

**Proposed Neighbourhood Plan (NP)
for
Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath**

Minutes of Meeting Held at Arden Academy on 01.07.2015

Present: Jane Aykroyd (JA, Chair); Tony Aykroyd (TA); James Carthew (JC); Geoffrey Evans (GE); David Gentle (DG); Ian Fisher (IF); Gill Griggs (GG); Bryan Hunt (BH); Louisa Jakeman (LJ); Ian Kay (IK); Bill Lally (BL); Steve Lyle (SL); Martin Murphy (MM); Richard Newton (RN); Mike Parker (MP); William Penny (WP); David Pinwell (DP); David Wallis (DW).

Apologies: Tony Abbott; Karen Allen; Cameron Scriven; David Fraley (DF); Lis Hedley.

1. Agenda Item 1 - Introduction:

We have made excellent progress since our last meeting, with many positive outcomes to report. In summary, we have successfully addressed nearly all of the urgent actions from our last meeting, to:

- a) target early communications at engaging Bentley Heath resident(s)/businesses so as to fill the gap in terms of their representation on the Forum. JA created a leaflet specifically for this purpose (shown in Appendix 3). This has been posted in the Bentley Heath Community Hall and also made available to attendees of the weekly Friday morning market.
In addition, MM provided copies of the leaflet to Bentley Heath primary school, where they have been issued to parents. A copy has gone for information to all the other Primary Heads.
As a result, it is very pleasing to welcome two new attendees from Bentley Heath to today's meeting, with a number of other expressions of interest now being followed up;
- b) start wider communications. JA and DP have created editorial about the Neighbourhood Forum for the Knowle Society July newsletter, due to be issued today;
- c) ensure business representation, following up on previous discussions. Neil Inman, from Scanlans Solicitors in Knowle, has confirmed his request for membership. We are following up to obtain formal confirmation from a couple of others. *(Since the meeting Caroline Wilden, of PSL Knowle; and Bev Robinson, also from Scanlans, have confirmed);*
- d) confirm youth representation. We welcome James Carthew and Billy Penny as new, student members of the Forum. Cameron Scriven will also be joining us at future meetings. I am sure they will keep us on our toes in actively representing the voice of younger members of our communities, adding an important perspective to our Plan;
- e) confirm support from an elected representative (Councillor). MM has confirmed that Alan Rebeiro will join the Forum and that Geoff Potts is very supportive. Ian Courts has a potential conflict of interest due to his portfolio, but supports creation of the Forum and asks to be kept informed. A meeting with Ken Meeson is planned.
SL has contacted Cllr Diane Holl-Allen, who is supportive and will come back to us re. whether she is able to join given her portfolio;
(Stop Press! - just as these notes are about to be issued, MM confirms that Ken Meeson has requested to join the Forum; and SL confirms that Diana Holl-Allen also wishes to become a Member.)

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- f) we have been contacted by Tyler-Parkes, who act as planning consultants on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands (formerly the West Midlands Police Authority). They are keen to know more about the Forum and Plan and to be kept informed of progress - possibly through the representation of our local Neighbourhood Police Officer. This is one aspect of community liaison that we need to pick up on;
- g) each of the three Focus Groups has held an inaugural meeting(s) – summary updates included in Appendix 1;
- h) there has been significant new development of the web site – as we will see later.

The only slight ‘fly in the ointment’ is that we are slightly behind where we had hoped to be in getting the finalised draft Constitution papers out (issued on 29 June). This means that we have not quite hit our target for Members to be able to sign off on the Application to SMBC at today’s meeting.

2. Agenda Item 2 – Finalised Draft Constitution

DP summarised the changes made to the previous constitutional documents. In discussion, no further changes to the Articles were proposed - these are now considered approved as final copy, subject to correction of the Company Name on the contents page.

DP stepped in more detail through the new ‘Meetings and Membership’ Standing Orders document that has been drafted since the last meeting. Forum members had various comments on this, as well as a number of corrections to other documents. All agreed changes will be included in a further update to each of the three documents to create final draft versions, including:

- ‘adoption’ rather than ‘implementation’ of the Plan in the Forum Objectives statement;
- simplification of the second of the Powers listed in the Forum Constitution document;
- a clearer statement of bank signatory arrangements in the Finance Standing Orders;
- inclusion of a membership category for young people;
- various other more minor corrections and clarifications.

