

MINUTES OF WALTHAMSTOW WEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL (WWCC)
MONDAY 28th JUNE 2006
STONEYDOWN SCHOOL, PRETORIA AVENUE, LONDON E17 6JY

PRESENT:

Community Chair:

Philip Herlihy

Councillor Chair

Johar Khan

Vice Chair:

K Bellamy

Councillor Vice Chair:

Councillor A Gladstone

Councillors:

Bob Belam
Robert Carey
John Macklin
James O'Rourke
Patrick Smith
Terry Wheeler (Cathall Ward)
Cllr N Qureshi (Leyton Ward)

Geraldine Reardon
Sean Meiszner
Bob Wheatley
Peter Woollcott
Liaquat Ali
Afzal Akram (Cabinet Champion)

Officers in Attendance:

Colin Moone
Brian Whiteley
Dr Judith Carlson
Bill Nisbet
Ben Manku
Jas Dhanjal
Tony Ferrari
Claire Witney
Penny Allier
Shirley Haynes
Anthony Lane

Head of Housing Services
Community Council Lead Officer
Regeneration Project Officer
Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
Environmental Services Senior Project Engineer
Project Development Team – Street Services
Waste Management
Community Councils Manager
Community Council Officer
Community Council Officer
Community Councils Committee Manager

Others in Attendance:

Matthew Nimmo
Sarah See
M Nuako
Inspector Jane Connors
Safer Neighbourhoods Ward Officers
M Killiner

RegenFirst Limited
Waltham Forest PCT
Ascham Homes
Metropolitan Police Service
Metropolitan Police Service
Guardian Newspaper

Residents Present:

There were approximately 73 residents present at the meeting.

PART ONE
COMMUNITY FORUM

Item

1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He invited newly elected Councillors for the local wards and the Cabinet Champion, Cllr Afzal Akram to briefly introduce themselves and introduced the new Councillor Chair, Cllr Khan.

The Chair stressed that attendees to the meeting should state what their reasons were for being in attendance if they were not resident in the wards and that focus should be placed on issues rather than individuals or groups. He also advised that only residents of the Wards covered by this Community Council were eligible to vote.

The Chair noted that a new Help Form was being used at the meeting, intended to make it easy for anyone to take part. Attendees could use the Form if they preferred not to speak themselves, have their question raised anonymously or required help with an issue after the day of the meeting.

He requested that all speakers show consideration by using the microphones at all times to aid those with disability who required the use of the hearing loop.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / MEETING CONDUCT - GUIDELINES

The Community Chair reminded residents of the guidelines that had been agreed at previous meetings.

There were no apologies for absence.

D Spiro wished to enthusiastically welcome the new Cabinet Champion, as there had been no such representative at many previous meetings.

P Herlihy concurred, adding that the new Champion, Cllr Akram, had an attendance record to date running at 100%.

4.0 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair with no amendments.

5.0 RESPONSE SHEETS

The Chair introduced Brian Whiteley, Community Council Lead Officer who presented the blue feedback report included in the Agenda to the meeting.

There being no further discussion the item was closed at this point.

6.0 TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

Councillor Terry Wheeler Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Enterprise and Investment gave a brief presentation on the possible future of the Walthamstow Town Centre area and then sought residents' views regarding the Town Centre redevelopments and vision.

Cllr Naheed Qureshi (junior cabinet member for enterprise & investment) was also in attendance for this item.

The main points raised by the meeting on this issue were taken during the Community Forum and discussion.

Item

7.0

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION / MATTERS ARISING

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The main points on this issue are summarised below:

K Lord was concerned about the arcade development and the general lack of progress with the Town Centre redevelopment. He stated that the community had been hearing the same thing since Community Councils started and he was of the opinion that the Council did not know what it was going to do with the site. He highlighted issues surrounding the fact that it has been a "wasteland" for 3 years, however, in an official report that went to Cabinet, the spend on the supposed redevelopment of the site was £406,334. He suspected that this money was being spent on consultants at £1000 per day and thought that this money could be better directed elsewhere. He wished to have further details of how this has been spent and justification for it.

Cllr Wheeler noted that the Arcade and the cinema should be looked at as two separate issues. This area was just one small, but significant, part of the overall picture of the redevelopment of the Town Centre. It was not his intention to debate particular issues at this meeting, more to examine the overall picture and get ideas. The situation with the negotiations with Henry Boot regarding possible developments on the site, he noted, was presently of a commercially sensitive nature and therefore he was unable to discuss anything at this stage for risk of expensive litigation.

