

# Meeting record

**Regarding:**

Magna Park Lutterworth Community Liaison Group (CLG)

**Date:**

6pm, Tuesday 5 October 2021

**Attendees:**

Cllr Bill Woolliscroft – Monks Kirby PC (BW)  
 Cllr Tony Gillias – Rugby BC (TG)  
 Cllr Adrian Warwick – Warwickshire CC (AW)  
 Cllr Margaret Wild – Cotesbach PC (MW)  
 Alison Wright – Willey Parish Meeting (AWr)  
 Cllr Jonathan Bateman – Harborough DC (JB)  
 Cllr Nigel Chapman – Bitteswell and Bittesby PC (NC)  
 Richard Nunn – Lutterworth Town Council (RN)  
 David Wright – Harborough DC (DW)

Gwyn Stubbings – GLP (GS)  
 Richard Allington – GLP (RA)  
 Olivia Hinds – GLP (OH)  
 Angela Jeffrey – Magna Park (AJ)  
 Scott Harker – SEC Newgate UK (SH)  
 Rebecca Coleman – SEC Newgate UK (ReC)

Item	Minutes	Actions
1	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Scott Harker (SH) welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
2	<p><b>Agree minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 meeting</b></p> <p>DW noted that there was no representative from Harborough District Council at the previous meeting and gave apologies.</p> <p>SH raised a point of clarification on behalf of Cllr Page regarding the relationship between Lutterworth Town Estates, the Heritage Centre and the Lutterworth Museum. SH proposed to add a sentence to the minutes to clarify that Lutterworth Town Estate is separate from the Heritage Centre and Lutterworth Museum before these are issued.</p>	SH to amend minutes with clarification.
3	<p><b>Planning update</b></p> <p>Gwyn Stubbings (GS) gave an update on the expansion of Magna Park to the north and the south and shared a masterplan showing the current site. GS noted that at the last Harborough District Council Planning Committee, two planning applications for units at Magna Park had received approval. Permission has been granted for one unit at Magna Park North, MPN4, and work will commence on site shortly. A second application for two units at Magna Park South received approval, but GS stated there</p>	

are no plans to begin work on these units yet. GS added that work is ongoing at Magna Park North to deliver three units adjacent to MPN4 (MPN1, 2 and 3).

GS confirmed that there was a live planning application for amenity uses adjacent to Mere Lane which would likely be referred to HDC Planning Committee in December. Nigel Chapman (NC) queried the location of this site to which GS clarified that the proposed application was to the south of Magna Park, where Mere Lane meets the A5. GS confirmed that the application is for a petrol filling station, gas fuelling facility and food and beverage outlets.

Tony Gillias (TG) asked where designated HGV parking would be located. GS advised that the permission granted for Magna Park North also included lorry parking at the land south of George House. In addition, as part of the Magna Park South proposals, there was lorry parking provision at unit MPS10.

GS noted that a revised proposal for the amenity use at Mere Lane would shortly be brought forward to change the use into a lorry parking facility. GLP is close to signing an agreement with a HGV park operator and subject to the original planning application receiving planning consent, the revised scheme will be submitted. Within the revised proposals, some elements of the original scheme would be retained, such as the gas fuelling facility while other elements such as the food outlets and petrol filling station would be removed.

Bill Woolliscroft (BW) asked where the access to the proposed HGV parking would be located. GS clarified that rather than putting lorry parking behind George House this would be moved to the proposed Mere Lane site. This would be served by the roundabout off the A5 and accessed from Mere Lane. GS highlighted this area on the plan and advised that this could accommodate over 100 HGVs and would be brought forward as Phase 1.

David Wright (DW) asked if the HGV park was intended as a commercial HGV park or would it be limited to Magna Park users. GS advised that this was at the operator's discretion, but his understanding was that there was sufficient demand from Magna Park users.

DW asked if HDC could be introduced to the operator to support them from an economic development point of view. GS said this could be facilitated and added that members would be aware of current supply-chain challenges and lorry driver shortages. The operator is well-established in the UK and is looking to deliver a high-quality environment with a focus on amenities and provisions for lorry drivers. GS added that GLP is keen to lift the quality of what is currently on offer for lorry drivers within the UK.

Olivia Hinds (OH) added that the unit will be in-keeping with the rest of the park and will also offer amenities for those who work in the park and the public.

NC queried if there was a trend towards localising the provision of logistics, away from centralised logistics. In this context, NC raised that speculative warehousing may be presumptuous. NC also asked if the bridleway had been reinstated as equestrian users currently had to cross the A5 and ride against traffic flows with the diversion. GS stated that the industry is experiencing huge demand for logistic

warehouse space, with demand outstripping supply. This has been fuelled by the increase in e-commerce as well as recent challenges which have contributed to retailers and logistics businesses wanting to hold more inventory in the UK. GS added that based on current experience, as soon as something was built speculatively, it was being occupied quickly. Four units on Magna Park South were all built speculatively last year and have all been occupied.