It was agreed that any further and final comments would be emailed to DP within a few days following the meeting. DP will then create amended versions in readiness for the forthcoming meeting with Solihull MBC.

ACTION: LJ offered to undertake a last proof reading of the finalised versions of documents.

As a general point, it was agreed that, going forward, there is a need for a standard naming convention and format across all Forum documentation for ease and consistency.

ACTION: JA to create document and presentation templates to be used by all Members.

3. Agenda Item 3 – NF Application, inc Boundary Definition

As we are slightly behind on our timetable to complete all the documents for the draft application to SMBC, a date has not yet been set for the meeting with Emma Tinsley-Evans (ETE). BH summarised where we are with the application currently. In discussions, a number of detail points were identified for discussion with SMBC and noted by BH.

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ACTION: BH to liaise with DW, DP and MM to arrange a time as soon as possible following this meeting to meet with ETE to discuss the draft Forum Application.

(Update 16/7: This meeting took place on Monday 6 July. ETE expressed a wish to have two documents - one for the Area application and one for the Forum application - with full justification for each. She advised that both documents need to be with her by 20 July so as to leave enough time for final approvals to be considered at the 1st October Managed Growth Committee meeting (which Councillor Courts sits on).

There was good discussion about our set of constitutional documents (Articles of Association). Following the meeting, it was agreed that, for the purposes of the Applications, we would submit a simplified constitution that would meet the needs of the general public. ETE has also provided us with a more precise map of our Area to include in the applications, that we will use going forward.

The final versions of the two applications were submitted on 13 July 2015 and posted on the SMBC website on 15 July. The six week local consultation period will therefore run from 16 July to 25 August.)

ACTION: JA to advise Members what is required by way of final review and signature to submit both the SMBC Application and get the Articles finalised and Company set up.

4. Agenda Item 4 – Communications and Engagement

JA briefly summarised communications to date (see 1a and 1b. above). With first communications having now gone out to Knowle and Bentley Heath, the next step is to think about what needs to be done in Dorridge - and the appropriate timing for this. In the short term, the approach will be to continue relatively low key communications, focusing particularly on trying to get short face to face briefings at various local group meetings. Beyond this, we need to be preparing and ready to quickly ramp up communications in all areas as soon as we receive confirmation that our Area and Forum application have been approved.

Over the next 6-8 weeks, therefore, JA will be preparing marketing material for the web site and to use at Open Days and other public meetings. Focus Groups will also need to be ready with appropriate material to explain their remit and to use at future consultation workshops.

ACTION: JA to make contact with Martin Lambert, of the DDRA, to discuss the approach to resident communications in Dorridge and Bentley Heath, building on his experience.

5. Agenda Item 5 – Focus Group Updates

Each Group Lead provided a brief overview of progress to date (a summary report from each Group Lead is included in Appendix 1).

A question was raised regarding the remit of the Roads and Infrastructure Focus Group in terms of what is meant 'infrastructure'? Forum members identified that this could include eg. transport (rail, bus), broadband, sewers etc

Going forward each Focus Group will record their own meeting minutes and issue these to Steering Group members and to the Librarian. JA will upload to the relevant Forum page on the website). Other Members wishing to read them can access them either via the website or via the Library.

ACTION: From Housing Group discussions, BH to check with ETE exactly what are the 'strategic policies' of SMBC.

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ACTION: Roads and Infrastructure – BL to follow up with contacts at the Knowle Society and the DDRA to understand more about the on-going discussions regarding car parking (Paul Toby contact point).

DECISION: SMBC has asked whether our Forum is willing to act as a Statutory Consultee for planning applications relating to our Area. It was unanimously agreed that we should, and will, do this.

6. Agenda Item 6 – Web Development

There has been much new development over the past month, with excellent support from Yousef and Fazle from Arden’s IT team. JA and MM took Forum Members through a demo of the website as it now stands. The overall menu and page structures have been finalised and, more importantly, we have started adding ‘real’ content and links relating to the Forum. A page has been added for each of the Focus Groups, which are currently blank awaiting appropriate content from the teams....

