

Formby Civic News

The Formby Civic Society Newsletter



November 2005

The future of the Green Belt?



Over 500 Acres of prime farmland on the Formby/West Lancashire boundary has recently been sold to an undisclosed buyer.

The Civic Trust is seeking views from our members and supporters on the importance of the green belt.

- Is the green belt a good thing?
- Does green belt legislation need to be reformed? If so, how?
- Are we worried about the loss of green belt land, or the pressures of new development?
- Do we have any specific concerns about the green belt in our local area?
- What do you think? Please See article by Ray Derricott on page 2.

Inside this issue:

A New Community Centre? 2

Protecting the countryside 2

Dune Dog Fouling must end! 3

Planning Matters 3

Wicks Lane Path 4

Trees 4

Country matters 5

Save our Shops. 5

Future programme 6

A DICKENS OF A DAY!

This year the Society is having a stall in the centre of the Village on Dickensian Day (Saturday 3 December). We hope you'll come along to show support and - if you've got some time - we'd be very grateful for help both erecting the stall (around 9.00) and taking it down at the end of the day (about 4.00). It won't be a long or difficult task but a few hands will make light work - and if you can help on the stall for an hour or so that also would be very welcome. Either come along on

the day or (preferably) let Alan Burton know you'll be coming (phone 876454). We'll be close to Derbyshire's shop where you'll be able to stock up on your Christmas supplies of Notelets, if you don't want to obtain them at our stall (remember as a member you qualify for a 50p discount if bought from us!). If you haven't seen our society leaflet "Discovering Formby" you'll also be able to get that, at a very reasonable 50p. We look forward to seeing you there. A.B.

A Date for your Diary:-

The Society Annual Dinner will be held at Formby Hall Golf Club on Saturday 3rd March at 7 for 7.30 pm.

Dress informal
Guests invited.

A New Community Centre for Formby?

After a successful and well attended meeting on 16th September, chaired by Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, the Society is now exploring the possibility of initiating a feasibility study to determine the practicality of securing, for future community use, the now disused Holy Trinity School. We hope to set up a small working group of representatives of other interested local organisations *and will be pleased to hear from other societies or organisations who share our view that a new Formby Community Centre is desirable.* Our present facilities have served us well but the possible availability of this well maintained building offers exciting possibilities to fill a need that has been raised again and again since the 1960's. We have already established that this proposed use would be in keeping with Planning Guidelines..

We are now asking the Diocese to let us have their views on the future of the building.

If the Diocese approve this sort of Community use and the building becomes available, part of it could possibly be sublet to small local business to provide income. Elizabeth McInness (Sefton CVS) is advising us on funding but it seems that the cost of a feasibility study could be met by an 'Awards for All' grant. Our attention



has also been drawn to a new and promising source of funding. This is from a new Lottery initiative, (The Big Lottery Fund) which has announced

“exciting possibilities to fill a need that has been raised again and again since the 1960's”

that it will launch a Community Buildings programme in the Summer of 2006. £50 million will be made available over three years in England to specifically support the building and improvements to village halls and other local venues. A key aim of the

A corner of the main hall at Holy Trinity. The building was extended in 1993.

programme will be to extend the services and activities delivered through community building and to ensure that more people make use of them. This sounds tailor-made for what we have in mind.

We have been supplied with the (itemised) full Maintenance costs for the last full year of use. An educated guess at the value of the building itself is in the region of £1.500K. It would be a shame to let such an interesting opportunity 'drift away' without full and thoughtful consideration. R.Y.

SEFTON BRANCH OF CPRE meeting

Ray Derricott attended a meeting of the newly formed Sefton Branch of the CPRE held at the Professional Development Centre, Park Road on 10 November 2005. The Branch was formed in September 2005 and is looking to recruit additional members and interest from Formby.

The meeting was chaired by Debi Jones with the Secretary and Treasurer present. After a short introduction the Chair introduced the Membership Secretary from the national organisation, the Chair of the West Lancs Branch, the Planning Officer from the W Lancs Branch and the Wildlife Crime Officer from Merseyside Police. Present in the audience were 12 to 14 members of the public. Each official gave a short presentation of their func-

tion and major issues as they saw them. One of the most informative presentations was given by the Planning Officer of the W Lancs Branch. Most of her work focused on Green Belt issues, Nature Conservation, the preservation of listed buildings, keeping up with Local Authority UDPs, and supporting local objections to planning proposals that were thought not to be in the interest of local communities. (Continued next page.....)

SEFTON BRANCH OF CPRE (Continued).....

This list correlates closely to the work of the Amenities Secretary of the Civic Society. She also warned about the imminence of new Planning Legislation that is thought to be proposing setting up the control of regional and cross-authority planning thus taking some power from localities. Much concern was expressed about the work and intentions of the NWRA. In this meeting nothing was mentioned about the implementation of the recommendations of the Boundary Commission. No one knew when the final recommendations of this body were to be expected. Most of these decisions are to be made from DEFRA and the

office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

A member of the W Lancs Branch gave testament of objections to planning in which she had been involved had been successful.

