

West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum
Annual General Meeting
Held at Cornerstones, St Johns Church
On Friday 28th October 2016 at 7.30pm.

1. **PRESENT** – Members of the West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum and Residents of West Byfleet, and other members of the Public.
2. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr. Richard Wilson, Cllr Graham Christie, Cllr Amanda Boote, David Fisher, Roland Nevett, Keith Cresswell and Lisa Craae
3. **Minutes of the AGM held in 2015** – These were accepted and no amendments were made.
4. **Chairs Report on last year** – Penny Hoskyn
Good evening everyone, good to see you all here.

The fifteen committee members of the Forum have had a very busy and interesting year.

After holding a variety of resident consultations sessions the committee felt they had gathered enough evidence to start to write the Plan.

In September 2015 we asked our Planning Consultant, Nigel McGurk if he would hold a short work shop to explain the best way to set about writing this document. This was a very informative and helpful meeting and enable us to us move forward. We have continued to work with Nigel, he is one of the county's top Neighbourhood Planning Consultants has also given assistance to Pyrford and Hook Heath Forums.

An editorial team was set up comprising of the five group leaders from the main Forum committee and our editor; with the rest of the committee members contributing their skills as required.

Alongside the Plan document we also have to provide a Basic Conditions Statement, which has been written and researched by Stewart Dick and also Consultation Statement.

So besides our monthly main committee meeting we have held over 20 editorial meetings, under the guidance of our Plan editor and project leader Sally Cantello. Sally has had to mange incorporating all our findings and different styles of writing into one, interesting, very technical and readable document. This has been a mammoth job and has entailed many hours of work by the committee members and particularly by Sally. I know I can speak on behalf of the committee in thanking Sally for all her hard work, patience and editorial skills and in Nigel's word she has produced an '*immaculately presented Neighbourhood Plan*'. Although I should add there is still much work to be done on the document.

Over a six week period in June/ July the draft Plan was put out for public consultation. A leaflet was produced explaining where and how the draft Plan could be viewed also detailing times and places residents could meet the committee. The leaflets with a comments form were delivered by our team of volunteers to every household and business within our Area. Over 41 hours was made available for residents to meet with a Forum committee members either at a fete, flower show, outside the school, Waitrose and on Referendum day.

The Plan was also sent to local stake holders such as Byfleet United Charity, Surrey County Council, Woking Borough Council, National Trust, Historic England, Altitude, West Hall Estates the Environment Agency, to name but a few.

Sixteen residents returned written comments along with many comments from the Stake holders.

Later Sally will update you on the development of the draft Plan.

But West Byfleet, and dare I say like many other things at the moment, is facing many changes and challenges.

In the course of setting up the Forum three large planning proposals were put forward all of which if they go ahead will have an enormous effect on West Byfleet, the Forum committee as well as writing the Plan, have become involved with these local planning matters and this has certainly added to the Forums work load.

We have met the Chairman of Octagon, David James, the developers of Broadoaks. A plan with details of what is proposed for the Broadoaks site is on view here tonight.

Updated to date statement From David James:-

As you may be aware, the second Planning Application was submitted and registered in September to complete the Broadoaks Master Plan. The Application submitted last year and approved in April 2016 excluded the southeast corner of the site and was also partly in outline and partly in detail. The new Application follows the Master Plan as seen at the Public Exhibition but now comprises the last 40 houses in the SE corner and is a detailed Application for the whole of the site.

We are hopeful that it will go before the Planning Committee at the meeting on 7th December 2016 and if approved will, subject to us signing the Section 106 Agreement, mean that we can start work on site with the main building work early in the New Year. The exact timing is all down to the discharge of pre-commencement Planning Conditions and how quickly these can be processed by the Council as we make our submission.

We anticipate that marketing of the first phase will appear on the Octagon website in the spring although it will be 2018 before occupations can occur.

United Learning proposed a mix private secondary school for 800 young people between the ages of 11 - 18 on 10 acres at Broadoaks site. The school is seeking more recreational space. At their request a meeting was arranged by the Forum, with interested other parties to look at possible way of perhaps improving sports facilities on the recreation ground which could then be used by the school and the community. We have received many comments regarding the recreation ground, with request for improved facilities. In our draft Plan we propose a concept Plan for this area as there

are many calls for use of this land and it's important to make sure what is proposed is best for the community.

Update from Graham Harvey Brown, Estates director:-

We are waiting for Octagon to complete the planning application process and the associated S106 issues which are a problem from our side. If all goes well and our Trustees approve our business plan, we anticipate entering into a legal agreement with Octagon in the first half of 2017. We see no point in making contact with WBC on the recreation ground until we move forward. Timings around opening a school are still under discussion. Sorry to be a bit vague but there a lot of things to sort before we can put a firm plan in place.

We have also held meeting with Stephen Tillman a director of Altitude, I will leave Richard Thomas to update you on the current situation.

Update from Stephen Tillman from Altitude

[By way of update we are in the final throws of progressing the planning application. This has involved a lot of work pulling the detailed environmental assessment together.

We were hopeful that we might be able to submit the application this month but I suspect it is now looking more like November.

Following our last meeting we have developed a new illustrative scheme that has removed the marker building as requested by your committee and looked to spread this across two buildings around the square.

In terms of further meeting with your Forum I am more than happy to arrange for another visit once the application has gone in]

We now move onto financial matters, our treasure Nasrin has provided an end of year report. As you will see most of the Forum's government funding is spent on our Planning Consultant fees

Once the Plan is in place our government funding will cease so costs for websites, public liability insurance, meeting rooms hire etc will have to be met elsewhere if the Forum is to continue.

We would like to thank our past Councillors Richard Wilson and Gary Elson who have both given a great deal of support, encouragement and time to the Forum Committee as well staff at Woking Council Planning Department, particularly our main contact Terry De Sousa .As you know Richard Wilson is still our as County Councillor.

Since May we have six Bough Councillors looking after West Byfleet interests, we are pleased to welcome here tonight John Bond for the Byfleet and West Byfleet ward.

Thanks must also go to residents and local business who have given the West Byfleet Forum their continuing support particularly the staff at the Library, John and Chris at Apples and Pears and our team of residents who come rain or shine taken on the task of delivering leaflets around our area.

When Phil Wilson, Carole March, Eileen Perryer and myself, as committee members of the RA, looked into setting up the Forum way back in July 2013 we knew we were totally dependent on resident volunteers coming forward to become part of this new venture.

Without those volunteers nothing would have happened.

So speaking personally I would like to sincerely thank each member of the committee for the many hours of work you have put into making sure the Forum objectives are achieved [although we still have a more to do] and for your support. Each member of the committee has taken on a role and hence we have worked together as a team, everyone contributing their own particular skills. At times it has been very challenging, we have not always agreed, but it's fair to say a very big learning curve for us all.

David Fisher who is resigning tonight has done a wonderful job in setting up and leading the Social and Community group. We thank him for his support; we will miss his wonderful memory for details and looking up interesting facts.

We also thank Nasrin who is resigning tonight as our treasurer. Not an easy task getting money out of the Government, one document was 35 pages long. But she has managed to keep us in funds. We thank you for all your support Nasrin. Finally we thank John Banks who joined us for a short while to assist with publicity but is now moving from the area.

In our Constitution officers cannot be in place for more than three years, Pauline Hedges resigned as joint chair in July, as she is in the process of moving away from the area. We thank Pauline for her support but we must add she will still be leading West Byfleet Live next year when West Byfleet celebrate a 100 years as a Parish.

I am now also resigning tonight.

It has been a very interesting three years; I have met lots of fascinating people and have certainly learnt a great deal about planning and about West Byfleet.

We are delighted that Wade Pollard has come forward to take on the role of chairman of the West Byfleet Forum.

Wade has been a committee member since the start of the Forum and is a lifelong resident of West Byfleet. I hope you will all give him your full support.

I wish you Wade, all the very best for the future.

5 Re-election of Committee Members

The members for re-election were read out to the hall and it was proposed and seconded to re-elect them. 2 new members joined from the floor with one, Dharma Svarajasingham, becoming Secretary of the forum and Chris Dougherty moving to become Treasurer. The other new member of the committee is David John Askew.

Election of the new Chairman, Wade Pollard, this was proposed by Nasrin and seconded by John Bond.

6 New Forum Chair – Wade Pollard

Thank you for electing me Chairman. I intend to do my best on your behalf. I have a hard act to follow. Penny has been a great Chairman. She has been the driving force behind the campaign to found the Forum and then to progress the Plan.

This has involved many hours of work not just chairing meetings but writing reports, liaising with residents, businesses, council officers, landowners and others. Many of you will also have seen her manning our stands seeking your opinions.

I am delighted that she has agreed to stay on the Committee to help us complete the Plan. On behalf of the past and present members of the Committee I would like to thank Penny for all she has done and present her with these presents as tokens of our appreciation. Also to give these presents to Sally who, as you have heard, has worked hard as Plan Editor to pull together the enormous volume of information we have collected into a document praised for its quality by our consultant.

2017 will be an important year for the Forum and West Byfleet. We have to finish the Plan and get it made. You have heard from Sally how that is progressing. We also expect a planning application for the Sheer House Complex. We hope the developer has taken your views into account. We will arrange for the developer to explain the application to you.

In the meantime I would like to thank you all for coming and for your interest in the future of West Byfleet. We look forward to celebrating with you when the Plan is made, hopefully by mid 2017. Good night."

7 Sally Cantello – update on Neighbourhood Plan for AGM 28.10.16

- At AGM last year – we tested the Plan's Vision and objectives and the initial draft policies

This is to brief you on what's happened since then:

- January 2016 - Draft Plan to WBNF's planning consultant for comment
- Feb 2016 - Draft Plan to WBC for informal comment
- March-June - Development of draft for consultation:
 - With residents
 - With WBC, SCC
 - With statutory bodies eg Environment Agency, Thames Water
 - Other stakeholders
- August – We reviewed the results from the consultation – overall positive
 - September – rewrite of the plan taking into consideration the views of the stakeholders.
- October – Health check with consultant and feedback. Minor redraft of some policies.
- November 2016 – to WBC for full consultation.