We still have a bit more to do before formally putting the website ‘live’ – Members are, however, encouraged to take a look at www.kdbh-np.org and provide any feedback to JA.

7. Agenda Item 8 – Minutes and Actions From Last Meeting

There were no comments on the minutes of the last meeting. A document was handed out at the start of today’s meeting completing the updates on actions from the meeting held on 14 May (and included in Appendix 2).

There are only a couple of other actions to update from the meeting held on 4 June (any action not specifically mentioned below has been completed):

ACTIONS:

- JA to create a short powerpoint communications ‘video’ covering the NF / NP that any Member can then use. **CARRIED FORWARD**
- BH to liaise with Emma Tinsley-Evans (ETE) to identify the appropriate Council Housing contact for SL; and Infrastructure contact for BL.
UPDATE 1/7: Solihull Housing Contact is Mark Collyer (eg. re. affordable housing).
CARRY FORWARD: Contact for Infrastructure still to be confirmed.

8. Agenda Item 8 - AOB

DP advised that Knowle Society are planning to invite a representative from UK Central to one of their resident meetings in October. It was agreed that this is definitely something that the Forum would want to be involved in. Forum Members were keen also that attendance be extended out to residents of Bentley Heath and Dorridge.

9. Agenda Item 9 – Agree Date and Focus for Next Meeting

Following discussion, it was agreed that going forward we will rotate meeting days between the first Wednesdays or Thursday of each month.

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10. The next Forum meeting will be on **Thursday 6 August at Arden Academy**, from 7pm to 9:30pm, with the following draft agenda:

- i. The main agenda items will be the Company Set Up, including bank account
- ii. KS and DDRA leaders share their experience of community engagement
- iii. Focus Group updates
- iv. 10-15 minute session from student members to share their first thoughts
- v. Update on Membership
- vi. Comms update, including Forum presence at Dorridge Day on 13 September
- vii. First thoughts on approach and format for Open Days in October

As membership has grown well over the past 3-4 weeks, the meeting will be preceded by a welcome session for New Members from 6:30pm to 7:00pm.

ACTION:

All to check proposed dates for Future Forum meetings and advise JA of any issues:

- 2 September (Dorridge Day 13 September; preparation for Open Day Events)
- 1 October (the date we expect to hear whether our SMBC Applications have been approved; finalised Open Day and first consultation events)
- 4 November
- 3 December (when some sort of Christmas celebration is in order!)

PLEASE NOTE STOP PRESS 16 JULY:

MM has advised that the Conference room at Arden Academy will not be available on 6 August, as staff at the school finish at around 5:00pm during the school holidays. We are also hitting the holiday season, with a number of Members already having passed on their apologies for the meeting.

However, the room will be available on **Thursday 20 August** (GCSE results and 6th form open day). I therefore propose moving the meeting to 20 August – **could Members please advise if they are NOT able to make this.**

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APPENDIX 1: Focus Group Summary Reports July 2015

1. Housing Focus Group: Minutes of meeting held on 10/6/2015

Present: Steve Lyle (SL, Group Lead, minute-taker), Gill Griggs (GG), Lis Hedley (LH), David Wallis (DW).

Apologies: Louisa Jakeman

Initial discussion focussed on understanding our role. In its simplest form we summarised this as follows:

1. To obtain residents' views (which process can only be started once the Forum is officially set up and literature available).
2. To understand the Council position on housing, building on the historical information available and ascertaining what new work is currently being undertaken.
3. Merge the two to:
 - a. establish areas where we may be able to exert influence
 - b. identify any wishes that may be undeliverable (e.g. no further increase in housing).

