



Woodford Community Council

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2011

WCC members present:

Paul Rodman Chairman

Helen Buszard Secretary

Robin Berriman Acting Treasurer

Ron Beatham, Robin Brammar, Frank Brown, David Buszard, Revd John Knowles, Cllr Bryan Leck, Stephen Taylor, Morag White.

Apologies: Maxine Wood (Treasurer)

Guests

Paul Lawrence and Ian Harrison, SMBC

Philip Chadwick and Matthew Clark, Gascoigne Halman

The Meeting was also attended by 90 residents and 30 visitors from neighbouring localities.

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speakers, Mr Lawrence and Mr Harrison from Stockport MBC and Mr Chadwick and Mr Clark from Gascoigne Halman. He presented apologies from Mr Mark Hunter MP, who had a prior engagement, and from the three local councillors, who were attending the Area Committee meeting in Bramhall; he hoped that Cllr Leck would join the AGM later. He commented that he had taken over as Chairman after the last AGM and gave a brief resume: he had lived in Woodford for most of his life, his professional background was in engineering and he had been a member of the Community Council for over ten years.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 25 November 2010 was proposed by Mr Coxey, seconded by Dr Buszard, and carried unanimously.

3. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman noted that this had been an eventful year for Woodford. It had been very sad to see the final closure of the BAE site and the end of so many decades of aviation history. The redevelopment of that site was now of prime concern to residents and there

had been a number of meetings, exhibitions and design workshops in which WCC members had played a major part. The WCC had endeavoured to keep residents informed at every stage and this had been helped by the launch of the e-Newsletter, which worked in conjunction with the WCC website. He suggested that anyone who was not already on the subscriber list and who would like to receive the newsletter should provide an email address at the end of the meeting.

He referred to the latest news about the prospective purchasers of the BAE site. From information already available, their plans seemed to be exciting and generally beneficial for Woodford. However, the sale had not yet been completed and detailed designs had yet to be seen.

He also mentioned other WCC activities, including the successful 'Keep Woodford Tidy' litter-picking day. He thanked all the residents who had turned out to help and noted that another litter day would be arranged in 2012.

He noted that one area that was of particular concern to residents was the level of crime in the area and said that the WCC intended to become more proactive in supporting crime prevention and would make it one of its priorities for 2012. It would encourage the establishment of more Home Watch schemes and would welcome any suggestions or ideas that might help the community to combat crime. In addition, he pointed out that there was always an item on the Agenda for the Area Committee meetings, where Councillors and members of the public were invited to raise policing issues with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team. Dates and further details of Area Committee meetings were given on the SMBC website. (There was a link to this on the WCC website.)

Finally, the Chairman reminded everyone that the WCC had no regular source of income and was dependant upon donations – such as those he hoped people would make that evening - and the generous sponsorship of the website by one or two local businesses. He had therefore decided to initiate a fund-raising drive in the coming year, so that a small surplus could be built up in case, for example, it became necessary to seek legal advice on behalf of the community.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Acting Treasurer reported that at year-end (31 October 2011), the bank balance was £797, compared with £928 at 31 October 2010. Income for the year had been £592 and outgoings £723. The Report was accepted.

5. Election of new Council members

The Chairman stated that there had been a number of changes in membership since the previous AGM and four new members - Robin Berriman, Robin Brammar, David Buszard and Stephen Taylor - had been co-opted during the course of the year. All four were willing to stand for election. There were up to three further vacancies and volunteers, particularly anyone with fund-raising experience or knowledge of commercial law, would be very welcome.

In the absence of any other nominations, it was proposed by Dr Evans and seconded by Mr Lingwood that Messrs Berriman, Brammar, Buszard and Taylor be elected as members of the WCC. This was carried unanimously.

6. Guest Speakers

Mr Paul Lawrence – Redevelopment of the BAE Woodford Site

Mr Lawrence began by providing an update on the current position with respect to the sale of the site. There had been considerable publicity regarding the prospective purchasers and he had hoped that their representatives would be accompanying him to the AGM to meet residents and outline their plans. However, BAE had considered that this would not be appropriate until the sale had actually been completed. It was anticipated that this would take place within the next few weeks. He emphasised that the purchasers were the Bamford family and that their intention was to develop the site for mixed use, not as an operational site for JCB. The plans involved the two MEDS, the north site being intended for residential development and the south site to provide employment opportunities and active recreational facilities, including an equestrian centre. Contrary to some initial reports, the whole area was not to become a film studio, although the use of the hangars, etc for filming was one of the possibilities. The Bamford family had indicated that they were keen to work with the local community and provide a development that would be beneficial for local people. Mr Lawrence also emphasised that Stockport had been working – and would continue to work – closely with Cheshire East on a plan for the whole site.

Mr Lawrence then referred to the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the site, which was currently in preparation. He explained that this document would lay down acceptable uses for the site and all planning applications would be judged against it. Stockport had been working closely with Cheshire East and with BAE, but with the prospective change in ownership, BAE had been standing back. If the sale were to be concluded quickly, the new landowner would become involved in the process. The key constraint on the site related to roads and transport and highway modelling was being undertaken to assess the impact of any development on roads. The SPD cannot be completed until this has been resolved. It was hoped that a document giving preferred options could be issued by the end of February 2012. Public exhibitions would be held and the Design Workshops would be reconvened. Account would be taken of public views and a modified SPD would be produced. A final six-week Public Consultation would take place and the final SPD would be adopted by both Stockport and Cheshire East Councils simultaneously.

Mr Lawrence then answered a number of questions from attendees. Particular points included the following.

- Access to the re-developed Heritage Centre would be via the main site and not down Old Hall Lane.
- With regard to infrastructure, particularly roads, the SPD would make the Council's requirements clear and there would be trigger points relating the amount and type of development e.g. number of houses, to the level of infrastructure that must be undertaken.
- The prospective new owners had indicated that about 1000 m of runway (at the Woodford end) would be retained for use by private aircraft.

- Concern about the loss of other Green Belt sites in Woodford – as mentioned in the Allocations DPD - was unfounded. There would be no change to the Green Belt boundaries and development on them would not be permitted.

Mr Lawrence concluded by encouraging everyone to participate in the consultation process and make their views known either directly to the Council or via the Community Council.

Mr Philip Chadwick – Assessment of Local Property Market

Mr Chadwick referred to the impact of the current financial uncertainty on house sales but indicated that the market in Bramhall and Woodford was still holding up. Regarding the BAE sale he said that uncertainty usually depressed the housing market but that it would recover once the scale of the development was understood. He cited the impact of the second Manchester Airport runway on Mobberley as a more extreme example. The announcement of the go-ahead for the runway killed the housing market there for some time but once the worst was known, the market had bounced back and the area had fully recovered.

7. Closure of Meeting

On behalf of those present, the Chairman thanked Mr Lawrence and Mr Chadwick for their excellent presentations. He thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting..

Minutes Approved, on behalf of the Community

..... Chairman

Date.....