



Woodford Neighbourhood Forum

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

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Annual General Meeting

24th October 2024 8 pm

Church Hall, Christ Church, Woodford, Stockport, SK7 1PS

Minutes

Attendees

Members: Terry Barnes, Robin Berriman, Evelyn Frearson, Paul Goodman, Jane Sandover, Maxine Wood, Chris Coppock, Brian Bagnall, Kris Hayward, Paula Mott, Val Shields, David Berry

Non-members: Michael Minahan, Sarah Turner, Peter Crossen

Cllr Dallas Jones, Cllr Mark Jones (representing Tom Morrison MP)

Apologies

Jude Craig, Janet DeVecchis, Avril Furness, Paul Rodman, John Schultz, David Russell, Louise Shaw.

Welcome

The Chairman, Terry Barnes, opened the meeting and thanked everybody for attending, with a special welcome to Cllr Dallas Jones and Cllr Mark Jones.

He explained that the formal AGM part would be conducted first, followed by the informal update meeting. There would be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of each part.

Chairman's Report

Terry Barnes presented his report as follows:

“Over the last year, the main issues have remained the same with responding to planning applications in the neighbourhood area and promoting implementation of the aspirations, such as walking, cycling and community integration.

Since last year we have been consulted on 26 planning application, which is 13 less than last year. The Monitoring report very adequately covers the extent of the work of the forum. It is an important document which assesses the effectiveness of the neighbourhood plan policies when used by Stockport Council in making decisions on planning issues. The report also considers progress in promoting aspirations. The report has been sent to council planning officers, our MP and circulated to members.

We are keeping up to date with other plans in our vicinity, including Places for everyone, previously the GMSF, issues with Cheshire East and the Stockport Local plan. With the change of Government and the expected changes to the NPPF, the local plan is in abeyance. This means that our plan is much used by planning applicants and Stockport.

As such we are keeping a watchful eye on current and proposed changes to Government planning regulations upon which it is important that we comment.

Once again, our thanks to our secretary Evelyn, our co-opted planning specialists and team who do so much for the Forum. Special mention must be made of planning expert John Knight who along with Paul Goodman put so much into the setting up of the Forum and thereafter in advising on planning issues. John has decided to retire. He will be sorely missed and our thanks go to him.”

Approval of minutes of 2021 AGM

The minutes had been circulated to forum members and contacts via email prior to the meeting.

Approval was proposed by Kris Hayward and seconded by Jane Sandover. No objections or comments were raised. Terry Barnes signed the minutes as approved.

Treasurer’s report

Robin Berriman presented the accounts which had been circulated to forum members and contacts via email prior to the meeting and shown on screen during the meeting as below:

WOODFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 30 JUNE 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
Bank		
Balance 1 July 2023	630	691
Refund of room hire	60	-
Donation	-	25
	<u>690</u>	<u>716</u>
 Website host renewal	 -	 86
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Balance 30 June 2024	<u>690</u>	<u>630</u>

R B Berriman
FCA
2 October
2024

Robin Berriman explained that we had rooms provisionally booked in the Deanwater Hotel. £60 was refunded by the hotel when it closed. This was the only transaction over the year. The balance stood at £690.

Terry Barnes explained that we had grants in the early days for preparation of the plan. We still have money in the bank should we require funds something, such as room hire. The committee meets at least four times a year and there are frequent exchanges of emails.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Sarah Turner and seconded by Chris Coppock. No objections or comments were raised.

Election of members of Management Committee

The names of nominees standing for election were shown on screen as follows:

Terry Barnes	Chair
Evelyn Frearson	Hon Sec
Robin Berriman	Treasurer
Jane Sandover	
Jude Craig	
Janet De Vecchis	
Zoe Jones	
Maxine Wood	Co-opted former resident
Paul Goodman	Co-opted Expert
Brian Bagnall	Co-opted Expert
Paul Rodman	Corresponding
Chris Coppock	Corresponding

Terry Barnes thanked our two planning advisors, Paul Goodman and John Knight, who had been with us since the beginning of the forum and had been an enormous help to us over the years. He explained that John Knight had retired at the beginning of the year and wished him all the best in retirement.