GG then spent some time explaining the background to how the Council reached its current position, including:

- The Localism Act, passed by the previous Coalition Government, dismantled regional planning and now relies on local authorities working together (the Duty to Cooperate) in order to plan housing numbers.
- Rejection by the Court of Appeal of the housing policies in the Solihull Local Plan on the basis that SMBC had not assessed housing need, or applied green belt policy, correctly.
- The existence of a "Housing Position Paper" which indicates SMBC is just meeting its rolling 5 year housing land supply requirements (need to check with Emma).
- Need to obtain a copy of the SMBC Annual Monitoring Report (again, check with Emma)
- The anticipated Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) "Strategic Housing Needs Study" by Peter Brett Associates is imminent. This is expected to indicate a new housing target for Solihull. It was agreed we can do little to influence the housing target for Solihull, but we could work to influence the target SMBC set for KDBH.

We then discussed ways in which we could identify those areas of land that should be protected from development and how we could strengthen the case against development. It was felt that land which was both Green Belt and listed for Grade 1, 2 or 3a agricultural use should be largely untouchable, so was an issue we could examine.

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(Copies of the 2006 Green Belt maps have already been obtained by BH from Emma, and are now held by GG for future reference. GG thought that maps exist showing agricultural land designation and these might be found on the relevant Ministry web site).

The possible creation of Rural Exception Sites, where building could be allowed on Green Belt land for affordable housing only, was also mentioned as requiring further investigation. There was also discussion about brownfield developments and density of new housing.

The discussion then moved on to answering some questions raised by SL prior to the meeting.

The final piece of urgent work was to create a key message for the Housing Focus Group to be included in the initial communication material and to appear on the website. After a lively debate all agreed on the following:

“It is highly likely that more housing will be required in K D & BH, and our aim is to minimise any adverse effects. We need your views on the number, location and type of developments (such as affordable housing) that you think would be most appropriate.”

ACTIONS

SL to submit key message to JA – Done 11/6/15

SL to contact Mark Collyer at SMBC and arrange meeting to discuss housing – Done, meeting arranged (including Emma) at 10:00 on Monday 22/6/15 at Orchard House, Council offices for up to 5 guests. Please confirm if able to attend.

NEXT MEETING

Propose Wednesday 8th July, at 8:00pm

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2. LEARNING, LEISURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOCUS GROUP

Update 1 July 2015 – Martin Murphy, Group Lead

The group has met on two occasions. We have had very constructive meetings aimed at exploring our remit and the journey needed. David G has kindly produced two papers:

1. A paper on our proposed strategy: **Paper 1** – ‘Establish Relevant Areas of Interest’.
2. We have discussed at length the type of methodology and how we may obtain the views of the residents in our community – **Paper 2** – ‘Obtaining The Views of Local Residents and Business’.
3. We have made contact with some key members of our community:
 - Meeting/contact with elected members – Alan Rebeiro (will join the Forum); Geoff Potts very supportive; Ian Courts supportive and asks to be kept informed despite potential conflict of interest due to his portfolio. Meeting with Ken Messon planned
 - Caroline Spellman has been updated – MM awaiting reply
 - Three student representatives will join the forum – James , Cameron and William. James lives in Bentley Heath!
 - MM has met with all four Primary Heads and they are fully supportive. Bentley Heath School has contacted parents re the need for BH reps and have distributed the leaflet.
 - MM and Primary Heads feel the NP will be a great school council project next term.
 - Awaiting reply from Manager of Sainsbury’s, Dorridge re support.
4. Discussed the vision for the Arden Centre of Community Learning

NEXT STEPS

1. Forum must decide on the timeline for consultation asap. Open days, communication, newsletters etc.
2. We recommend the Forum create a new post – **Liaison Officer** with other NF groups, since our focus group (we believe others) need to see how others have carried out surveys and community consultation.
3. MM to meet with ARUP to find out what experiences they have in working with other NF groups and consultation/survey strategy. Key people/links have been on holiday – provisional meeting planned 11th July to discuss above.
4. Enlist support of SMBC – need to meet Emma asap before the end of term to discuss our remit (what is the best way to do this?) and who will provide the existing data needed to start our work.
5. MM to contact SMBC CEO in order to enlist support and find out key officers who will support us during the data collection and consultation stage.

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3. ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOCUS GROUP

Update 30 June 2015 - Bill Lally, Group Lead

Unfortunately we have not been able to convene a full meeting of the "Roads, Parking and Infrastructure" Focus Group, since two members have been away. However, Louisa and I have had a couple of good meetings, which clarified in our minds certain items - and raised other queries.

