



## **Woodford Community Council**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2012**

#### **WCC members present:**

Paul Rodman            Chairman

Helen Buszard        Secretary

Robin Berriman      Treasurer

Ron Beatham, Robin Brammar, David Buszard, Ken Coxey, Cllr Bryan Leck, Stephen Taylor, Morag White, Maxine Wood.

#### **Guests**

Mr Jim McMahon, Service Director, Major Projects, SMBC

The Meeting was also attended by 30 residents, local Councillor Paul Bellis and several visitors from neighbouring localities.

#### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speaker, Mr Jim McMahon. He presented apologies from Mr Mark Hunter MP, who had been detained in London by Parliamentary business, and from local Councillor Brian Bagnall.

#### **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 24 November 2011 was proposed by Mrs White, seconded by Mr Coxey and carried unanimously.

#### **3. Chairman's Annual Report**

The Chairman noted that this had been another busy year. A photographic competition had been held in the spring, the winner being Ms Evelyn Frearson for a beautiful photograph showing reflections in floodwater near Barr Green Farm. The annual 'Clean up Woodford' day had been held on 9<sup>th</sup> June and he thanked the 21 hardy people who had turned out on a very wet Saturday morning to pick up some 30 bags of litter.

However, he continued, the main concern of the year had been the new proposals for the development of the airfield. After the general support given to the ideas put forward by Mr Bamford and Avro Heritage at the end of the previous year, residents had been disappointed to find that a large proportion of the developable land had been sold to

Harrow Estates/Redrow Homes for purely residential development. This had been followed by dismay when it was disclosed at the SMBC Exhibition held in May that the construction of 950 houses had been proposed in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the site. WCC had received numerous comments and objections from residents, as a result of which it had been decided to set up an Action Group – Woodford United - harnessing the skills and expertise of local people to oppose the proposals. A questionnaire circulated to all residents had received an excellent level of response and had resulted in a clear mandate being given to WCC to represent residents' interests. Many residents had made donations to the fighting fund and he thanked them for their support. A fuller report on the actions taken by Woodford United would be presented by Stephen Taylor later in the meeting

He concluded by pointing out that SMBC had received a record number of responses to the consultation on the draft SPD and that it was expected that a revised SPD would be available very shortly.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer informed the meeting that there were now two separate accounts – the original WCC account and a new account for the funds received by Woodford United.

The WCC account had held a balance of £797 at the start of the financial year (1/11/11) and during the year £224 had been received in donations at the previous AGM and £725 from website sponsorship. After outgoings of £761 – mainly for website maintenance - the year-end balance was £985.

Woodford United had received donations of £4625 for the fighting fund, of which £924 had been spent, primarily on the Exhibition boards and on the banners. The balance on 31/10/12 stood at £3701. The costs would have been considerably higher if had not been for the generous help of Mr Willis, who had undertaken most of the printing required free of charge.

Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting.

#### **5. Report from Woodford United**

Mr Taylor introduced himself as a long-time resident of Woodford and a member of WCC and of the Steering Group for Woodford United. Together with the Treasurer, he had also represented WCC on the Poynton Local Area Partnership (LAP) Group, run by Cheshire East and involving councillors from Poynton, Adlington, Prestbury and Mottram St Andrew.

Mr Taylor began his report by outlining the various actions that had been taken following the establishment of the Woodford United group, as described earlier by the Chairman. The group, which comprised local residents, amongst whom were architects, planners, traffic consultants, business and IT and legal professional representatives, had held its first meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Future strategy had been discussed and a number of sub-groups had been set up to address specific issues relating to the development proposals. Circulation of the questionnaire seeking residents' views had been organized. The response to the questionnaire had been excellent, with an

overwhelming number of residents indicating their opposition to 950 houses and also other concerns relating to impact on traffic, infrastructure and lack of employment opportunities. Many donations had been made to the fighting fund and he added his thanks to those of the Chairman for this support and also thanked Southfield House, Jackson Barrett and Gass, and the Artisan Meat Company for their sponsorship of the WCC website.

Since the initial meeting there had been over a dozen more full meetings of Woodford United and various WU members had attended meetings of Stockport Council and its Executive and Regeneration Committees, Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee meetings and an East Cheshire Strategic Planning Committee meeting. A conference had been held with a leading barrister, who had provided very helpful advice. WU had been in regular touch with MP Mark Hunter and with local councillors and had registered its concerns with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Many of these activities had been published on the WCC website and incorporated into newsletters and leaflets. During the consultation stage of the SPD, Woodford United had held two very successful exhibitions at the Woodford Community Centre in parallel with the SMBC exhibitions.

Mr Taylor then went on to consider what would happen now that the SPD consultation period was over. He noted that the revised version was due out at any moment, having already been delayed because of all the amendments required following the consultation process. Over 500 responses had been received by the Council and Woodford United itself had identified over 110 individual challenges, observations, or conflicts. It is anticipated that a number of changes will have to be made and that enforcements and trigger points added as conditional upon any planning application approval. Full details have yet to be seen, but WU believes that there may still be opportunities to make legal challenges and re-submit concerns to the Secretary of State and/or local ombudsman. The next stage after that will be to assess in fine detail any planning application that comes forward from Harrow/Redrow.

In summary, he commented that WU has not taken a totally negative stance. Whilst the headline issue has been 'No to 950' and there are many other concerns expressed by residents, it is recognised that some form of development will take place and the main objective must be to minimise any negative impact on the existing community and ensure that there are commensurate benefits to Woodford as a whole.

Finally, Mr Taylor gave a brief account of the reasons for putting forward the proposed amendment to the WCC Constitution. He explained that a Neighbourhood Forum could be created to define various objectives regarding future development for an area and these may be set out as a Neighbourhood plan, which could become a policy document within the local authority. There are a number of ways in which a Neighbourhood Forum could be established.

Woodford United has already been effecting part of this role and WCC would like to formalise the structure in a manner that would be most effective. The community's support was being requested so that steps might be taken to negotiate and establish a Neighbourhood Forum with SMBC. It was believed that this would best be done in a collaborative manner, and cross interest involvement was the preferred way forward. It had also become clear that such a remit did not just relate to the Woodford Aerodrome site, but could also cover such matters as SEMMMS consultation, negotiation regarding the Poynton Bypass and Town Plans that are being progressed by

neighbouring communities. These and many other issues could affect Woodford and the community needs to be involved and work with the other communities to put forward its own ideas and concerns. The establishment of a Neighbourhood Forum for Woodford would be an appropriate route to do this.

## **6. Amendment to the WCC Constitution**

For the reasons explained in the previous item, the following addition to Clause 1, Purposes and Objectives, of the Constitution was put forward in order to allow WCC to have the option of establishing a Neighbourhood Forum.

*1.4 Woodford Community Council is empowered to propose or work towards the formation and establishment of a Neighbourhood Forum. This may take the form of either a sub-group of this committee or an independent organisation. Such sub-group or organisation will be required to have its own constitution compliant with national legislation contained within the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.*

The amendment was proposed by Cllr Leck, seconded by Dr Buszard and carried unanimously.

## **7. Election of WCC members**

The Chairman reported that Mr Ken Coxey had been co-opted onto the committee earlier in the year and was now willing to stand for election. There were further vacancies, but no other nominations had been put forward. It was therefore proposed by Dr Buszard and seconded by Mrs White that Mr Coxey be elected as a member of WCC. This was carried unanimously.

The Chairman suggested that if anyone else was interested in the work of WCC, they should contact a member of the committee after the meeting.

## **8. Guest Speaker**

The Chairman introduced Mr McMahon, who would be speaking about the proposals for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road.

Mr McMahon began his presentation by reminding everyone that the proposed new road would connect the A6 at Hazel Grove to Manchester Airport via the existing A555 and that the first phase of the consultation period was now underway. He gave a brief history of the scheme, explaining that although the possibility of such a road had been mooted as early as 1938, firmer proposals had been put forward in the 1990s, when the Government published a strategic review of the roads programme as part of the development of a new integrated transport policy. In 2001 the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) was accepted by the Government and the three local authorities involved - Cheshire, Manchester and Stockport – started to develop the road scheme recommended in the strategy. After a number of stop/starts with allocation and then withdrawal of finance, agreement was finally reached on funding for the current plan (which excluded the Poynton Bypass) in 2012, with £165m being provided by

central Government and the balance of £125m coming from the Greater Manchester transport fund.

Mr McMahon then gave an outline of the scheme, which would involve constructing about 10 km of dual carriageway, with a segregated cycle/pedestrian route along the entire length of the road, and would include 13 new or improved junctions and four rail crossings. A massive public consultation exercise was being undertaken in two phases. The first phase, which began the previous month, was seeking views on options for the scheme. Detailed information had been distributed to some 85,000 residences and businesses and a number of full-day exhibitions were being held in various locations around the route. Full engagement with stake-holder groups was taking place and meetings were being held with owners of properties directly affected by the road. Full details were also available on the website [www.semmms.info](http://www.semmms.info). The first consultation would close on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013, after which the responses would be analyzed and a preferred plan would be put forward by the three Councils involved for a further four-week consultation. It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted in summer 2013 and, if necessary, a Public Inquiry would be held 2013/2014. Construction was likely to start later in 2014, with completion expected by 2017.

Mr McMahon then answered a number of questions from the audience. Particular points covered included the following.

- **Junctions/Traffic flows:** Forecasts had been made of predicted traffic flows at junctions, both in 2017 and fifteen years later, to ensure that they would operate efficiently. Whilst the relief road was intended to reduce congestion on local roads in the surrounding areas, it was recognized that some areas would see increases in traffic. Traffic modelling had been carried out to identify changes in traffic flows on key routes in the vicinity of the relief road. Traffic modelling had also been undertaken to identify locations affected by the scheme and where complementary and/or mitigation measures should be considered.
- **HS2:** No account had been taken of the possible route of HS2 because that information had not yet been made available.
- **Funding:** Despite the recession and the pressure on public finances, the current government had identified the scheme as a priority and allocated £165m towards it, as had the previous government prior to the 2010 election. It had been prioritised within the National Infrastructure Plan and at Greater Manchester level by the combined authority. Equally, the estimates of costs had been very robust and there was little likelihood of an over-run.
- **Design feasibility:** Early Contractor Involvement had been employed to ensure the deliverability of the proposals.

## 9. Closure of Meeting

The Chairman thanked Mr McMahon for his excellent presentation.

He reminded residents that there were new dates for the Council meetings at which the revised SPD would be considered. Details had been given in the hand-out provided and

he encouraged everyone to attend in particular the Area Committee meeting, which was being held on 10<sup>th</sup> December in the Community Centre.

He invited everyone to stay on for tea or coffee and take the opportunity to meet members of Woodford United and view the various Exhibition Boards before formally closing the meeting.

*Minutes Approved, on behalf of the Community*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Rodman', written in a cursive style.

Chairman

14 November 2013