

Our Green Spaces Focus Group - 22 February 2021

Present

Jed Aitchison ('Library of Things' Project), Ron Baker (MVP & LM), Anne Baxter, Jenny Bell, Rachel Fletcher (Friends of Meanwood Park), Andy Gell, Pip Goff, Cllr Sharon Hamilton (Meanwood & Moortown), Roger Handley, Susan Harnett, Nicky Hill, Chris Hughes, Karen Holder-Benjamin, Sylvia Jay, Nigel Lees (Woodhouse Ridge Action Group & Monk Bridge Green), Janet Matthews (MVP & LM), Carolyn Mackay, Haiko Muller, Chris Needham, John Nelthorpe, Jackie Prescott, Cllr Mohammed Shahzad (Meanwood & Moortown), Isabel Swift, Emma Tonge, Pauline Trusselle, Lewis Turner (Lemon Balm), Jonathan Ward.

1. Introductions

Janet Matthews explained that the aim of the Love Meanwood Focus Groups is to begin putting into action the findings of the Love Meanwood community consultation that are contained in its Vision for Meanwood 2030. <https://lovemeanwood.org.uk/>.

This is the second of three and is focusing on Our Green Spaces – protecting and enhancing Meanwood's green spaces:

- developing a linked and protected biodiversity corridor of green space with an accessible cycle and pedestrian route
- protect and enhance the many additional green spaces for socialising, playing, exercising, biodiversity and climate resilience
- support and value Meanwood Park and Meanwood Valley Urban Farm ensuring they continue to support the community

There are links between these projects and with the work of other focus groups

The other two Focus Groups will hold similar meetings:

- Connections - Monday 1st March 7pm
- Heart of Meanwood – meeting held 15th Feb. A note of that meeting can be viewed at <https://lovemeanwood.org.uk/focus-groups.html>

2. Meanwood Valley Group

Isabel Swift and Chris Hughes outlined the work they had undertaken to understand and map the Meanwood Valley.

Green spaces were important to the whole community and their aim was to identify the many elements affecting the enjoyment of the valley, e.g. land ownership,

biodiversity, land status etc. This information was being recorded in a map that would provide a single source of information to identify opportunities to improve the valley for the benefit of the community and also to support work / bids for funding to achieve this.

Isabel shared a slide illustrating how she thought the Green Spaces group linked in with the Vision, MVP and the community as a whole – attached.

Action

- Isabel & Chris to update the next meeting on progress

3. Monk Bridge Green

Nigel Lees outlined his work to enhance and protect the land off of Monk Bridge Rd (adjacent to Mill Pond Lane – where the beck goes under the road).

The land is currently owned by a large company who have no interest in it. Nigel and others have been working to enhance it with maintenance and planting. He is negotiating with the company to bring the land into public ownership for the good of the community and develop it as a 'pocket park'.

Anyone interested can contact him via his [FB page](#) or [website](#).

Ron Baker mentioned the recent [FB post](#) re land at the end of Highbury Terrace. Some residents were interested in renovating this land for growing vegetables etc. Nigel said he would make contact to see if he could advise.

4. Highbury Cricket Ground

Jackie Prescott outlined recent activity at the old Highbury Cricket Ground.

The owner has posted a statutory notice attempting to prevent anyone claiming a footpath over the land (other than that designated on current LCC plans).

She is gathering evidence to prove that there has been a footpath in common use over the years 1993 to 2013 (when it was fenced off by the owner).

Anyone wishing to provide evidence can do so by completing a form detailing how you have used the land.

5. LCC Countryside Ranger David Preston

Janet advised that David Preston, a great supporter of Meanwood Valley Trail is returning to work in the Valley.

6. Training Opportunity

Isabel outlined an upcoming free training opportunity – environmental surveying.

Action

- Isabel to provide details for distribution to attendees and posting on social media.

7. Green spaces in Meanwood

There are many lesser-known green areas, footpaths and features in Meanwood, e.g. Stainbeck, Carr Manor fields, Sugarwell Hill. As part of the Connections focus group these green spaces are to be mapped showing footpaths linking them.

Janet and Ron have walked the Stain Beck path many times and believe there are opportunities to enhance this area with, for instance, an outdoor gym.

8. Environmental activism in Meanwood

The meeting discussed current groups working to improve the community and tackle waste:

- **Litter Free Meanwood**

This is a Facebook group of Meanwood residents who are keen to make Meanwood litter free. Currently, because of Covid restrictions, they do not meet in groups but individuals do small scale litter picks. When restrictions are lifted the aim is to organise group action across Meanwood.

Anyone interested can contact them via the [Litter Free Meanwood Facebook page](#).

- **Plastic Free Meanwood**

This is a Facebook group set up by a Meanwood resident for people interested in eliminating the amount of plastic used in our community.

Anyone interested can contact them via the [Campaign for plastic free takeaways in Meanwood Facebook page](#).

- **C.R.A.P. Leeds LS6**

A Facebook group offering the opportunity for people to re-use and recycle items they don't want that would otherwise be sent to landfill – it's free to join and no selling is allowed. People can also ask for things they need.

To join go to their [C.R.A.P Leeds LS6 Facebook page](#).

8. Meanwood environmental action group

The meeting discussed setting up a group to focus on reducing carbon usage and improving the environment in Meanwood. This would be an umbrella group for the likes of the three groups named above plus other action to, for example:

- grow local food (there is already a community orchard off of Parkside Rd set up by the former Transition Meanwood group);
- campaign to reduce waste
- encourage active travel through, and exploration of Meanwood – this links with the work of the 3rd Focus Group – Connections
- look at ‘Active Travel Neighborhoods’ and ‘Low Traffic Neighborhoods’

This could link with other groups across Leeds, e.g. Zero Waste Leeds, Greenpeace, Leeds Climate Commission, LCCs Climate Emergency Group.

Action

- Please let us know what this group should be called.
- Janet to set up a meeting of this group
- Cllr Shahzad to provide contact details for Polly/ Pauline Cook, Chief Officer of Climate Change @ LCC

9. Leeds City Council Transport Strategy – Have Your Say

Cllr Shahzad urged everyone to look at the proposed LCC Transport Strategy and comment on it. The closing date for comments is 26th March.

You can access the strategy and comment on it [here](#).

10. A ‘Library of Things’

Jed Aitchison outlined his project to set up a community resource of items that people in the community could borrow instead of buying them, e.g. tools, equipment etc. He is working primarily with HEART in Headingley but this could also benefit Meanwood via the Community Centre on Stainbeck Avenue.

11. Next Meeting

To be held in 6 weeks’ time.

Day & Time? - is a Monday the best day? Is 7pm the best time? Would 6pm, lunchtime or another time be better to ensure accessibility?

Want to join in? All welcome.

Let us know lovemeanwood@gmail.com