He explained that all the members of the team listed had been on the committee since the beginning of the forum. We had co-opted Brian Bagnall on to the committee this year. He had been very supportive of the forum along the way.

There were no nominations from floor for any new committee members.

Election of the committee members was proposed by Kris Hayward and seconded by Chris Coppock. No objections or comments were raised.

Close of AGM

Terry Barnes closed the AGM part of the meeting at 8.13pm.

Local Update

A summary of the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report and an update on local plans and planning issues followed the AGM. Slides presented during the meeting and can be found [here](#).

1. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Report

Evelyn Frearson presented a summary of the report, which covered:

Purpose of the report

- Explain the background to the neighbourhood forum, the neighbourhood plan and the role of the management committee as a consultee on planning applications
- Check that the council uses the neighbourhood plan policies
- Document progress on planning applications
- Check progress on implementation of Village Aspirations
- Check current relevance of the Plan and the Aspirations
- Check compliance with Stockport Local Plan and NPPF

Planning Applications in Neighbourhood Area

- The number of applications was reducing:
 - 50 per year from 2019 to 2022
 - 39 in 2023
 - 26 in 2024
- Most applications were for extensions and policy compliant
- There had been two controversial applications
- Four applications had not been notified to WNF
- There had been two appeals
- The committee had submitted comments on five applications, including:
 - Very tall flag pole at 1 Moor Lane. WNF committee objected. SMBC refused it because the height was not policy compliant.
 - One new dwelling on Church Lane. Policy compliant. WNF committee had not objected.
- SMBC report did not cite WNP policies for three applications
- Committee had monitored applications from last year that reached a decision this year, including:
 - Eight new dwellings at Blossoms Kennels
 - Five new dwellings at Moorend Farm
 - New dwelling behind 409 Chester Road

Managing the task

- Some applications had been readily assessed as “no comments”
- Template had been used for detailed responses
- Committee had kept track of applications and deadlines via a table
- Area Committee meetings had been monitored
- Stockport Planning website had been monitored
- A Table with committee’s comments had been updated at intervals on the WNF website

WNF committee detailed responses

These usually included:

- General comments as locals
- Photographs of the site
- Assessment against policies in:
 - NPPF 2023
 - Stockport Development Plan, which included:
 - Woodford Neighbourhood Plan 2019
 - Saved UDP 2011
 - Core Strategy 2011

Extracts from the table in the monitoring report

An extract from the table was shown on screen and the colour coding was explained.

Ref Number	Details	WNF commented	Date comments submitted	Area Committee	Status	WNP policies referenced by SBMC
DC/091394	Dean Hill, Wilmslow Road, extension and garage	Comments	2 April 2024		Permitted	None
DC/090886	214 Woodford Road, extension	Comments	26 Mar 2024		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/090425	1 Moor Lane, flagpole	Objections	1 May 2024		Refused	ENV1 DEV4
DC/091630	39 Jenny Lane, extension	No comments	12 May 2024		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/091938	38 Moor Lane, extension	No comments	30 May 2024		Permitted	DEV3 DEV4
DC/092080	353 Chester Road, additional storey	No comments	30 May 2024			
DC/092296	Church Lane, residential dwelling	No objections Comments	3 July 2024			

	WNF objected
	WNF made comments
	Called in to Area Committee
	WNP not referenced in SMBC report
	Refused by SMBC
	Not notified by SMBC

Extracts from last year's table

As there was a time lag between planning applications and a decision some of the results of some of the previous year's applications were shown on screen.

