



Landfill and Incinerator  
Jo Wilson to: mpoon

17/03/2014 06:39

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DistrictPlanningforBetterWasteMgtC.pdf

Dear Legco Members,

Five years ago, a group of Lamma residents came together to try to do something to stop dumping on agricultural land in our community. We reported the case to government, wrote reports and even made presentations to Legco - all with no result. The land which used to be the green lung of our community is now a wasteland.

We then turned our efforts to trying to clean up our community more generally. We produced a report of some 250 areas that were dirty or ugly. Many of the problem areas were around the bins - our waste management facilities have not changed in 20 years. Again, we reported these problems to government and again we have seen little action. The local FEHD team tries to do what it can but without leadership from EPD - the department that is responsible for waste strategy - there is little they can do to change things.

In 5 years, we have seen NO ACTION from EPD to improve the environment in our community. A report by residents in 1995 outlined a community waste reduction and recycling plan that would have significantly improved our community. The writer quotes government reports predicting that landfills would be full by 2017, yet like the 70+ reports we have submitted to government over the last 5 years, this one too was ignored.

You are being asked to give approval to people who have known that the landfills were filling up, yet have failed to implement any meaningful programme to reduce waste or invest in recycling. Those newer to government are caught like deer in the headlights and their decisions are not easy - give in to an intransigent bureaucracy and at least get some money to do something, or face things getting worse before they get better.

We cannot hope to make any progress with the same old approach. Every member of society needs to be educated and engaged to make choices that address the waste issue. Every district needs to participate and be responsible. We need government to be effective in this - though sadly the track record shows little competence in this area.

The Integrated Waste Management Action Group has put forward an excellent proposal: <http://wastehk.org/2014/03/14/our-submission-to-ea-panel-the-need-for-plan-b/>. This echoes the plans put forward in 1995 on Lamma and our own submissions to government over the years - which frustratingly have produced no significant improvements, though through our efforts, we do now have intimate knowledge of a dysfunctional bureaucracy.

We urge the panel to insist on a fresh approach. I attach one of our papers, which demonstrates how a district planning approach could work. This approach is common in other places around the world and many of the steps are so simple you wonder why they haven't been adopted here (until you try to ask government to do anything).

We will not be present at Legco on Saturday 22nd March, but hope that you will take on board our comments. We would be happy to share our other reports and experience with members of the panel at an appropriate time. This experience has left us with little faith in the ability of the Environmental Protection Department to protect the environment.

Best regards

Jo Wilson  
Chairperson  
Living Lamma



# Better Waste Management in Hong Kong

A District Planning Approach

Presented to KS Wong by Living Lamma

7<sup>th</sup> July 2013

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# Strategy is not a Problem

- 2013: Blueprint for Sustainable use of Resources
- 2005: A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)
- 1995: Lamma Conservancy Association Community Waste Minimization Plan
- 1993: Govt. Review of 1989 White Paper “A Green Challenge for the Community”
- 1989: Govt. White paper on Pollution

# Implementation is a Problem

- Lack of operational plans to support strategy
- Distance between strategy and action
- Bureaucracy and “jobsworth” attitudes
- Lack of effective communication – both between departments and with the public
- Lack of continuity with changes in personnel
- Sometimes lack of training with government staff, little scope for initiative making it impossible to resolve simple, grassroots problems
- This means that “local” problems are sent upwards. However, once they get to the top, they are not considered “strategic” and are therefore bounced elsewhere, never to be resolved

# What People Hear and What People See Does Not Add Up

- Hong Kong recycles 48% of its waste yet there is no coherence in the placement of our bins and we see recyclable material dumped with general waste and non-recyclable items in the recycling bin – often there are no recycling facilities where needed.
- Statements that indicate that charging for construction waste has solved the problem when our green spaces and agricultural land have become dumping grounds are particularly upsetting.
- Here are some examples of what we see:

Piles of unwanted items – perhaps put by for future use. There is no community recycling centre common in other countries.



Dumping on agricultural land filling in a lily pond – no action is taken by government sending a strong message that it OK to do this.





Unattractive and poorly designed Refuse Collection Points are treated as dumping grounds by the public, despite FEHD's heroic efforts to keep them clean.





Our recycling bins are not adequate for the amount of recycling people want to do



And often there is no recycling bin where it is most needed



And it took the most monumental effort to get glass recycling bins: 50 tonnes of glass collected by the public



# Change is Necessary

- We have already provided suggestions to EPD as a starting point for coherent community waste facilities (see site visit report of 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012)
- We now include a vision for a District Waste Reduction & Sustainable Living Action Plan for your consideration.
- Small, visible changes (such as changing the colour of the plastic bags for recycling or redesigning the bin areas to encourage changes in behaviour) would significantly help to connect strategy with action.
- Over the past 4 years, Living Lamma has produced a detailed micro-study on waste and design problems that are contributing to the continual decline in the quality of our living environment. We see the same issues all over the rural New Territories. We would like to encourage other districts to adopt our approach and for EPD to engage with district administration and the public together (i.e. in the same room) so that we can work towards a cleaner, safer and more beautiful environment.