Another stimulating talk was given by the police officer who investigates crimes related to the trapping of birds, badger hunting, the destruction of wildlife sites, the sale of endangered species and the importing of dangerous animals and the avoidance of quarantine regulations. Most people present indicated that this kind of work by the police force was unknown to them and were surprised about the

range of work undertaken. The officer emphasised that he could only take action on the basis of actual evidence and could not get involved in the general work of specific charities and pressure groups. General questions from the audience were about the siting of telephone masts and the sale of Green Belt farmland from the Leverhulme Estate. The rumour was that all land had been sold as a single sale to one individual. The meeting was told that the purchaser and his intentions could be revealed by the Land Registry who was obliged under the Freedom of Information legislation. R.D.

Dog Fouling on dune Footpaths.

In line with other Civic Societies along the Sefton Coast the FCS Committee recently agreed to support Sefton Coast and Countryside service's attempts to persuade local dog-owners not to allow their pets to foul dune footpaths.

This is an important issue on aesthetic, medical and ecological grounds. Strong views have already been expressed by visitors. For instance in a recent survey 57% of Sefton residents reported 'annoyance by the actions of others' and 59.1 % of Sefton residents gave the reason for this as 'Dog fouling/behaviour'. This response was significantly higher than 'litter' (40.3%). With something like 300+ dogs a day around Formby Point the problem is not insignificant and from the conservation point of view, it is clear that any increase in nutrient deposition should be discouraged on the dune grasslands.

If this localised pollution and widespread nutrient input continues there may be serious consequences for habitat status. Since the Dogs (Fouling of Land Act) 1996, however, the law has become clearer and this should be helpful in tackling the problem. In

addition Sefton Coast and Countryside Service now employ a part-time ex-policeman to help tackle this problem. Current official attitudes are as follows: *Sefton Council*; "the whole of the Sefton Coast is designated land

SCP 'Coastal Code' says "Clean up after your dog "

under the 1996 Act. On this it is an offence for an owner or keeper of a dog to fail to clear up after their dog has fouled. Failure to comply can result in a prosecution and a fine of up to £1,000. It is not a defence to claim that you did not know or were not there when the dog fouled. Never let your dog out alone". *The National Trust*; "As the number of dogs walked in the countryside increases, additional measures are needed a) to encourage greater awareness of the adverse impacts dogs can have on the environment, wildlife and other visitors, b) to control indiscriminate dog fouling, c) to provide more areas where dogs are not allowed or allowed

only under close control and d) to reconcile conflicts between dogs and stock farmers so that better use may be made by walkers and others of tenanted farmland". *Sefton Local Nature Reserve Bye-laws*; "require dog owners to keep dogs "under control and properly restrained".

There are plenty of discrete notices at major dune access points together with appropriate litter bins but the actual use of appropriate disposal seems at present very low. Somewhat surprisingly the number of prosecutions under the 1996 Act also seem to be unknown! Is there a case for tightening up the regulations regarding dog control? Should everyone now become more pro-active in helping educate, prevent and if necessary punish offenders?

Great attempts have been rightly made to improve sea-water quality on our coast. Now is the time to reduce fouling on the dune-system, in exactly the same way and for the same reasons that it is now being vigorously tackled in the New Forest

RA.Y.

Planning Matters by Ray Derricott

Site at rear of 73 / 75 Freshfield Road.

On behalf of the Society I have objected to the proposal to build a group of apartments and other dwellings on the site of the old railway sidings behind 73/75 Freshfield Road. Our objection was based on the high density of the development when previously the Council had given permission for two houses to be built on the site. The access to the site is a con-

tinuation of Old Town Lane. This is narrow and cannot be widened. The junction with Freshfield Road is already quite busy and needs careful manipulation; this development will add to the possible danger. Developments of this kind will probably be occupied by at least two-car families thus adding to the parking and access problems. Importantly the Council services will expect to collect rubbish and recycling material again bringing additional problems. I have urged that developments of this kind should not be delegated but should go to the full

Planning Committee. The UDP names Freshfield Road as an 'area of character'. Let us keep it so.

Golf driving range. I have investigated proposals to change and reconstruct the golf driving range on the Moss. This is not related to Formby Hall Golf Club's plans to build a Golf Academy. The reconstruction remains within the footprint of the existing range and although nearby residents might complain; I cannot find any general grounds on which the Society can object.

Wicks Lane Path.