Ref number	Details	WNF commented	Date comments submitted	Area Committee	Status	WNP policies referenced by SMBC
DC/088501	Land Adjacent To Hall Moss Lane, two dwellings	Comments	24 May 2023	Yes	Permitted	ENV3 ENV4 DEV1 DEV4 EMP2
DC/088653	31 Moor Lane, extension	Comments	8 June 2023	Yes	Permitted	DEV3 DEV4 ENV3 ENV4
DC/088660	Blossoms Kennels, 8 new dwellings	Objections	21 June 2023	Yes	Permitted	Decision notice not on website
DC/088615	45 Hall Moss Lane, demolition and replacement of dwelling	Comments	23 June 2023		Permitted	ENV3 ENV4 DEV2 DEV4
DC/088616	45 Hall Moss Lane, demolition of outbuildings and construction of bungalow	Comments	23 June 2023	Yes	Permitted	ENV3 ENV4 DEV4

Controversial proposals

These had included:

- A flagpole and flag at 1 Moor Lane. This had caused concern among residents. The application was refused by the Council because it was not in keeping with the local character.
- 8 new dwellings on Quiet Lane at Blossoms Kennels.
An earlier proposal had been reduced in volume, in order to avoid harm to the Green Belt. Issues in the decision had included impact on the volume of traffic on a Quiet Lane, which was thought to be reduced by the change from a kennels business to a residential use; and lack of accessibility, which had to be disregarded because the Council did not have a 5-year housing supply. The application was permitted by the Council.
- Evelyn Frearson pointed out to the meeting that local residents believed that there were inaccuracies in the information provided in the application.
- Construction management plan for 8 new dwellings at Blossoms Kennels.
A slide was presented showing a variety of vehicles stuck in deep ditches on Blossoms Lane. The forum had noted to SMBC that a construction management plan would be needed because the section of the lane to Church Lane is very narrow and not suitable for large vehicles.
- Solar Farm 75 acres adjacent to Old Hall Lane. A request had been submitted to SMBC for guidance on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required.

This had caused a lot of concern among residents because it was an inaccessible site in a precious bit of Green Belt. WNF had submitted comments to SMBC. No planning application had been submitted.

Paul Goodman noted that he had been monitoring planning appeals nationally. There had been a lot of applications for solar farms. Companies were looking for sites where they can link to the national grid. There is no national strategy for solar farms. The decisions made by Inspectors were not following a set pattern.

Planning Appeals

There had been two appeals on applications that had been refused by the council:

- DC/088073 5 new dwellings at Moorend Farm. The appeal was dismissed in May 2024.
- DC/083007 409 Chester Road, new dwelling on land at back. The appeal was lodged in August 2024.

Observations

The management committee had made the following observations:

- WNF had not been notified by SMBC about some applications
- Applications for extensions were mostly non-contentious
- There had been two controversial applications
- Officer's reports were generally comprehensive and useful
- Some external consultants had been assessing planning applications
- The neighbourhood plan had been generally used conscientiously by in-house officers
- Fewer applications were going to the Area Committee
- WNF and SMBC had generally concurred

There was a discussion about the changed rules for calling applications to the Area Committee. Cllr Mark Jones explained that it now required two councillors rather than just one to call in an application. EF enquired whether the aim had been to speed up the process. Cllr Mark Jones explained that it is extremely rare for councillors and officers not to agree on householder applications. Brian Bagnall pointed that, while that was true for the borough as a whole, it did not apply to this area.

Woodford Village Aspirations

The meeting was reminded that these included:

- Safe walking and cycling routes
- Improved traffic safety
- Improved bus services
- Information about facilities
- WGV - dialogue with developer and council
- Clean air - reducing the burning of waste and traffic pollution

The following activities had aimed to achieve some of these aspirations:

- Annual summer fair. This had been a success again, even though the weather was mixed. For the first one in 2023 the weather had been very hot and for the one in 2024 it had been wet.
- Winter festival. This had been the first one and was a success in spite of stormy weather on the night. Peter Crossen explained that the weather had been challenging. The next one would be at the community centre to provide more shelter.
- Guide to public rights of way. A leaflet had been printed funded by WCC.
- Reporting obstructed pavements and public rights of way by members of WNF and WCC.
- Extensive advertising of events and facilities. The community centre was particularly active in this.
- Engaged in WGV extension consultation. WNF had been invited to the preview for stakeholders and discussed the proposals with Harrow and Redrow representatives at the event.

