

Bobby's Wood/Woodend Question & Answer Sheet.

Will Bobby's Wood Name Change?

There has been no suggestion of changing the name, in fact we have sought to highlight the story behind the name (2018). Our crowd funding campaign has been targeting all the people in Maghull, the majority of whom do not know the wood, the name, or the history. Consequently, Woodend was used in this instance in the belief that people would recognise the area more readily. Nevertheless, wherever possible we have used the name alongside Woodend, in countless postings to date.

Although affectionately Bobby's Wood was named after a horse belonging to a local grocer who grazed his horse during working hours, for a couple of years in the late 1940s, the wood itself is a remnant of a medieval 2 x 5 mile wood that belonged to a Saxon named Uctred, both referred to in the Domesday book (1086) and is close to the River Alt (meaning old) utilised by Vikings when the area was closer to an estuary. It was the 'woods end' and just prior to the neighbouring Northway (A59) being built they demolished Woodend Farm, leaving the sandstone wall in the car park of LIDL as the only reminder. Whilst all the neighbouring roads are named Broadwood, Larchwood, and Woodend.

Why Change?

Maghull Town Council (MTC) obtained a lease from Sefton Council for this area to maintain its ecological standards and prevent it from the real and constant threat of commercial development in this sought-after area, evidenced by the announcement of the newly proposed development, on the old Motor Range Site. MTC maintains 14 parks and 19 open spaces, yet despite the site at Damfield Lane being a blue plaque preservation area - central government on appeal overturned the MTC (legally binding) Neighbourhood Plan, and Sefton Borough Councils planning refusal. It can feel that every aspect of Maghull is scrutinised for some form of commercial development.

How Do We Protect This Potentially Sought-After Site?

Currently, Bobby's Wood/Woodend is mainly used dog walkers. However, for something to be protected it needs to be valued and used by a wider cross-section of the community. MTC are working to achieve this standard and have a responsibility to provide equality of experience for vulnerable groups whether they be young, old or disabled. Consequently, a harmonious path provides accessibility to enable shared experience and engagement with community projects (e.g. Kew Gardens and RHS mentored grant schemes involving nursery, primary and high school children and U3A) to develop the old overgrown borders and develop new ones over time. Planting of trees and hedging involving every aspect of the community and specifically schoolchildren and local Scouts. The establishment of a specific community group (Friends of Bobby's Wood) to manage and monitor the area with the support of MTC, is also another essential component and MTC objective.

The potential provision of a historic sculpture to celebrate the history, a wisteria arch provides iconic, colourful, beautiful natural sensory attraction akin to Bodnant Gardens or Croxteth Park Gardens. The local schools have already identified that they would like to support and visit the area as part of their history curriculum. Expert consultation has taken place with the following: Head Gardener for Mersey Care NHS Trust, Multiple Chelsea Gold Winner and Local Landscaper, MTC Amenities Manager, three artists, Mersey Forest, Northern Forest, and the Tree Council, Stephen Guy and Dr John Rowlands (Historians).

A table and benches provides a hub for all these community activities including: history and ecology education, pause and reflection within an evolving beautiful space. The neighbouring Bumbles Nursery is already excited about this potential opportunity to engage the children in every aspect.

The hedging and protective knee-high rail fence will provide safety for children, pets, wildlife from traffic dangers in form of potential accidents and pollution.

All of these suggestions provide a broad engagement, interest, belongingness, ownership, pride, value and provide durability/sustainability/protection at every level.

Will the Table Invite Antisocial Behaviour in the Evening?

The project has been discussed with the immediate neighbours who have been positive about the proposals. They have informed FOMD that with regard to antisocial behaviour that this is generally not an issue because the whole site is so visible from all sides. Maghull Town Council (MTC) consulted with Merseyside Police regarding antisocial behaviour in parks and informed the deputy council leader (a retired Chief Superintendent) that the best deterrent is visibility. Consequently, this reinforced our original plan to situate the table in plain view near Northway next to the proposed path and the constant night-time flood lighting provided by Bumbles Nursery, thus being constantly visible by users and passers-by. In the worst case scenario consideration will be given to relocating the table should all reasonable solutions be exhausted. However, whilst it is important to be mindful of potential problems orchestrated by a small minority, FOMD & MTC think we, as the community's majority, should self-righteously refuse to be constrained, when the benefits are so overwhelming.

Potential for Extra Litter

We share your concerns about litter generally in Maghull and Lydiate. One FOMD trustee undertakes a monthly litter pick and collected 22 bin bags each month in January and February, in the 1 mile stretch of road that he looks after. Another FOMD co-founder has a similar experiences, she won a Civic award for organising her ongoing litter picking for Lydiate. A local Vicar (co-founder) also organises lots of supportive events. However, one thing we all recognise is that generally the more improved the area looks, the more people respect the area, and litter is reduced. This was evidenced in the following article link <https://www.champnews.com/papers/pdf/M2719.pdf#page=7>

One of the adjoining neighbour litter picks Bobby's Wood, along with FOMD and others we have witnessed. We also have another local councillor who continues to organise a monthly litter pick in this area for the last two years. In addition, the MCT maintenance team cut the grass on a weekly basis and also litter pick on these occasions. You will also notice in the proposal that we intend to obtain two litter bins, a recycling sculpture bin, in addition to the rather oversized bin that exists adjacent to the site.

