



Woodford Community Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 29th NOVEMBER 2017

WCC members present:

David Buszard Chairman

Helen Buszard Secretary

Robin Berriman Treasurer

Ron Beatham, Chris Copock, Ken Coxey, Evelyn Frearson, Avril Furness, Bryan Leck, Rev David Russell, Jane Sandover, Morag White, Maxine Wood.

The meeting was attended by approximately 40 residents and visitors.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting by introducing himself and extending a warm welcome to residents. He also welcomed local councillors Brian Bagnall, John McGahan and Mike Hurleston and presented apologies from Cheadle MP Mary Robinson, who was unable to attend because of her Parliamentary duties. Finally, he welcomed Guest Speaker Sue Stevenson, Head of Highways and Transport for SMBC, who had kindly agreed to present an update on local traffic issues.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 17th November 2016

The Secretary noted that the draft Minutes of the 2016 AGM had been available on the WCC website since January 2017 and drew attention to the need for two minor corrections. In Minute 4, Treasurer's Report, the figure given for estimated printing costs for the 2016 AGM should have been £14, not £141. In the third paragraph of Minute 6 the statement attributed to Emma Curle, had said that 'Stockport's objectively assessed housing need was 22,000.' but that figure should have been 20,212.

Subject to these small changes, she asked the meeting to approve the Minutes as a true record. This was proposed by Paul Rodman, seconded by Maxine Wood and carried unanimously.

3. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman began his report by noting that he had been Chairman of WCC through the last eventful year, having taken over from the retiring Chairman, Paul Rodman, on an interim basis after the 2016 AGM. He reminded everyone of the shock and surprise at the publication of the draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, which had proposed building a further 2,400 houses in Woodford's Green Belt. This had happened just before the 2016 AGM and Eamonn

Boylan, then CEO of SMBC, and his planning team had attended that meeting and attempted to explain and defend the proposals. There had been a lot of dissent and it had been obvious that most Woodford residents held very strong feelings about the proposed loss of Green Belt. The deadline for comments on the GMSF proposals had originally been 23rd December 2016. This had been considered a scandalously short period for comments on such a major issue and after waves of protest, the closing date had been put back to 16th January 2017. In conjunction with WNF and the Woodford Community Centre Management Committee, WCC had worked very hard on two fronts – firstly, to disseminate the information as widely as possible to ensure that local people knew of the proposals and of the need to submit their comments by the deadline. Secondly, to pull together detailed and cogent arguments against the mass destruction of the Green Belt. This had needed detailed analysis of the GMSF proposals and supporting documents and the drafting of counter arguments that could be used by residents in objecting to the proposals. An informal group ‘Save Woodford’s Green Belt’ had been set up with its own Facebook Page and Woodford had joined protest groups from other affected areas within Stockport Borough – High Lane, Heald Green and Marple - on a Protest March to Stockport Town Hall on 14th January 2017 – with active support from local MPs and councillors. Very quickly more than 40 separate groups had formed across the whole of Greater Manchester to oppose the loss of Green Belt and these had been coordinated through the ‘Save Greater Manchester Green Belt’ Group, which was responsible for the large Rally in front of Manchester Town Hall on 1st April 2017. Woodford had continued to play a part in that Group – thanks mainly to Evelyn Frearson, who had attended many meetings on its behalf.

This activity had resulted in more than 27,000 responses to the consultation, many of them opposed to the loss of Green Belt, and the preparation of revised proposals had been put back until June 2018, so that they could all be considered. It was hoped that the result would be a more acceptable second draft and various statements made by the new Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham, had indicated that a lot more emphasis would be placed on city and town centre regeneration and development on brown field sites. The Chairman emphasised, however, that it was important not to be complacent and that all the groups needed to be ready to respond to the next phase.

The Chairman also drew attention to the updating of SMBC’s Local Plan and noted that a first draft had already been out for consultation. The next stage would be awaited with interest next year. He also mentioned the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan, which had been the focus of an intense period of hard work over the last year. It was now nearing the final stages of preparation for the Regulation 14 Pre-submission Consultation in the next few weeks.

On a different note, he commented that WCC had also been involved in maintaining liaison with the Redrow development. This year there had been three meetings with the Technical Director and Sales Team and these would continue on a quarterly basis. Various issues had been raised, mainly on behalf of residents of Bridle Road and a small section of Chester Road, who were closest to the current building work. These issues had included noise, dust, removal of trees and potential problems with watercourses. It was recognised that there were bound to be difficulties and inconveniences during any construction, but where possible these should be minimised for existing residents. He noted that MP Mary Robinson and Cllr Brian Bagnall had been particularly active in trying to assist in the resolution of these problems.

