

Wyke Beck Way Community Forum

Centre Manager's Report to 21st Oct.08 Board and Forum Meetings

1. Personal position

As some of you will know I went down with a bad attack of shingles in June and I regret to say that it has taken up to the middle of September for me to recover. As a result of this and a holiday in France during September, I have not been able to address WBW issues as well as I intended. This has meant that David has had to step into the breach and do more than his normal share to keep The Forum's flag flying which he has of course done successfully. Normal voluntary service has now been resumed.

2. Valley Master Plan

Excellent progress has been made by the **Ecology Task Group** who have not only met up twice to date but, thanks to Ruth Bull and David's planning were given refreshments on route at the William Hill Community Centre, during a successful full inspection of the Valley on 21st July. This walk and reconnaissance, was all the more successful for the additional help given by Forum members, Brian Waters and Anne German.

I have now met up with Moy Anderson LCC Sustainability Unit who leads this Group and she has confirmed that she is very happy with progress on how they will complete the mapping of flora and fauna of the valley. We will learn more at the Forum meeting but suffice to say that this Group has already demonstrated the value of our approach to this project by bringing professionals and lay informed people together. It is also highly appropriate that good progress is being made on this aspect of the Master Plan since it is demonstrating our commitment to ensure ecology issues are given full weight and prominence in the development of the brief for The Master Plan.

The **Flood Alleviation Task Group** has met once to date. John Woods of the Environment Agency is leading on this topic; David Davenport and David Conboy are representing The Forum and the meeting was also attended by David Sellars LCC Chief Engineer for Drainage. Whilst an important start was made on assessing the current position regarding the impact of impending new development on the Valley's surface water catchment capacity, there was a lack of clarity about how such developments were being managed drainage wise. Apparently many issues around this topic will be addressed by the development of a Drainage Master Plan for the EASEL area. This will be commissioned by LCC at the end of this month which will lead to the production of the Plan by the end of January. The expectation is that this will put forward strategies leading to proposed projects to get potential future flooding under control. I therefore expect this Task Group to meet again to ensure it is fully integrated into the dialogue on this proposed drainage master plan and to examine how precisely current housing schemes under construction have built in and adequate safeguards drainage wise.

The **Access Task Group [FP & Cycleways]** has not yet met but I hope to be able to announce at The Forum the arrangements for its first meeting which I aim to get off the ground this month. Peter Dyson has agreed to represent the Forum as has Rodney German. So yet again we will have good lay knowledge of the Valley alongside LCC represented by such as Roger Brook, Development Officer, Footpath Networks, and others responsible for footpath and cycle ways specifically. Key additional players from Leeds Ramblers and Sustrans have also been contacted. We aim to use this group to try and improve the contact between the WBW Centre and the City Council on footpath and cycle way proposals in the Valley since they have failed to consult us on recent proposals. We have since sent in some detailed comments on these proposals and have yet to receive an acknowledgement.

I have not yet put in hand the arrangements for the meeting of **Landscape and Open space Task Group**. We have not yet determined how will fit heritage into the jigsaw. I will seek Forum views on this.

I have chaired the first meeting of the **Coordination Task Group** who have the task of pulling the brief for the Valley Master Plan together as well as determining how we are going to fund that part of the

study that we can't do 'in house'. This was attended by Gerard Morris, Environment Manager, the Environment Agency (who effectively heads up AAL) and Sue Speak, Team Leader, Local Plans, LCC.

3. The Forum takes to the Air Waves!

In July David went along with Forum members Ken and Norma Burrows to take part in a live local radio discussion at East Leeds FM Radio. The programme centred on the WB Valley and issues around its green spaces and our objectives as major redevelopment comes along.

4. Awards for All

Considerable time and effort was put in by David and our colleagues from Groundwork Leeds in compiling a grant submission under the Heritage Lottery scheme of the above. This would and eventually will enable us to undertake a range of environmental initiatives with local people. The bid document was returned to us because of some incredibly small bureaucratic omissions and is now on its way back for their attention. The delay thus incurred has however meant that we have missed an opportunity to get such schemes underway this autumn.

Eric Cowin Centre Manager
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