

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 15th June 2023

7:15 pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance

Phil Cooke, William Sheehy, Kristina Zagar, Adrian Essex, Geoff Bell, Kalu Amogu, Jackie Myers, Jacquie Knowles, Omar Villalba, Hilary Britton, Oonagh Gormley

Guests Included

Anthony Green, Samuel Betts, Isobel Pierce, Carol Boye, Jaime Powell, Paul Connolly

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence

Cllr Sarah Young, Cllr Caroline Selman, Mina Faragalla, Barbara Panuzzo, Ngozi Obanye, Leonora Williams, Elaine Gosnell, Andrea Anderson, Euphemia Chukwu

0.2 Acceptance of minutes

0.3 Matters Arising / Action Tracker

0.31. Hackney will be providing the data and numbers during the partner updates. A member from Hackney Building Maintenance will also be joining via Zoom.

0.32. Roda received an update from Jaime Powell that the church was contacted in 2021 as part of the consultation. They declined to participate and asked not to be contacted for consultation in the future. Geoff noted that it is important to engage with all religious groups in the area and stated that otherwise Berkeley would be breaching the Discrimination Act. Jaime clarified that

Berkeley, as part of the engagement, has held workshops to engage with hard-to-reach groups. However, all Berkeley is required under planning is to present the scheme in a public forum and invite everyone to come along. Berkeley is not required to speak to every single person and group. The requirement is that the public consultation is made available to everyone. The workshops that Berkeley have held exceed the required engagement.

0.33. MHDT provided a synopsis of the My Place project. Roda circulated the information to Board members on Wednesday 14th June. Simon Donovan has also provided the requested financial information which Roda circulated on 15th June.

ACTION: Any questions regarding the financial information provided can be emailed to Roda who will raise it with Simon after the meeting.

0.34. The update from Berkeley regarding the windows is that the majority of the interim remedial work to the previously locked off windows are completed. There is one window outstanding, which has been subject to a delay because of the limited availability of the access equipment. They have also confirmed that all KSS1 apartments will be attended to by a specialist contractor in due course for further enhancements to be made to the windows. Berkeley is finalising with their consultant what those enhancements will consist of, with an expectation that all work to enhance the windows can be completed in one visit. Berkeley will provide a further update on this once they have finalised the scope of work with their consultant. Trevor Hughes has also asked Berkeley Group Legal representatives if they can advise on when this report will/may be available.

0.35. Mina, Omar and Geoff had the initial first meeting for the community forum. Roda has also circulated the minutes from the meeting on the 14th June.

Major Topics

1. WGN Sewage update

1.1. Samuel Betts, Head of M&E at NHG, provided an update on the WGN sewage system. NHG has recently obtained a procurement contract for drainage works due to recurring issues with the system backing up over the past few years. As

part of the upgrade, NHG will be replacing the existing sewage pump in the pit that serves the area. Currently, there is a separate pump and macerator, but NHG plans to remove the inline macerator. Instead, they will install a combined sewage pump and macerator in a chamber with ample capacity to serve as a backup in case of any problems.

- 1.2. The total cost of the works is approximately £200,000, and NHG will cover this expense without passing it on to the residents. Samuel noted that this does not imply that the existing system was not designed in accordance with British standards to the best of NHG's knowledge. However, the purpose of these works is to increase the pump capacity and prevent backups and blockages.
- 1.3. The scheduled timeframe for the works is between August and September. The contractor will be appointed next week, following the completion and approval of internal process/forms to confirm budget allocations.
- 1.4. During the project, there will be noticeable changes in the affected area around the sewage pit, as it will be fenced off for approximately two weeks. Additionally, there will be an excavation and installation of a new sewage pipe along the raised ground leading to the back of Birchwood. This new pipe will connect to a newly constructed manhole. The purpose of the pump is to efficiently transport the waste up the pipe, allowing it to flow downhill via gravity towards a new connection point near the manhole down the street. By implementing this setup, the risk of backflow will be significantly reduced, and the drainage system's capacity will be enhanced. To ensure uninterrupted operation of the current system, an additional high-capacity pipe will be installed instead of replacing the existing ones. ACOM has been responsible for designing the works, and NHG will engage a consultant to oversee the project and mitigate any potential recurring issues.
- 1.5. William expressed concerns about path subsidence following the completion of the works. He noted that Hackney had previously conducted the works and asked who would be responsible for rectifying the path. Samuel clarified that Berkeley is currently in a waiting phase, anticipating NHG to carry out the excavation work beneath the path and up the hill, enabling the upward pumping process. Once NHG successfully completes the excavation, Berkeley will proceed with the necessary remedial works on the subbase of the path.
- 1.6. Geoff acknowledged that NHG has confirmed that the previous sewage system arrangement met the existing standards, and