**LAMMA DISTRICT ACTION PLAN FOR THE  
SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES**

**Waste Reduction  
Carbon Reduction  
Heritage and Ecological Conservation/Education  
Jobs and Community Benefits**



**Presented by**

**Living Lamma**

**to**

**KS Wong**

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

**If a small island off the coast of Scotland can do it, then why not Hong Kong? (See: <http://www.tzcb.org.uk/>) Lamma could become Hong Kong's eco-island with targets for:**

### **1. Waste Reduction – action points include:**

- Changing the colour of the bin bags for recycling materials
- Redesigning the bin areas to maximise recycling / minimise landfill - the competition itself would be an awareness raising exercise
- Branding the vv (including the driver's uniform) and design the recycling and refuse collection receptacles to fit on the vv
- Encouraging community recycling for:
  - Green waste from tree trimming etc (need a big shredder/mulcher)
  - Household composting of uncooked organic waste (many people are already doing this)
  - Household items - through designated days to put out large items as they do in Sydney and "vide greniers" (or community flea markets) for smaller items
  - Glass, paper, plastics, WEEE, clothing, cardboard, waste oil, food
- Putting in water fountains - encourage use of Lamma Eco-Island reusable bottles (No plastic bottles if you are brave - it's been done elsewhere)
- Banning items that are environmentally harmful and that can't be recycled (such as polystyrene - again it's been done elsewhere)
- Enforcing the law on littering and dumping
- Making no distinction between private or government land when it comes to littering or dumping. There is no reason that some people in society should be allowed to pollute. I am not allowed to destroy my house by purposefully setting fire to it. People should not be allowed to purposefully destroy the ecological value of their land by dumping on it. Dagenham in the UK has achieved great things, surely Hong Kong can too - for inspiration see: <http://www.barkingdagenhampartnership.org.uk/news-archive/Pages/eyesoregardens.aspx>
- Keeping building sites tidy and protecting streams from dumping and concreting.
- Bringing back lap sap chung for Lamma – we can find volunteers to wear the suit. Or perhaps we can create new characters: Lapsap Jai and Yau Yong Sifu (Trash kid and Have Use Master). When Living Lamma helped out with the glass recycling, the Chairperson became known locally as Yau Yong Gweipor, instead of by her former nickname Lapsap Gweipor.
- Encouraging Lammites to leave excess packaging in the shops (then eventually the stores will get fed up with dealing with trash and let their suppliers know)
- Getting Lands Department to hand over unused government plots for Incredible Edibles projects. Instead of derelict land, we get food production,



which teaches people to respect the land. Here is a 3-minute trip to Yorkshire to Mary Clear to explain this concept:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FmviVi10bU>. If this dump of a Yorkshire town can turn itself around, then surely Hong Kong can too.

- Exploring waste to energy synergies and the possibility of combining facilities at the Lamma Power Station and improving recycling/decreasing traffic flow through the village by combining facilities at the power station reclamation.

## **2. Carbon Reduction – action points include:**

- The Development Bureau has recently called for ideas on the small house policy. Here are some:
  - Make Lamma's small houses Hong Kong's first eco-villas
  - Have a community competition (sponsored by HK Electric) to come up with ideas - insulation, renewable energy, recycled materials, landscaping, etc
  - In Sydney, houses are fitted with solar panels and excess energy is fed back into the grid and in most parts of the developed utility companies have expanded beyond their original single service scope to provide a range of services for living - why not have HK Electric do this on Lamma? It would make sense to make use of the existing power station reclamation for things like waste management and might have carbon benefits if it could lead to fewer boat journeys.
- Retrofitting vv's to make them electric (make sure they are fitted with bells so we can hear them coming)
- Making improvements to the pathways and for bike parking to show commitment to walking and cycling as methods of transport

## **3. Heritage and Ecological Conservation/Education – action points include:**

- Installing an Eden Project type venture for the quarry -a flagship project for Asia aimed at promoting sustainability, see <http://www.edenproject.com>.
- Establishing a visitor's centre to tell people about Lamma's archeology, heritage and ecology (the old Lo So Shing school or the soon to be old police station at Hung Shing Yeh would be ideal) and a venue to showcase art and photography to inspire environmental conservation.
- Establishing a reptile sanctuary - somewhere humane to put those errant creatures that find their habitats zoned as "village" - for people to learn about them and Lamma's protected species.
- Employing countryside rangers and tree wardens - the latter especially is urgently required, particularly with the threat of brown tree rot and the current lack of care in ensuring our tree stock is healthy and well maintained.



