leading the field in Europe and their standards should be translated and adopted here.
- Kent has less water per head of population than Cairo and the population was increasing. New technologies were needed for households, farming and land management. Educating developers was paramount; many builders were supportive of 'green' measures but the developments had to make economic sense.
- Burning rubbish to produce electricity. Ideally this was a last resort; a demanding society produced more garbage whereas there was no waste in nature. Reduce, re-use, recycle and be less wasteful. The main problem was creating too much waste in the first place.
- Is there too much emphasis on wind turbines? UK is one of the top 7 windy countries in Europe. Plenty of integrated, economically viable, income-generating solutions exist; wind turbines are appropriate in certain locations and biomass was an alternative. Nuclear power was unsustainable, uranium supplies would run out and waste had to be dealt with. Over the next 3-5 years rolling power blackouts could be expected. Why not use the many coal deposits left in the UK?
- Tidal and current power was particularly significant along the coast; St. Margaret's had one of the highest tide levels and tidal flow would be ideal for a turbine project if the shallow waters could be overcome. Wave power would be more appropriate on the west coast of UK. Why did leading innovations not receive investment?
- Energy use should be made more visible at a community level; images such as a thermometer could show energy/water use and help to meet targets. Behavioural change is also a key driver and visible measurements are particularly useful in schools. Educational premises should be used to start with to reinforce the message. St. Margaret's had energy monitors which could be lent out. Hougham had carried out an exercise which resulted in a shock over the amount of power used by domestic appliances, particularly clocks on microwave ovens and other parishes had been given this information at DDC's annual Town and Parish Liaison meeting in 2008. Why was electrical equipment with low energy efficiency still produced, imported and sold? Freeview boxes on TV's came with instructions not to turn them off – this contradicted advice to turn off appliances to save money.

7. Opportunities for Funding

KCC Cllr Manion reported that he had a Member Community Grant of £10k and a £9,300 Local Schemes Grant to allocate within the Division. The closing date for both was 30 October 2009. Participatory Budgeting would be instituted this year and a Saturday meeting would be held in November for all applicant groups to make their presentations.

Emma Carey advised the meeting that application forms and guidance notes were available; the deadline for Small Community Grants was September and for KCC Grants it was October.

Future discussion topics

- how to access funding for a wind turbine at Dover Grammar School for Boys (Cllr Chandler to speak to Shaun Cline, SEEDA and Sandwich Technical College)
- highways – ‘rat run’ routes
- litter: - McDonald’s litter – how to avoid it spreading;  
- zones for litter collection and times given to SITA for clearing zones;  
ensuring litter is cleared as soon as grass verges have been mown;

The Chairman thanked Alistair Gould for allowing the event to be held at the Pines Calyx and closed the meeting at 8.40pm.