



Woodford Community Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2011 AT THE VICARAGE, CHESTER ROAD, WOODFORD

PRESENT

Mr P Rodman	Chairman
Mrs H Buszard	Secretary
Mrs M Wood	Treasurer

Mr R Beatham, Dr D Buszard, Revd J Knowles and Councillor B Leck..

By Invitation: Mr R Brammar

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Berriman, Mr F Brown, Mr S Downes, Mr I Hanson and Mrs M White.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed Mr Brammar and thanked him for his interest in the work of the WCC.

He also explained that Mr Berriman and Mr Brown could not be present because they were attending a LAP Working Group meeting, which had been arranged at short notice for the same evening.

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 26 May 2011, were approved as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minute 3 (b) Fund-raising

The Secretary apologised for not yet having had time to draft the standard document for use in fund raising. This action would be carried over.

ACTION: Secretary

3. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Treasurer reported that the bank balance stood at £1,048.08, with two payments - for £19.38 and £31.50 – still to be made.

It was noted that the latter payment was for the booking of the large hall at the Community Centre for the 2011 AGM, which was to be held on Thursday, 24 November 2011. It was agreed that following the routine business of the AGM, the main topic of interest would naturally be the development of the BAE site. Appropriate speakers would therefore be invited to provide updates on progress.

ACTION: Chairman, Secretary.

4. MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

It was noted that letters of thanks had been sent to the two retiring members, Mr Hall and Dr Evans, as agreed.

It was agreed unanimously that Mr Brammar should become a co-opted member.

It was reported that Mr Stephen Taylor had expressed his renewed interest in joining the WCC, although he would not be able to participate until September. This was welcomed by members and it was agreed that he should also be co-opted.

It was hoped that all co-opted members would put themselves forward for election at the AGM in November.

5. SUB-GROUP REPORTS

(a) Development of BAE Site

Design Workshops

Dr Buszard presented a detailed report on the Design Workshops, which he had attended with Mr Berriman and Cllr Leck. (NOTE: The full text of his report is given in Appendix A to these Minutes.) He concluded by stating that despite his initial scepticism, he had found the workshops to be an interesting and very worthwhile exercise and that he now had more confidence in the openness of the consultation procedure consultation.

Cllr Leck concurred with this analysis, although he had some concerns that Cheshire East views had seemed to predominate in the Workshops, even though the MEDS fell entirely within Stockport's boundaries and Stockport would ultimately be responsible for development decisions.

It was recognised that if part of the MEDS were transferred to the Poynton/Adlington end of the site, this would reduce the size and thus the impact of the Woodford part of the development. Additionally, it would give Cheshire East an incentive to maintain and manage the green areas that fell within its remit.

It was noted that the facilitators, Taylor Young, were preparing a detailed report for Stockport Council and that a Public meeting would be held at the Community Centre on 14th July 2011 to present the findings of both the Design Workshops and the earlier Public Exhibitions. An advance presentation would be made to local councillors on 8 July.

In conclusion, it was agreed that it was vital for the WCC to keep in close contact with both the planners and developers as the work progressed. This would be particularly so when the time came for clearance/remediation of the site, in order to mitigate as far as possible the impact on residents of the inevitable noise and traffic congestion. Cllr Leck emphasised the importance of members attending the Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme South Area Committee meetings, where regular updates would be provided.

LAP Working Group

It was noted that following several meetings over the last few months, a formal document on the future of the Woodford site had been agreed between representatives of the various communities bordering the site and had been submitted to the planning authorities of both local authorities and to BSE/Cass.

Following the collection of email addresses and other contact details from interested parties at the Public Exhibitions, a joint Database had been drawn up for use by the local parishes and communities under strict conditions of use. WCC would be able to use this list to supplement the email addresses already held for circulation of the e-Newsletter.

(b) e-Newsletter and Website

It was noted that a Newsflash would be sent out to inform residents of the meeting on 14 July 2011.

The Secretary confirmed that the winner of the Photo Competition had been chosen and that full details, including the winning photograph and the judge's critique, were now available on the Competition page of the website. In addition, all the entries had been included on the Gallery page. She encouraged all WCC members to access the website at regular intervals and review its content. Any additional material or amendments would be welcomed.

(c) Woodford War Memorial Community Centre

The Chairman reported that running of the Centre was going well. The Church Fete, which had been held there on 2 July 2011, had been very successful and the Woodford Players, who had celebrated their diamond jubilee this year, had won a number of awards for productions held at the Centre.

(d) Stockport Council Issues

Cllr Leck had no specific issues to raise.

Attention was drawn to the SMBC Notice board outside the Community Centre. This had been in a poor state of repair for some time, but had now had collapsed. Cllr Leck agreed to bring this to the attention of the appropriate Council department.

ATTENTION: Cllr Leck

(e) Neighbourhood Watch

There was nothing specific to report. Cllr Leck mentioned that the local councillors had regular meetings with the police and that householders were, as always, advised to ensure that doors and windows were kept locked, particularly during the summer months when there was more chance of leaving them open inadvertently. Thefts of manhole covers were still causing problems though the Borough.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Monday, 3 October 2011, starting at 7.30 pm.

Approved

Date.....