First, in terms of a "pithy" summary of (what we believe to be) our area of interest, we have come up with the following statement:

"Roads, parking and infrastructure are important to us all and influence (impact on) our daily lives. Our aim is to ensure that these facilities are sufficient to serve those who live or work in KD&BH (our community), and to minimise any adverse effects that future permitted developments could have. We would like to hear your views on these important aspects of community life, and how you feel they need to be improved. In particular currently, we are keen to have your feedback on the latest proposals of SMBC regarding on- street parking, which can be inspected at www.solihull.gov.uk/parking/travel-roads-and-restrictions/tros followed by the query, "parking in Dorridge" or "parking in Bentley Heath."

The SMBC response to on-street parking problems is a concern for the Group. It raises the question whether it is acceptable to deal with these problems simply by banning or severely restricting on-street parking, without taking into account the effects that these somewhat draconian proposals will have on (for example) people wishing to park their cars to travel by train to Birmingham or to London – or who wish simply to drive to Knowle to do some shopping. A number of people have already intimated that they find the parking situation in Knowle so dire that they are reluctant to go in.

Dorridge has 90 free parking places at the station, and a further 120 at the car park behind Sainsbury's filling station. On the other hand, Widney Manor station has 270 free spaces. Surely Widney Manor cannot be regarded as a more important station than Dorridge? Certainly, fewer trains stop there - and no London trains.

Our Group's other concerns were mainly around clearly defining our terms of reference. Precisely what is meant, in this context, as "infrastructure"? Does our remit include roads generally, footpaths, cycle-ways; does it refer to car parks? Advice on this would be appreciated.

We also need to request that Emma put us in touch with appropriate personnel at SMBC who can advise us as to what we need to do to make appropriate input.

Doubtless our contribution to the overall plan will develop over time.....

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**APPENDIX 2: UPDATE TO AGENDA ITEM 11 ('ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING')
OF FORUM MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE**

(a copy of these updated actions was provided to Members at the Forum meeting on 1 July 2015. The few actions outstanding are highlighted in grey.)

- **BH** to follow up with **ETE** to:
 - clarify the role of a NF in addressing any need/desire for new roads;

UPDATE: There is technically no reason why the need for new roads cannot be expressed in a Neighbourhood Plan. However, there are a number of important issues to consider. Firstly, the Neighbourhood Plan should be in conformity with national and local planning policy which, in the case of Solihull, is focused on promoting sustainable transport.

To express the desire for new roads in a Neighbourhood Plan would require a significant amount of evidence to demonstrate need and deliverability. New road building is not considered appropriate or necessary in the Solihull Local Plan and indeed, the bypass line through Knowle has been removed on that basis.

Emma Tinsley-Evans suggests that it would be very difficult to justify new road building in a Neighbourhood Plan for Knowle / Dorridge and Bentley Heath. It would not be in accordance with the transport policies in the Local Plan, which aim to "make the best use of existing assets to make the most efficient use of existing transport networks limiting the need to build new roads and investment in large scale infrastructure." It is therefore unlikely to be something that the Local Authority would consider favourable in this case.

Further, apart from having regard to national planning policies and being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, another of the 'basic conditions' that a Neighbourhood Plan must meet is contributing to the achievement of sustainable development (the 'in word' at the moment). SMDC would therefore question whether the desire to see new road building would meet this 'basic condition' without significant evidence and justification.

The question is, are we proposing that the Neighbourhood Plan supports new road building in Knowle / Dorridge / Bentley Heath? or are we thinking of identifying a potential route? Emma feels that it would be better to consider the reasons why we want the Neighbourhood Plan to address any need/desire for new roads - there are likely to be alternative, more sustainable solutions to consider first. If we feel the need Emma could arrange a meeting to discuss our thoughts with her transport colleagues.

