



Edition 1. December 2010

[BAE News](#) | [Woodford's future](#) | [What's on in Woodford](#) – these are the main themes that we have for you in this, the very first (but, we hope, not the last) edition of the WCC newsletter. If you are in a hurry to read the latest news, simply **Ctrl + click** on any underlined item that catches your eye to jump straight to the relevant article. If you have a little more time, let me welcome you and allow me to explain the purposes of this newsletter. These are threefold, namely:-

- 1) **To encourage a debate about the future of our community.** Woodford is going to change significantly over the next decade. In all probability, the population will double, BAE will vanish and new companies will spring up. In situations like this, many people feel powerless and simply accept whatever is decided for them. However, to take a local example, the people of Alderley Edge did achieve significant changes to their bypass, both in the preservation of footpaths (by means of a footbridge costing well into 6 figures), and in the avoidance (at much greater expense) of an unsightly bridge over a railway. In addition, changes are afoot in the planning world. The coalition government has announced important changes which will give “neighbourhood groups” a significant voice on major developments such as housing estates. Finally, a major cause for optimism is the openness with which BAE and Stockport Council have been conducting the planning process. Of the hundreds of people who attended the meetings in Bramhall in October and in Woodford in November, the vast majority will have been impressed with the thoroughness of the planning process and with the willingness of the planners to answer our questions.
- 2) **To encourage participation in community affairs.** Woodford may be small, consisting at present of some 550 households, but there are numerous activities which are taking place. In conjunction with the Parish Magazine and with the community website, this newsletter aims to publicise just what is going on in Woodford. If you belong to a group that needs publicity, why not consider a page on the community website. In future editions, this newsletter will be happy to promote any such publicity material, by providing a simple link from the newsletter to your own website or to your community website page.
- 3) **To report on local news.** We won't be reporting upon who is having an affair with whom, but we will be reporting upon any other matters we consider to be of local community interest. If you have any stories which you feel may be of interest, please contact the *ed* either by email or by phone.

That's it as far as our objectives are concerned. We need as much involvement as possible, so please **forward** this email to your friends. (Only 55 houses out of the 550 in Woodford currently receive this email). If you have received this email from a friend, please reply to [newsletter@woodfordcommunity.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@woodfordcommunity.co.uk) giving name and (optionally) address details. We promise not to pass your details on to any third party (see [footnote](#)).

## BAE News

### Woodford to close in 2011

Uncertainty has surrounded the exact date for the closure of BAE's Woodford site. Hundreds of people attending the Bramhall area meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup> heard Paul Rubinstein, Stockport Council's Director of Regeneration, outline the planning process for the BAE site based on a scheduled closure in 2012. Barely a month later, following the announcement in the Commons by David Cameron of the cancellation of the Nimrod MRA.4 programme, Mr Rubinstein painted a different picture at the AGM of Woodford Community Council, stating that the site could well close in 2011 and that the planning process was to be accelerated in an attempt to meet the new deadlines. During November over 300 sub-contractors had their contracts terminated, reducing permanent staff remaining at the factory, which in the past has employed thousands, to a number less than 500. Finally, at the beginning of December came the announcement that

BAE were shedding more than 1,000 jobs at factories around the UK, and with it the realisation that the Woodford factory will almost certainly close in 2011. This brings to an end a factory which opened in 1924 and at which numerous different types of aircraft were developed including the Lancaster and Vulcan bombers.

### **Why is the Nimrod being scrapped?**

The Nimrod MRA.4 programme is a multi-billion pound project which was within months of completion. How can it make sense to scrap the project at this stage? Many comments on the internet were understandably apoplectic. However, some clues were provided earlier this year by *Jane's Defence Weekly* which stated that the offer to cancel had come from RAF chiefs. Although the savings derived from the cessation of production amount to a mere £200 million or so, the amounts to be saved by the cancellation of support contracts and by a reduction in the numbers of personnel employed are considerably greater, probably in excess of £3 billion. The question also needs to be asked as to why RAF chiefs were prepared to lose the Nimrod. Could it be that its role in reconnaissance, particularly in the detection of submarines, is no longer considered to be vital now that the "cold war" is at an end?



**The Nimrod MRA.4** *If you have an opinion to express on this topic, or on any other items relevant to Woodford, send your comments by replying to this email. (See [footnote](#))*

## **Woodford's Future**

### **Hundreds of houses for Woodford?**

Public meetings held in Bramhall on October 24<sup>th</sup> and in Woodford on November 25<sup>th</sup>, heard Paul Rubinstein outline the planning process which will determine the future of the BAE site. The whole of the BAE site, approximately 500 acres, is within the green belt. However, within these 500 acres are two areas which have already been built upon and hence are classed as "brownfield", meaning that they are eligible for redevelopment. The two areas amount to 100 acres in total and are based around the main factory on Chester Road, and around the airfield buildings close to New Hall, at the end of Old Hall Lane. Amongst the questions to be decided by the planning process are the following:-

- Should the redevelopment be 100% residential, 100% commercial, or some mixture of the two?
- Should the two areas be amalgamated into one? This could be considered by the planners, so long as the total "brownfield" area does not increase. In effect, this would mean an area currently built upon being returned to green belt, to compensate for the loss of green belt elsewhere.
- What percentage of any housing should be "socially affordable"? What should the overall density of housing be?
- Are transport facilities adequate to cope with proposed developments?