K Lord was concerned that this valuable site would be sold off to a private company for less than its true value and that would be the last the community hears of it. He added that in entering negotiations with Henry Boot, the Council had waived correct tendering procedure and therefore would be unlikely to get the proper return on the site.

P Herlihy requested Cllr Wheeler return with a breakdown on expenditure to date for the site and other issues raised.

Cllr Wheeler agreed to present these details to the next meeting.

A **resident** asked who would be providing the 1200 houses indicated in the presentation.

Cllr Wheeler advised that he expected it would be a mix of tenures, balanced with a good proportion of social housing, however, as yet it was too early to speculate on the details.

A **resident** and member of the Cleveland Park Road Residents Association noted that consultation results had shown to date that the public were strongly in favour of the cinema at the EMD. In the meantime, the Council has pushed forward with plans for a multiplex on the Arcade site. She requested that the new Councillors take advantage of the new term, combine the EMD and the Arcade and put the cinema where the people want it. She requested that the decision be referred back to Cabinet or Scrutiny. She would rather have a slow process and the right outcome where the view of the people was honoured.

Cllr Wheeler again advised that he was unable to discuss specific issues at this meeting, owing to the sensitive nature of negotiations at present. He was also keen to see the best result for those already in the Borough and those who come in future years.

P Spiro noted that the Arcade was not a small part of the Town Centre regeneration plans as it represented the gateway to the centre of the borough. He noted that headlines had been effectively utilised before the election for campaigning purposes and suggested that some further efforts were required

**Cllr T
Wheeler**

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to make people aware that something is happening. Presently there was no information except rumour. On another issue, he asked for further information on the developments planned for Church Hill and also the St James St end of the High Rd. He noted in the presentation that Cllr Wheeler had highlighted that the latter had the best of the building stock, but added that shopkeepers were anxious down this end to learn of plans, as it had long been regarded as the "dead end" of the High Street.

Cllr Wheeler advised that Church Hill discussions were also constrained by issues of confidentiality. He noted that at the bottom of Church Hill was a "dull" 60's-era building that was subject to a proposal to demolish and replace, however, more than that he was not at liberty to say. He went on to say that St James Street did present a number of interesting opportunities. He was pleased to see that the area was doing well and a distinct character emerging, with new cafes, a Turkish supermarket and other small shops appearing. He was aware that the area still had to come to terms with co-existing with the street market. He noted that there was a potential for development of the old Sainsbury building and the huge area that is the Alpha Business Centre and South Grove Car Park, if Sainsbury were encouraged to relocate.

A **resident** was concerned that he had heard several times that matters of discussion were closed due to confidentiality. He asked whether it would be a matter of the decisions being made before consultation would begin with the public. He called this a "smokescreen" to keep information from the community. What was key to his point was that the consultation processes of Waltham Forest were widely considered to be the most closed off of any borough. The community wanted real consultation with their views heard. Henry Boot had been given a "free ride" without the necessary tendering. The Council had told him what allows them to do this and advised that they could sue if this was challenged. He felt also that Tower Mews had been "railroaded" through the process and he was willing to bet that this will be the precedent used for a high building at the Arcade site. He suggested that planners take a trip to St Albans or East Croydon where successful low-rise, mixed-use developments with a wide variety of shops could be witnessed. This was what the Town Centre needed in his view. He raised the issue of the kiosks, both of which seemed now not to be operating and he asked what was really being done to build up the social life in the Town Centre.

A **resident** agreed that the consultation process in the Borough was not working and was did not take the views of all stakeholders. The views of the community were most important. She was interested in a comfortable and secure life and currently she felt the area was "a mess". She asked also what arrangements were being made for parking at the cinema.

Cllr Wheeler said that he was aware of all of these issues surrounding consultation and sensed the frustration of the community, but again highlighted the need for confidentiality surrounding the developments. There were other things to talk about and he was seeking views tonight on those areas, though he was aware of the need to resolve these other pressing issues sooner rather than later. He recalled history, before the site was an arcade and it had similarly been derelict and abandoned until the right development came along, which at the time transformed it. He did note that there were car parks available in the Town Centre to service the cinema once it was in place and the centre was also very well served by public transport.

