



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

Draft Minutes of the 1st Annual General Meeting

Held on Monday 29th September 2014 7.30pm

Large Hall Woodford Community Centre

Attendance

WNF management committee members: Mr Terry Barnes, Ms Evelyn Frearson, Mrs Judith Craig, Mrs Helen Buszard, Mr Paul Rodman, Mr David Buszard, Mrs Jane Sandover, Mr Bryan Leck, Mr Paul Goodman, Mr John Knight, Mrs Dorothy Chesterman, Mr Ron Beatham, Mr Colin Griffin, Mr Alan Bramwell, Mrs Maxine Wood.

Current WNF members: Mrs VS Greenwood, Mr L Evans, Prof D McLeod, Ms B Mercer, Mr F Brown, Mrs A Hancock, Mr N Hancock, Mrs J DeVecheis, Mr M Smith

New members joining at this meeting: Mr AG Neil, Mrs DJ Neil, D Greenwood, Mrs S Shierson, Mr M Shierson, Mr K Hayward, Mr B Whitelegg, Ms J Hurst, Mr D Mott, Mrs P Mott, Ms V Shields, Mr K McEwan, Mrs J McCall, Mr J Dunne, Mr A Dunne, Mrs K Moody, Mr C Moody, Mr P Bindotti, Ms F Ware, Mr V Burke, Mr C Rawlins, Mr J Clitherow, Mrs V Downie, Mrs M Law, Mr G Law, Mr M Craven, Mr M Upton, Mr G Lawrenson, Mr J Parker.

Other Woodford residents and residents of neighbouring communities.

Guests: Mark Hunter MP, Mr Richard Wood from SMBC.

Total number attending: 67

1. Chairman's Welcome

Terry Barnes (TB) opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the 1st Annual General Meeting of the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum (WNF). A special welcome was extended to invited guests: local MP, Mark Hunter and WNF liaison representative in SMBC, Richard Wood. TB highlighted the contribution Stephen Taylor had made as the driving force in the early stages of setting up the Forum and called for one minute's silence in his memory.

2. Apologies for Absence

WNF committee members: Mr Roger Burton, Mr Robin Berriman.

Local area councillors: Cllr Brian Bagnall, Cllr Paul Bellis.

3. Chairman's Report

TB introduced WNF expert advisors and others on the Forum management committee who would give presentations.

Firstly, he called upon Paul Rodman (PR) to explain the work of the Forum. PR explained that the Localism Act had given local communities more say in plans for their village through the formation of a Neighbourhood Forum. PR reported that work to establish a Forum in Woodford

began through the WCC [Woodford Community Council] and its sub-group Woodford United. Application documents were completed, including a constitution, in which the historical Parish boundary was used to delineate the Neighbourhood Area (NA). WNF applied to SMBC for official approval and was officially designated in Oct 2013 but the Aerodrome was excluded from the NA due to opposition from the new owners of the Aerodrome, Harrow Estates. WNF is concerned that future residents on the Aerodrome site will be excluded from the Forum. However, the entrance area is within WNF NA. Therefore, the Forum has a say in how it is developed.

A Forum is obliged to consult residents' views via a questionnaire. PR reported that this had been done and there had been 276 responders to the questionnaire. He thanked everyone who had responded.

PR explained that the next steps involve development of a Neighbourhood Plan covering the next 10-15 years, outlining what people of Woodford would like for Woodford. The Plan is subject to a referendum. If approved by the majority of residents, then it will be adopted by SMBC and become policy.

PR noted that Poynton Town Council has applied for a Neighbourhood Area which includes Cheshire East section of the aerodrome and the application was unopposed.

4. Treasurer's Report

TB reported that Robin Berriman, the Treasurer, was unable to attend but Forum members needed to approve his report which was available in the room and read out by TB (see Appendix). TB explained that only Forum members could vote. Approval was proposed by PR, seconded Jane Sandover, a show of hands indicated approval and there were no objections.

5. Approval of Draft Constitution with Minor Amendments

Evelyn Frearson explained that minor amendments to the Constitution were required. These were:

1. The Neighbourhood Area Shown in the map in the appendix should be replaced by a map showing exclusion of Woodford Aerodrome site. The revised map was displayed.
2. The 21 day notice period for application to become a member of the management committee should be reduced to 7 days.

Approval was proposed by Dorothy Chesterman, seconded David Buszard and a show of hands indicated approval with no objections.

6. Election of Committee Members

Helen Buszard (HB) explained that an interim management committee had been formed initially. The committee can have 5 to 23 members. The officers are Chair, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer who are elected by the committee. HB then introduced the present committee members (as shown above in attendance list) and asked for volunteers to join the committee. Colin Moody and Nigel Hancock volunteered from the floor. Their membership was proposed by HB, seconded by Colin Griffin and approved by a show of hands.

