



## **Annual Report 2025**

For the Annual General Meeting on 25 November, 2025

This report summarises activities of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum since the last AGM on 20 November, 2024, at Cutteslowe Community Centre.

### **1. The WNF Steering Committee**

Between public meetings, the work of the Forum is carried out by volunteers on the WNF Steering Committee. Following the 2024 AGM, WNF's officers and Steering Committee (SC) members were:

Chair – Paul Buckley; Vice-Chair – John Bleach; Treasurer – Richard Lawrence-Wilson; and committee members – Mary Brown, Tony Dale, Chris Dawkins, Louise Franklin, Katherine Kaye and David Stone; plus our City and County councillors (attending meetings as non-voting associate members) – Steve Goddard, Jo Sandelson, Andrew Gant and Laurence Fouweather.

Communication with the community is vital to the work of the Steering Committee. We are grateful to Louise Franklin for providing expertise in comms, and to former committee-member Steve Roberts for continuing to manage content of the Forum website:

[www.wolvercotenf.org.uk](http://www.wolvercotenf.org.uk).

Since the 2024 AGM, the Steering Committee has met eight times. We also hosted an Open Public Meeting on 3 June at Wolvercote Village Hall. That featured a presentation from Val Tate on the Wolvercote Young People's Club and their plans for the future, together with a review of new developments local to our neighbourhood by Katherine Kaye, and an explanation by Tony Dale of the 'CIL' funds that the Forum has access to, and how they had been spent on community projects recently. The meeting was well attended and provoked much discussion of these topics.

At the June meeting, John Bleach retired as Vice-Chair of the Forum, after many years service as one of the driving forces behind the founding of the Forum, its creation of a Neighbourhood Plan, and reaping its benefits for the community since then. He made an enormous contribution, and our community is greatly indebted to him.

Since the June meeting, we were delighted to welcome three more local residents onto the committee as co-opted members: Melat Ayele, Elaine Chaston and Judith Haverty.

### **2. Representing the community in responding to public consultations**

One of the benefits of having an approved Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan has been that the City Council pays some attention to our opinions on local developments. WNF continues to be recognised by the Council as a 'consultee' in relation to applications for planning permission in our area. We have therefore monitored all the applications that appeared in the past year, and responded to the Council's public consultations on them and other

matters, when we saw the need. In addition, the Steering Committee has responded to public consultations on developments next door to us: notably the stadium proposed by Oxford United Football Club for the 'Kidlington Gap'. In making these representations we have been guided by our understanding of views within the WNF community, as expressed for example in the agreed Neighbourhood Plan and at our public meetings. I am especially grateful to Mary Brown for her help in this work.

Since the last AGM we have engaged with 70 public consultations, and we responded to nine of them. Three of those concerned the stadium, where we were aware of a range of views within the community. Many local people have been opposed it for a wide variety of reasons, while supporters of OUFC have naturally been more enthusiastic. The Steering Committee has consistently opposed it, but mainly just for one reason: the damaging impact it is predicted to have, on match days, on our local roads such as the Banbury Rd, and on the functioning of Parkway Park&Ride and Parkway station. However, in August, the stadium finally received Planning Permission from Cherwell District Council, so these are problems that our community will have to cope with in a few years' time.

Two Oxford City Council consultations that we responded to related to two stages of its creation of the Oxford Local Plan 2042.

Details of all our responses can be found on the WNF website at [www.wolvercotenf.org.uk/wnf-committee-responses-to-planning-applications/](http://www.wolvercotenf.org.uk/wnf-committee-responses-to-planning-applications/).

### **3. Allocating CIL money for community infrastructure**

Thanks to our having in place an approved Neighbourhood Plan, WNF has access to a 25% share of the Community Infrastructure Levy collected from developers in our area, by the City Council. Since there has been a considerable amount of development here recently (especially Priory Grove and Oxford North), a relatively large amount of CIL money has built up. A big responsibility of the Steering Committee has therefore been managing carefully and fairly the spending of it, on behalf of the Forum. CIL is intended for improving community infrastructure, especially to accommodate the growth in size of the community, arising from new developments. It provides a precious one-off opportunity to enhance our local community facilities.

Many local community groups have been keen to grasp this opportunity, and we received 29 CIL applications in total, to the two spending rounds in Spring and Autumn of this year. To those projects, just over £300k has already been allocated, with more currently under consideration.

Every application was examined carefully, and often needed to be followed up in correspondence with applicants, when more clarity was needed. In addition, every application was made available for two weeks on the WNF website, to enable scrutiny from the wider Forum membership. Many comments were received, and these were taken into account when decisions on funding were made by the committee. Approved applications were then forwarded to the City Council for payment, with all the necessary paperwork. All this is now proving a considerable task for volunteers on the committee, and we are immensely grateful to our CIL team who have been leading this work during the past year: John Bleach, Tony Dale and Chris Dawkins and, more recently since John retired, Elaine Chaston.

Since we gained access to CIL money in 2021, all applications so far have been for sums of £50k or less. However, the pot of CIL currently available does open the possibility of funding a few more substantial infrastructure projects, to significantly increase, expand or improve local community facilities. Bigger projects require more scrutiny, and the committee is keen to engage with applicants at an early stage in the development of any large-scale applications for CIL.

Details of the CIL application process and of the eight CIL spending rounds, to date, are available on the WNF website at [www.wolvercotenf.org.uk/home-page/cil-projects/](http://www.wolvercotenf.org.uk/home-page/cil-projects/)

#### **4. Opinions please!**

Everything the Steering Committee does between our public meetings it does on behalf of the whole WNF membership – i.e. everyone who lives or works in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum area. Therefore, we are always keen to know the views of members, on planning of the WNF neighbourhood and on spending of CIL money. We encourage members to send us views on such matters at any time – the easy way is via email at [wolvercotenf@gmail.com](mailto:wolvercotenf@gmail.com) – and to have their say at our public meetings.

For the same reason, the committee is always keen to welcome new members, to contribute to our work for the WNF area community. Anyone interested is invited to contact us by email.

#### **5. 2025 Open Meeting and AGM**

More on the above topics will be provided by speakers at the Open Meeting and Annual General Meeting on 25 November 2025, where there will also be opportunity for questions and discussion.

Paul Buckley  
Chair, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum  
17 November, 2025