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A **resident** noted that many local residents who utilise the Sainsbury supermarket do not have cars and would be unhappy to see it move away from the Town Centre. There were plenty of alternative supermarkets around that catered for those with cars. She noted that the St James St end had gone downhill since M&S departed some years ago. She felt that the town centre needed more interesting shops and things to do on foot. She also suggested that there would be a good demand for a suitable quality gym and fitness centre in the Town Centre as the Kelmscott was run-down and uninviting and the Pool and Track was inaccessible and isolated from a personal safety perspective.

A **resident** asked why the Council had not thought to raise revenue on the currently empty Arcade site some time ago by adding bays and meters for parking purposes.

J Kear asked whether the Council was aware of the intentions of the owners of the Alpha Business Centre to extend the facility across the car park, which would be counter to these proposals. He added that this could impact more positively on the area with regard to jobs.

Cllr Wheeler advised that he was in regular consultation with local business interests, including those of the Alpha Business Centre. These discussions did feed into the process. He recalled in the past that many people used to cycle and walk to work, so this was an important aspect to bear in mind with the development. With regard to the departure of M&S, Cllr Wheeler agreed that it was a shame that they had left the site at the time and that something better was not made of it. He noted that a Members Forum has been established to discuss matters relating to developments in the Town Centre and residents were welcome to come to that.

A **resident** commented on the parking and traffic situation suggesting that new developments should look at a more car-free aspect, as had been suggested for years. Not one was located as yet in the Borough.

Cllr Wheeler agreed stating that he had intended to mention it from his notes that the housing developments would fall in line with this strategy utilising the excellent transport interchange in the Town Centre.

P Herlihy suggested residents with concerns fill in the "Help Forms" so that they could be passed on to Cllr Wheeler. He asked for any other issues.

A **resident** was concerned about the cleansing of the area where the street market was located, stating that it was usually in a very poor state of cleanliness. When the community was consulted on the closure of the market on Mondays it was promised that this day would be to "deep clean" the area, however, to date this had not been in evidence. He noted that while it was easy to be "dazzled" by new plans and schemes, what makes the area a better place to live is the continued maintenance and upkeep of these areas. If this was absent then they will fall into decay and disrepair. He wanted to know further details about such plans to clean the area and whether the Monday plans were to go ahead as promised.

Cllr Belam, as new post holder for the Environment, offered to return to the meeting with details, as he was meeting with the Head of Environment on Friday.

A **resident** asked what the Council plans were to tackle truancy by local secondary students.

P Herlihy suggested that this topic would be better addressed during the Safer

CC Team
/ Cllr
Wheeler

Cllr
Belam

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Neighbourhoods presentation and discussion.

A **resident** supported earlier comments on the evening economy, stating that there was very little to do in the area as far as Blackhorse Road. It would be a great bonus if at the St James Street end there could be the café and restaurant area to support this evening economy notion.

A **resident** highlighted a recent consultation report on the new developments (Page 22) which spoke of “sustainable development” and “amenity value”, however, it was noted that sustainability was not necessarily a function of price. In these days of global climate warming, it should be compulsory to look at high quality sustainable developments, with a view to the Borough becoming a leader and example to other areas in turning these opportunities into landmark developments of which we can be proud.

A **resident** wished to raise a few subjects. One was the proliferation of roadside works on gas mains in the area, often working from 7am to 7pm, which was not allowed. Complaints have been ignored and no one seems to be taking responsibility for handling the issue. The resident was anxious to find out how this could be taken forward. The second issue related to a request for more information relating to the responsibility for certain traffic violations being passed over to the Local Authority. This apparently was news to the Police and the resident presumed that it was the red-light cameras. Could someone please confirm details on this issue? The final issue related to recycling waste from the market. She felt that much of this could be composted and/or recycled and this seemed like a common sense thing to do.

P Herlihy noted the comments and requested responses to the next meeting or directly to the questioner, particularly on the gas main repair works.

K Lord noted that the local playground in Greenleaf Road was to be repaired and redecorated (loose steps, slide work, etc) which he had to raise with the Council to get done. A letter he received stated that it would be done within the limited budgetary resources available. Looking again at the budget monitoring documents published by the Council, he was surprised to see that one the one hand, staff on the ground were being starved of resources, while Building Services overspent by £2.2 million in the last financial year and have been allocated an extra overspend on forecasts for this year of some £700,000. This allocation of additional funds he considered would need to come from somewhere and therefore would impact significantly right throughout the Environmental Services budget planning function, most notably at street level where it really counted. He requested clarification on exactly what Building Services was, what they did and why such enormous overspends on forecast.

P Herlihy requested responses to these questions for the next meeting.

