

West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum

Meeting held on 22 October 2014 8 p.m. at Church of the Good Shepherd, Pyrford

Present The members present then introduced themselves : Penny Hoskyn, Pauline Hedges (Joint Chairs), Emma Davis, David Hastie, Bob Tilley, Angela Williams, David Hope, Graham Philips, Richard Thomas, Wade Pollards, Sandy Hurlle, David Fisher, Ross Goodman, Nora Goodman, Rob_Mchattie_Graham March. Eileen Perryer (acting secretary)

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising There were none.

2. Planning Groups Reports

Leaders of three of the groups which have so far been formed presented their reports:

i. **Built Environment**

Wade has been mapping the whole area with the number of dwellings and the area they enclose. He has also mapped the green spaces. He plans to compare this with the NFs in Byfleet and Pyrford. Penny, Pauline, Ross and Wade have met with Tom Hickman, the land owner of the whole of West Hall estate. The Hall itself, with some outbuildings, were sold to Mouchel and partners (Civil Engineers) in the 60s when permission was given for some additional building. This area has recently been sold to Anchor Homes and is no longer part of the Green Belt. A large area remains. Wade have also met with SW Trains to look at the area round the station. Some of the land is contaminated. Wade is pleased that they are prepared to allow us to put up small posters on or near the lifts.

Another area with potential is Broadoaks, originally owned by the M.o. D. Planning permission was given for office accommodation. Unfortunately the developers went bankrupt in 2008, only one building was completed, and the administrators are anxious for some development. A recent proposal for a Free School was refused by the Min. of Education. It is believed other owners have entered the picture but this is difficult to ascertain. There is a restored listed building on this site.

ii. **Open Spaces**

Ross Goodwin has been in touch with his opposite numbers in Byfleet and Pyrford. He has contacted Terry de Souza from Ernest Amoako's office, and has also received help from Gary Elson. Penny pointed out that a large swathe of land in West Byfleet is owned by Byfleet United Charities. This includes the recreation ground, the school sites and Stoop Court right up to Dartnell Park; and also the industrial site on the north side of the railway.

There is extreme confusion over the question of building on Green Belt land. Eric Pickles now says there must be a really solid case for using it. He is also changing his mind on proposals to convert offices into dwellings. WBC have commissioned a report on the viability of Green Belt land in the Borough. At a recent meeting held in WBC offices for NFs and potential NFs, Ernest said WBC was looking at only 1.1% of this Green Belt land in Woking – unfortunately most of this is in the East of the Borough. The Pyrford and West Byfleet Forums are hoping to hold a joint Public Meeting in November/ December to discuss the situation.

Penny and Richard said WBC do need to identify sites for up to 292 houses /year – NFs can make other proposals but cannot reduce the final total.

iii. **Commercial Sector.**

Pauline/Roland Nevett heads up this group. They have completed a questionnaire for all commercial users – this includes the offices above the shops and businesses run from home. It is hoped to hand-deliver these. Responses can either be returned physically or on line and the responses will be collated using? Survey Monkey.[been looked into]

Pauline has looked at the shopping centre in Knaphill. The shops have a more varied range but it is smaller. WBC have always said they want to see West Byfleet as a business centre, with offices as well as shops, second to Woking Centre. It was remarked that, with the very high prices for housing and offices in Central London, businesses may well move out to West Byfleet, providing jobs and giving WBC increased income. The last 250 workers left Sheer House a week ago – this will reflect on the income to the shops and restaurants.

Pauline has visited the Woking News and Mail offices – they have invited her to write a weekly column from the 3 villages – please send her the news!!

3. The Other Planning Groups

Two other Planning Groups are needed - **Community** and **Infrastructure**. Penny asked for more volunteers to start work, in particular offers to head up the groups.

iv. **Community**

We need a survey on residents views – what they like, dislike and what they would like in the future. Penny has contact with a group of working young mothers who are keen to become involved. We should remember that West Byfleet has no community hall or centre; a problem which has arisen when we have tried to find a suitable meeting place for a forum meeting.

v. **Infrastructure**

This includes roads, pavements, potholes etc.

David Hastie offered to look at traffic flow. Can we do anything to reduce traffic through West Byfleet using the A245. David said he had been involved in a study of the traffic on the A320 and A245 – it was agreed in 2002 that the flow was 3 times what the roads could accommodate but very little seems to have been done since and the traffic has gone up. He has been trying to get answers from County Hall about current traffic flow without success so far.

4. Questionnaire

It is proposed to produce a questionnaire to be delivered to each home. Each of our 5 groups will be included. Every voter in a household is entitled to complete the form. **Will each group bring their part of the questionnaire to a meeting on 10 November at Waitrose.** Delivery will be in the week starting 17 November. Byfleet had over 1,500 replies to their questionnaire, 500 completed on line. Graham Philips offered to deliver to the area north of the railway. Leaflets will be in the Library Community corner and on the web site. WBBA will also be involved.

5. Updates

Penny said we have spent all the money donated by the Residents Association – hire of the Hall this evening has just been covered. Luckily the money promised to NFs for the starting costs, up to £7000, has at last been delivered. For West Byfleet NF this was £1560. In theory this should be spent by 31 December but all three forums are appealing for the grants to be available for another 6 months. However we can now pay for the questionnaire.

Penny and Wade went to a meeting with Ernest Amoako at the WBC offices to discuss progress on the formation of Neighbourhood Forums across the Borough. There was a lively discussion but the impression gained was that apart from Hook Heath, which is firmly established, and the 3 NFs from Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford, there is little enthusiasm among other Residents groups.

Another meeting has been called by Woking's chief Planning Officer, Jeni Jackson, but the agenda is confusing. Penny is trying to clarify what the meeting is for.

6. Any Other Business

There was no further business. Penny thanked those who had come along to this meeting.

Next committee meeting is on 10 November at 7.30 p.m. at Waitrose

AGM