OH added that market analysis showed that there was a national vacancy rate of just under 3% and this was lower in the Midlands. In the Midlands, there is a 0.34-month supply of logistic warehouse space based on a 10-year average. Based on this 10-year average, there is less than a three-month supply to service demand.

NC commented that when he drives to the M1 there is an empty warehouse that has been vacant for a long time. GS said this unit does not belong to GLP and that he is unaware of the reason why it is vacant. OH and DW clarified that building is currently under offer.

Richard Nunn (RN) added that a large part of Great Britain was local to where Magna Park was, and this location within the Golden Triangle would always be particularly favoured. RN added that the vacant warehouse was around 129,000 sq. ft which was not the same scale of those that occupiers of Magna Park were attracted to. RN expressed concern that it is the same size of those proposed as part of the Lutterworth East development and these may be harder to find occupiers for.

GS returned to the bridleway question asked by NC. GS said he had been assured by the team that all footpaths and bridleways remained open and where this was not the case due to construction, alternative routes were in place. GS noted that he had received a few comments about footpaths and what had been happening on site. GS advised that a large-scale plan was being produced to show the network of routes on site and this would be put on display around Magna Park. This was to give people using the network some guidance. Alongside this, GS stated that a masterplan of the site is currently being produced which will show the public the extent of the park and what will be coming forward on-site.

NC suggested that routes on the other side of the A5 that link up with Magna Park could be shown on the map. GS noted this point and raised that Harborough District Council had been supportive of the plans.

Alison Wright (AW) raised that currently some users could not use the diversion because they could not get over the safety barriers. These were crash barriers that were put in place by National Highways. GS advised they would not be able to remove crash barriers that were there for safety reasons.

AW commented that as most of the accesses into the park were currently closed from her end, they could not access the site. GS stated that GLP's obligation was to maintain links through the parks itself but appreciated that when certain areas are under construction, temporary diversions had to be put in place. GS raised that GLP had at no point committed to a bridleway crossing over the A5 as National Highways had pushed back on this from a safety perspective. NC commented that it was not safe for equestrian users trying to cross.

	<p>AW asked if the footpath that currently goes through the proposed HGV park facility and amenity use was going to be rerouted. GS advised that it does not go through the proposed site and there is a pavement along the A5 that links up to the wider network.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Update on highways works</b></p> <p>GS noted that members were likely aware of the need for an improvement scheme at Gibbet Hill. GS stated that GLP is continuing to work with National Highways to find a way for the scheme to come forward as quickly as possible and ahead of the projected timeline of 2027. GS stated that National Highways had asked GLP to do some modelling work to look at Magna Park’s projected take-up rate for warehouse occupation and this had been done. GLP would continue to work on modelling projections at National Highways’ request.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Update on construction works</b></p> <p>OH shared two photographs of the current progress of on-site construction at Magna Park North. Steels have been erected on the first of the four units at Magna Park North. On this site, three were about to commence vertical construction. More steels would go up for units 2 and 3 by the end of the month. OH shared practical completion dates for the three units. The first is expected on 10<sup>th</sup> December and Units 2 and 3 in February 2022. Earthworks for the fourth unit are now ongoing, with vertical construction anticipated to start in January 2022 with completion expected in June 2022. OH stated that of the four units, two had been pre-let and the third is currently under offer. OH commented that this reflected the demand in the market.</p> <p>DW asked if the new occupiers of the pre-let buildings are likely to be large employers, noting that specific information is likely to be confidential. OH noted for context that the size of the units were large, at 200,000 sqft and 300,000 sq. ft and confirmed that the details of the occupiers could not be given at this stage</p> <p>RN asked what proportion of units at Magna Park are fully automated. GS stated that very few are but in the newer buildings they were seeing more automation coming in. GS noted that as a developer, buildings are completed as a shell and the occupier then put in the required automation. GS gave the example of Wayfair who have installed a significant level of automation into their unit. GS commented that GLP is seeing occupiers take longer leases of around 15-20 years, to allow them to invest in the buildings that they lease at Magna Park.</p> <p>GS felt that there was no evidence that everything was being automated and from a personal perspective felt that automation changes the quality of employment offered and broadened the spectrum of employees needed. GS said that as GLP build speculatively, it had to forecast what buyers were interested in and be conscious of what occupiers may want going forward. GS gave the example of an increased demand for office space.</p> <p>OH agreed, stating that GLP had found that a lot of people wanted to integrate their office space into their warehouse space. OH commented that building specifications are getting slightly taller and this is driven by more occupiers using the cubic capacity of warehouse space rather than just the baseplate. OH gave the example of a new</p>	