A **resident** asked whether the rail link between Stratford and Chingford via the Hall Farm Curve would ever be reinstated.

Cllr Wheeler advised that the Council had been and will continue to push for the reinstatement of this link, however, to date the operating companies had failed to see the business case for it to be included in their current long-term strategy. There is a pressing need for a fast link between Stratford and Walthamstow and we need to demonstrate the case for it. Residents can help by supporting the efforts of the Council. This case may be able to be demonstrated by something like the introduction of a fast bus service to Stratford to establish demand and thereby justify its replacement by a rail

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/ Cllr
Belam

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service. There were currently a lot of interesting proposals for north London rail links, this being one of them. For instance, Hackney Downs is mooted to be linking to Hackney Central, which would therefore create a secondary link between Walthamstow and Stratford, which may be an alternative. He highlighted problems for people from Leyton to travel to Enfield and vice versa, adding that while London did generally have a good transport service, it was the orbital services that were the weakness. Good transport links also had knock-on implications for the long-term unemployed.

P Herlihy at this stage took the decision to close the item requesting again that residents respect the decisions of the Chair and the timing necessary to cover all the items on the Agenda.

The item was closed at this point.

8.0 BLACKHORSE LANE REDEVELOPMENT

Matthew Nimmo, Senior Consultant, presented the third (and final) consultation draft plans for the future of the Blackhorse Lane area. These plans are due to be adopted for implementation in October of this year. The presentation was followed by questions and discussion.

The Chair asked for questions from the floor and these are summarised below:

A **resident** member of the Higham Hill Community Association noted that there appeared to be little or nothing of youth provision within the plans.

A **resident** noted that one landmark venue that was well-known even outside the Borough and provided at least one avenue for evening entertainment (The Standard Venue) was highlighted to be demolished and replaced with a similar venue. However, she was sceptical of such promises based on those made in the past about other things such as the library, cinema and arcade. She felt it would be a terrible loss if it were to go.

A **resident** asked whether these plans for the school site (McEntee School) took account of the burial site and gypsy site located there.

A **resident** was concerned that the plans for the relief road only took account of traffic in one direction and no account of issues with traffic coming from any of the other directions. She felt that this measure would not help the situation significantly with the increased traffic volumes expected. She noted also that this congestion problem at the junction seemed to be a particular issue when it rained. On another water-related issue, she wondered whether the increased numbers of houses planned for the area would not impact negatively upon the already scarce water resource situation that we see at present.

A **resident** suggested that more should be done to consult with youth on their needs and wants. They were not being catered for under these schemes and they deserved to get something for their futures.

A **resident** wished to concentrate on the proposal for Willowfield School, as she lived nearby to the new site with her house overlooking Douglas Eyre playing fields. She wished to know in which direction the school would be facing, what percentage of the fields would be absorbed and where exactly the school would be located. For instance, was it to be on the old Warner Head Office site? She was concerned that "thousands" of schoolchildren would be wandering up and down what is currently a quiet residential road. She noted in the plans the incentive that cultural opportunities would be improved for local residents. She questioned the sincerity of this comment, as Willowfield had

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<p>already offered adult education in the past, but this had been cut out, so the record to date was not good on this issue.</p> <p>E Poulsen commented that Essex Hall was now only a Day Centre for older persons with dementia. She noted that the "grandiose" plans for a Joint Service Centre with surgery, café, library, community centre, nursery and day centre at one location had now been dropped on financial grounds with the centre part completed at the nursery stage. The day centre members have been told that they cannot get back in until May next year. She wanted clarification on the situation.</p> <p>P Herlihy noted that time had overtaken proceedings and there was a need to move on to the next item. He asked that attendees respect the decision of the Chairs to move on according to the Agenda. Other details and questions could be forwarded on the "Help Forms" available in the hall. He asked that the questions be forwarded to Matthew Nimmo for response to the next meeting.</p> <p>The item was closed at this point.</p>	M Nimmo
<p>9.0 COMMUNITY COUNCIL BUDGET</p> <p>There was no formal discussion on this item at the meeting. Summary notes are available online at the Community Chair's "unofficial" website: www.WalthamSoft.com/WWCC</p> <p>The Community Forum was closed at this point.</p>	