- clarify considerations around, for example, relocating Arden School (already on designated green belt) to another area of green belt;

UPDATE: Emma has provided a link to the copy of the Green Belt review that was undertaken as evidence base for the current Local Plan (included in the section on Evidence base studies under Chapter 11 - Promoting Quality of Place) at <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Planning/appealsenforcement/planmaking/ldf/evidencebase>

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She has also discussed with her colleague the issue of relocating the school and allocating future residential development in the Green Belt. The considered view is that this is not something that could be done through a Neighbourhood Plan, as Green Belt boundaries can only be changed through a review of the Local Plan. Any proposal to allocate a school or residential site in the Green Belt would be contrary to national and local planning policy.

As a Neighbourhood Plan cannot remove land from the Green Belt, even if a site were to be allocated in a Neighbourhood Plan it would not guarantee that the site would receive planning permission. A planning application would still need to be submitted and would have to demonstrate very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. Therefore, we would advise that any future development such as this should come forward through the Local Plan review process to ensure it is deliverable.

We could however flag up the issue through the Neighbourhood Planning process to raise awareness and potentially gain support from the local community. Therefore, if this were something considered acceptable to the local authority through a review of the Local Plan, it would be more palatable to the local community if they are already aware of it and have been consulted on it.

Overall, it would be better to raise the issue through the Neighbourhood Planning process and, working with the local planning authority, promote the appropriate site(s) through the review of the Local Plan.

- identify someone from Housing who could come to speak to our Group;

UPDATE: The contact on housing, with regard to affordable housing, is Mark Collyer (mcollyer@solihull.gov.uk or tel. 0121 704 8145).

- ascertain the publishing date of the documents provided by ETE at the last meeting;

UPDATE: The date of the Housing Market Assessment for Solihull was 2009 and the date of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment was September 2012.

- get hold of a copy of the larger scale UDP map (although now out of date) and upload to the NF library.

UPDATE: The Green Belt maps have been received from Emma.

- **BH** to forward a copy of the Solihull Strategic Planning Presentation to ETE.

- **BH** to contact Councillors Courts and Potts to advise of Forum creation and seek their thoughts on the proposed Neighbourhood Area - particularly in the context of Ward boundaries and any relationship with Ward development plans.

UPDATE (MM): Councillor Geoff Potts is very supportive. Councillor Ian Courts is supportive and asks to be kept informed despite potential conflict of interest due to his portfolio. **NOTE:** MM has also been in touch with Councillor Alan Rebeiro, who will join the Forum.

MM has also updated Caroline Spelman on developments and is awaiting a reply as at 1/7/15.

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- **IF** to scan and upload the paper documents provided by ETE into the NF library.
UPDATE: IF confirmed that the Forum Library is fully up to date with the documents that Members have sent through.
- **GG** to clarify position with regard to potential Ward / Council Neighbourhood Team funding to support NF aims and update next meeting.
UPDATE: The amount is £1500 each for Knowle and Dorridge wards (as set out in Appendix 2 to the reports to Cabinet on 17 and 18 March 2015). It is understood that the money will be made available once we have provided bank account details.
- **DW / JA / DP** to explore whether, and what, Accountancy support could be available to the Forum Treasurer.
UPDATE: Dave Pinwell has advised that this could be done through his organisation, although would incur a cost. Other options are to seek support from a local accountant / accountancy organisation – with a couple of suggestions put forward.
- **KA** to continue with resident follow up, working through the consolidated contact list, and provide further update next meeting.
UPDATE: Karen has stepped down from her proposed role as Events Planning / Management for the Forum. Dave Fraley has agreed to take up this role going forward.
- **BL** to follow up with the South Solihull U3A re. potential Members from Bentley Heath.
- **JA** to follow up with contact involved in Bentley Heath village hall market.
UPDATE: Contact is Gill Irskine. With Gill's support, Mike Parker from Bentley Heath has expressed an interest in joining the Forum. Gill has also arranged to have the communications leaflet added to the Community Hall notice board, and has a batch of leaflets available for attendees of the Friday market to pick up.
- **IF and MM** to consider how best to integrate the document store within the web site and update at next meeting. **(CARRIED FORWARD)**
- **MM and JA** to discuss potential support from Arup. **UPDATE 1/7:** MM advised that his contact has been on holiday. Meeting now provisionally arranged for 11 July. **(CARRIED FORWARD)**