

Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee Minutes

Tuesday 21 January 2020, 7.30pm at the White Hart Community Pub, Godstow Road

Present: John Bleach (JB), Mary Brown (MB), Cllr Paul Buckley (PB), Christopher Hardman (CH) (Chairman), Richard Lawrence-Wilson (RLW), Cllr Liz Wade (LW)

Apologies: Tony Dale (TD), Cllr Steve Goddard, Katherine Kaye, Steve Roberts (SteveR), Simon Ryde (SimonR), David Stone (DS)

1. Previous minutes

Amendments to the minutes of the meeting held on December 6 had been circulated by email and were agreed. RLW to send final version to JB who would arrange for them to go on the WNF website.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes, not on the agenda: None were raised.

3. Preparation for the Referendum

The date for the referendum is confirmed as May 7 2020.

The draft flyer was well received and thanks are minuted to JB, Phil Dove and others. CH identified a lesson to be remembered, that small sub-groups focusing on specific tasks can work well. Minor changes were suggested. CH highlighted the focus of the flyer on the policies and broad purposes of the Plan, rather than on CIL money. He would cover CIL in his article in the March Flying Goose. JB will circulate a revised draft by email before the next meeting. *Action: JB*

Agreed to order 3,500 copies, printed and folded. 3,000 are for the Flying Goose and 500 to be available in local shops, pubs, the surgery and Summertown Library. CH said that he and sufficient others had volunteered to stuff the envelopes to go with the Flying Goose in March.

Other publicity: LW said she would look into running a stall at the White Hart Sunday market and in Kendall Crescent in the weeks leading up to 7th May. JB will work with Phil Dove on a striking, colourful laminated A4 poster, based on the flyer, to go on notice boards. *Action: JB*

Hard copies of the WN Plan will be provided by the City Council in a few official locations. WNF should provide/obtain a few to go in local pubs and shops; these will need to be kept behind the counters for temporary loan. All publicity produced by WNF must say prominently that the full Plan is on the website. The meeting considered the idea of balloons, suggested by DS. Although initially attracted, after discussion they felt balloons would be unacceptable on environmental grounds, a danger to wildlife even if biodegradable in the long term. MB agreed to look into procuring some banners. *Action: MB*

As actioned in December, LW had asked the City Council what publicity will be given, and when, to the ward boundary changes and how they will administer the referendum alongside local elections, as the two votes will involve different areas. She had received no answer and would chase. *Action: LW*

4. ONPA meeting: LW will circulate her note to all members of the committee. *Action: LW(done)*

5. CIL

In December LW had undertaken to find out what is the process of consultation for CIL spends in the ward. Her approaches to City Council officials had so far been unproductive. The December minutes of this Committee record that officers had said before a Plan was "made" just councillors would be consulted, and after the Plan is made the NF would be responsible for ward consultation. There had been no confirmation of this. LW said that (whether or not there is a Plan, or even a Forum) local Councillors are definitely supposed to be advised on the availability of CIL and consulted on how it is spent, but she stated emphatically that this had never yet happened in Wolvercote ward.

Feedback in the margins of the ONPA meeting was that Local Authorities did not appear to be clear about what should happen once referenda had been held. Apart from Cherwell District they were generally poor at communicating with Forums. Within Oxford City, it seemed that Headington and Summertown Forums are

developing their own procedures to identify and prioritise projects to be funded from CIL, and to carry out the public consultation required. Other organisations such as residents' associations do not appear to be involved in a formal way. However it is not clear that substantial project spend has yet gone ahead in either of those areas. Wolvercote may be a special and more sensitive case, with much more CIL money becoming available over an extended period, due to the Mill Site and Oxford North developments.

PB pointed out that the County Council had only agreed not to object to the Oxford North development on condition that Oxford City passes over £2.8 million of CIL money to pay for school places. Complex calculations are involved and we do not even know what base figure should be used when trying to work out the 25% of CIL that is to be controlled locally by the Forum.

Therefore there remain fundamental questions about how CIL works, and the role of the WNF in its deployment. LW, PB and other councillors have escalated the questions and will meet senior City Council officers on 12 February. They intend to submit questions in writing in advance and ask for written replies that will form the basis for an agenda and structured discussion at the meeting.

Action: LW and PB

6. CIL project list: JB had had no time to work on this.

Action deferred

7. Oxford North: CH had submitted new written representations on behalf of the NF, and PB and LW had spoken at the meeting of the Planning Committee on 16th December. The application was approved.

8. Wolvercote Mill development

Community building

CH summarised the expert opinion that SimonR had obtained from Richard Venables of VSL&Partners of Kidlington, Commercial Property Consultants, on what the space might be used for.

They felt that the space was not ideal for community use. The internal balcony would have to be enclosed. There appeared to be just 1 WC, which was insufficient for any use (this needs to be checked, because 2 WCs had been proposed). Commercial viability was marginal, it would be difficult to charge enough rent to cover maintenance costs. It was not suitable as a shop or cafe and too small for a nursery.

LW highlighted the 'healthy interest' in the various community premises, referred to in Nadia Robinson's report of 25.09.18, and will ask Vicky Roe about the basis for this statement and whether it has come to anything.

Action:LW

Surgery unit

MB had written to Savills to ask about letting of the new surgery space. They had not answered her questions directly but had said that there were discussions with the CCG. It was not clear if these were currently active. She had again met Dr Matthew Cheetham and Heidi Devenish from Summertown Surgery who were very surprised at what Savills had said. They consider the new space is fully adequate to replace the existing surgery. Demand at the surgery is substantial and increasing. The new premises would need fitting out, and LW said that she would ask if CIL money can be used for this.

Action:LW

7. Cherwell Local Plan. Responses had been submitted by LW, PB and CH.

8. Any other business

CH said that WNF had not heard until too late about the development at 327 Woodstock Road, and would certainly have objected. Those present felt that the WNF needs a planning sub-committee to ensure that important development proposals are not overlooked. LW undertook to email CH and JB each week with the more salient Wolvercote planning applications - pending the setting up of a sub-committee.

Action:LW

9. Date of next meeting

Friday 14 February.

Meeting closed at 10.00 pm.