

Minutes of the Lancaster Forum Green Spaces Forum at Morecambe Town Hall

Date: 4-Dec-2017

Topic: Opening Space and Playing Pitch consultation with Knight, Kavanagh, and Page

Present: Carmel Daniel (research consultant at KKP) and Chris MacFarlane Principal Consultant on Open Space at KKP (sports/leisure consultancy), Helen Ryan (Public Realm Development Manager, LCC), Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox (Bulk Ward), Pete Turnbull (Chair of LGS Forum, Friends of Barley Cop Woods), Kamilla Elliott (Lancaster Green Spaces Forum Secretary, LGS Trustee, Friends of Ryelands Park), Jean O'Neill (LGS trustee, Friends of Ryelands Park, Friends of Lune Bank Gardens), Fred Ayres (Chair of Lune Valley Beekeepers), Han Fleet (Friends of Ryelands Park and Friends of Fork to Fork), Ian Proctor (Fairfield Association and Friends of Freemans Wood and Coronation Field), Brian O'Neill (Friends of Ryelands Park and Friends of Lune Bank Gardens), Louise Belcher (Friends of Thwaite Brow Woods and Friends of Carnforth Coke Ovens), Roger Frankland (Judges Lodgings and Friends of Storey Gardens), Sarah Blackler (Friends of Greaves Park)

KKP introduction

We are conducting an audit and assessment of the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces owned by the council--anything half an acre plus. Categories include parks, amenity green space (recreational grounds or grassed areas), play areas, natural and semi-natural green space, allotments and green corridors (disused railway lines, etc.), The study also includes bay and promenade study and urban green spaces (e.g. grazing land)

The most recent study was in 2010, conducted by another company.

Phase 1: Description of what in present

Phase 2: Strategy: how to use the information to inform the Local Plan process; setting standards for developments

The Local Plan deadline is end of January 2018; our report is due in before Christmas

Online survey <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/planning-policy-consultations>

The deadline of Dec. 4 has been extended to Friday Dec. 8

KKP representatives asked the group to indicate strengths of the current green spaces/open spaces. The following list was generated:

1. The district has many more Friends groups now than 5 years ago
2. and the Lancaster Green Spaces Forum, newsletter, and Facebook group pages forge connections between them and also Green Lancaster at the university
3. The district has a good general awareness of green issues and a strong Green Party
4. Councillors from all parties are involved in Friends groups
5. We have a diversity of green spaces
6. We have two areas of outstanding natural beauty and the coast in our district
7. Williamson Park is a showcase park

8. There is a range of skills among volunteers: bats, bees, wildflowers, coppicing, scything, spraying, strimming, hedge laying (taught by Sandra Silk, Bowland area, County Council) etc.
9. Volunteers have maximised odd bits of green spaces and wasteland e.g. Aldcliffe triangle, an allotment where raised beds are productive, etc.
Two Strengths also raised limitations
10. Green groups have support from the LCC and County Countryside Officer (but less in the wake of budget cuts)
11. Active retired people form the basis of many Friends groups (it is difficult to recruit working people)

The Forum then discussed

Limitations

1. We don't have many large open green spaces by comparison to other cities
2. Morecambe and Carnforth lack green space by comparison to Lancaster and rural areas
3. In rural areas, there are not many Friends groups
4. Some Friends groups were generated by threats to resources or development; others are better resourced so that they are not so tied to basic maintenance tasks or battling for attention and council resources (e.g. Williamson Park Friends)
5. No money for Friends groups for basic supplies—funding tends to be tied to projects.

The discussion of limitations led to the following SUGGESTIONS

1. Green space and public space needs to be built into new developments: appropriate provision rather than token spring animals etc. to meet requirements. The council needs to take a strong stance on this and refuse to grant permission to developers who don't do this rather than let them bargain their way out of doing so.
2. The council needs to develop a policy for resourcing poorer areas that does not depend on Friends groups or complaints. Studies show that these tend to be bourgeois activities. We should not forget or neglect open spaces in deprived areas; there needs to be a policy ensuring more equitable distribution of resources and spaces and maintenance. Other councils have developed policies of this kind, more proactively resourcing deprived areas than affluent ones. Suggestion from Helen Ryan that councillors should start Friends group in areas where there are none.
3. Don't forget the trees along the roads; replace them when they die
4. Give Friends groups access to council nurseries/plant centre to plant seeds and grow crops.
5. Consider green spaces along the Morecambe Prom e.g. Frontierland.

Before Dec. 8, additional points can be posted in the online survey. After Dec. 8, please send any additional input to Helen Ryan at hryan@lancaster.gov.uk Do remember that the deadline is before Christmas and that staff take time off around Christmas.

Any other business

Flood damage to green spaces:

Some footpaths washed away: High Field/Low Moor—money through 106 plan for path from High Field to Derwent Home is still there
Dorrington Road Woods steps at top of woods closed
Newton Beck woods: bridge on Ridge estate detached
Crag Rd steps for Esthwaite Gardens damaged/closed
Bottom of Scotch Quarry badly damaged

Please contact Helen Ryan if you know of substantial damage to green/open spaces from recent floods. Helen is devising ways of preventing future damage seeking cost-effective material for drainage.