

Present: Kirstin Richardson Cllr Ian Forster Peter Arthurs Jane Arthurs Viv Davies Dave Hutchinson Delia McNally Joe Thompson Maureen Skevington Phil Toulson Grahame Tobin Mervyn Butler Phil Payne Howard Lawrence Lesley Younger Sue Balmer	Apologies: Ron Forbister George McCoy Gaynor Clarke Howard Becke Sue Shilling Jane Howarth Brian Navi
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Welcome from the Chair:

Kirstin welcomed everyone to the meeting. She extended a special welcome to our new Councillor, Ian Forster, who joined us for his first full monthly Forum meeting.

Good news in the Forum area was noted. This month the expanding population of wild birds in our area, including several category one species, was celebrated.

Matters arising from meeting on 17 May 2021:

Minutes of last meeting agreed.

Matters arising:

- Repairs to the collapsed and corroded sewer on Boldon Flats have been completed.
- The Forum response on the Moor Lane scheme, taking into account comments by members, has been submitted to South Tyneside Council.
- Respondents to the Council consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan have been thanked.
- Royal Mail will provide an alternative location outside 65 Front Street for the post box.

Protocol for online Forum meetings

Hopefully, we will soon be able to meet at face to face meetings, but to help with the smooth running of our online meetings and to give all members a chance to voice their opinions, without distracting background noise, we ask that:

- all attendees are muted at the start of the meeting

- attendees only speak when invited by the Chair
- attendees raise their hand to attract the Chair's attention, if they wish to speak on any topic.

Neighbourhood Plan: update and next steps

The independent examiner, Rosemary Kidd, has read the responses from the Council consultation. These may still be viewed on the South Tyneside Council website at:

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/72037/Examination-of-the-East-Boldon-Neighbourhood-Plan>

She has thanked the Forum for further information she has requested but requires clarification and answers to 34 queries and comments. Both the Forum and the Council need to respond to her queries by the end of June. The Forum Executive is working through the list of queries and is preparing responses with the help of our consultant, Jo-Anne Garrick. We must also ask for Council support in providing two maps to illustrate certain responses.

The Examiner will make a visit to the Forum area before she decides whether amendments to the draft plan should be made.

Following discussion, it was felt that it would be possible to accept changes if these did not affect policies in the Plan. Policies are rooted in community engagement. Community feelings towards car parking are particularly strong. A response to the Examiner to explain this more fully is needed.

In line with the Forum constitution, Joe Thompson proposed a motion:

“This meeting gives authority to the Forum Executive to progress discussions with the Independent Examiner over the Neighbourhood Plan.”

This was seconded and agreed by all members present.

Actions:

- *Joe Thompson to source relevant maps from STC.*
- *Forum Executive to finalise responses requested by Examiner.*
- *Forum Executive to build a considered response for Parking Standards.*

Wildlife corridors

STC has provided important new information regarding wildlife corridors. A comprehensive document was prepared for South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead Councils and was published on 11th December 2020. It is entitled: Wildlife Corridors Network Review and can be found online at: https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/media/22885/AD-22-Wildlife-Network-Report/pdf/AD.22_Wildlife_Network_Report.pdf?m=637436398548600000

As STC has indicated that the review will form part of the evidence base that will inform the preparation of the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan and any other relevant documents, the Forum is disappointed that we were not made aware of the research earlier. It is a significant document using new methods of wildlife corridor research containing case studies and examples of best practice. Maps relating to South Tyneside are included in the accompanying PowerPoint shown at the meeting. Merv Butler explained the significance of the new research for the protection of sites in the Forum area, including core sites and buffer zones, habitats, watercourses and key species. Records for key species were provided by ERIC (Environmental Record Information Centre for the Northeast of England).

Developers have attacked the existing mapping of wildlife corridors on the Draft Neighbourhood

Plan. This new form of mapping is clear and our consultant recommends replacement of maps to take new research into account. It is felt that this also strengthens the Forum's policy EB5 relating to Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Actions:

- *Change the form of mapping in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan to take account of the Wildlife Corridor review.*
- *Members should continue to log species seen in the Forum area on ERIC website.*
<https://www.ericnortheast.org.uk/recording-wildlife-2/>

Network Rail work at Moor Lane: update

The Network Rail Stabilisation works on Moor Lane continue to be of concern because of the size of the operation. In response to our concerns, the Forum received a letter from Network Rail dated 26 May 2021 giving assurances that wood chippings would be removed and reparations made to the site. We have thanked them for the correspondence but have asked for clarification about the timing and detail of reparations and for a meeting with their representatives and Clare Rawcliffe, STC Countryside Officer.

Delia McNally reiterated her desire to push the contractors to make the best restoration of the site possible, with areas for foraging and mixed hedging. Attention should be paid to flora and the presence of rhizomes of native species which need to be protected.

Maureen Skevington thanked Delia for her expertise and expressed her alarm at the perceived destruction of such a large area of land.

The Secretary has copied our letter to Network Rail to our MP, Councillors and relevant Council Officers. Kate Osborne has written to the CEO of Network Rail and has expressed support for our campaign. We are grateful for her interest.

Merv Butler observed that, as Network Rail has purchased a strip of land from the Church Commissioners, they can exercise development rights on their own land. Clare Rawcliffe is checking details relating to permissions on the site compound.

AOB

- A Forum member has drawn attention to the worn road markings at the top of The Hawthorns, which cause traffic blockages. Councillor Forster undertook to raise this issue with STC staff.
- Lesley Younger reported that anti-social behaviour is on the rise around St Bede's. We have a Community Support Police Officer and hope to work with him to solve problems.
- Planning applications continue to be made for usual home developments and will be shared with the membership where relevant.
- The regular newsletter will be sent to members via email.

Kirstin thanked all for attending.

Meeting closed 8.15 pm

Date of next meeting: 19 July 2021