

Hills Resource Recovery Centre Liaison Committee

Minutes of a liaison committee meeting held at Compton Bassett Village Hall on Thursday 30th March 2006.

PRESENT

North Wiltshire District Council

Councillor David Evans

Compton Bassett Parish Council

Councillor Peter Szczesiak

Councillor Peter Barnett

Councillor Fran Creasey

Councillor Serena Henly

Calne Town Council

Councillor Colin Viner

Councillor Roy Golding

Hilmarton Parish Council

Councillor Phil Kibble

Friends of Compton and Surrounds (FOCAS)

Michael Ransom

CPRE Wiltshire

Anne Henshaw

Wiltshire County Council (officers)

David Rose, development control manager

Henry Newbery, planning enforcement officer

Hills Group

Peter Andrew, waste disposal manager

Andrew Liddle, aggregates production manager

Barrie Hedges, communications adviser

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nancy Bryant (WCC), Councillor John Henley (Hilmarton PC), Councillor Mel Wilkins (Hilmarton PC), Councillor Dave Grafton (Cherhill PC) and Steve Burns (Hills).

Chairmanship

In Councillor Bryant's absence, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Szczesiak

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

David Rose and Henry Newbery introduced themselves to the meeting as Wiltshire County Council officers with particular roles to play in waste and mineral planning matters. Mr Newbery said it was apparent that the various councils enjoyed good direct relationships with Hills. As planning enforcement officer, he was happy to hear from them in any circumstances where it was felt planning conditions were not being complied with.

It was agreed that Mr Newbery's contact details should be circulated in the minutes: Tel 01225 713436, e-mail henrynewbery@wiltshire.gov.uk

SITE NAME

Concern had been raised by Compton Bassett Parish Council that recent planning documents still used the name of the village in the site's title. Barrie Hedges explained that that it had not been possible to amend all plans but that efforts were generally being made to change the site name to the Hills Resource Recovery Centre and the location to Lower Compton. It would, however, take time to change long established habits, not just within Hills but with local authorities.

PLANNING APPLICATION

Peter Andrew said that the planning application for an extension to the quarrying and landfill activities had now been submitted to WCC and was registered on 23 March. The well attended public exhibition in January had enabled local people to view the proposals and discuss them with Hills staff. Few comments had been received about the plans as a result. Following the last meeting of the liaison committee, amendments had been made to provide for additional planting along the roadside between Lower Compton and Compton Bassett.

Members of the committee raised concerns about the limited time available from WCC to comment and Mr Rose was asked to extend the consultation period. Hills representatives confirmed that they would be happy to provide the necessary flexibility.

While the application itself was not available online, a non-technical summary of the environmental assessment was being placed on the Hills website (see below).

Councillor Mrs Henly had queried the use of "Low Lane" as the location for the extension. It was confirmed that the local name for the stretch concerned was in fact the "White Road".

Mrs Henshaw asked whether consideration had been given to using finally restored areas of the landfill for amenity use. Mr Andrew said that, while land restored to date was being farmed and that was shown for the future, the company would consider alternative ideas from the various councils represented on the committee. It was agreed that the Calne representatives should ask for the matter to be placed on the agenda for the next "Focus on Five" group meeting of local councils.

In response to a question from Councillor Evans, the Hills representatives promised to check with their planning consultant whether consideration was being given to diversion of the Sustrans cycle route which would avoid the need to cross the conveyor route.

LANDFILL, AGGREGATES AND CONCRETE UPDATE

Andrew Liddle reported that the Tarmac-owned ready-mixed concrete plant had been removed and Hills Concrete had erected its own, which was now operational. Overburden had been removed from the area previously occupied by the old plant ready for sand extraction.

Mr Andrew said that, following sand extraction, a new landfill cell would be prepared this summer. Work was also planned to upgrade areas that had been restored previously. He confirmed that the highest parts of the landfill were within the limits set by planning conditions. The reason for the surcharge was that the landform would ultimately settle by some 25 per cent over a period of around 20 years.

RECYCLING OPERATIONS UPDATE

A report provided by Steve Burns stated that recycling for the first 11 months of the 2005-06 year amounted to 81,716 tonnes, which was about 11,000 tonnes ahead of the equivalent period for 2004-05. Poor weather had slowed recycling rate in February and March and it was likely that the originally expected 92,000 tonnes for the year would not be achieved. A landfill diversion of 34% was being achieved for all waste and 31.5% for household waste against a Wiltshire target of 30%.

The network of 10 household recycling centres had received over 64,000 tonnes and recycled 73%. From 1st April the HRCs (other than Devizes) would open for an extra two hours on Wednesday and Thursday evenings (until 7pm). The need was identified in a customer survey last summer. Gypsum (plasterboard) recycling containers were now being added to HRCs. Carpets and rigid plastics would also be added to the recyclables in the near future.

Kerbside recycling was generating 1,400 tonnes per month. New rounds in North Wiltshire and rural parts of West Wiltshire would begin shortly, meaning that 98% of all households in the two districts would now have collections. Hills now performs 135,000 collections per fortnight.

COMPOSTING UPDATE

Mr Andrew said that the company had recently invested a further £250,000 in its successful composting operation. The compost was undergoing accreditation and was now available in bulk bags which had been selling at the rate of some 130 per month. Available in three grades, the material had been sold for landscape use at the new Heathrow Terminal 5.

OPEN DAY

Mr Andrew said that, following the success of the open day in January, the company would consider a larger event in the summer of 2006 or 2007. This could include input from plant suppliers.

OTHER ISSUES

The special mobile hotline for any neighbours with concerns about the site had yet to be used.

While litter picking was being undertaken around the outskirts of the site, there were concerns amongst some councillors about levels of roadside litter dropped by lorries other than those operated by Hills. It was suggested that some contractors were not effectively sheeting their vehicles and agreed that Hills should be asked to raise the matter with those concerned. The company will also investigate a complaint from Councillor Szczesiak about a Chippenham Recycling lorry seen passing through Compton Bassett without apparent regard for the weight limit.

It was confirmed that employees' vehicles were no longer being parked in the grounds of the NAAFI building. Space had now been allocated within the Hills site itself.

INFORMATION ON HILLS WEBSITE

Mr Hedges advised that the Hills website www.hills-group.co.uk now had a new community zone designed to contribute to effective local liaison. Facilities on the Lower Compton page included the minutes of liaison meetings, a non-technical summary of the environmental assessment that accompanies the new planning application, and an online version of the exhibition run in the village hall in January.

LIAISON WITH AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES

Mr Hedges confirmed that he had put Aggregate Industries in touch with Councillor Bryant in response to the request at the last meeting. Mr Newbery said that a meeting of the joint AI / Viridor liaison committee for Sands Farm had taken place recently and another was planned for Thursday 7th September at 5pm at the block works.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Hills Resource Recovery Centre liaison committee will take place at Compton Bassett Village Hall at 7pm on Monday 5th June 2006. Note: we have had to opt for a different day from those identified at the meeting as the hall has long term bookings on Mondays and Thursdays.