The saga continues! Sefton Legal Department is drawing up a legal notice to designate the path as a Bridle Way. During the summer I have corresponded with Mr Marrin from Traffic Control and I have e-mailed and talked to Val Hough, the Footpaths Officer. I have consistently made the Society's view that the Wicks Lane Path should be a footpath only. It is far too narrow, especially at the junction of the path with Larkhill Lane, to have dual use. Many children use that access to and from school. There is also the usual evidence that the path is

being used by horses. As we anticipated some two or more years ago that if the path became a Bridle Path the developers would object. After conversations with the developers this seems to be the case. The path could then be closed to all users. The path was closed from July 2004 for over a year. The position of the National Trust is uncertain but they will probably object to a dual-purpose path. R,D.



Above; The new and controversial entrance to Wicks Lane path.

Trees

There were three applications to fell trees that are subject to TPOs. The Society is keen to retain as many mature trees as possible and we usually object in principle to their felling. There are some exceptions such as self-set sycamores and trees that are subject to obvious rotting. The first of these trees was an overgrown Christmas tree that had been planted lovingly by a previous owner of a house in Wicks Lane. The tree is now huge,



is mainly brown rather than evergreen and adds nothing aesthetically to the site. The second tree is a pine that is leaning at an angle of at least 45 degrees over a house in Victoria. It is clearly dangerous. The third tree is an

old birch tree that is situated between two houses in Kirklake Road. It is cracking the nearby pavement making walking there dangerous and it is also cracking boundary walls and paths. Again it does not add to the aesthetic appeal of the area. I cannot see how we can object the felling of any of these trees. The Council Department also agrees with this. R.D.

Country matters



Above; Farmhouse for sale at Altcar.

At the request of the Chairman, I also attended a committee meeting of the CPRE West Lancashire Group. I was made very welcome. It became clear very early in the meeting that we shared many concerns with this gentle but determined group. We share boundaries and are equally concerned about maintaining the Green Belt, the maintenance and development of access to the countryside, the monitoring of buildings of note, resisting insensitive planning proposals, the siting of telephone masts and insisting that not too many planning proposals were decided by delegation. I was given time to express our own position. They were concerned about the recent large scale selling of former Leverhulme estate farmland and the possible future of MOD land. The meeting was very worthwhile. I promised that we would keep in touch.. R.D.

Save our Shops!



1

Display on the pavements? How about these? All in Chapel Lane, Formby, in years gone by.

- 1, Birtwistles, (later Dalley Bros).
2. Outside Charter's Butchers.
3. Rimmer's; A Christmas display.



2



3

With our best wishes
for a Happy Christmas!

Chair; Dr Reg Yorke, 3 Wicks Lane,
Formby. 01704 872187

Hon Secretary; David Willis,
5 Phillips Close, Formby. 878994

Treasurer; Mike Belshaw,
38 Graburn Rd, Formby. 01704
874940

History Group; Barbara Yorke
Art Group Rep; Barbara Mossop
Amenity Secretary; Ray Derricott
Newsletter Editor; Dr Reg Yorke
Distributing Secretary;
Elsie Winthorpe

www.formbycivicsociety.org.uk

THE FORMBY CIVIC SOCIETY.

The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes in the area comprising Formby and Little Altcar, which area shall hereinafter be referred to as "the area of benefit":

1. To stimulate public interest in the area of benefit,,
2. To promote high standards of planning and architecture in the area of benefit;
3. To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit and safeguard its natural amenities.
4. To encourage the study of Local History of the area by arranging meetings and keeping relevant publications, books, maps, archives, historical artefacts, photographs and pictures accessible for study and research by members, authorised students and scholars and (by special arrangement with the Secretary), members of the public.

The Society is registered as Charity No 516789 with the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales

Future programme; 2005/2006.

These meetings are held in the Ravenmeols Community Centre, Park Road, Formby, at 8.

Friday 25/11/2005 - GENERAL MEETING "*Protecting the Countryside*"; Audrey Nelson

Thursday 1/12/2005 - HISTORY GROUP "*Golf Courses in Sefton*"; Harry Foster

Thursday 5/01/2006 - HISTORY GROUP "*What our Scrap-books tell us*"; Barbara Yorke

Friday 27/01/2006 - GENERAL MEETING "*England's Historic Seascape*" Deanna Groom

Thursday 2/02/2006 - HISTORY GROUP "*St Luke's Church and School*", A. Waplington

Friday 24/02/2006 - GENERAL MEETING "*The NW Association of Civic Trust Societies – The First Three Years*", Stephen Langtree

Thursday 3/03/2006 - HISTORY GROUP "*The Botanic Gardens Museum*" Miss Jones,

Friday 24/03/2006 - GENERAL MEETING "*Burbo Bank – Future Prospects*" Adrian Maddocks

Thursday 6/04/2006 - HISTORY GROUP "*Members Evening*"

28/04/2006 - AGM followed by "*Formby Parish Council – The Story So Far*" Sean Brady.

Art Group. January 14th 2006 Annual Get-together at Lydiate Hall Farm. It is hoped that we can discuss next years programme at this time. Please let me know if you will be attending, by end December. .Phone me on 01704 873920. **Barbara Mossop**