Will the Wisteria Arch Be Safe?

The structure will be made from a lifelong rust proof galvanised Hammerite painted steel, of a similar diameter and hardness structure to that of scaffolding, which is cemented in to the ground, and comprises of an anti-climb design. It will be created by a local blacksmith with over 40 years of experience. The public arch at Bodnant Gardens has lasted over 100 years and does not have a fraction of the strength that this will contain. Visibility is also

maintained because the structure will for most year be transparent outside its mature flowering period. MTC will also inspect it regularly as part of their insurance requirements.

Why Have You Only Contacted the Immediate Neighbours and Not Others?

Since April 2020 FOMD have consulted and raised awareness through with the following:

- Merseyside police (November), in addition to the deputy council leader who is a retired Chief Constable.
- Three local eminent horticulturists (February)
- Mersey Forest, Northern Forest, the Tree Council (April 2019)
- Sefton Council
- Maghull Town Council
- MCT Amenities Manager and Maintenance Team
- Five posters around the site
- Raised the profile of the launch through a children's art competition
- Placed posters in nearly every Dover Road shop and post office, Tinto Coffee Shop, and Morrisons. Shared information with open shops at Woodend, the Meadows, and Northway, St Georges Presbyterian Church.
- Three local schools and Bumbles Nursery (who are supportive and wish to engage)
- Spoken to every person we have seen on the site when we have visited several times a week, who have been supportive. One of the Northway neighbours also volunteered to make bird boxes along with other forms of support.
- Spoken to all the direct neighbours to Bobby's Wood prior to the restrictions and recently since the loosening of restrictions, who have all been supportive and wished to engage.
- It has been broadcast twice on BBC Radio Merseyside.
- It has been broadcast on the Maghull Community Radio in the form of a 40 minute interview.
- It has been vetted and verified by Sefton Council and an independent body representing the national Spacehive crowdfunding organisation.
- It has received countless endorsed on social media and by our local MP and his social media accounts.
- I understand it has been circulated through the Sefton Green party and has been supported by their founder member and spokesperson.
- It has been circulated to the whole Scout movement in Maghull who have also volunteered with planting in November.
- A huge array of others (local) who have supported it with £16,000 worth of cash donations and in-kind work, highlighted on our crowdfunding website.
- There have been several postings on the Maghull community Facebook page which has a membership of 10,000 people.
- There have been postings on a local sustainability website
- There has been a posting on the Lydiate and Maghull in pictures website
- It has been posted on the Sefton Focus website
- It has received several postings on the Champion newspaper Facebook page during their lockdown.
- It has been on the front page of the Champion newspaper which is delivered to every house in Maghull.

During this lockdown period the Council has been unable to meet and undertake its normal affairs, with every member of staff and the councillors supporting charities and other agencies in delivering shopping and medicines to vulnerable residents and even providing a befriending scheme over the telephone. Consequently, it would have been inappropriate to use any other resources in further canvassing and illegal/irresponsible to be knocking on doors.

Nevertheless, with the council's return, and a lessening of restrictions, we will be adding two larger noticeboards to Bobby's Wood for the next couple of months. We are also commencing a survey that will be available to the local community, some of which will be in paper form and electronically via the Internet. MCT plans to create a Friends of Bobby's Wood by the end of the year to provide further ownership and engagement at every level.

Who Is Paying for the Project?

FOMD is funding the whole project through a crowd funding initiative created through a collaboration between Spacehive and Sefton Council, utilising cash pledges and in-kind donations. Sefton Council has a special £50,000 ring fenced fund for community projects, of which they can give up to a maximum of £5000 or 40% of the individual groups target fund. When FOMD applied for this crowdfunding initiative and was locked into the process, the Covid 19 restrictions had just commenced, making it enormously difficult to undertake this type of crowd funding, though we also recognised that the ring fenced money might represent the only chance of obtaining funding at that time. Nevertheless, in the current climate we have been overwhelmed by the communities generosity and the sense of hope for the future that this environmental project appears to represent. We are now at 68% of our target (2.7.20), which we have to reach by October or obtain the nothing.

Who Is Responsible for the Land?

MTC is three years into a ten year lease from Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, and are responsible for the high standard of maintenance on the site.

How Can I Help?

We are still crowdfunding at www.spacehive.com/woodend until October and would be enormously grateful for your donations, offers of support, or sharing the project with others. If you are interested in being part of a 'Friends of Bobby's Wood' in the latter part of this year please express your interest at woodendcwp@gmail.com

Who Are Friends of Maghull and District (FOMD) and What Is Their Relationship with Maghull Town Council?

FOMD are a new charitable group who represent a wide range of other charitable groups in the local area. Our constitutional objectives are to deliver social and environmental projects in Maghull and the surrounding area, and act as a supportive/advisory resource to other local charitable groups to achieve their objectives. We have recently completed the Stafford Morton Way Wildflower Project. We are also supported by MTC and Sefton CVS.

Further Information and Contact.

Project website: www.spacehive.com/woodend

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