



Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee Meeting Wednesday 18 November 7.45 20 Home Close

Present: Christopher Hardman (Chairman) John Bleach, Mary Brown, Cllr Jean Fooks, Graham Jones, Richard Lawrence-Wilson (Treasurer), Cllr Steve Goddard, Angela Goff, David Stone, Linda Johnson-Bell.

Minutes: Corrections to the minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 29 September.

4. “Thanks” changed to “*thanked*”. 5. Final draft “of our response” inserted in first line. Re: Health Centre. It should read “*retaining current satellite surgery*” and delete “*on the Mill Site*”. In sentence beginning “Whatever workshop facilities...”, the phrase “*i.e. four units*” should be removed.
1. **Matter Arising not elsewhere on the agenda.** The Minutes of the AGM to be taken away and studied for future comment and they are then to be put on the website and also emailed to persons on the mailing list with an appeal for funding and voluntary helpers who can give their time. Nicola Blackwood MP has requested a copy of the minutes. JB requested that the AGM minutes be broken up into more readable paragraphs.
 2. **Meeting with Savills re: Northern Gateway.** There is a meeting with Savills, who are acting for St John’s, on Monday 23rd November. It is recognised that the site is “challenging”. This is to be a preliminary meeting. Savills had two people at our AGM. Pollution levels remain the main concern with the Northern Gateway as the levels will only grow unless traffic is moved away and no one should have to live or work within such high levels. GJ suggested that there might be a “land swap” as TRAX are looking for a new base, and if they could be accommodated at the roundabout end, employment could be moved further north. TRAX would generate only around 10 vehicles per day, whereas housing would produce many more vehicles. Merton, on whose land TRAX is currently, did not go in with St John’s on the Northern Gateway Plan. JF said there was to be a new “Master Plan”, which is presumably what they would tell us about at the meeting. There was much discussion about what we should ask to be put into the Plan. The Forum’s position at the Inquiry must be reiterated and priorities need to be determined. The ideal scenario for the Northern Gateway was to have nothing built there, at least until the problems of traffic and air quality are solved, but this was obviously lost at the Inquiry. JF said that the University want to house post-graduates somewhere, but more affordable housing for key workers is what is needed. GJ said that everyone is a key worker and more housing is needed for *all* low paid workers.
 3. **The Paper Mill site.** JF said that the Mill Site planning application is due to be discussed at the West Oxford Planning Committee on December 1st. Once planning permission is granted

the site will be sold. The access to the site limits the number of houses that can be built there. According to the Highway Authority the Godstow Road can absorb the extra traffic generated, though this is doubted by local residents. The bridge is strong enough as long as it is kept one way at a time with the traffic lights. JB said that Oxford Co-Housing was still very interested in the site. They had lost the site at Stansfeld in Headington where they had raised the funds to buy it but had been outbid by Science Oxford. They might be able to raise the money to buy the whole of the Mill site in conjunction with community partners. JB suggested it would be worthwhile to talk to them and there were several questions to be asked. If Oxford Co-Housing wanted to make a statement on the Mill site we could perhaps contribute to it. It was felt that it would help them if there were community engagement.

4. **Brookes Student Projects.** CH is to keep in touch with Sue Brownill and discuss with the students what we need and seek to avoid duplication in their projects. AG said it would be useful to get Cherwell's 14–18 year olds involved, as it was their future. JF said students were possibly interested in the environment but not in planning. She said it might be possible to get 18–19+ year olds at the Young People's Club interested. CH said we should suggest to Brookes' students that they might get through to them as they are nearer in age, since we need to demonstrate that all age groups have been consulted. LJ-B said that St Edward's and Summerfield have ecology, environment and bio-diversity on their curriculum. JB asked when was the last time we had heard from Brookes, or were they waiting on hearing from us? SB had said we could get in touch with individual groups at any time but currently the only way of doing so was through her.

5. **Meetings with Council Officials.** Report of Meeting by MB and AG with Council officials on 26th October 2015.

We met with Sarah Harrison and Tom Morris at our request, to discuss aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan concerning Green spaces and Bio-diversity. We were provided with helpful maps, one concerning the whole of Oxford Local Plan showing areas of

- natural environment*
- sport, outdoor rec and community facilities*
- historic environment*
- retail and commercial leisure*
- general*

And other, smaller maps showing SSSI area, and another showing areas covered by CS12 and NE20 (other nature conservation areas). We need to investigate further the land owned by OPT, since this does not appear to have a designation at the moment. Also, any allotments other than those on Wolvercote Common and at Cutteslowe are currently "not protected" according to Sarah.

We discussed the current requirement with developments of 20 or more dwellings to have a minimum of 10% public green space. For example, possibly more space could be allocated for new allotments on the Mill Site. We mentioned the protection of private gardens. Council policy on this is covered by their Sites and Housing policy. We mentioned grass verges, but these are the responsibility of the County Council, for cutting. Biodiversity is covered by CS12 and NE20 in the Local Plan, and we were told that surveys in certain areas had been done, and some of the reports have been lost. Sarah and Tom admitted that this whole subject

needed revisiting, but that there is no current timetable for this to be done. Generally, we felt it was a helpful meeting, and that we could ask for a further one if necessary. They offered to look at any draft if we thought that would be helpful.