Progress may seem slow, but that's for the following reasons:

- 1 WBNF is in the forefront of this; neighbourhood planning is still new; no templates; we are feeling our way

- 2 Consultation is key – we have to do it and do it comprehensively
- 3 The policies have to be specific to our area – not off the shelf; we can't just lift them from other plans
- 4 They need to stand up to considerable scrutiny from stakeholders (most of whom are more used to planning issues than we are)
- 5 Our policies are not allowed to duplicate planning policies and guidance already there nationally and locally. This leads to a bit of a tussle! e.g on A245 traffic, green belt protection which we know are important to residents. We are taking advice about continuing to include certain policies which may be seen to duplicate national policy.

Next step – further consultation with WBC – leading to examination.

Post examination – redraft or goes to referendum

11 **Sheer House Complex;**

Besides sitting on the Forum committee Richard is also deputy chairman of the RA

Richard Thomas spoke about the likelihood of a planning application in the near future. A public meeting will be arranged following this, probably early in the New Year.

12 **Councillor Graham Christie;** in his absence, the Forum Chairman read out a report written by Councillor Christie updating members on planning matters in West Byfleet and in the Borough.

13. **Councillor John Bond;** spoke about the number of homes being built in the Borough and how numbers seem to be at least in line with current requirements. *He also* would like to congratulate West Byfleet Forum Committee and others for the enormous amount of hard work they have put into producing their Neighbourhood Plan –

He reported also

We are here tonight because of the Neighbourhood Plan for West Byfleet – so I thought it appropriate to remind myself of Woking Council's Core Plan for the village – the main statements are:

- West Byfleet is a District Centre – second only to Woking Town Centre
- Developments to 2027 are:
- 170 houses (other local centres are allocated 250 dwellings)
- Up to 13,000 sq.m of extra retail floor space (ie 4 times Waitrose?)
- 1,000 to 1,500 sq.m of extra office floor space

What are the proposals now and how do they match the Core Strategy?

- Broadoaks – 150 dwellings and a school
- Camphill Club - 28
- Car park - 12
- West Hall – 600 dwellings
- Station Approach (Sheer House) – 91 dwellings
- No increase in retail floor space
- No plans yet for more office floor space

There are a number of points which I could raise here, but feel it is important to concentrate on the Green Belt.

The Green Belt

By far the biggest element here is the loss of Green Belt land at West Hall – and we now have information which was not available when the Core Strategy was agreed.

- Forecasts in 2011/12 showed enough urban sites for Woking's housing requirements in the next 10 years.
- But these forecasts anticipated a 550 deficit when trying to find urban sites for 11-15 years ahead - up to 2027
- This justified the release of Green Belt land - to cover this deficit.
 - But the new 10 year forecast – provided last week - now shows a 344 surplus when looking forward to 2027
- So the original forecast was pessimistic by some 900 dwellings
- But this forecast was the sole basis for releasing Green Belt land
- How can you base vital decisions – such as the loss of the GB – on a forecast of events over 11 years ahead?
- could we forecast BREXIT 5 or 10 years ago
- could we anticipate that Donald Trump might be president of the United States 10 years ago
- could we even guess that Woking Council would have 3 Independent Cllrs
- The Green Belt is a very important and valuable asset for Woking Borough and local residents

- I have informed all councillors of the new forecasts and the consequences
- Clearly no councillor would want to release Green Belt land
- There will be another consultation shortly – I hope all residents and all councillors will now say NO - loudly
- Please note that I have also discovered that the profits from Green Belt land are over £6M per hectare
- govt figures show a value of £22,000 per hectare for Green Belt land
- but £6,500,000 per hectare for land in Woking with planning permission for housing
- no wonder developers are so keen to get Woking's officers and councillors to release Green Belt land
- but this profit has to come from somewhere – and local residents will contribute most of the profit
- the loss of a valuable amenity and on the value of their property
- a loss to trees and fields which could help us in the increasing problems from flooding due to climate change
- I also advised other Councillors of the govt's land valuations last week
- Please email me if you'd like a copy of the details I sent to Councillors last weekend.

- my contact details on the local notice board and I have hand-outs
Stop Press

Before I came out this evening I was told that Guildford Council announced today they are putting back their local plan and having a fresh consultation.

Their previous consultation showed "widespread opposition to building on the green belt".

They are therefore revisiting their housing plans to ensure that the plan is "robust, up-to-date and accurate"

The Council Leader said: "We have listened to feedback from residents."

The new consultation on Woking's Green Belt starts soon – be ready. I hope the Residents Association will again play a part in informing all local villagers in Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford of the issues and the alternatives.

14 . **Any other Business**
There was no further business.

15. **Date of Next AGM Meeting**
This will be announced