Conclusions from monitoring

WNP was relevant, up to date and achieving vision and objectives.
Progress had been made with Village Aspirations

Future tasks

The management committee intended to:

- Continue to respond to planning applications
- Continue to monitor implementation
- Monitor changes in local and national policies
- Continue to advocate for the aspirations
- Review WNP to stay compliant with new Stockport Plan and revised NPPF
- Hold another Summer Fair and Winter Fest
- Raise funds to help with meeting room hire or leaflet printing if needed via the summer fair.

Paul Goodman noted that one of reasons for fewer planning applications could be that more can now be done under Permitted Development Rights. Many applications don't require comment because they are essentially permitted development.

Brian Bagnall asked whether a retrospective application had been submitted for the gates and gatepost on Woodford Road, which had been reported to Planning Enforcement.

Cllr Mark Jones reported that SMBC had written a letter to the land owner requesting a retrospective application.

Action: Evelyn Frearson to follow up on this.

Changes to Planning Regulations

Paul Goodman presented this section.

A new Government had been elected July 2024.

One of the Government's manifesto aims was to increase house building via:

- planning reforms
- the release of Green Belt land
- reintroduction of mandatory housing targets for local authorities

The Government consulted on changes to planning guidelines and housing targets which included:

- Housing targets mandatory
- Formula for calculation changed
- Targets much higher for the Northwest, rural areas, and Stockport
- "Grey belt" category for low quality Green Belt sites
- Brownfield first, but must use Green Belt if needed to achieve targets
- Strengthened presumption in favour of sustainable development

Paul Goodman noted that there had been several rounds of revisions to the NPPF. There were 43K representations to the most recent consultation. In theory the Government has to respond to each one.

The methodology for calculating housing targets is not workable.

The Grey Belt issue was confusing because it was already possible to build on previously developed land in Green Belt, e.g. petrol stations. The development industry was objecting to the level of densification

We would have to see how quickly they change the regulations.

2. Stockport Local Plan

Paul Goodman presented this section.

Stockport opted out of GMSF and had to produce its own plan.

A new draft plan had been prepared for consultation in Sep/Oct 2024.

- It included development on brownfield (previously developed sites) with no removal of land from Green Belt
- This had been possible using exceptional circumstances for lower housing numbers than Government standard methodology
- That plan had proposed more houses than were proposed in GMSF with denser development in town centre
- Consultation had been paused due to proposed revisions to targets and guidelines

Paul Goodman noted that the timetable was not workable. We would have to see how it went. One of the consequences has been a lot of surveying on land in Woodford.

It was worth noting that Green Belt in Woodford washes over everything whereas in Poynton the Green Belt wraps around the settlement.

3. Woodford Garden Village extension proposals

Paul Goodman presented the slides.

The proposals included:

- 550 additional houses at the south east end of the site.
- A mix of new housing
- Including affordable and older people's accommodation,
- Community hub
- Open space

Two consultation events had been held in July and September 2024

The points raised in the WNF response, which is on the website, included:

- Site is in Green Belt
- Supplementary Planning Document 2013 is still a policy consideration
- Site was to return to agriculture
- Cumulative over-development
- Environmental impact
- Infrastructure requirements
- Suitability of the land for building
- Accessibility
- Suitability for affordable housing
- Uses of community hub
- Timing
- Positive features included rural style near Old Hall Lane

Paul Goodman commented that it seemed that Redrow was aiming to get ahead of the local plan process. An application would be submitted with all technical documents.