PART TWO
FORMAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

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<p>10.0 SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS</p> <p>Inspector Jane Connors (IJC), Metropolitan Police Services, presented information on the recent introduction of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) to all wards and the arrangements being put in place to introduce Ward Panels later in the year. The meeting was asked to split into groups by ward to allow discussion concerning local policing issues. Ward Councillor group representatives were then asked to feedback the main issues from their wards. This was followed by a short question and answer session.</p> <p>The main issues raised are summarised below:</p> <p>Cllr Ali (High Street):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth problems in Circle 33 properties between Courtney and Cornwallis Rd.• Coppermill Lane youth problems with untaxed motorbikes.• All night parties in the area – request for noise team to intervene.• High St illegal DVD sellers.• General concern surrounding burglary in St James St and High Street businesses – more patrols at night. <p>Cllr Gladstone (William Morris):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Garages in Pasquier Rd / Higham Hill Rd• Council-owned sites creating problems - should have opportunity for anti-social behaviour designed out to set an example.	

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- Would be useful to know who owns what site, e.g. Ascham Homes or Council.
- Concerns about activities such as bullying around play areas such as Greenleaf Rd, Aveling Park and Lloyd Park.
- Congratulated MPS generally on SNT initiative.

Cllr Meiszner (Higham Hill):

- Wished to learn more of full complement of team for ward.
- Issues relating to minibikes across the ward and especially for Cheney Row.
- General issues on controlling crime in the area.

Cllr Belam (Chapel End):

- Issues taken up directly with the officer present.
- Have already seen some positive results of the SNT.
- Looked forward to making the ward much safer.

The main points raised in the Q & A session are summarised below:

IJC noted from the discussion that the burglary initiative is ongoing and at the moment four teams are patrolling the high street working on various shift patterns. On the youth disorder issue, she noted that the SNT teams could work together at times to tackle cross boundary issues. The teams are also looking to work even more closely with Housing Associations and the Council to tackle these issues. On the issues of the minibikes, the teams were also looking to work with the Council and traffic officers on this issue. At the present moment she advised that there were no more funds for additional resources, however, she hoped to strengthen the team in the future.

Cllr Ali asked whether the CCTV cameras in St James and High Streets actually worked. He referred back to the issue of the high rate of burglaries for businesses in these areas.

IJC advised that the CCTV did in fact work and was used regularly in the investigation of such incidents. She noted that many of these intruders gained access through the roof.

P Spiro (Friends of Lloyd Park) made a point on opening full access in parks by removing all barriers and fences, based on a visit he had made to Mile End Park, where such measures had reduced anti-social behaviour and allowed easier access for enforcement by police. He suggested that it might be a good model for the local population to consider.

A **resident** suggested that a possible issue might be with caretaking on a 24/7 basis in these parks.

A resident asked about the shift patterns for the SNT.

IJC advised that each SNT worked to shifts according to the needs of their wards, however, indicated that the standard hours would be 10-6 pm and 2 – 10 pm.

Cllr Wheatley was pleased to have the feedback tonight on the youth disorder issues, but had been disappointed in the past with the response of officers to his requests, particularly surrounding issues in Priory Court. He cited a recent meeting attended by three officers and he had received no response on the issues he raised.

SNT Officer advised that the team was aware of issues around large groups of males playing football in the street and they had tried to manage the situation,

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<p>however, many live in Priory Court and would like to go to play on the football pitch, but they have issues with the older youth. The team is in the process of trying to resolve the issue.</p> <p>K Lord noted that there was an issue, in his view, around the remit and boundaries of operation of the LBWF Street Wardens. He had been threatened in Greenleaf Road and contacted the Street Wardens (which took 4 hours) only to be advised that they don't deal with that area. He requested clarification on their intended role, the scope of their activities and what the boundaries were for their activities.</p> <p>IJC advised that she would investigate and report back to the next meeting.</p> <p>The item was closed at this point.</p>	<p>Insp J Connors / M Bridge (Street Wdns)</p>
<p>11.0 FORMAL COUNCIL BUSINESS</p>	
<p>There being no further formal decisions required on matters arising from the Community Forum or any further discussion, the item was drawn to a close.</p>	
<p>12.0 DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING</p>	
<p>The meeting was asked to note that the date dates and venues for the future meetings:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 September 2006 at Chapel End Junior School, Roberts Road, E17• 20 November 2006 at Lloyds Park Theatre, Lloyds Park, E17• 5 February 2007 at Hillyfield Primary School, Higham Hill Road, E17	
<p>All meetings start at 7.30pm.</p>	
<p>The meeting ended at 9.50pm</p>	

Chair's Signature _____

Date _____