



**S&A PRODUCE & MARDEN COMMUNITY
LOCAL LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday 11th April 2018 6.00 p.m. @ Brook Farm, Marden**

MINUTES OF MEETING

ATTENDEES:

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| Sandra GLADWYN (SG) | ○ Parish Councillor |
| Arthur FRASER (AF) | ○ Parish Councillor |
| Kema GUTHRIE (KG) | ○ Ward Councillor |
| Richard BATHO (RB) | ○ Parish Footpath Officer |
| Daniel MARTIN (DHM) | ○ Group Commercial Director – S&A |
| Peter HOLDER (PH) | ○ Group HR & Recruitment Director – S&A |
| Jude NORCOTT (JN) | ○ Public Relations Manager & Local Liaison
Committee Secretary – S&A |

1. Apologies & Minutes of last meeting

- David Ryall (DR) was not in attendance.
- DHM introduced himself to the Committee and offered the option to Chair the meeting to the community members. The latter agreed to continue with the same format as previously adopted and DHM therefore assumed the role of Chairman.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no matters arising that would not otherwise be addressed during today's meeting.
 - KG pointed out that as a member of Herefordshire Council's Planning Committee, she would be unable to pass comment on any planning issues that may arise for discussion at this meeting.

2. Brook Farm up-date

a. Activity to date

- Picking of the first new season strawberries had commenced today. This is slightly later than last year and DHM advised that the market in general has been delayed by 2-3 weeks.

b) Planning

- Office block and The Volunteer – As the Committee are probably aware, both of these applications had received approval. There are currently no intentions for works to commence during this summer on either project and the Company will give a further update at the next meeting.
 - The Volunteer – The Company commented that there is currently a concern around the lack of support from local residents in utilising the pub. Hopefully this will improve.
- Installation of biomass boiler – The Company advised that they are currently undertaking air quality and noise assessment surveys to submit to the planning officers.

- Polytunnel cover for 12 months – The Company are currently undertaking updated flood risk assessments at the request of the planning officer.
- Seasonal agricultural workers' accommodation and market housing – one or both of these applications is expected to go before the Planning Committee in June. The delay has been largely due to the Council's District Valuer who has been instructed to audit the viability assessment. AF asked why a valuation was necessary and if it was at the request of the Company – JN is to investigate and respond in due course.

ACTION - JN

3. **Seasonal worker update**

- There are currently 280 workers on the Brook Farm campsite with a peak number of approximately 450 occupants expected towards the end of May and the beginning of June.
- At the last meeting, AF had enquired as to the number of seasonal workers that would be on site over the Christmas period. PH advised that there had been 163 workers on site between Christmas and New Year.
- The Company had refreshed relevant parts of the induction policy for seasonal workers, in order to further reflect the importance of community issues, for example cycling and litter. PH requested that he be advised as soon as possible of any issues, old or new, in this respect, in order that the Company may react quickly and effectively.
- The Company has been contacted by the local police force who has advised that it is their intention to establish information visits to farms employing seasonal agricultural workers. The purpose is to assist Eastern Europeans to better understand the differences in law between their homelands and the United Kingdom. The Company is awaiting an update on progress. Additionally in a similar vein, the police are drafting an information booklet which focuses on safety and social aspects of living and working in local communities within the UK. The Company have fed information into this publication and whilst it may not be ready for circulation during this season, all agreed that it would be most useful going forward. PH will keep the Committee updated on progress.

ACTION - PH

- Litter picks – SG asked if the Company were still conducting their own litter picks in between the two events organised by the village as in previous years. PH advised that the Company's cleaners carry out regular inspections of the road from The Volunteer down to Brook Farm, however SG is particularly concerned with the area along the alley way from Walkers Green to the mini market. Of particular concern is cigarette ends and ensuring that any litter is placed in the refuse bin provided. PH showed the Committee a picture of a multilingual notice that is displayed on the Company's campsite car park requesting workers to utilise the bins provided. It was agreed that something similar would be helpful by the alley way. KG offered to contact the Locality Steward to ascertain if it would be possible to site such a notice at this location. Additionally the Company agreed to conduct litter picks in June and August and these would also encompass the community playing field area.

ACTION – KG & PH

4. **Local community issues**

RB read out a letter from Parish Councillor Robin Brook that had been tabled at this week's meeting of Marden Parish Council. The letter was in response to the recent circulation of the minutes of the last Local Liaison Committee meeting to Marden Parish Council and additionally referred to issues a – d below.

a. Recent damage to Leystone bridge

JN clarified that this recent incident was in respect of a Spanish haulier whose vehicle having left Brook Farm, hit the bridge and caused the resultant damage. Balfour Beatty have advised that in order for repairs to the bridge to commence, a road closure application has to be applied for which may take up to six weeks. Currently there is an approximate start date of mid-May. In respect of costs, Balfour Beatty's claims team will contact the haulier once the works have been completed, to arrange for settlement. The Committee discussed the Parish Council's concerns regarding both Leystone and Moreton bridges in respect of the suitability of vehicles utilising them. It was acknowledged that this issue has been debated previously and how in spite of the fact that the bridges are listed, it is not possible to enforce any weight restrictions. The Company were asked if their HGV's still adhere to a 20mph speed restriction through Marden village. JN responded that the self imposed instruction is advised to all lorries travelling to and from Brook Farm and also encompasses the villages of Sutton St. Nicholas and Moreton on Lugg.

