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# Woodberry Down Community Organisations (WDCO) Awayday

11<sup>th</sup> January 2025



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## Abbreviations

WDCO	Woodberry Down Community Organisation
NHG	Notting Hill Genesis



# 1. Introduction

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The following notes record participants' discussion and input during Woodberry Down Community Organisations (WDCO) Awayday on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2025.

The aim of the workshop was that participants:

- Reflect on how WDCO is currently working.
- Explore and agreed ways to strengthen what WDCO does.
- Refresh what WDCO is about and its core values.
- Explore and agreed ways to strengthen decision making and how the organisation operates.
- Agree priorities & next steps

The following ground rules were agreed:

- Listen Respectfully
- Honesty
- Open to compromise
- Curiosity/respectful – no misogyny
- One person speaking at a time
- Step up step back
- We are all equal
- Disagree agreeably
- If discussing a point try and back up with facts, evidence and/or examples.
- Not personal

For the programme for the day, please see Appendix One, and for a full list of attendees please see Appendix Two.

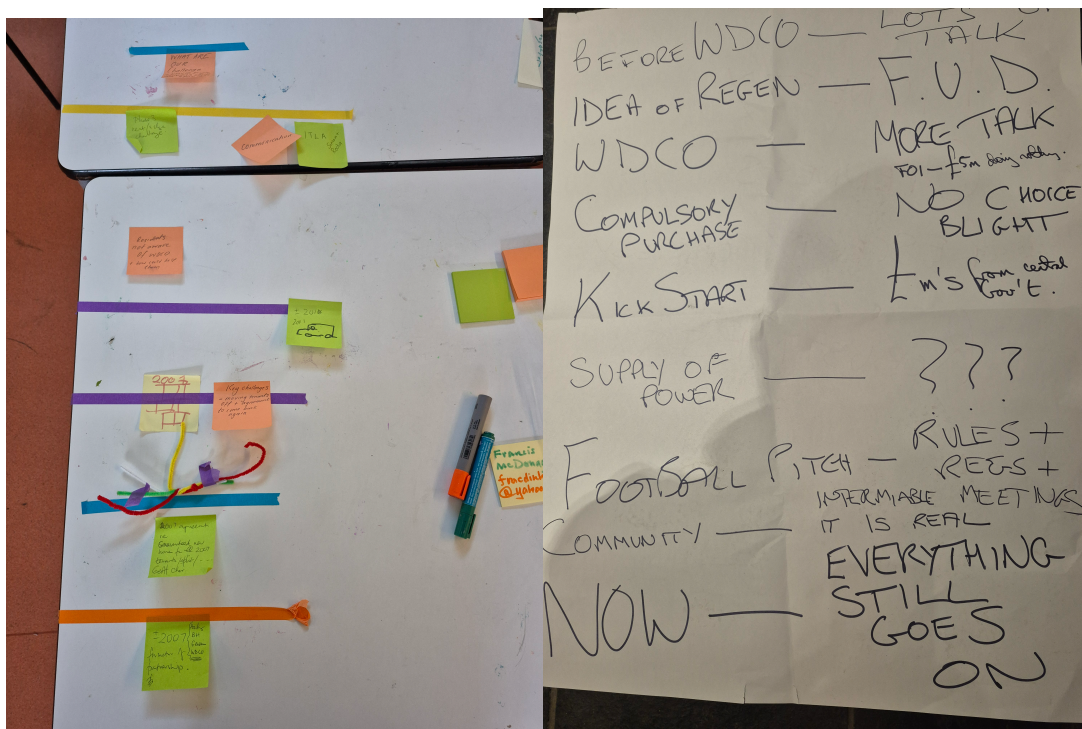
## 2.WDCOs Journey

Participants split into groups and created a real path on the floor and flipchart of WDCOs journey to date.

Participants split into groups of 3 add:

- Key events
- Key projects
- Key changes in WDCO for you
- Key challenges
- When did you join?
- Key dates on the journey,

Below is a summary of the journey and key dates from 2 groups:



### 3. How WDCO is Currently Working

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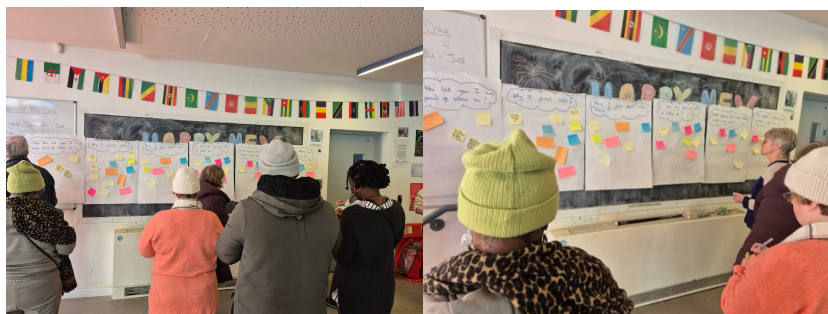
Participants added their comments on post it notes to the following questions:

#### a) Why I joined WDCO?

- To help my community I live in.
- Football pitch.
- Give voice to my community.
- Because it is the only way to get involved with the partners re the regeneration here.
- To support my community, particularly the voice less.
- To make change in my community.
- Billy told me to.
- I was asked to join.
- Wanted to know more information so I could tell my neighbours.
- Was encouraged to.
- Service charges – had enough of neighbors moaning
- To learn more about WDCO.
- I was the only person from my block who attended the election – I Think WDCO is important.
- Enlightened self-interest.
- I joined WDCO because I care for my community, and I still do.
- To help make the estate a better place for everyone.
- To challenge against Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) performance.

#### b) How I feel about WDCO now?

- Could be more efficient and effective.
- Too complicated, the Board is too big.
- Troubled.
- Happy to me a member but can get frustrated.
- Not working. Members are rude, bullying and harassing – its stressful.
- Fractured.
- Torn.
- Disappointed and frustrated.
- Without unity, common goals and structure there will be missed opportunities.
- It needs to work better together.
- Too much negative behaviours towards social tenures by some WDCO members.



**c) What excites me most about WDCO and our work?**

- Provide challenge to partners and hold them to account.
- Having some influence to help the community if possible.
- Nothing excites me it is largely a huge waste of effort – it's disappointing.
- Nothing excites me about WDCO why should it!
- The prospect of getting what people need/want.
- It's a big problem (still).
- Nothing – it's a stressful Board.
- Hopefully to get things moving in the community.

**d) Over the last year I am most proud of WDCO for?**

- Continuing with the fight.
- Challenging the rent and other costs of new flats – Stage 3.
- Nothing.
- The football pitch for the kids, keeping them out of gangs.
- Phase 3 – rents opposition.
- How WDCO stood up and went against the partners for Phase 4.
- Standing up to the Council, Notting Hill Genesis re: Phase 3 rents.
- WDCO members standing up for tenants who are moving into Phase 3.
- Having gumption to push forward even when all might seem futile.
- Help social tenures move from mold, damp to clean homes.

**e) I see my future role in WDCO as?**

- Making change and improving communications.
- Doubtful.
- Leaving mentioned twice.
- Need to change to maintain my buy in.
- Uncertain mentioned twice.
- Making changes within a team.
- More of the same? I hope not!
- Sabotage is happening daily.
- I would like to help grow social cohesion.

**f) The biggest challenges for WDCO, right now are?**

- Communication of partners which withhold key information.
- In house fighting.
- Deciding/agreeing to its role here.
- Ho can Berkley be challenged; we are mostly from social housing.
- Too many want to be leaders - no discussions.
- Communications, organisation.
- Lack of focus, inability to make decisions – “we've always done it this way”.
- No authority.
- Working together.
- Too much control lies with the partners.
- Worldwide problems effecting decisions.
- Leadership and organisation.
- Working together for the better good.

There then followed a conversation where participants looked at each other's comments and reflections were shared about where WDCO is and how people are feeling, these included the following;

- There have been tensions and divisions between WDCO board members
- There is a breakdown in trust and respect between the different groups on the board.
- Behaviors of some Board members is an issue.
- Decision making isn't clear.

Participants agreed that there is a need to:

- Build trust and respect
- Start rebuilding relationships and finding a path forward.
- Reduce the tensions and find agreement on how to make decisions and move WDCO forward in a more productive manner.
- A shared commitment to improving the working relationships and decision-making processes.
- Agree on a collaborative action plan and find ways to collectively put pressure on the development partners.



## 4. WDCO's Aims, Purpose, Objectives & Values

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Participants reminded themselves about WDCOs Aim, purpose and objectives (Source: WDCO Constitution).