- Making Lamma's temples heritage sites and the fishing village in Yung Shue Wan to become a living museum. Other old buildings to be granted heritage status so that their owners are given some incentive to maintain them rather than to destroy them (as is about to happen to Diesel's - denied heritage status because there are a certain number of this type of building across the rural NT - never mind that it is the only one of its kind on Lamma Main Street.)

## **Jobs and Community Benefits**

- As Hong Kong's eco-island, there should be funds made available to pilot various schemes, a relaxation in standard designs and procedures across departments to allow for experimentation and the creation of jobs that are aimed conservation, maintenance, and promotion of Lamma's heritage, ecology and life style. There should be a general push to clean up and beautify public areas (without destroying the natural landscape and charm of the village environment). Funds should be made available for small-scale projects that could make small but important differences. People should be paid to conserve and beautify, not just destroy and concrete.

At the very least – we would like to see **a competition to redesign the bin areas.** (This would be relevant for different areas in Hong Kong and could mobilize design professionals, schools and universities, businesses and the public to think about Hong Kong's waste problems).

On Lamma, FEHD are doing their best and have the go ahead to upgrade the facilities, but they are not architects or designers. Hence, government funds may be spent on a wasted opportunity to upgrade the organization and design of waste facilities. We have been approached by EPD to apply for ECF funds to run a design competition and would be willing to do this if government is unable to do so. However, this reliance on unpaid members of the public to fix things is not in itself sustainable. It also means that the learning from the experience is not going where it should. We also believe that a competition would have tremendous benefit for public education and demonstrating government's responsiveness to our waste problems. The bins are billboards for Hong Kong's commitment to waste reduction and recycling. They should look good, be relevant for local circumstances and facilitate the desired behaviour.

We would like to see EPD leading the design of the bin areas because responsibility for waste strategy lies with that department. How do we want people to act? What are they doing now? What do we want them to do differently? How can we encourage that? There is no reason why we should not be working towards a zero waste Lamma, particularly as the local staff of FEHD are extremely good, understand the problem and want to change.

Living Lamma has been campaigning for a cleaner environment and better design of public facilities in support of Lamma's planning intention for more than 4 years.

The problems we face with environmental degradation, insensitive design of projects and development pressure are common all over the rural New Territories. Our methodology has been to catalogue the problems (See, for example, Living Lamma's *Stop the Mess* Report of February 2010) and then engage with relevant government departments to try to resolve the issues. In this way, we have learnt about the constraints of the system in which the simplest of common sense measures are sometimes impossible to achieve. We continue to work with government to find avenues for improvement. Every small step makes a difference. We hope that other district groups will adopt this approach for the benefit of Hong Kong. We are happy to share our experience with those who wish to take steps for positive improvement.

For more information, please contact:

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## Supplementary Paper 1

### Lamma Island - Hong Kong's Eco-Island

#### A Proposal to Inspire Change

Lamma Island is a 25-minute ride from Hong Kong's central business district. It is unique in Hong Kong. There are no cars on the island and no chain stores. The island has some important ecology – Romer's tree frogs, green turtles, finless porpoises and white-bellied sea eagles, to name a few. Some of Hong Kong's most valuable archeological artifacts have been found on Lamma, and visitors can still witness traditional fishing villages and farming.

Lamma's environment is under threat, however. Development pressure means that the island's uniqueness could soon disappear. Waste problems – apparent all over Hong Kong – are despoiling this beautiful island. Agricultural land is being dumped on; the amount of waste washing up on the beaches resembles landfill; and the waste facilities were created at a time when it was acceptable to put all unwanted items into landfill regardless of their potential future use.

There is an opportunity to turn Lamma's environmental deterioration around, and in the process reverse Hong Kong's environmental decline, by providing an example of excellence to inspire transformation. There is opportunity for a "Hong Kong Eden Project."