The meeting had produced several useful maps and a copy of the Green Space Strategy had been requested from the council. The Oxford Preservation Trust had not yet responded to requests for information about allotments. Cutteslowe allotments are mostly disused and the council is considering turning it into a nature reserve. Only those on Wolvercote Common and Cutteslowe were currently protected spaces. The allotments opposite the Trout are owned by the OPT. The ones in Upper Wolvercote are not protected at all. There is a recommendation of 0.4 of an allotment per person in Oxford. The Local Plan can protect allotments but these need to be put into the Plan. The Council does not still have available all the local biodiversity reports. SG to ask questions at council meetings.

6. **Cutteslowe Park – Open Space designation.** CH asked if we might agree to make a joint application with Summertown to include both Sunnymede Park and Cutteslowe Park in an application for Open Space designation. The application has to be made through the Council and CH will contact Tom Morris.
7. **Report on the Questionnaire.** CH said there was one important thing that we need to know from the questionnaire – from which area did people come. DS has co-ordinated and interpreted the questionnaire responses by area. This all amounted to a lot of information. DS requested help with the practical task of assimilating data. Anne Charles was thought to be the best hope of being able to do this and once obtained, the summary of details is to be put on the website. It was pointed out that a public body needs to use reliable standards and methods of producing data while avoiding the problem of over-analysing. It was noted that the majority of responses said that some housing on new developments should be reserved for people working there.
8. **Engagement with all areas of the Ward.** It was asked if the Brookes students could be involved in this. JF pointed out that the information on the Templar Road notice board was out of date. She will put up new notices about the Forum and the AGM etc if she is given the information as she has access to this notice board. Information goes out quarterly in the Flying Goose. LJ-B is keen on using a Facebook page. Notices could go on notice boards urging people to go onto Facebook and asking residents to 'like' the page. JF said not everyone uses a computer or other device. Posters could go on notice boards as well as the website and a monthly newsletter was desirable. LJ-B offered to set up the Facebook page.
9. **Recruiting volunteers to assist with sections of the Plan.** There was difficulty in persuading people to help. It was suggested that we try getting parts of roads or areas to contribute, especially people who have lived in the area for a long time.
10. **Facebook and the website.** Already covered at 8.
11. **Funding and Project Management.** DS offered to try to find organisations who have the required skills and who can help with the Plan. CH said that Summertown had obtained some funding from Locality. WNF probably qualifies for financial assistance but more information

and help is needed. Headington pays for certain days and specific amounts for items and assistance. We need to know how much is needed because we have to say exactly how much we want from the funding source and how much time we want someone to work for us. A team is needed to work on this and CH asked if anyone present had the experience of applying for grants and funding. A total of £6-8,000 is available, of which a large amount probably remains as it is so difficult to obtain. CH will make a start on applications and then request further help. Funds are needed for literature, posters, printing, hiring venues for meetings or exhibitions, publicity, legal advisors for assistance with planning laws etc.

12. **The Plan – a new timetable.** The current aim is to be ready to hold the referendum at the same time as the local council elections in 2017. We have to have the plan ready for examination by an inspector before the referendum. This means that we have to concentrate on this as well as on responding to planning applications on the Mill site and the Northern Gateway.
13. **Any Other Business.**
 - Keith Dancey had written [to The Oxford Times] about the railway's plans for screening. Comments need to be in by 19th November. The barriers against sound are 2.5 metres high and wooden. They will be placed from Lakeside southwards. There is also the possibility of some planting somewhere along the edges and there is a need to keep on at the railway company.
 - It was said that the representative from Savills who was at the Northern Gateway exhibition at the Oxford Hotel had asked if we would like them to talk to the Forum. He had been in the public gallery to hear JF's opposition to the Northern Gateway when it was discussed at the planning inquiry. The Forum was recognised as the people to consult. JB suggested that the Wolvercote Commoners' Committee should also be working with the Forum and it was widely agreed that this should happen.
 - The payment from the University for the Godstow Abbey project has been received and this sum is ring-fenced for this project. It is hoped there would be an 'unveiling' in the spring. A sum of £151 had been collected in donations at the meeting in the Village Hall. There had been a gift of £530, for which thanks were recorded, towards the project and could potentially be used for another questionnaire. Cllr SG said that £500 from his Ward allowance will be paid in to the Forum's fund. RL-W said that traffic issues exercised his part of the ward and this is a county matter. JF agreed to send AG notice of the meeting on 3rd December with councillors and officers.
14. **The date of the next meeting** is Wednesday 9th December and will be held at 7 Godstow Road.

GJ gave his apologies in advance of this meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm