

## GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY FORUM MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> January 2015.

<b><u>Present:</u></b>	Richard Trelfa (Chair)	- Hempsted Residents Association
	Stephen McDonnell (Sec)	- Environmental Co-ordinator, Gloucester City Council
	Meyrick Brentnall	- Environmental Planning Manager, Gloucester City Council
	Barry Leach	- Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership
	Cllr Jim Porter	- Cabinet Member for Environment
	Audrey Fielding	- Glos Federation of Women's Institutes
	Cllr David Brown	- Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Usman Bhaimia	- Gloucester City Council
	Brian Furnis	- Resident
	Ray Pass	- Stagecoach in Gloucester
	Claire Mitchell	- Vision 21
	Anthony Perry	- Environment Agency
	Jo Martin	- Environment Agency
	Norman Nutall	- Hempsted Resident
	David Lesser	- Gloucester Resident
	Mathew Panon	- Gloucestershire County Council
	Kate Cole	- Gloucestershire Joint Waste Team
	Robert Burns	- Tuffley Resident
	Jean Burns	- Tuffley Resident
	Wayne Best	- Gloucester City Council
	Pam Daw	- Castlemeads Court Residents/Friends of Alney Island.
	Richard Graham	- Member of Parliament for Gloucester

<b><u>Apologies:</u></b>	Cllr Lewis	- Gloucester  City Council
	Jenny Powell	- Stagecoach
	Cllr Field	- Gloucester City Council
	Gordon Heath	- Resident
	Graham Stanley	- Glos Minibus Scheme
	Margaret Day	- Friends of Robinswood Hill
	Dawn Fearn	- Gloucester City Council
	Jackie Cave	- Friends of Robinswood Hill
	Penny Clewer	- Transition Gloucester
	Andrew Harley (Vice Chair)	- Gloucester City Homes Tenants Forum

#### ACTION

1. Minutes of previous meeting 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014 were agreed.

2. **Matters Arising**

BL asked with reference to the item on the Public Open Space Strategy. What had happened to the proposals on the redesign of the Westgate Leisure Park, and also the proposals to redesign Alney Island in terms of improved access and amenity?

MB responded to say that a planning application for the Westgate Leisure Park would be submitted shortly and the application for the GETCO grant for the Alney Island improvements had been submitted last week.

3. **Flooding in Gloucester** – Richard Trelfa started the discussion off by circulating a letter from a Mr Lake which had been published in the Citizen Newspaper an attached picture showed flood water around Hempsted Landfill.

RT then introduced Jo Martin from the Environment Agency who gave a presentation on the work that the Agency does with a particular focus on what work is being done to reduce the impacts of flooding in the River Severn flood plain.

A copy of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes,

Jo explained how the flood plain worked and showed maps with flood water spread and topography which are used in modelling likely flood impacts. Measures are then built to hold back or redirect flood water where there is a cost benefit. She illustrated this with examples. Each year £340,000 was spent on maintenance of defences and £70,000 on flood warning.

With reference to Corn Ham and Mr Lakes letter she said, further detailed modelling was currently being done that was looking at this and other areas and a report on the findings of this work would be available in the near future. This report would inform the way the Environment Agency responded and would help in deciding which new flood defence or removal of barriers to water flow would be most beneficial. Jo stressed that all works were subject to cost evaluation and unless a source of funding could be found new measures could not be built nor existing barriers to flow removed. She highlighted how a regeneration scheme in Derby on the River Derwent had enabled improvements to be made as a result of developer contributions. At Alney Island the old railway sidings had been removed to improve flows of flood water using this funding route after the new road was built.

RT asked for clarification would there be more frequent flooding of agricultural land and were increases in rainfall and sea level rises the result of climate change. Jo said yes this is what expert scientists were advising.

RT said Mr Lakes letter suggested that Gloucester Tip had changed the flow rates within the flood plain RT wanted to know if removing obstructions such as levees at Corn Ham would improve flows across the flood plain.

JM said it might but that could have other impacts elsewhere which was why they were modelling different scenarios.

RT asked would tidal factors make a difference and should the Severn Barrage be built. He also asked about the value of dredging the Severn. AP responded saying that it was possible that if a barrage were built this would reduce tidal flows, but this would not stop fluvial flows, he also felt dredging was not the answer as the River Severn was not a slow enough water course for this to be effective.

DB asked could areas identified as a flood risk in Gloucester be improved by developer funding as with the Docks railway sidings.

NN asked a question about the Internal Drainage Boards under which land owners pay a precept to have water courses kept clear and drainage maintained.

JP said he was on the local IDB and would be happy to take up any points raised at the next meeting with the board. He did point out that both the areas mentioned were not waterways covered by the board.

JP had visited a local flood plain consultation meeting in December and wanted to know when the results would be made public, particularly in relation to raising the height of the Alney Terrace defences.

RG asked where do we go next, with regard to flooding at Alney Terrace, he acknowledged that some good work had been done, from both the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, Gloucester City and County Councils. He was looking forward to the publication of the modelling report however in the mean time risk had been reduced and everyone could take some real positives from the story so far.

WB said going forward it would be good to identify some quick wins as clearly Gloucester was going to grow,

There was a discussion about land management and how water could run off fields used for arable crops quicker than land used for traditional grazing.

RT asked about various sumps and large construction projects that had been built at Westgate and Hempsted,

AP said these were built by Severn Trent Water a statutory undertaker to control storm water flows and sewerage flows in times of flood, he felt sure that they could send a spokesperson to a future meeting to explain these measures in more detail, Tim Smith was the local contact for these matters.

RG invited all present to congratulate AP on receiving his MBE.

4. **Robert Burns Letter**

Robert was invited to speak to his letter which had been circulated in relation to his proposals to build two new water parks to reduce flood risk in Gloucester. He gave examples of a number of schemes around the country where similar schemes had been developed such as the Cotswold Water Park. He felt the potential for amenity, tourism, and economic development was massive if he could get his project off the ground. He requested the establishment of a working party to examine his proposals in more detail.

**MB**

BF felt the forum would be persuaded if a site visit to the area were organised using a double decker bus. There was a need to get a project leader and a champion he felt the EA and ministers should be involved.

MB said in the context of the Joint Core Strategy (Planning Policy) it was unlikely that the project could be developed due to the land ownership, cross boundary considerations and environmental constraints. He also said that councils current Planning Policy's were working towards an examination in public so therefore not likely to be subject to significant change.

RG suggested the project should be submitted to the Gloucestershire County Council minerals group also Stroud district Council if these bodies felt it was viable it could be taken forward. There was then a further discussion about various aspects of the proposal, river deltas and various theories' about the benefits of the scheme and others in Holland.

It was agreed that the County minerals group would be the main action for the proposal MB agreed to pass Mr Burns proposals on to this group for a response.  
Action MB

5. **Alney Island**

MB gave an update on Alney island which is managed as a nature reserve by the City Council. He explained that the land was grazed by a herd of traditional Gloucestershire Cattle that were very tough and did not mind getting wet.

**ACTION**

**SM**

6. **Topics for future meetings**  
Topic for next meeting would be a transport theme with an update on Elmbridge Major transport scheme and Gloucestershire Cycling strategy, with contributions from Stagecoach and Gloucestershire Highways. Action SM

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

5<sup>th</sup> March 18.00hrs