There was a question from the floor about the total number of houses built. Terry Barnes replied that it was 650 at the time. It was likely to get to around 850, but would not go over the 900 with the original planning permission.

4. Deanwater House Planning Application

Paul Goodman presented the slides.

- The Deanwater Hotel closed and the site was purchased by PH Holdings Ltd
- Submitted application to fell a diseased tree.
- They made contact with WNF to arrange a meeting and we got prior view of the plans. WNF intended to take up the offer of a meeting.
- Planning application (DC/093468) now submitted which proposes :
- Retention of Deanwater House

- Split into two units
- Retention of the Grade II Listed barn. This is the bit that was the restaurant, but does not include the bar.
- Additional 9 new dwellings:
 - 7 detached houses
 - 2 semi-detached houses

Paul Goodman explained aspects of the plans and elevations. He noted that traffic would be less than the hotel use.

5. AVRO Heritage Museum extension proposal

Terry Barnes presented this item. BBC News North West had covered it with a 3 minute slot. It would be a very large building in order to house a Shackleton with 37 m wing span plus 4 other aircraft, archive and educational material and community space. There would be a mezzanine floor with 1908 and 1921 aircraft hanging from roof. The building would be 90 m long, 30 m wide and 15 m tall. The rebuild cost of the Shackleton will be £110K. It will have to be built in situ, so a crane will be needed.

Harrow/Redrow is the landlord, so they were liaising. The height would be less than CAE building next door which is due for demolition associated with the WGV extension application. The planning application for the new building is ready to be submitted with very special circumstances to justify use of small part on Green Belt. Harrow/Redrow would look at it first, but the Barratt merger has resulted in staff changes.

6. Handforth Garden Village

Paul Goodman explained that it was an allocation for housing development in the Cheshire East Council local plan [2017]. The planning application was approved a couple of years ago [2023]. Stockport Council had been awarded more money to improve the A34. There were plans to make the Stanley Green round-about bigger, but an extra take off for a fast food outlet made it even more difficult.

Cheshire East Council had an arms-length company called Engine of the North promoting housing sites in Cheshire East. It was taken back in house recently. Infrastructure costs were a problem. Cheshire East Council did not own all the land. Some of it belonged to MOD and some to local farmers. Cheshire East Council was proposing that infrastructure costs were found from somewhere and then house builders would be required to pay it per plot when they developed it. But house builders don't like to work that way.

The new Government was proposing to look at large sites that have not been developed, so they may look at this one. The Cheshire East scrutiny committee had looked at viability.

7. Places for Everyone

This was formerly GMSF for 10 boroughs and became Places for Everyone for 9 boroughs when Stockport dropped out. It had finally gone through all the processes. All nine councils adopted it and it is now the adopted plan for the region. There are potential JRs.

One of the grounds for JR that was allowed by a judge was that the proper process was not followed when some of the Green Belt addition sites were withdrawn during the examination.

Each version reduced the amount of Green Belt taken out, but it is still a substantial amount.

8. Discussion and Questions

Question from the floor: Has a planning application been submitted for land next to the former British Legion?

Answer: The forum has not been notified about a planning application and would be if there was one because it is in the neighbourhood area.

Paul Goodman noted that our plan included protection of the British Legion for community use, but not the land next to it.

The forum has received messages about the issue that the new owners of the land did not wish to allow the Scouts to use it, as they had done for many years previously. The committee was trying to help where it could.

Brian Bagnall congratulated the committee on the work that it had done, saying that it took a long time to get a plan through as the first one in Stockport and it would have been easy to have given up, but we kept it going. He noted that Evelyn Frearson put in immense amount of work on the planning applications and monitoring. Terry Barnes thanked Paul Goodman for his input and for the general team effort.

Terry Barnes thanked everyone for attendance and the local councillors in particular as they are very busy people and then closed the meeting.

Evelyn Frearson, 25th March 2025

The slides presented at the meeting can be found on the WNF website on this link:
[WNF AGM and update meeting 2024](#)