Finally, he reminded everyone that at the 2015 AGM several residents had raised the increasing problems with traffic along Church Lane and Blossoms Lane. There had been serious concerns about the safety of pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists. Early in 2016, WCC had undertaken a survey of residents’ views and had produced a detailed report, which had been submitted to SMBC with full support from local councillors. Traffic surveys and video cameras had then been employed by SMBC and it had finally been decided that Church Lane and Blossoms Lane

should be granted Quiet Lane status - with a 20 mph limit – on a trial basis. This was part of the proposed Woodford Traffic Mitigation measures, which Sue Stevenson would be mentioning later. He felt that this was a very positive outcome and he thanked Cllr Bagnall in particular for his perseverance in progressing it.

This concluded the Chairman's Report.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer introduced the Financial Report for the year to 31st October 2017 and gave a brief summary of the main points, noting that the balance of WCC funds, including the ring-fenced amount of £436 held on behalf of WNF, was £1,864 at year-end, compared with £1,596 at the same time last year. The income for 2017 was just over £1,009, thanks to donations of £259 made at the 2016 AGM and a third website sponsor, Notcutts Garden Centre, joining Jackson Barrett & Gass and Southfield House. The main expenditure was, as usual, for website maintenance, together with a smaller amount for advertising in the Parish Magazine and printing costs. He noted that copies of the Accounts were available if anyone wished to have more details.

5. Election of WCC members

The Secretary noted that there were currently 13 members on the committee, including the four new members who had been elected at the 2016 AGM: Evelyn Frearson, Jane Sandover, Avril Furness and Chris Copock. They had been valuable additions to the team and had made a major contribution to the work on GMSF. Unfortunately, this year there would be several changes to the committee membership. Maxine Wood, a long term member and resident of Woodford had recently moved just out of the area and as a non-resident could no longer be an elected member. However, she was willing to stay on the committee as a co-opted member – as permitted under the Constitution. Ken Coxey, a former WCC Chairman, had decided to stand down this year. The Chairman, who – as already indicated – had taken on the role on an interim basis – was also standing down, as was the Secretary herself, having been a member for 10 years and Secretary for nine of those years. Finally, she noted that Bryan Leck, who has been on the committee for over 20 years, had decided that it was time to leave.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman expressed thanks and appreciation to Bryan, not only for his lengthy contribution to WCC, but also for his service to the Woodford Community over so many years. He noted that Bryan had originally been a Parish Councillor and then became a Cheshire County Councillor in the 1960s. When Stockport Metropolitan Borough was created in 1974, he was appointed as the first Mayor of Stockport and he remained an SMBC councillor for some 40 years, finally retiring in 2014. A presentation was made to Bryan in recognition of his outstanding achievements for Woodford.

A presentation was also made to the Secretary by retired Chairman Paul Rodman, on behalf of WCC, to mark her retirement from the committee.

The Secretary then enquired whether anyone present would like to join the Committee and Mr N Khan Moghal volunteered, explaining that he and his family were in the process of moving into a new house in Woodford Garden Village. This offer was gratefully accepted and a warm welcome was given to Mr Moghal. The Secretary asked that the new committee, comprising Ron Beatham, Robin Berriman, Chris Copock, Evelyn Frearson, Avril Furness, Khan Moghal,

Rev David, Russell, Jane Sandover and Morag White, be formally elected. This was proposed by Jude Craig, seconded by Ken Coxey and carried unanimously.

Finally, as a point of information, the Secretary explained that under the Constitution the Honorary Officers were not elected at the AGM, but were appointed by the Committee. Until a new Chairman and Secretary were appointed, Jane Sandover had kindly agreed to act as a facilitator in order to maintain committee business and respond to WCC emails, etc.

6. Local Traffic Issue

Guest Speaker Sue Stevenson provided updates on the three main issues affecting Woodford and responded to questions and concerns raised by attendees.

A6MARR Project

Ms Stevenson noted that more work was planned at the Woodford Rd/ A555 junction, with further night time closures at the beginning of December. It was anticipated that the junction would be substantially complete by early 2018. At the Chester Road link (near the oil terminal) there would be tie-in works, which would commence early in 2018 and would require traffic management, although details of that had still to be confirmed. The full road was programmed to open in Spring 2018, although this would depend very much on factors such as the weather – hard winter conditions could cause delays.

Concerns were raised by several residents regarding the apparently slow progress being made and the fact that at times there appeared to be few workers on sites, particularly at the Woodford Road junction and the Stanley Green roundabout. It was suggested that the work should be carried out 24/7 in order to complete the project as quickly as possible and minimize disruption. In response, Ms Stevenson explained that the contract was for Design and Build, which in effect meant that it was up to the Contractors to decide how the work should be carried out in the most efficient way – subject of course to some conditions set by SMBC. There had to be a balance between overnight working, which would disturb residents close to the activity, versus shutting roads during the day with the subsequent congestion. Various factors had to be taken into account, e.g. school exams and – at this time of year - the extra traffic generated by Christmas shopping etc. Sometimes nothing would be happening on the site because the contractors were waiting for utility companies to put in the required services. There was an added problem at Stanley Green because planning permission had been given for a new restaurant at the roundabout, which meant that work to provide access to it had to be factored in.