### Our Aim

- *Create the kind of community we envisage together with the physical environment which is most conducive to its achievement by securing the active, positive, vigorous and ongoing involvement of each and every section of the Woodberry Down community and all other present and potential partners.*
- *Work for the provision of excellent housing, education, employment, health, leisure and retail opportunities to all residents.*

### Our Purpose

- *Act as the representative body of all residents (whether tenants, leaseholders or freeholders, regardless of landlord) and those who work from commercial premises within the designated area of Woodberry Down.*
- *The Organisation will act in their collective name in discussions, debates and negotiations with any, and all, public sector, voluntary sector or private sector entities which are already playing a part (or could, or would wish to, play a part) in the future of the Woodberry Down area.*

### Our Objects

- *To improve all aspects of the Woodberry Down neighbourhood and the opportunities, life-chances and living standards of the Woodberry Down community through the comprehensive regeneration of the neighbourhood.*
- *To influence, and where appropriate work in partnership with, all other organisations whose policies or services are, or could be, directly or indirectly relevant to the interests of the Woodberry Down community.*
- *To provide a forum for all parts of the Woodberry Down community to come together to discuss issues of mutual concern, to agree policies and to develop action plans to secure their implementation.*
- *To inform all parts of the Woodberry Down Community of significant developments through printed materials and public meetings.*

There followed discussion about WDCOs principles and values and agreement that these would be an important guide around:

- How WDCO operates (e.g. its activities, standards, etc).
- How WDCO is perceived externally (i.e. in the eyes of the community and partners).
- How WDCO Board members conduct themselves and carry out their role.

Participants split into 4 groups and discussed what should be WDCO's shared values:

Group 1

- Give community a platform
- Constructive criticism of partners
- Support community activism

Group 2

- Inclusive and diverse Board
- Active participation
- Effectiveness/informed
- Respectful/honest/courteous
- Transparent/openness

Group 3

- Working together to create a vibrant community
- Listening and understanding
- Inclusion/inclusive
- Building bridges

Group 4

- Honesty
- Openness
- Respectful/courteous
- Robustness

**Agreed Action 1:** Board members agreed it would be useful to develop and agree a Code of Conduct for Board members

**Agreed Action 2:** Following feedback and discussion from the group the following values for WDCO going forward were discussed and agreed:

- Be open and inclusive
- Be actively participative
- Be challenging
- Be robust
- Be respectful and courteous
- Be empathetic

Other values WDCO may want to consider based on the conversation might be:

- Be transparent
- Be accountable

## 5. Being an Effective Board

The facilitator shared a summary of what an effective Board might look like:

- Work as a team, using the balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.
- Sets a good tone through leadership, behaviour, culture and overall performance
- Members feel safe to suggest, question and challenge
- Culture, behaviours and processes help you to be effective; - including accepting and resolving challenges or different views.
- Have appropriate skills and knowledge and can give enough time
- The chair enables the board to work as an effective team by developing strong working relationships and creates a culture where differences are aired and resolved.
- The board takes decisions collectively and confidently. Once decisions are made the board unites behind them and accepts them as binding.

### What is an Effective Board?

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## What is an Effective Board?

### 1. Work as an effective team

- Meets as often as you need to be effective.
- The chair, plans the board's work and meetings, making sure Board members have the information, time and space they need to explore key issues and reach well-considered decisions.
- Regularly discuss effectiveness and ability to work together as a team
- Take time to consider the range of perspectives and outcomes, respecting all viewpoints and the value of compromise in board discussions.
- Gets independent, professional advice

### 2. Review the board's composition

- Regularly considers, the skills, knowledge and experience it needs
- Big enough to oversee the needs of the organisations work

### 3. Oversee appointments

- Procedure to appoint Board members
- Looks at what skills it has and needs, and this affects how new Board members are found.
- Appointed for an agreed length of time.

### 4. Develop

- Receive an induction
- Reviews its own performance, including that of the chair.
- Board members check their own performance.