For a more detailed description of Paul Rubinstein's presentation, together with the slides used and the questions asked and answers given, click [here](#).

### **A "centre" for Woodford?**

If Woodford is to have many more houses, probably leading to a doubling in the size of the community, then it is inevitable that more will be required in the form of social or community facilities. Will a doctor's surgery be required? Will Woodford's youngsters be provided with local primary and secondary schools, or will they be expected to travel to schools in adjoining communities, such as Bramhall and Poynton? Nobody wants a huge superstore, but perhaps a few small shops may not be unwelcome? Questions such as these raise the possibility that there may be advantages as well as disadvantages to the expansion of Woodford. A well designed "centre" could be a focal point for the village, and could raise community spirits.

*How would you like to see Woodford develop? Reply to this email and we will endeavour to include your comments on the community website. (See [footnote](#))*

### **Woodford homeowners to decide on own planning permission?**

Both the *Guardian* and the *Sunday Telegraph* recently carried a story concerning proposed changes to the granting of planning permissions which could well be of great significance to the people of Woodford. Perhaps the least significant part of the proposed legislation relates to the granting of planning permission for alterations to individual houses. Communities such as Woodford



will be able to form “neighbourhood groups” which will be able to agree upon development standards, known as “neighbourhood development orders”. These will enable homeowners to build extensions or to modify their homes in some other way without needing to obtain planning permission in the traditional way from Stockport Council – they will simply need to obtain the approval of their neighbourhood group instead.

Of perhaps even greater significance is the power which the proposed legislation promises to give to local groups in determining the outcome of more major projects, for the Conservative party manifesto stated :-

**“Significant local projects, like new housing estates, will have to be designed through a collaborative process [involving] the neighbourhood”.** [Ed’s italics]

All those people who attended the recent meetings in Bramhall and Woodford concerning the development of the airfield will have been impressed with the openness of Stockport Council’s officials in describing the planning process, and in answering the numerous queries raised by local residents. It is perhaps even more heartening to realise that under the proposed legislation local residents will have real power in shaping the outcome of major redevelopments such as that which will take place over the next few years at Woodford airfield.

*What do you think about the idea of “neighbourhood groups” which will have a significant say not only on individual house alterations but also in determining the shape of major developments, such as that of new housing estates. Are they a recipe for vicious infighting between opposing groups or will they lead to a glorious blossoming of local democracy? Will the new legislation make a significant difference to the outcome of the Woodford airfield redevelopment? Answers please in an email to the ed. (See [footnote](#))*

## What’s going on in Woodford

### **What’s on in Woodford (& who to contact if you are interested)**

Appearances can be deceptive! Beneath its outwardly peaceful exterior, Woodford is a hive of activity, with numerous interest groups to suit young or old, church or non-church, academic or athletic. The Woodford Village Calendar lists all the various groups, gives all necessary contact details, and may be visited [here](#).

The WCC Newsletter aims to give a bit more background to local groups. This time it’s the turn of Woodford W.I. who report as follows:-

*Woodford branch of the WI provides members with interesting talks, discussions and activities in a welcoming atmosphere. We have weekly clubs for bridge, darts, table tennis, and a 'singing for fun choir'. The classical music society meets occasionally whilst the walking group has a varied programme of walks in the local area. There are also outings and social events throughout the year, and we have our own entertainment group. If you are interested in joining us, the next meeting is on January 13<sup>th</sup> starting at 7.30pm in the large hall of the Community Centre .*

If you would like to publicise your group’s activities, contact editor Frank Brown on 0161 439 3602 or email [newsletter@woodfordcommunity.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@woodfordcommunity.co.uk)



### **Appearances can be deceptive!**

Numerous activities take place in Woodford including amateur dramatics, art, badminton, bridge, church fellowship and friendship, comedy nights, dancing, darts, dog training, football, golf, scrapbooking, snooker and yoga. There is a baby and toddler group, whilst for those a bit older the scouts also have cubs, beavers, brownies and rainbows. There is a full calendar of events at the community centre, including a party on New Year’s Eve and a Burns Night on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan.

For further details, click [here](#)

## Your website

More and more people are becoming aware of the Woodford Community website. At present the site offers useful information in terms of what is going on (see above), [local attractions](#), and [local government and police contacts](#). There are also many splendid photographs taken by local people, such as the seasonal picture shown here. Feel free to study pictures of Woodford in [spring](#), [summer](#), [autumn](#) and [winter](#), or check out the local [wildlife](#).

We want to develop the community website further, so if you feel that you (or your group) have something to offer, either in the form of content or in the form of ideas, we'd be pleased to hear from you. The website can be accessed at [www.woodfordcommunity.co.uk](http://www.woodfordcommunity.co.uk)



**Moor Lane last winter**

A picture taken by Robin Berriman, one of the many pictures of Woodford on the community website

Footnote re our data protection policy:- We promise not to pass your details on to any third party. Comments from your emails may be used on the community website (anonymously if you wish). You may post comments directly to the website [here](#), but the editor reserves the right to remove text or material considered unsuitable. You may unsubscribe from this email at any stage by sending an email marked UNSUBSCRIBE.