Woodford Development Mitigation Measures

Ms Stevenson outlined the proposed measures, which were being funded by Redrow as part of the Section 106 Agreement. These involved improvements to Public Rights of Way to provide a link to Bramhall Health Centre and Railway Station and also traffic calming measures on Hall Moss Lane, Moor Lane, Jenny Lane, Church Lane and Blossoms Lane. She described the latter in more detail, mentioning in particular that a number of pairs of speed cushions would be constructed on Hall Moss Lane, Moor Lane and Jenny Lane to reduce vehicle speeds. Junction speed tables would also be constructed at the junctions of Hall Moss Lane/Blossoms Lane, Hall Moss Lane/Church Lane and Moor Lane/Jenny Lane. The speed limit on these roads would remain at 30 mph. On Church Lane and Blossoms Lane, the speed limit would be reduced to 20 mph for a trial period because of the significant number of vulnerable road users using these roads on a regular basis. They would be designated Quiet Lanes with appropriate signage. Two road chicane features would be constructed on Church Lane to act as horizontal traffic calming features. A survey had been carried out earlier in the summer to obtain the views of the residents living on all the roads in question and the proposals had been approved at Bramhall and Cheadle

Hulme South Area Committee meeting on 9th November 2017. Subject to approval of Traffic Regulation Orders, which were currently being publicised, the plans would be implemented in 2018.

A number of residents queried why so many pairs of speed cushions had been proposed for Moor Lane and Hall Moss Lane. Ms Stevenson explained that to be effective and encourage motorists to maintain a steady speed, they could not be too far apart, otherwise motorists would be braking hard before them and then speeding up afterwards. The construction of the speed cushions was also raised, particularly whether they would be laid on top of the road surface, rather than incorporated in it, and it was suggested that the former would make them more susceptible to damage from buses and HGVs. Ms Stevenson replied that they would be built on top, but would be properly sealed, although she conceded that there could be problems if the larger vehicles drove over them before the seal was set. Once again, it was a question of balance between risking that and closing roads.

Concern was expressed as to whether the proposed chicanes in Church Lane were really necessary and whether they would make difficulties for agricultural vehicles, horse boxes, etc. Their locations were also questioned, since one was situated near to the blind corner at Pear Tree Cottage and the other near to the Blossoms Lane junction. Reassurance was given that close attention would be paid to such issues when the detailed design work was undertaken and nothing would be implemented before further consultation had taken place.

A final query was raised as to whether the repair of potholes was included in these measures. It was explained that SMBC already had a recognised system for the reporting and repair of potholes.

Poynton Relief Road

Ms Stevenson gave a brief update on the Poynton Relief Road. Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) and Side Road Orders (SRO) had been published in November 2017. The Target date for a Public Inquiry (if required) was May 2018, with the Inspector's decision anticipated in late Summer/early Autumn 2018. The outcome of this would determine future timescales. Confirmation of the CPO and SRO, together with approval of the final business case would allow the scheme to proceed. Subject to that approval, work would commence on site in Summer 2019 with completion anticipated by Autumn/Winter 2020.

A question was asked as to whether due account had been taken of the nature of the land over which the Relief road was to be constructed, particularly the area near to where the proposed bridge to carry Chester Road was to be built. All the land in that area was known to be very wet and boggy and there were concerns that once the underpass had been dug out there could be flooding problems similar to those that occurred at the Woodford Road bridge earlier in the year. There was further concern regarding how exactly the new bridge would be built without severing the link between Woodford and Poynton for long periods and causing huge delays and congestion. Ms Stevenson pointed out that Cheshire East Council was the lead authority on this project and would be responsible for ensuring that all appropriate matters had been covered when the contractors were appointed.

Final Comments

Ms Stevenson showed two maps indicating Forecast Changes to Traffic Flows - Short Term and Long Term respectively - and noted that these were available on the website.

General concerns were raised as to how all the local roads – particularly the A34, which was already over capacity – could cope with the ever increasing traffic generated by all the new building developments being approved by both SMBC and CEC. Ms Stevenson responded by

referring to the SEMMMS Refresh, which was already underway, and the need for co-ordinated public transport plans for this area of Greater Manchester.

7. Closing Remarks

The Chairman thanked Sue Stevenson for her presentation and response to all the issues raised by residents. He thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Minutes Approved, on behalf of the Community

Chairman

Date: