

# **WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION**

## **Special Board Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**7.15 pm Zoom Meeting**

### **Attendance**

<b>Philip Cooke</b>	<b>William Sheehy</b>	<b>Elaine Gosnell</b>
<b>Jackie Myers</b>	<b>Euphemia Chukwu</b>	<b>Kalu Amogu</b>
<b>Andrea Anderson</b>	<b>Donna Fakes</b>	<b>Lesley Benson</b>
<b>Kristina Zagar</b>	<b>Brian Byrne</b>	

### **Members Elect**

<b>Hilary Britton</b>	<b>Leonora Williams</b>	<b>Geoff Bell</b>
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### **Guests Included**

**Simon Slater Roda Hassan**

### **Section 0 - Introduction**

#### **0.1. Apologies for absence**

##### **0.1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:**

Margaret Lewis, Philip Dundas, Sylvia Doody, Jacquie Knowles  
Janet Grant, Oonagh Gormley, Mina Faragalla

### **Section 1 - Proposed Constitutional Arrangements**

- 1.1** Phil Cooke introduced the purpose of the meeting to discuss constitutional changes proposed by the Executive Committee regarding the length of office of co-optees, how often board members would be appointed to external bodies / partnership meetings and when Design Committee Members would be re-elected.
- 1.2** He highlighted that although it was an issue that split the Board there needed to be polite disagreement and respectful debate. He summarised the process, i.e. a proposer and seconder would speak in favour of the proposals, followed by an objector, and that the debate would continue until a final summing up and the vote.
- 1.3** He proposed the amendment regarding the length of office of co-optees and was seconded by Jackie Myers. Phil highlighted that co-

optees were treated the same as elected Board members with the exception of being interviewed and appointed at each AGM, and that the proposed change was fairer as it would bring them in line with elected board members.

- 1.4** Jackie Myers supported Phil, giving as an example her situation where she was temporarily moved off the estate, had been very active both in WDCO and the local community and had lived on Woodberry Down for 50 years, she felt the current system would potentially mean that WDCO would lose such experience on the Board.
- 1.5** Lesley Benson opposed the change, she highlighted it wasn't personal issue about individuals, and reminded people that she first come on the Board as a co-optee. She said that the co-optees constitutionally were meant to bring in additional skills, experience and expertise that could benefit Board discussions at a particular period of time, and that the status quo was fair, anyone could put themselves forward and be decided upon by the Board.
- 1.6** There was discussion by the Board with a number of Board members and Board members elect contributing. Some highlighted that there were fundamental differences of accountability, between elected Board members and co-optees as they were accountable to their constituents, others feeling that regular appointment of co-optees refreshed the Board membership and opened up the Board to fresh blood and new skills. Some Board members felt three-year length terms allowed expertise to be developed and highlighted that co-optees have been very active in partnership meetings and helping run the Board. Whilst others felt that three-year terms were too much of a commitment and that having annual elections / appointments were more democratic and hence worthwhile. Also, some questioned why the changes were being suggested now, i.e. at the end of a Board term rather than decided by the new Board.
- 1.7** During the debate there was discussion regarding how the Board could be more accountable and welcoming, there was a suggestion that there should be staggered elections, i.e. a percentage of Board elected each year; also information to be provided to new residents moving to Woodberry Down on the role of WDCO and its achievements over the years. This was felt would encourage both an understanding of WDCO and its role, but also more involvement by newer residents.
- 1.8** The constitutional amendment was put to a vote, and the vote was 7 in favour, 2 against with 1 abstention. This met the criteria of both a quorate meeting and two thirds vote in favour and hence the constitutional amendment was passed. Although Hilary Britton wanted it noted that Board Members elect hadn't been able to participate in the vote.
- 1.9** The Board then moved onto the second amendment regarding the term of office of the Design Committee. Phil and Jackie proposed and seconded the amendment and spoke in favour of the change. They highlighted that the Design committee didn't fit in well in WDCO annual elections, instead that the preparation of each phase took between a year and 18 months from start of discussion to submitting the planning application. They didn't want the WDCO reps changing during this time and this amendment was aimed at preventing that.

- 1.10** Concern was expressed by those that opposed the changes that the length of time between elections to the Design Committee, were unclear i.e. at the end of a phase or the completion of a masterplan review and hence was largely open ended. Some also felt that the Design committee should be more reflective of the mix of tenures on the estate. Billy highlighted that the Design committee had come about due to the dissatisfaction of WDCO on the design of the new social rented homes in KSS1, also that it takes time and experience of working on the Design committee to understand some of intricacies the design issues, problems incurred and hence it was important to provide continuity.
- 1.11** Elaine was concerned about providing fewer opportunities to vote people onto the Design committee and felt that the Design committee would benefit from changes in representatives with particular skills.
- 1.12** Following the debate, the constitutional amendment was put to a vote, and the vote was 7 in favour and 3 against. This met the criteria of both a quorate meeting and two thirds vote in favour and hence the constitutional amendment was passed
- 1.13** The final discussion was on the proposal for all partnership working groups to be elected for three years rather than annually. Again, the discussion was on the relative benefits of regular changing membership, accountability and involving a wider range of Board members, versus continuity, experience and understanding of issues discussed within the working groups.
- 1.14** A number of Board members raised the issue of providing information to the Board by the representatives of the working groups, so that Board members could keep abreast of discussions and ensuring accountability of Board representatives on working groups. Communication between the Board and representatives on working groups including the Design committee had been a theme of the debate where all Board members agreed that it needed improvement. It was felt that this would lead to greater understanding of issues and allow Board members to comment on the work that is being carried out in more detail in sub groups. There had also been suggestions about how the constitution might not be fit for purpose and potential changes that might be considered.
- 1.15** The constitutional amendment was put to a vote, and the vote was 6 in favour and 3 against. Whilst the Board was still quorate and a majority of Board Members had voted in favour of the constitutional change, there hadn't been a two thirds majority of Board Members voting, and hence the ITLA informed the Board that the amendment hadn't passed.
- 1.16** Phil Cooke thanked the Board Members and Board Members elect for the considered manner that they had debated the issues and asked if there was any other business.

## **2.0 Any Other Business**

5.1 None

**Meeting Ended 9:30pm**