b. Access for lorries carrying chippings for proposed biomass boiler when C1122 Haywards Lane is closed

RB referred to the aforementioned letter, quoting details of the planning application for a proposed biomass boiler which stated that 4 vehicles per day (on weekdays), would be transporting woodchip to Brook Farm. At the last meeting of the Local Liaison Committee, the Company had advised that with a decrease in activity in relation to imported fruit, the number of vehicles associated with the biomass boiler should not result in any extra vehicles travelling to and from Brook Farm than at present. The letter queried this statement, as well as enquiring of the route that the woodchip vehicles would be taking. The Company responded that as a result of a decrease in activity relating to imported fruit, there appeared to have been less vehicles compared to the same period last year. In the event of a road closure on the C1122, lorries would be advised to take alternative routes through Moreton on Lugg, Sutton St. Nicholas and Bodenham. The Committee discussed that this would be the same for any HGV's needing to gain access to Marden and the surrounding areas in the event of the road closure, and not only vehicles associated with S&A.

c. Lorries late at night

The aforementioned letter questioned a further statement in the minutes of the previous meeting of the Local Liaison Committee, stating that there had been success in stemming the flow of traffic between the hours of 10pm and 6am. The letter implied that there was still a regular volume of traffic between 11pm and 2.30am, mostly inbound although also some outbound vehicles had also been observed. The Company advised that CCTV footage of any vehicle activity overnight at Brook Farm continues to be monitored on a daily basis and a lower percentage of activity has been seen. In addition, DHM advised that he has visited haulage companies in Spain and instructed them directly to refrain from accessing Brook Farm during night-time hours. The Company have also liaised with other suppliers who as a result have amended their hours of delivery to avoid gaining access overnight. In order to identify vehicles that may be ignoring such requests, the Company asked if any relevant information could be advised to them as soon as possible. In particular if this request could be communicated to local residents living on the respective routes, this would be very helpful. The Committee agreed that it may also be helpful to seek to establish a joined up approach in respect of traffic with Marden Parish Council. It was also noted that evidence of any vehicles may reveal that not all of the offenders are related to S&A.

ACTION – SG/AF/KG/RB

d. Incident recently of lorry parked up overnight which disturbed residents

The Company advised that this was in relation to a lorry which became stuck in the snow and had to be dug out. DHM advised that he and a team of colleagues went to the aid of the vehicle as soon as they were aware of the issue the following morning. With hindsight, it would have been courteous that morning to visit the neighbouring residents who had been disturbed during the night to apologise. The Company requested that apologies be communicated via Marden Parish Council to the residents concerned.

DHM continued that this was a good example of where swift communication can be key, in order for the Company to act as quickly as possible when incidents occur. As a result, members of the Committee were advised that they can contact DHM in the case of any emergencies going forward. Similarly, PH should be contacted in respect of any emergency issues in association with S&A's seasonal workers. Members should continue to e-mail any general matters to JN.

ACTION – SG/AF/KG/RB

e. Abusive car driver

JN had been requested by the Company's Transport Manager to advise the Committee of a recent incident where a lorry driver had been subjected to abuse from a car driver. The lorry driver who was travelling towards Marden, had pulled over to allow the car to clear the level crossing at Moreton on Lugg, when the driver of the car made an obscene gesture and mouthed obscenities at the lorry driver as they passed by. The car was a silver Vauxhall, possibly an Astra Estate and the driver had long, dark hair. The Committee were advised that should any similar incidents take place in the future and a registration number of a vehicle has been obtained, the Company's Transport Department will report the matter to the police.

f. Brook House

The Committee requested an update in respect of the commencement of works with details and a proposed timescale. JN is to investigate and respond in due course.

ACTION – JN

g. CHP

The Committee asked if the CHP facility had been commissioned as previously advised. DHM responded that it was now in use and that JN would respond with any further details in due course.

ACTION - JN

5. Community Fund

- Village clock – SG proposed that the Company consider providing support to assist with the siting of the historic village clock in the church bell tower. The clock requires a case and estimates are currently being sought. SG will send further details to JN for the Company's consideration. PH suggested contacting Hereford Art College as there may be an opportunity for assistance from students; PH will provide JN with his contact at the college for JN to pass to SG.

ACTION – PH/JN/SG

6. A.O.B.

- Road closure information
KG apologised for the recent misunderstanding in relation to the communication of incorrect information regarding road closures as a result of flooding. The Council had circulated details of an incorrect location on more than one occasion. KG advised that she has made a formal complaint to the cabinet minister responsible for highways and transport and that she will report on the outcome when received.

- Communication
DHM reiterated the Company's request for prompt advice of any issues and the contact details to be used in the case of emergencies.
- Meeting with Marden Parish Council
DHM advised the Committee of a recent meeting between the Company and Marden Parish Council, in respect of the operation and benefits of the Local Liaison Committee. A meeting summary with actions has been provided to the Parish Council and the Company is presently awaiting feedback.
 - The Committee discussed how it may be beneficial to seek additional members to join the Liaison Committee and in particular to have representation from local residents. SG proposed Mr. Steve Miles and RB suggested Mr. Phil Ryan, both of which will be approached respectively and advised to contact JN.
- Next meeting
Wednesday 18th July at 6.00 p.m. – provisional
Wednesday 26th September at 6.00 p.m.

ACTION – SG/RB