they have also assured that the system will meet standard guidelines after the works. However, he emphasised the importance of assuring residents that the system will not only meet the standard guidelines but also effectively resolve the overflow issues. Samuel explained that NHG conducts design calculations based on factors such as the number of flats and the probability of all the flats utilising the pipes simultaneously. These calculations determine the flow rate of waste, which helps determine the appropriate sizing of the pipework. He emphasised that the calculations are in line with the Institute of Plumbing Design Guide, indicating that, from NHG's perspective, the pipes themselves are not the issue. Instead, the problem lies with the macerator. By removing the macerator and relocating it to a tank with a larger capacity, it allows for waste to accumulate before reaching a critical level and thus resolves the issue of overflow.

- 1.7. The Board inquired about the expected completion date for the works. NHG indicated that they are anticipating completion by the end of September. This estimation takes into account the internal forms being signed off with the contractor, who has requested a six-week mobilisation period followed by two months on-site to finalise the works.
- 1.8. Omar inquired whether NHG had implemented enhanced maintenance regimes to complement the ongoing works. NHG informed the Board that they had made a commitment since December 2022 to conduct weekly maintenance checks on the system until the new solution is implemented. In addition, NHG has been carrying out six-monthly checks since the December inspections, specifically surveying the pipework to assess any accumulation over the preceding six months.
- 1.9. Roda inquired about the timeline for NHG to share the reports from ACOM with WDCO. Roda specifically mentioned the commitment made during the Round Table to provide these reports to WDCO.

ACTION: Samuel Betts assured the Board that he would personally communicate with Tracy Lavers to ascertain when NHG would be able to share the reports with WDCO.

- 1.10. Roda proposed that, if NHG plans to organise a resident meeting to address concerns about the WGN sewage system, it should be inclusive and open to all tenures.

ACTION: Samuel will relay this suggestion to Jada.

2. Damp and mould update

- 2.1. Paul Connolly, Damp and Mould Disrepair Manager from Hackney Council, delivered an update on the status of damp and mould cases in the old Hackney Council blocks. He has been tasked with conducting a thorough review of the existing processes to identify potential areas for improvement. Additionally, he will examine lessons learned from other councils and how they addressed damp and mould disrepair issues.
- 2.2. From April 2022 to May 2023, Hackney's Building Maintenance team analysed data related to damp and mould cases. The findings revealed that out of the 149 households in Phases 4-8 that reported such cases, only one household was classified as severe and subsequently provided with alternative housing.
- 2.3. Out of the reported damp and mould cases, 44 have been successfully resolved, while 105 cases remain open. The ongoing cases consist of a combination of repairs in progress and those still in the inspection stage.
- 2.4. Carol Boye clarified that in regards to the questions regarding the number of residents who were temporarily rehoused, Loulla Weeks, the Area Housing Manager, will provide the information during the Hackney Operational meeting at the end of June, as she was unable to attend the Board.

ACTION: Loulla Weeks will be attending the Hackney Operational meeting at the end of June and provide figures.

ACTION: Roda will circulate figures and updates provided by Hackney to the Board.

- 2.5. The Board has also requested block/Phase breakdown of the figures.

ACTION: Carol will provide the more refined data with Phase breakdown by the Liaison meeting for Roda to circulate to the Board.

- 2.6. The Board members asked what constitutes a severe case and to define severity. Carol clarified that cases classified as severe are based on if they need to rehouse the household. Paul also noted that they use the guidance of the HSRS survey which has categories for different levels of severity.
- 2.7. The inspections of the flats are carried out 5 days from when the case has been reported but he noted that he is not sure if they are achieving this.

