

Joint chair report West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum AGM 20th November 2015  
Held at the Cornerstone Hall West Byfleet

Apologies for absence:- Cllr Richard Wilson. Cllr Gary Elson. Committee member David Hastie

Joint Chair Report.

The main objective of the Forum is to produce our Neighbourhood Plan, which covers planning issues. Any policies or projects which are included within our Plan must have the backing of the community; we started with a blank canvas presuming nothing. This is why over the past 18 months we have been sending out questionnaires to you all and also sought your views at drop in events, Christmas, autumn and summer fairs and other public meetings. In July we were joined for a time by our MP Jonathan Lord at our stand at the West Byfleet LI:VE event.

All this is to gain an insight and understand how our village works we have contacted and spoken with local community groups such as the guides and scouts, talked to the school heads, Doctors at the Health Centre, the directors of Byfleet United Charity, who own a great deal of land in our village. We have met with Chris Hollingshurst, vicar here at St Johns and Father Malacly, the priest at the Catholic Church. We have spoken to or had contact with the Golf Club, the National Trust, The Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents Association, the West Byfleet Business Association, our two adjoining forums of Pyrford and Byfleet....to name but a few organizations. Each Forum is appointed a contact with WBC Planning Department and our is the very helpful officer Terry De Sousa who along with Ernest Amoako have met members of the committee on many occasions and who have been very patient answering our numerous questions while we get to grips with understanding not only how our village works but areas of responsibility of WBC: sometimes enlightening the council as to what we have here in West Byfleet and at times persuading them to see our point of view, particularly over our green spaces.

We have met with Tom Hickman who's company West Hall Estates own the land that has been put forward for housing if it is released from the green belt. The meetings were very informal, Tom wishing to explain some of his proposals and explaining the topographic of his land. Notes of our last meeting with Tom may be found on our notice board, headed up West Hall. I would stress at no time did the Forum committee agree to any proposals put forward, it was for us a fact finding exercise.

As you will know Sheer House has now been sold to the development company Altitude Real Estate. Altitude have said in their publicity hand out they would like to consult with the community, and so we will be meeting up with them sometime early in the New Year taking along the many comments you have made about the present building and how you would like to see the area developed. They have informed us that they have employed Glen Howells architects and Grant Landscape to draw up plans which will take 2-3 years. I will leave it up to Roland Nevett who heads up our Commercial section to fill you in with more information.

I will just touch on Broadoaks in that the planning application is with Woking Council and the public consultation date is now extended to 26<sup>th</sup> November. From the Forum's research our residents for the most part would be happy with a mixed development; homes and a school is seen as that by WBC.

But we do have a large question mark over the traffic and safety issues along the Parvis Road.

Both the Sheer House and Broadoaks developments will generate CIL money, this is basically an Infrastructure levy paid by the developer. If we have our Plan in place the Forum would have a direct

say in how 25% of this CIL money could be spent on local community projects. If the Plan is not in place it is 15%.

So it has been a very busy year for the members of the Forum committee. we have been meeting on a monthly basis, first over the shop at Waitrose and now in the committee room at the Social Club. Over the last couple of months our five group leaders, who research into our Open Spaces, Built Environment, Infrastructure, Social and Community and the Commercial Sector have been meeting with Sally, our Plan editor, on a weekly basis and will continue while we set about completing all the paper work required to go into our Plan. At most of our committee meetings we have had either Councillor Richard Wilson with us or Councillor Gary Elson. Some time we have even been lucky enough to have had them both!

Funding of the Forum, while we are writing our Plan, is met by a government grant. Out of a possible grant of £8,000 we were allotted £5,500 which will take us up to the end of this month. We can apply again for the rest of the grant which will take up to the end of the March 2016. Then we will have to look again for funding from April and also funding in the long term if the Forum is to continue.

The grant covers such costs as web and email facilities, public liability insurance, hire of meeting rooms and printing costs but most of the grant goes to meet the fees of employing our planning consultant Nigel McGurk. I should just mention here that Nigel has also worked with the Pyrford and Hook Heath Forums.

Over June and July the Forum became involved with promoting and informing our residents about the Site Allocation Document

While the Residents Association funded the cost of hall hire and met our printing costs it was a group of four Forum members Gill Luff, Angela Williams, Stewart Dick lead by Andrew Leong Son who carried out a great deal of research which was presented at the public meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July. This meeting was arranged by the Forum with both Ernest Amoako and Terry De Sousa speaking. We are informed that the next round of consultation on the Green Belt Site Allocation will come out for public consultation in January next year. If we have your email address we will inform you as soon as we are told.

At our AGM last year we spoke of the many challenges we had faced setting up the Forum and this year different challenges have present themselves. The main challenge for us is that there are very few guide lines as to how to set up or run a Forum or what should not go into a Plan. There are suggestions from the government agency Locality but as each community is different they are only just that.. suggestions. For all the committee it's been a big learning curve.

When we set up the Forum we wanted and indeed needed to involve as many people in the community as was possible. We thank everyone who has taken the time and trouble to respond to our questionnaires. Our largest response, so far, was just under 400 replies to last November's questionnaire. The committee would like to thank Chris and John in Apples and Pears for their support and who are our village post box; Wendy Grimshaw and her helpful team at the library who have set up the community corner where all hard copies of our paper work may be found. To Waitrose who gave us a meeting room for free when we had no funds, and to Stella at the Social Club who makes us feel very welcome. The Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents for their continuing support

To our printers Inprint on the Camphill Estate, who keep our cost as low as possible and meet our very tight deadlines, to Curchods and Waterfalls Estate Agents who have each provided some funding for our leaflets, to Wine Reach for tonight's wine, thank you to Mark and Allen Fuller of Fullworks' who sort out any problems with our webpage and emails. And a very big thank you to our

team of 25 residents who deliver our leaflets, many of whom I know took to the streets, in the rain on Saturday. We have over the last 18 months delivered 4 leaflets to each household in our area. You are an important link between the committee and our residents.

But last but by no means least Pauline and I would like to give a huge Thank you to your Forum Committee for their continuing support, their investigation prowess and their many other skills that have been put to good use to get us thus far..... and quite frankly for just sticking with it!

That is the end of our report.

Thank you.

Penny Hoskyn Pauline Hedges  
Joint Chair WBNF