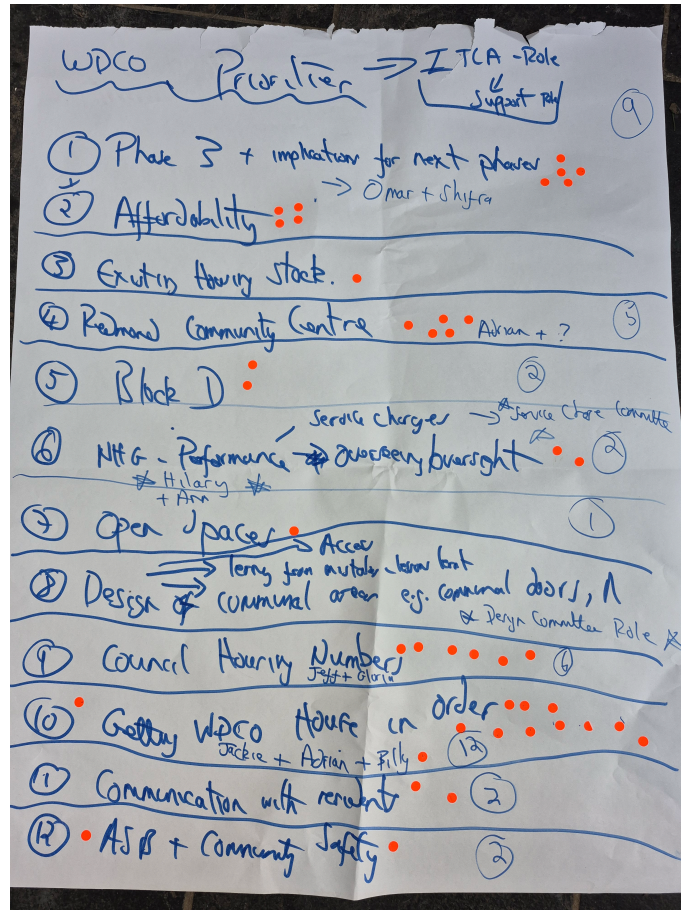


**Agreed Action 3:** Participants discussed and agreed the following ways to strengthen decision making;

- Improve WDCO Board meeting Agendas by:
  - Being clear with each agenda item if it is a) For information b) For a decision c) For Action.
  - Prioritise the agenda items based on the regeneration timeline and WDCO agreed priorities.
  - Ensure every WDCO agenda includes updates from:
    - Committees WDCO members sit on.
    - The Exec
- Minutes to highlight actions and decisions

## 6. WDCO Priorities Over the Next Year

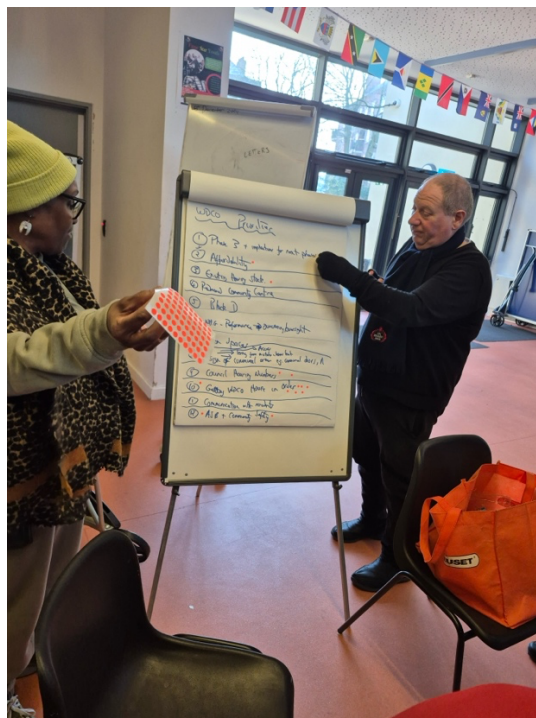
Participants discussed and agreed potential priorities for 2025, they then voted on the top priorities.



**Agreed Action 4:** Participants agreed that one or two Board members would lead in looking at a priority for WDCO and draft proposal/actions and approach WDCO should take to progress these priorities. It was agreed these would be discussed at the next WDCO Board meeting to be agreed and a timeline with review clarified.



Priority	Votes from participants	WDCO Lead
Getting WDCOs house in order	12	Jackie, Adrian & Billy
Phase 3 and its implications for the next phases, including affordability	9	Omar & Shifra
Council House numbers	6	Jeff & Gloria
Redmond Community Centre	5	Adrian & (Person needs to be agreed)
Block D	2	
NHG – Overseeing its performance, service charges.	2	Hillary & Ann
Communication with residents	2	
ASB & community Safety	2	
Existing housing stock	1	
Open Spaces	1	
Design of communal areas, access, learning from mistakes		Design Committee Role



## 7. Next Steps

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- a) Write up today and circulate
- b) WDCO Board agree the following actions