APPENDIX A

Report on the BAE Design Workshop – 13th to 18th June 2011

Some 38 people attended the first day but not all came to each of the remaining sessions. About 30 stayed through the five sessions. They included local councillors from both Stockport and the adjoining NE Cheshire parishes, local residents, a very significant local land owner (Michael Kingsley), some developers (?), representatives from Stockport and E Cheshire NHS trusts, the Headmistress of Poynton High School and two representatives from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), a Government quango. WCC was represented by Robin Berriman and myself, with Bryan Leck there in his role as Councillor. Ken Coxey, former WCC Chairman, also attended.

The lead facilitator was Stephen Gleave with other staff from Taylor Young who led the group through a series of exercises to tease out relevant aspects of the design options. I confess to entering the process in a sceptical frame of mind, believing that we were likely to be led down a garden path (or perhaps a runway) to an inevitable conclusion that was BAE's or SMBC's preferred option. Having tested this out on a number of occasions I abandoned conspiracy theory and concluded it was a relatively free flowing exploration of options.

The overall proceedings are well described in the blog set up by TY:
<http://woodfordaerodromedesignworkshop.wordpress.com/> but in brief consisted of:

Day 1 Exploration of expectations and concerns, coach tour of site, feedback, then a presentation from Richard Cass on the exhibition and way forward.

Day 2 A design exercise sorting a series of images into what would be suitable and what would be unsuitable for the site. There was pretty good agreement between the two teams over what was good for Woodford. Following a presentation on sustainability in relation to development there were separate table discussions covering "Character and Identity", "Movement and linkages", "Landscape and green infrastructure" and "Uses and activity".

Day 3 Some frustration had set in about what we were doing or achieving and so the objectives were reviewed – it was about defining options and general principles rather than a masterplan. The issue of MEDS was discussed and there was general agreement that the design should be about the site as a whole rather than being constrained by MEDS in their current places. Although it was accepted that in planning terms SMBC were at least a year ahead of E Cheshire, this was not significant in terms of the development time for the site. There followed, at first sight, a rather strange presentation on the "Magic and mystery of place making". It was basically about how important it was to make a design 'work' within its environment. This was probably somewhat out of place since this will be very much the responsibility of the final developers rather than the SPD. It did however bring to the fore the importance of developing and maintaining sight lines to natural features surrounding the site such as Lyme Park, White Nancy, the Edge etc, as well as perhaps the reverse views.

We then had the opportunity of designing our own individual site concepts. There was some commonality of ideas, probably from local residents. I suspect the more radical proposals came from non-locals such as the HCA representatives. The concept of splitting MEDS B between A and Poynton was common, as was the use of the runway as a road with relief links to Adlington and Chester Road. Finally there was an expert panel giving presentations on a wide range of topics, as well as some hard information in written form, which went into the four 'Resource Boxes', one on each table. This was useful in showing what information was NOT available as well as what was. The most controversial aspect were statements on 'affordable housing' from Stockport Planning. This was later 'clarified' by Paul Lawrence.

Day 4 There was an opportunity to review available information as well as what was missing or conflicting. These were logged for feedback to the Authorities. Following a discussion, participants were able to select the group they wished to join out of four options:

1. Those who only wanted to develop within the existing MEDS (major existing development site) – 1 person
2. Those who only wanted to develop the same amount of land defined by the MEDS but consider other locations in the Stockport Council area only – 3 persons
3. Those who only wanted to develop the same amount of land defined by the MEDS but consider other locations across the site (including Cheshire East) – 12 persons
4. Those who wanted to be free thinking and develop the whole site without the MEDS constraints – 2 persons

Note: I may be slightly out on the numbers on each table but Option 3 was overwhelmingly the most popular.

Key themes were:

- Desire to protect green space and make use of views and vistas;
- Ensure good connections with links to Poynton and/or Adlington in three out of four groups;
- Mixed uses: employment and housing;
- Sustainable development;
- Bridle, cycle and footpaths across and around site;
- Development of a 'Woodford centre' with a tendency towards middle to higher value housing, possibly with a 'retirement village'.

Day 5 was the wrap-up, starting with a review of Day 4's designs where pairs posted strengths and weaknesses on post-it notes for each design.

In the concluding discussion the participants agreed the exercise had been worthwhile and that the group should be reconvened at key moments in the future. Affordable housing policy on the site needs to be resolved.

Afterthoughts It was a significant commitment of time, hence the preponderance of retired persons or those with potential business interests in the developments. The Taylor Young team, particularly Stephen Gleave, did a very good job in maintaining a flow and structure to the process, giving plenty of opportunity for issues and ideas to be expressed whilst controlling dominance on any single issue.

I went through various stages of scepticism, frustration and enthusiasm but finally believed it was worth attending. One could perhaps argue some details of the process, particularly the information available, which there was not time to examine closely. I tried to request a 'Resource Box' for WCC but the four were allocated to SMBC, Cheshire East, BAE/Cass and Taylor Young. However, I was told that all the information would be made available on a website sometime shortly.

Finally some thoughts for WCC on this topic:

- It is a very long-term project - 5 to 30 years;
- This phase is only background for the SPD and hopefully BAE/Cass in selecting/advising potential developers;
- SMBC's feedback on the process will be instructive on how they view the results;
- WCC should be involved in future phases;
- Whatever future path is taken the first and biggest impact on Woodford is likely to be site preparation particularly if a significant amount of runway/hard standing has to be removed. WCC should be prepared to negotiate with SMBC particularly regarding positioning and operating hours of crushers (eg in a Site B hanger away from houses); access routes for materials entering and leaving the site etc.

David Buszard

7th July 2011