7. Update on Woodford Aerodrome Development

TB called upon John Knight (JK) to update the meeting on the Aerodrome development. JK explained that he has worked for over 30 years for Macclesfield and Cheshire East Councils.

He noted that the Aerodrome development affects Poynton, Woodford and Adlington. Harrow had submitted 3 applications: 1: for safe demolition; 2: for road works to enable an entrance; and 3: a hybrid application i.e. part full and part outline. JK explained that this is an increasingly popular type of application.

The first stage of the development involves a brownfield site, approximately 145 houses, contains full details and is considered to be an enhancement. The problem with the hybrid application is that it proposes a further 775 houses and 100 unit Extra Care facility with some indicative plans which include a school and small shops.

The Forum objected on the basis that it was a departure from SMBC's policies. Cheshire East Council were going to do a joint study with SMBC but this did not happen, so there are no plans for the Cheshire East side of the Aerodrome at present.

The second and most relevant objection is that that the proposition infringes the Green Belt, as much of the development is not on the brownfield parts of the site. WNF lodged objections. The local Area Committee in SMBC had serious concerns.

At the SMBC Planning and Highways Committee meeting half of the members approved and half did not, so the Chairman cast the deciding vote in favour of the development. JK reported that SMBC will refer the application to the Sec of State (SoS) to resolve the question of whether it is a departure from policy. It is understood that all three applications will go to the SoS. The current SoS [Eric Pickles] will then have 21 days to decide whether to call it in or not. Therefore, to support the case for calling the application in, the Forum needs residents to write in to the SoS using their own words. If a public enquiry is called, it will be probably sometime next year. The Forum will notify the Forum members.

An attendee from the floor expressed concerns about the predicted increase in traffic resulting from the development.

8. Update on Cheshire East Council's Local Plan Examination

TB called upon Paul Goodman (PG) to update the meeting on the Cheshire East Council Local Plan. PG explained that the Local Plan is designed to guide plans for the next 15 years. It is a huge plan drawn up over a long period of time, including over 1,000 pages. It has involved many studies including environmental assessments etc. the published draft proposes release of land from Green in Handforth for approx. 2,000 houses. In the last revision of the plan the boundary was brought further South and abuts the Stockport boundary [Woodford NA].

The Plan and all the representations were submitted in May to the SoS for Environment. A Planning Inspector, Mr Stephen Pratt, was appointed to lead an Examination of the Plan. Many landowners and developers have put forward alternative parcels of land for development, including the CEC side of the Aerodrome which has been put forward by Harrow. Woodford residents' views have been put forward.

PG reported that the debate on the proposed Green Belt release in the North of the borough has taken up many hours. Barristers acting on behalf of developers have pointed out the deficiencies in the Plan.

The Examination was due to move on from general legal and policy issues to examination of specific sites, but the Inspector has major concerns as to whether the plan is sound. An adjournment is highly likely, so the future timetable is unknown. The law states that, when the Examination ends, the Inspector will recommend whether the plan should be adopted or otherwise. The situation is likely to be up in the air for some time. The development on the Handforth East site is unlikely to be considered until November.

TB noted that WNF is concerned about the potential for development of approximately 3,500 homes with 2 km of Woodford Church. WNF is not against development but it is opposed to the extent and scale of development proposed. The forum is trying to fight for Woodford village.

9. WNF Questionnaire – Presentation of Preliminary Findings

TB called upon Evelyn Frearson (EF) to update the meeting on the preliminary results of the Questionnaire. EF explained that the questionnaire is an obligatory part of the Forum's duties. It was a team effort among committee members to compose, distribute and collate it. Stephen Taylor had played a leading role in composing it and Roger Burton had done a lot of the work on collating and analysing the results. Everyone on the 1,200 strong extended electoral register received a questionnaire.

EF explained that the results presented were preliminary and will be subject to expert analysis. It is important that we know residents' views and thanks was extended to everyone who had responded.

EF reported that there were 276 respondents in total. All the bar charts shown in the presentation represented % respondents out of this total. As respondents could tick more than one box, then they don't add up to 100%.

Results on the following key aspects, which came over as important in answers to questions and free narrative responses, were reported:

Rural location: % responses indicated that "the good things about living in Woodford" were: rural location (over 90%); quality of life (83%); convenient location (67%); village community (66%); and environment (63%).

Retaining the existing character of the village: 99% ticked "yes" future development should be in keeping with the existing character of the village.