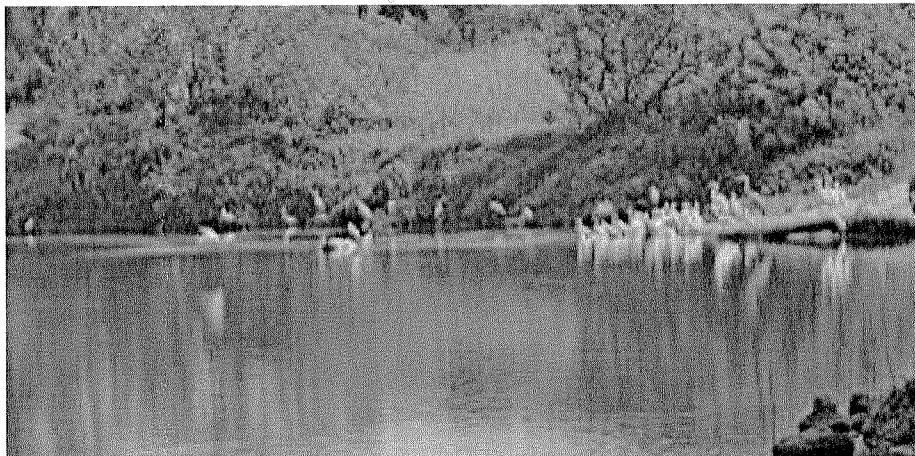
The future of Lamma's ex-quarry is now under review. The quarry was reinstated in 2002 and a forest was planted. The area has a large freshwater lake and, because it has been left untouched for 10 years, it has become one of Hong Kong's most beautiful parklands covering 20 hectares (see picture).

So far, the only options put forward have involved real estate development, for which demand is so far unproven. Hong Kong currently has two theme parks: Disney and Ocean Park, but neither of these showcase Hong Kong's ecology or provide a venue for social and environmental education that can be transferred into sustainable living practices.

In the UK, the Eden Project is a visitor attraction that does all this and has over 1 million visitors per year, (not bad for a remote location). It was built on an ex-quarry site and covers an area of 15 hectares, slightly smaller than the Lamma quarry. Last year, the Eden Project achieved an operating surplus of £2.4 million.

To view Eden Project's sustainability report, visit:

<http://www.edenproject.com/sites/default/files/eden-project-sustainability-report-2010-2011.pdf>



## Supplementary Paper 2

### Panel on Environmental Affairs

Meeting on  
Monday, 22 April 2013, at 2:30 pm  
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

#### LIVING LAMMA SPEAKING NOTES: 3-MINUTE VERSION

1. If Hong Kong is to tackle its waste problems we need to inspire change.
2. The problems with littering, dumping and waste that Living Lamma has documented are common all over Hong Kong.
3. We have found that the way in which waste is perceived and processed is a fundamental cause of our environmental decline. We have been trying to do something about this, with numerous reports, site visits & endless correspondence with government departments, and positive actions such as clean ups and glass recycling.
4. Glass is a small part of the overall problem, but it is an important one.
5. Experience overseas shows an evolution in the provision of waste services and certainly changes in behaviour have occurred. Other places realize that the cost of environmental clean up far outweighs the cost of providing services and have made it easy for people to recycle.
6. In Hong Kong, it remains very difficult to achieve even the smallest of common sense changes largely because of bureaucratic constraints and disfunctionality when it comes to responsibility for waste, even when individuals in the system work hard and have good intentions. We have many examples of this and I would be happy to share these when time allows or you may find them in our reports.
7. In 1995, a Lamma residents' group put forward highly achievable plan for a waste management system based on principles of reduction and recycling – including glass recycling.
8. 18 years later and we have finally got our first glass recycling bins, but as you will see from our submission, this took a monumental effort to achieve. Why, in a city that prides itself on its speed and efficiency should this be the case?
9. There are understandably frustrations with the PRS. What happened to the income from the 45% tax on wine and beer that was abolished just a few years ago? Why has Hong Kong been paying to deposit glass into landfill for all this time (and paying to import sand and pavers)? Why should the producer pay for the consumer's choice? Why was no apparent thought given to the generation and disposal of glass waste in the promotion of Hong Kong as Asia's wine hub?
10. If we are to make progress we have to look positively to the future and we have to find some way to change thinking so that we can innovate and evolve.

## Supplementary Paper 2

11. Everyone in society must take responsibility for the waste they produce and we need to inspire changes in attitudes from every sector of society, including government, to achieve this.
12. Lamma is a great place to showcase how things could be. As our experience with glass recycling showed, members of society regardless of age, race or social standing can work together, not for any financial incentive, but because we want to clean up our environment and improve our facilities. We also have an idea to create a world-class centre – Asia's first - to inspire transformational change in making sustainability meaningful to people's lives. We would be happy to discuss these opportunities with the panel further.
13. I heard the PRS termed the "Passing Responsibility Scheme." Buck-passing has been one of the main frustrations in our efforts to clean up our environment. This has got to stop. We need to connect government, people and businesses with the waste they produce and find the means – at a district level – to introduce a fair charging system that provides the right penalties and incentives to encourage change.