

**WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
7pm Zoom Meeting**

**Attendance**

Jackie Myers, Leonora Williams, William Sheehy, Adrian Essex, Oonagh Gormley, Andrea Anderson

**Visitors included**

Omar Villalba, Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

**Section 0 - Introduction**

**0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence**

Geoff Bell, Kalu Amogu

**0.2 Minutes of meeting 22nd October 2024**

0.21 There was an error in the attendance list for the last Executive Committee meeting - Phil Cooke was not in attendance.

0.22 Minutes were checked for accuracy and agreed.

**0.3 Matters Arising**

0.31 The Executive Committee had a pre-meeting before the Round Table to look at the approach, with actions drafted by Omar. These actions were agreed at the pre-meeting on Tuesday 29th October.

0.32 The Chair circulated Hackney's response to the Executive Committee questions, which was discussed at the pre-meeting.

0.33 Roda sent an invite to the Executive Committee for the pre-meeting.

0.34 The Executive Committee went over some of the priorities at the last Executive Committee meeting but there were two priorities that were not confirmed. Andrea expressed interest in leading the Resident Association Liaison but this was not confirmed. There was also no volunteer to lead the Constitutional Reform. The Executive Committee will discuss these two priorities later in the agenda.

0.35 Adrian suggested returning the Partnership Agreement document, along with comments from the Executive Committee, to the Board.

**ACTION:** Roda will circulate the Partnership Agreement to the Board and provide background on its development.

0.36 Roda confirmed that the site visit took place on Wednesday 6th November.

0.37 William is still waiting for responses to the survey from community organisations, such as Friends of Woodberry Down and the Friday Prayer Group. Adrian inquired about the number of surveys distributed and whether all relevant groups have been covered. William explained that he has contacted the primary school, Redmond Centre, and Manor House Trust—spaces already used by the community—but has not received a response from the primary school. He also noted that they had not reached out to the Jewish school or other local schools.

0.38 Roda and William suggested that it might be helpful to map out the various available or bookable spaces in Woodberry Down—such as the primary school, secondary school, Redmond Centre, and The Edge—to collect information on pricing and facilities. Adrian and Oonagh reviewed facilities for play and sport, and added this information to the website.

**ACTION:** William will ask the Board if there are any additional community organisations in Woodberry Down that should be included.

0.39 Roda sent an email to Hackney regarding the Arup feasibility study and asked for a written report to come to the November Board. Hackney responded that they are in the process of setting up a meeting with the District Heat Network working group and will then arrange an update to the wider Board.

**ACTION:** Hackney to provide a written update to the Board following the meeting with the District Heat Network working group.

0.310 Jackie has not yet booked the restaurant and needs to know how many Executives are likely to attend. She mentioned that most restaurants accept card payments rather than cheques and asked about paying the deposit by cheque. Roda suggested that she could pay the deposit upfront and invoice WDCO afterward, similar to how she handles refreshment orders for the board. Adrian proposed having a WDCO credit card, noting that the treasurer would benefit from having one.

**ACTION:** Leonora will discuss the possibility of a WDCO credit card with Kalu.

0.311 The Chair addressed concerns raised in emails suggesting that a subset of the Executive Committee is acting beyond its authority and making unilateral decisions. She clarified that this is not the case, asserting that all decisions are made collectively by the Executives and then brought to the Board for a stamp of approval. Oonagh responded that the Executive Committee, including the Chair and a subset of members, has been acting beyond their authority, as no formal powers have been devolved to the Executives by the Board. Oonagh highlighted that the Chair's primary role is to manage meetings, ensure all voices are heard, and consult with the Board to determine which powers, if any, should be delegated to the Executive Committee. Oonagh also noted that

Adrian had submitted a proposal on behalf of four Board members, but it was immediately rejected by Geoff. The Chair dismissed parts of the proposal, and it was not included in its entirety on the agenda. Adrian emphasised that decisions made at the Executive Committee are intended for further discussion at the Board level, not simply for approval without scrutiny or “stamp”. Roda acknowledged that the omission of certain items from the Executive agenda was an oversight on her part, explaining that the Chair had asked her to include all proposed items but that some were inadvertently missed. Oonagh argued that the full proposal should have been considered, including suggestions such as holding a private meeting without partners or non-members and addressing Phase 3 matters in a separate meeting. However, these aspects were disregarded or rejected by Geoff and the Chair. The Chair clarified that their email response did not indicate a final decision but merely disagreed with parts of the proposal. Oonagh countered that the Chair should have reserved judgement and waited until the meeting to express their views. The Chair explained their objection to moving Phase 3 discussions to an earlier time, as residents are already aware of the scheduled WDCO Board meeting time, which accommodates those with work commitments. Oonagh maintained that this issue should have been brought to the Executive Committee for discussion, rather than the Chair acting as though they have the final say. She requested that the proposal be reinstated for discussion, with dedicated time during the meeting, and suggested removing partners and non-members from the agenda to allow sufficient focus on the proposal. The Chair agreed, acknowledging the importance of today’s discussion and clarifying that no decisions had been made for the November Board meeting.

0.312 Leonora raised to Oonagh that it was unprofessional to discuss this in front of Omar - she suggested that this present Executive Committee meeting consisted of bickering instead of working together. Oonagh responded that this was brought up by the Chair and that she simply reported what happened and responded to being criticised. The Chair responded that she was not criticising, but rather clarifying that no subset of the Executive Committee was making decisions.

## **Section 1 - Major Topics**

### **Proposals for November Board Agenda**

- 1.1. **Phase 3 Update from Omar and Shifra:** Omar reported that NHG and Hackney failed to inform residents about the new rent and service charge levels for Phase 3. He noted that while Suzanna from LBH has been responsive, NHG has not yet addressed the actions discussed at the meeting on 30th October. A follow-up meeting is scheduled before the WDCO Board meeting to address these issues.
- 1.2. Omar wanted to discuss an update for the Board, as the community is eager to know what WDCO is doing to address the increase in costs. He suggested that he and Shifra present a paper outlining WDCO’s response to the service charge and rent increases for social residents in Phase 3. The paper would highlight actions such as reducing one-bedroom rents, holding multiple meetings to address the surveys, and planning follow-up meetings. Oonagh inquired

about the duration of the presentation, and Omar assured her that the paper would be concise, with the discussion lasting around 25-30 minutes.

- 1.3. Omar emphasised that Hackney and NHG need to come together to address the overcharging of residents and that NHG should be held publicly accountable for not responding to resident queries. Adrian mentioned that the Board recognised the outrage expressed by residents and appointed a group to act on their behalf, raising concerns with NHG and Hackney. Omar noted that while residents have voiced their concerns, they have not yet achieved their objectives. He stressed that residents want to see tangible progress, such as a reduction in the service charge, to demonstrate a clear path forward.
- 1.4. Oonagh noted that there was an agreement for NHG to revisit the service charge and provide the calculations, suggesting that WDCO should continue to press for these updates offline. Omar responded that questions regarding service charges have been raised since June/July, but NHG has not provided clear timescales for answers. He stated that it is unacceptable to ask residents to move in without knowing the service charge costs. He also pointed out that NHG had bypassed an agreement made at the Board by sending calls to residents instead of sending a letter that would have been reviewed by WDCO. Omar emphasised that NHG have had multiple opportunities to address these issues, and WDCO would hold them accountable during the meeting for not adhering to timelines and commitments.
- 1.5. Roda suggested finding a compromise by limiting the discussion on these frustrations, as Oonagh had suggested. She asked if it would be useful to have NHG and Hackney attend part of the meeting to hear firsthand about their commitments and how WDCO is relaying this back to the community. Omar countered that NHG has not committed to any timescales or conclusion dates, which is now impacting future Phases of social homes.
- 1.6. Adrian mentioned that a meeting is scheduled before the next Board meeting and asked who would be attending, specifically whether senior representatives from NHG and Hackney would be present. Roda responded that the previous meeting had three different NHG directors. The Executive Committee members have agreed to allocate 30 minutes on the agenda for this topic.
- 1.7. **Delegation of Powers to the Executive Committee:** This item was due to be discussed at the October Board and the Chair requested for this to be added to the November Board agenda. Oonagh mentioned writing a paper outlining the responsibilities relating to the Delegation of Powers and what this could look like. Oonagh also suggested sending a paper out to the Board to discuss and to agree or disagree. Adrian asked if the discussion of the Delegation ends with a consensus or vote or if it is just a discussion. Oonagh responded that a consensus would be ideal. The Executives have agreed for the Delegation of Powers to be added to the November Board agenda for 15 minutes.

**ACTION:** Oonagh to send document to Roda by Thursday 14th November to circulate with the hard copies.

- 1.8. **Assignment of policy areas to Vice Chairs:** In the last Executive Committee meeting, members agreed that the Ground Floor Vice Chair's role would be shared between Oonagh and Geoff. Roda suggested that "individual cases" be renamed to "Operational Issues."
- 1.9. Andrea expressed interest in leading the "Resident Associations" priority and requested clarification on the work involved. Roda informed Andrea that residents in the older blocks (Phase 5, 6, and 7) have shown interest in establishing an RA. Roda has been in contact with Hackney Council and will connect Andrea with both the residents and the Council to begin coordinating the process. Roda also had an initial meeting with residents from the NHG blocks to set up their RA and will ask Andrea to take over and assist them in formalising it.
- 1.10. The "Constitutional Reform" priority currently has no volunteers. Adrian suggested that this could be addressed by the Constitutional Review working group. Andrea inquired if anyone from the social tenure sectors was present, noting that William and Geoff are on this committee. Andrea raised a concern with Oonagh regarding the KSS3 Residents' Association, which does not include renters, asking why renters were excluded. Oonagh explained that the property owner does not permit anyone who is not a leaseholder to be part of the RA.
- 1.11. Andrea also mentioned a resident renting in the private blocks who were co-opting into WDCO but were denied joining the RA in her block. Oonagh responded that the contractual relationship is between the tenant and the owner of the flat, and as tenants do not have a contractual relationship with the building owner, they are ineligible for the RA.
- 1.12. Roda pointed out that the Willowbrook and Hartington Court RAs are made up of shared equity and shared ownership residents, so they also do not include private renters. She suggested that this exclusion may stem from the constitutions that resident associations are required to adopt. Roda will follow up on this and provide more information at the next meeting.
- 1.13. The Executives agreed that the Assignment of Policy Areas for Vice Chairs will be taken to the Board. However, there is no candidate for "Constitutional Reform," and it was agreed that the Constitutional Review working group would be more than capable of leading this. Additionally, the Executives agreed that "Individual Cases" will be renamed "Operational Issues" going forward.

**ACTION:** Roda will arrange a meeting with Andrea, Hackney, and residents interested in setting up a Resident Association.

**ACTION:** Roda will write a summary to be included with the Board papers on the Vice Chair priorities.

- 1.14. **Partnership Agreement:** Roda captured the Executive Committee's comments on the proposed changes, and the Board will discuss which changes they want to accept. Roda asked the Executive Committee how much time they would like to allocate to this, as the December Board meeting will be shorter. The Executive Committee agreed to skip rehashing matters arising and the action tracker to allow more time for discussion. The Executives agreed to allocate 30 minutes to the Partnership Agreement on the November Board agenda, with the discussion continuing at the December Board meeting and finalised at the January Board before the Awayday.
- 1.15. **The status of Liaison Meetings:** Adrian has written a proposal to be sent out with the Board papers which suggests no longer holding Liaison meetings as they are not as effective and suggested that making Resident Associations stronger is a better formula. William raised that the Liaison meeting is a way to escalate issues to senior partners. The Executive Committee agreed to discuss the status of the Liaison meetings at the January Board for 15 minutes and to take to a vote if there is no consensus.
- 1.16. **A report from Billy on the Community Groups Survey:** Oonagh suggested presenting the report as a written update.

**ACTION:** William will provide a written update to go out with the Board papers.

- 1.17. **The role of NHG in WDCO's present problems:** Oonagh raised that this is critical and needs to be discussed at the November Board. Hillary's paper outlines issues with NHG but will probably not end in a resolution and relates back to Omar's point that NHG are not responding to issues arising from Phase 3 rents. The paper asks about the sanctions and measures that WDCO has to take to NHG to answer Omar's questions.

**ACTION:** The Executive Committee agreed to allocating 30 minutes on the agenda to discuss the role of NHG.

- 1.18. **Strengthening of the relationship with stronger Resident Associations:** Adrian suggested not having this proposal on the November Board agenda as Roda has set out a course of action to strengthen the relationship with RAs. Oonagh suggested that Andrea and William work on this together as William's role involves looking at operational issues.

**ACTION:** This agenda item will come back to the Board when there is something to report.

- 1.19. **The state of the current Ground Floor and what this implies for future Phases:** Adrian and Nezdett do not have a paper written

at this stage and suggested postponing until a written paper is prepared.

- 1.20. The Executive Committee agreed that partner updates will not be discussed at the Board meeting.

**ACTION:** Roda will ask Board members to send written questions.

### **Awayday 27th January**

- 1.21. Roda received an email from Hackney stating that they aim to schedule the Awayday for 27th January. They have a new external facilitator who will arrange an initial phone call with the Chair. Roda asked if the external facilitator will attend the Executive Committee meeting and Hackney responded that they will come back with an update.
- 1.22. Adrian inquired about who is responsible for drawing up the agenda for the Awayday. He also noted that the only reference to the Awayday in the Constitution states that the Board will have two confidential meetings each year, one of which immediately precedes the Awayday. Adrian sought clarification on the Partnership Agreement, which mentions setting out a series of projects, as well as solving problems over the next 12 months. Roda responded that the external facilitator would hold discussions with different partners to help set the agenda, as has been done in the past. She clarified that this is the partners' Awayday, where the goal is to identify projects and actions for the upcoming year. In contrast, the Awayday referenced in the Constitution pertains to WDCO's Awayday.

**ACTION:** Roda will ask Hackney to provide more information on who draws up the agenda and if the new external facilitator is still involved.

## **2. Outcome from the Phase 3 Community space site visit**

- 2.1. Roda updated that, following the last site visit, there were questions around the fit-outs and layout. Roda has received the drawings from NHG that were shared with WDCO a few months ago - Roda will circulate the drawings again.
- 2.2. Simon had a meeting with Hackney yesterday, where Hackney confirmed their intention for WDCO to move to that space and for the contract for Unit 2C Rowan apartment space to conclude. Roda explained that Hackney's rationale for this decision is based on costs, long-term sustainability, and the lack of security of tenure since the lease has expired.
- 2.3. The layout was agreed upon by Berkeley and NHG as part of the PDA, and there is also a specification for the equipment that needs to be supplied, which is included in the PDA agreement. Additionally, a moveable partition was part of the plan. However, there are still outstanding fit-out issues to be resolved, such as window design, blinds, etc.
- 2.4. Regarding the lease, Hackney's proposal is for Hackney Council to hold the lease, with NHG leasing the space to Hackney Council,

which would then sublease it to WDCO at a peppercorn rent. The internal works and maintenance would be taken over by Hackney Council. The Chair inquired if there would be an opportunity for another site visit.

**ACTION:** Roda will circulate the drawings from NHG and arrange another site visit with the Chair.

- 2.5. Adrian commented that WDCO should resist the move, as it involves a less attractive space and location, with no financial benefit for WDCO. Roda noted that WDCO may not have a choice, as this could become the only viable option for Hackney due to budget cuts. She asked when this would be brought to the Board for discussion and suggested that Adrian's recent email could serve as the basis for the discussion at the November Board meeting.

**ACTION:** Roda will include Adrian's document as part of the paperwork for the November Board meeting. The Executives have allocated this as the last item on the agenda.

### **3. AOB**