- 2.8. Anthony Green inquired whether cases without access would be considered resolved. Carol responded by affirming that such cases would be classified as "no access."
- 2.9. Geoff highlighted the seriousness with which Hackney is addressing the issue. However, he noted the importance of recognising that in the past, individuals who raised concerns about damp and mould were wrongly blamed for inadequate property ventilation, which discouraged them from reporting further cases. To address this, Geoff proposed implementing a proactive policy and approach to identify and assist vulnerable residents in addressing damp and mould issues.

3. Partners Updates

- 3.1 In response to concerns raised by the Board members regarding the gate issue at NHG blocks (Rowan and Hornbeam) and its impact on mitigating anti-social behaviour (ASB), Samuel will address the matter and ensure NHG reports back on it during the Contracts meeting. Additionally, Roda requested that NHG provide a report at the upcoming Contracts Meeting, detailing the frequency of gate breakages and potential solutions to resolve the issue. Roda further explained that the Executive Committee has recommended sharing information between NHG and R&R regarding contractors who have demonstrated effective performance and their proposed solutions to the problem.

ACTION: Samuel will take note of the concerns and ensure that an update regarding the gates issue is provided at the NHG Contracts meeting.

- 3.2 With regards to the meeting on the rodent issue, there was an action taken away months ago, however, Omar raised concerns over progress after the meeting as there has been no response and no minutes shared.

ACTION: Isobel Pierce will take this away and come back to WDCO.

- 3.3 A question was raised regarding the progress update for Block D. Jaime informed the Board about a recent meeting involving Trevor, Hermione, and Millco. As part of Berkeley's obligations, they will be responsible for fitting out the space, and Millco has been informed. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for next week to discuss the specifics of how the space will be fitted out.
- 3.4 Isobel also mentioned that there are ongoing developments in the background, which may require cabinet approval. Depending on the progress of these developments, Hermione might be able to provide an update at the July Board meeting.

- 3.5 Roda highlighted that the Executive Committee had put forth a suggestion to establish a task and finish group for the Ground Floor Strategy. This group would allow WDCO to provide input into the report being developed by Berkeley and contribute to the overall strategy. Roda further informed the Board that Jaime has taken note of this suggestion for further consideration.
- 3.6 Simon Donovan shared the financial information, and Roda has subsequently circulated it among the Board members. Simon clarified that they were unable to provide the precise percentage of usage in the centre due to a new booking system. The current information is based on a 24-hour booking format that needs to be adjusted by the system. However, Simon assured that they can provide income data for the period, allowing for comparisons with previous years.
- 3.7 John Williams, from Renaisi, asked to address the Board. Renaisi is collaborating with various teams in Hackney, particularly in the health and social sector, to gain insights into the challenges faced by Hackney and City residents in achieving independent and healthy ageing. Their focus includes examining barriers such as health inequality and identifying provisions that can support residents in living healthy lives. As part of their research, Renaisi plans to conduct focus groups where residents can share their perspectives on healthy ageing. Each session will last for an hour, and participants will receive a £20 shopping voucher as a token of appreciation for their input.

4 Board discussion (without partners)

- 4.1 **Public Forum:** Roda circulated the notes from the first meeting attended by Geoff, Mina and Omar. They discussed the initial ideas and Roda summarised the discussion.
- 4.2 Omar informed the Board that the Public Forum as per the constitution is good for the group to connect back to the community and confirm their priorities and needs. The public forum is also useful for approaching challenges and getting residents' views on proposals.
- 4.3 Omar also suggested looking at the blocks, and Board members' door knocking to help get turnout in a range of key areas in order to receive feedback from everybody in the community.
- 4.4 Omar also noted that WDCO could use the upcoming consultation in July to look at people's areas of concern and to identify what WDCO should focus on.

ACTION: Mina, Omar and Geoff are looking to meet after the Board and will report the next steps back to the Board.

ACTION: They will also look at what areas the questionnaire should focus on.

- 4.5 **Constitutional review:** Roda has shared the notes from the last meeting of the Constitutional Review Working Group.
- 4.6 During the meeting, the group agreed that the Chair needs to implement stricter deadlines for the partners, and the Executives were given a list of specific tasks.
- 4.7 The members of the Constitutional Review suggested the possibility of co-opting individuals for a temporary period, specifically for projects or task and finish groups. This would allow them to contribute their expertise without the same level of commitment as an elected Board member. However, it was suggested by the Board members that short-term co-optees should not have voting rights.

4.8 **AOB**