Enhancing the quality of the built environment: Responses showed that the following were important: design that reflects the scale of the existing village and with increased provision of green spaces (96%); use of traditional local building materials and property styles (70%); enhanced protection of the landscape and positive management of the varied local wildlife (83%); and ticked enhanced protection of historic and natural features (71%).

Controlling the scale of the village: In answer to the question "If the Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for housing, what would be an acceptable scale for individual housing development schemes between now and 2030?": nearly 70% of respondents ticked no more than 50, and

several respondents noted on the form that there should be no additional development in Woodford given the proposed developments at BAe and in Handforth.

Volume and speed were the main concerns about road traffic in Woodford: 83% ticked excessive traffic volume, and 70% ticked excessive traffic speed as concerns.

Community Centre: Almost all respondents answered these questions, indicating that the centre is important to residents. Narrative answers provided lots of ideas for facilities and activities. 90% ticked “yes” they were aware of the facilities, and 81% ticked “yes” they were aware of the activities at the Centre. It was clear that the Centre is an asset of which we can be proud but it needs improvement and more local support.

Public transport: Although 45% of respondents wish to improve public transport, curiously 57% said they would use it rarely. To date, results had not been analysed to check whether these were a different set of respondents.

Health care and social service provision: 67% considered that there is adequate access to healthcare and 54% consider that the local authority social service provision matches the needs of the local community, although narrative responses show concerns about whether health care will continue to be adequate when all the extra people arrive.

Aspects the Neighbourhood Plan should encourage included: public footpaths, road safety, public transport, Community Centre, cycle paths.

Protection of the Green Belt and views: came over very strongly in narrative responses, in particular views of the Pennine Hills, open farmland, green fields, Alderley Edge, and the skyline to the West.

Impact of BAe and Handforth developments: Although there were no questions relating to the current development proposals at the airfield or in Cheshire East, concerns about the impact of BAe and Handforth developments were raised in free narrative responses, including impact on traffic, increase in traffic on the lanes, impact on Green Belt and impact on rural character and scale of village.

The next steps include development of a Neighbourhood Plan, information sharing and the Plan becoming part of SMBC policy.

Mark Hunter (MH) complimented the Forum on their work so far. MH stated that he is resolutely in support of the Forum in their endeavours. He has written to the SoS to ask him to call the plan in for an inquiry. He will continue to do what he can.

10. Open Discussion on Future Actions of WNF

The following points arose:

- A lady from Bramhall stated that many Bramhall residents enjoy Woodford’s facilities and are concerned about the development proposals. She described Woodford as the “garden for people living in Bramhall”.

- TB raised the question of how to communicate with Bramhall residents. Suggestions arising included: advertisement in free paper and posting messages on Bramhall website. TB suggested that this should be an item for agenda for next WNF committee meeting.
- A gentleman pointed out that SMBC appear to have been allowed to redraw the boundaries of Woodford.
- JK explained that the Forum can apply to have the boundaries extended.
- An attendee asked what plans the Forum has for meeting costs of a legal appeal.
- Colin Griffin commented that it is a difficult question to answer but a very rough estimate would be costs of approx. £20K. Brenda Mercer suggested that a contribution of £15 to £20 each would cover it. Raffles and events were suggested but the Forum needs support. The need to engage more residents was raised.
- David Buszard pointed out that people think that “someone else will do it”. More people actively involved with the Forum are required.

11. Close of Meeting

There being no other business, TB closed the meeting at 9pm.

Evelyn Frearson and Jude Craig 7th November 2014

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

c/o Woodford Community Centre, Chester Road, Woodford, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 1PS

Email: woodfordneighbourhood@gmail.com Web: www.woodfordneighbourhoodforum.co.uk

Appendix

WOODFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD FROM 17 OCTOBER 2013 TO 30 JUNE 2014

	£	
90% of grant received	(note 2)	6219
Printing and delivery of questionnaires		-934
Cash held by RIBA at 30 June 2014	(note 3)	£5,285

Notes

1 The Forum was designated by Stockport MBC on 17 October 2013. Its year end is June as set out in its constitution, so these, the first set of accounts, cover the period to 30 June 2014.

2 The Forum was awarded a grant of £6910 by the Community Development Foundation. This covers development and analysis of a questionnaire, meetings and an exhibition. An initial payment of 90%, £6219, was received on the Forum's behalf by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in February. The grant aided work is currently scheduled for completion by 31 December 2014.

3 The grant monies are not allowed to be held by the Forum itself as it is not an incorporated body. We are grateful to RIBA who offered to administer the grant on the Forum's behalf, which was acceptable to the Community Development Foundation.

4 The Forum has opened a bank account. Woodford Community Council kindly agreed to transfer £2000 to the Forum, which happened in July 2014, after the period end. It has incurred no expenditure to date other than that related to the grant, as set out above.