**Action 1** - To develop and agree a Code of Conduct for Board members.

**Action 2** – To adopt the following values for WDCO going forward:

- Be open and inclusive
- Be actively participative
- Be challenging
- Be robust
- Be respectful and courteous
- Be empathetic
- Be transparent
- Be accountable
- Be open

**Action 3** – To strengthen decision making in the following ways;

Improve WDCO Board meeting Agendas by:

- Be clear on each agenda item if it is a) For information b) For a decision c) For Action.
- Prioritise the agenda items based on the regeneration timeline and WDCO agreed priorities.
- Ensure every WDCO agenda includes updates from:
- Committees WDCO members sit on.
- The Exec
- Minutes to highlight actions and decisions

**Agreed Action 4:** To look at the priorities below and develop proposal/actions/ approach to take these actions forward with a timeline with review clarified.

- i. Getting WDCO house in order- Jackie, Adrian & Billy
  - ii. Phase 3 and its implications for the next phases, including affordability - Omar & Shifra.
  - iii. Council House numbers - Jeff & Gloria
  - iv. Redmond Community Centre - Adrian & (Person needs to be agreed)
  - v. NHG – Overseeing performance, service charges - Hillary & Ann
  - vi. Design of communal areas, access, learning from mistakes - WDCO Reps who sit on the Design Committee Role
- c) WDCO to feedback to the Woodberry Down Partners Awayday that:
    - WDCO has been working on strengthening itself by agreeing shared values, code of conduct and priorities for WDCO to focus on in 2025 with partners.

## 8. Review of The Day

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### Something you liked.

- Coming together and being open and honest.
- Talking/listening with WDCO members (not around a table).
- Having time to talk about things.
- Working on the issues.
- Airing out dirty laundry.
- Being able to talk and discuss openly WDCO's issues as a team.
- Honest.
- Agreement of priorities.
- More of today.
- I think it's been a good day.
- Meeting people.
- Good to express and talk.
- Partial honesty (still some elephants in the room).
- Good knowledge and thoughts.
- Talking to other members of the board individually.

### What is your take away from today?

- More positive.
- Cohesiveness.
- More info around certain areas.
- The message that the people in social housing do not feel they know what is going on and do not feel they have a voice.
- Trying to resolve certain issues and agreeing the priorities for WDCO.
- Lots of information and people's thoughts that are important and need to be discussed more.
- Better understanding of others position.
- We all need to do more work.
- Working in better partnership.
- How often I would agree with others.
- Help when can.

### Something you would like to see at the next awayday

- Future activities for WDCO.
- Working together for the residents of Woodberry Down.
- Would like to see outcomes of our efforts.
- More cohesion and positivity and progress.
- Trying to work together.
- Positive communication.
- Review and celebration of 2025 achievements and the role of individuals.
- Continued unity in WDCO.
- Progress.
- More unity and action.
- Let's wait and see how we progress this year.

## Appendix 1: Programme

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**WDCO Awayday**  
**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2025**  
**9.45am to 3pm**  
**The Edge Youth Hub (Young Hackney),**  
**7 Woodberry Grove,**  
**Woodberry Down, N4 1S**

By the end of the workshop participants will have:

- Reflected on how WDCO is currently working.
- Explored and agreed ways to strengthen what WDCO does.
- Refreshed what WDCO is about and its core values.
- Explored and agreed ways to strengthen decision making and how the organisation operates.
- Agree priorities & next steps

<b>9.45am</b>	<b>Arrive, refreshments.</b>
10am	Welcome and Introductions
10.30am	How WDCO got to where we are and our journeys along the way.
11am	Post it note exercise about Board members & WDCO followed by a discussion.
<b>11.20am</b>	<b>Mid-morning refreshments</b>
11.30am	Touch base on WDCO's Vision, purpose, priorities, values
12.15pm	Being an effective Board & Decision making
<b>1.15pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
2:00 pm	What do we need to do going forward - Key priorities and strategic objectives over the next year.
2.45pm	Next steps & Review of the day.
<b>3pm</b>	<b>End</b>

## Appendix 2: Attendees

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Name
Jackie Myers
Phil Cooke
William Sheehy
Oonagh Gormley
Omar Villalba
Shifra Appich
Hilary Britton
Adrian Essex
Geoff Baron
Ann Hunte
Gloria Obliana
Teena Parrott
Paul Bragman - Facilitator