	<p>pre-let where the occupier is putting a three-storey mezzanine into the unit. OH said that this uplift in floor space meant that more people could be employed within a single unit.</p> <p>DW commented that this was positive from an economic development and local authority point of view as there would be improved career opportunities. DW noted that one challenge in the district was the cost of housing, and better paid jobs meant people could afford to live in the area, which over time would enhance communities.</p> <p>SH reminded members that the meeting was being recorded to assist with drafting the minutes. The recording will be deleted once the minutes of the meeting are agreed and would not be published.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Future meetings and speaker suggestions</b></p> <p>SH reminded members that if they had any suggestions for future meetings, they are welcome to get in contact before the next meeting.</p> <p>DW noted that he would be interested in meeting with the HGV park operator to see their proposals and how these have progressed. GS said that he would raise this with them and see if this could be facilitated at a future meeting.</p> <p>BW raised that TG is involved in Midlands Connect and asked if a representative of the organisation could attend the next CLG meeting to discuss Gibbet Hill. TG advised that he would be meeting with Midlands Connect shortly and would raise this with them. TG also informed members that an A5 Partnership meeting would be taking place on the 15 October.</p> <p>SH noted that National Highways is kept updated about the CLG's meetings and invitations to CLG meetings were shared with them. SH commented that he had continued to ask about members of National Highway's strategy and planning team attending a future CLG meeting as this was raised when National Highways had presented at the last meeting. SH noted that when he had received email updates from National Highways, these were shared with members.</p> <p>TG thanked SH and left the meeting.</p>	<p>GS to ask lorry park operators if they could attend a future meeting.</p> <p>TG to make contact with Midlands Connect to attend a future meeting.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>GS gave an update on the Community Fund. GS advised that money had been paid and that the fund is supporting some good initiatives. GS noted that there would be a launch event for the fund that week with the local MP in attendance to raise awareness of the initiative and to encourage organisations to submit applications.</p> <p>DW asked for clarification on the nature of the launch event. GS said that the fund has been operating for some time but had been relaunched last November. However, COVID restrictions meant a launch event hadn't taken place at that time and that this was the purpose of the event.</p> <p>Margaret Wild (MW) asked for clarification on the location of the two buildings on Magna Park South that had been granted planning permission. GS spoke to the</p>	

location of the two units using the masterplan and advised that the CLG would be kept posted on the timescales for bringing the units forward. MW asked if the units were part of the original plan. GS stated that they were.

SH raised that a member of the community, Mr Jenkins, had asked the CLG to note the responses given to him outside of the meeting by GLP on questions he had submitted regarding water voles. SH read out the questions submitted by Mr Jenkins and the answers given for the CLG to note. These were as follows:

*1. Have you done a Water Vole count since releasing them last year? I was informed that 40 were released.*

We have monitored the site as stipulated by our licence. The water vole receptor site will be monitored over the next three years to ensure that the habitat remains suitable for water voles. Monitoring surveys have been completed this year on 26 April and 22 June 2021 by two experienced ecologists. These identified a medium relative density population within the receptor site. This was confirmed by field signs, it is not possible to calculate a numerical figure based on field signs alone.

*2. What maintenance is being done to ensure the environment for Water Voles is still suitable? I have not seen any obvious maintenance.*

The requirement for management and maintenance will be picked up during annual monitoring surveys over the next few years though will be kept to an essential minimum to reduce disturbance to the water vole population. A landscape and ecology management plan for the area will be submitted to the local council as a condition of the adjacent development which will include measures to manage and maintain the habitat for the value of biodiversity in general and water voles in particular in the long-term.

*3. In my opinion, the waterways you have created for the voles are being swamped by plant growth & therefore likely to become unattractive to Water Voles. I believe this will lead to silting up.*

As water vole are prey to a wide range of predatory species a dense bankside vegetation is what we are aiming to provide and was the reason behind using mature turf and extensive plug planting/pre-established coir matting in the design of this receptor habitat. This vegetation will provide cover for water vole as they move through their territory as well as providing a wide range of species for foraging. Remedial works will only be required as the bankside habitat begins to turn into scrub which has potential to out shade the ruderal and marginal vegetation or where silting is significantly reducing the extent or depth of the open water areas available.

*4. How do you intend to prevent disturbance to Water Voles now that new development is being carried out very close to, and beside them? For example, against constant vibration of their land/environment by use of heavy plant & machinery.*

Best practice guidance considers disturbance of a water course to be works within 3-5m of the toe of the bank. The buffer zone around the receptor site will exceed

	<p>this guidance and as such no direct mitigation will be required. However, if works are required within this zone for any reason they will be reviewed in advance and a Natural England licence will be sought if required, with the associated mitigation strategy for the protection of water vole followed during the works. General mitigation for work near to water courses, dust suppression, pollution prevention guidance etc will be outlined in the Construction Management Plan and will be followed during works in proximity of the water course.</p>	
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting (January 2022)</b></p> <p>SH thanked everyone for attending and advised that the established format would continue at the next meeting. SH noted that the requests for speakers would be considered.</p>	