

## DEPUTATION TWO – WYKE BECK VALLEY COMMUNITY FORUM

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

DR B WATERS: Right, we have Anne Jerman from Rothwell, Marjorie Gartside from Leeds 8, we have Alan McHugh from Beckfields, from Holton Moor, and Pauline Wright from Killingbeck Fields. My name is Brian Waters.

My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today. My name is Brian Waters and I am Chair of the Wyke Beck Valley Community Forum. I wish to petition you on two closely related matters.

Firstly, we request that you continue to fund the post of Wyke Beck Valley Ranger after the current external funding ceases this September. Secondly, we request that you confirm the proposal before you to designate five Local Nature Reserves in the Valley. Our leaflet sets out where these are.

The Wyke Beck Valley Community Forum has its roots in campaigns by local tenants. It was established in 2005 and over the last eight years we have gained the support of Friends Groups and community groups all along the valley. Indeed, my introduction to the Community Forum was through one of the local Friends Groups. We endorse and support the City Council's Parks and Green Spaces Initiative.

Over the last eight years we have co-operated with many bodies, including the City Council in several of its facets. Our latest involvement will expectantly see a foot and cycleway over the Aire and canal by the end of this calendar year. We have both local cycle and footpath groups represented on our Forum. You may have seen reference to this project in last month's press and TV reports. Some of our efforts are also shown in the leaflet.

In 2010, to mark International Biodiversity Year, we were able to present the Lord Mayor with a Valley Ecological Survey, thus cementing the valley's role in the Yorkshire Biodiversity Action Plan. We are community representatives on the Valley Pride Access to Nature Partnership. This employs a Co-ordinator and a Ranger using funding from Natural England's 'Access to Nature' lottery grant. Besides building up grass roots enthusiasm in localities and schools, this programme will produce this year detailed Valley Management Plans and a new Management Group. Together with Friends groups, these will continue the work we have started.

There are strong sustainable reasons why the post of Valley Ranger should be funded by the Council from this autumn and why complementary action of endorsing Local Nature Reserves in the Valley should go ahead. We are working with Parks and Countryside to further this aim.

In supporting the continued presence of a Valley Ranger and designating five new Local Nature Reserves, you are rewarding the community's voluntary efforts and benefiting all the citizens of Leeds.

Thank you for receiving us. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) Thank you very much. CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.