

DARESBUY PARISH PLAN – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACTION GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD IN DARESBUY PARISH ROOMS ON THURSDAY 19 JULY 2007

Present: Lyn Goodkin (Chair)
Alan Goodkin
Sarah Hogan
Mervyn Hogan
Ian Ireland
Eleanor Brittain
Ruth Neville
Frances Hough
Eleanor Brittain
Elaine Whitlow

Paul Oldfield, Nature Conservation Officer at Halton Borough Council

Apologies from: Geoff Ford, Geoff Owen, Mike and Jenny Harding,
Wendy Harding

DARESBUY NATURE RESERVE

Ten people walked to the proposed Nature Reserve on Monday 16 July together with Paul Oldfield. It has great possibilities and could be developed into say a circular walk with a bridge taking walkers back to the towpath. There could be a pond, and tree planting, and also a 'boggy' area. Paul is particularly interested in introducing black poplars, which are rare, and he thinks that there may be one already in situ. A hedge along part of the railway line was discussed. Cash for this could come from two sources:

1. Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN) whose money comes from land fill tax credits – to the tune of maybe £25,000 to £40,000 in a one year project
2. Environment Agency might be interesting in supporting a scheme of this type if they like the idea

Paul will investigate these sources of funding and come back to us.

The site is near another site in the Preston Brook area but Paul thinks that access between the two sites should be discouraged as the other site suffers badly from litter and fly tipping. So maybe a bridge across Keckwick Brook should not be built initially.

The Bridgewater Canal Trust manages the towpath in this area and Paul will speak to them regarding access and timing of strimming as they could become an ally here. HBC will maintain the footpaths in the nature reserve but there will be no rangers. It would be up to walkers etc to report any problems.

There was a general discussion about what we would want in the nature reserve and the main points seemed to be a wild flower meadow, a 'boggy' part and woodland areas. Paul talked about the bank of Keckwick Brook, which runs through the reserve and how we could encourage wildlife such as the water vole into the area.

The next stage would be a scale plan/drawing of how it would look. Paul will arrange this and it will probably be available by the end of August. The applications go in every quarter so this could then be put forward in October, tenders could then go out and be back hopefully by the end of December and we could start on the reserve in spring 2008.

There was a general discussion about the possibility of another nature reserve nearer the Primary School and various ideas were put forward such as part of farm land could become an environmental area. As most of the land in the village is owned by Lord Daresbury, Lyn Goodkin volunteered to contact the Land Agent, Chris Marsh, and see if she would like to attend the next meeting.

There was a great deal of general discussion about the area and Daresbury Firs which is already a Local Nature Reserve. The quarry in the Firs, the sandstone cutting at the top end of Chester Road and Red Brow Lane cutting (a Regionally Important Geological Site - RIGS) may have some money available for their interpretation as interesting Geological Sites.

LIGHTING AND SPEED BUMPS IN VILLAGE

Paul advised us that HBC would come back to us about this. There is however another Action Group who we assume will deal with this area.

CONTROL OF NOISE AND LIGHT POLLUTION

Paul advised us that HBC would not get involved in this. We discussed whether it would be worth writing to the main culprits but the consensus of opinion was that we would be wasting our time!

TREE PLANTING

Cheshire Landscape Trust will help here if we identify sites but they will only give trees to be planted on land that has public access from a footpath or road.

John White, at HBC will also advise here but he does not identify sites.

It was suggested that farmers in the area (Lord Daresbury, Nigel Wright, & Bill Eden) could be approached about planting trees. Elaine said that they were going to plant some hedges on her farm but a lack of time was the problem!

The main areas for planting seemed to be virtually the same as identified before ie the A56, Newton Lane, and maybe a hedge to hide the black bags at the top end of the village.

ENERGY SAVING, ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION ETC

It was suggested that a stall at the Hatton Show would be a good idea, and could also give information about a 'proposed' Gardening Club which could all be incorporated together with suggestions being made about the correct plants to use for dry weather and also to encourage wildlife. There is a meeting re the Hatton Show on Tuesday 24 July which some of the Group will try to attend.

Lyn and Alan spoke about putting links on the Daresbury website to the RSPB and Natural England which have good wildlife friendly gardening tips. Ian said there is an Energy Saving Trust website which gives advice and information.

VILLAGE WELL REINSTATEMENT

It was suggested that we write to Chris Marsh, Land Agent, to see who owns the land. Also may be approach the Parish Council regarding funding. The Vicar would be also contacted about this.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was proposed as Thursday 16 August if Chris Marsh could attend, although Eleanor Brittain was unable to make this date.

It was suggested that no further discussion would take place about the site of the Nature Reserve until Paul had come back to us with drawings. However if Chris Marsh could attend on this day, we can enquire about other areas nearer the village/school, which may have possibilities of developing into a smaller nature reserve.