

**WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes
Tuesday 24th February 2026
7 pm Zoom Meeting**

Attendance

Adrian Essex, Oonagh Gormley, Omar Villalba

Visitors included

Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

Section 0 - Introduction

0.1 Welcome / Apologies for absence

Leonora Williams, Gloria Obilana, Gita Sootarsing, Hilary Britton

Section 1

1. Minutes of meeting 3rd February 2026:

1.1. The minutes were checked for accuracy and accepted.

2. Matters Arising / Action Tracker:

2.1. WDCO members had a meeting with NHG regarding conditions and impact on RAs. NHG will be coming back with response to WDCO's questions.

2.2. The Executives agreed that the Social and Economic Team's work with Active Within benefits the community.

2.3. Omar proposed holding a walkabout; the Chair suggested using this opportunity to review vandalism and poor maintenance in Maplewood and Birchwood. Omar also noted that the CCTV in the lifts is not operational. Roda added that NHG has received the outcome of the audit they carried out on the CCTV system and will report back to the March Operational Meeting with an update on the findings and the remedial works required for each system, including how many are operational, what is not working, and the proposed plan of action.

2.4. The Public Forum is underway.

2.5. The Chair proposed getting into the habit of changing the constitution every month and to include hybrid meetings as a way of proceeding during the WDCO Board meetings. The Chair suggested advertising the March Board meeting as being a validly hybrid meeting. Omar added that WDCO should only be offering hybrid meetings as an option to Board members and the public and to have direct accountability for partners to attend the meeting in-person.

ACTION: ITLA to invite and advertise the Board meeting as a hybrid meeting for Board members and the public, and as an in-person meeting for partners.

- 2.6. The Chair noted that only 13 Board members attended last week's meeting and that the Executives need to explore the reasons for low attendance, including whether this may be linked to the way meetings are chaired. Omar proposed contacting Board members who previously attended to ask why they no longer do so. He further commented that Board discussions often include technical language, which members of the public may find difficult to follow. In terms of outcomes and tangible change, Omar noted that some residents have described the meetings as a 'talking shop'.
- 2.7. Oonagh queried which Board members who attended the AGM are no longer attending Board meetings. Omar also proposed publicising WDCO's achievements more effectively to demonstrate success and progress. He observed that WDCO continues to face challenges regarding social representation; although some progress has been made in engaging residents, a number of Board members still consider this to be an ongoing issue.
- 2.8. Roda acknowledged that the majority of Board members have submitted apologies when they cannot attend due to work and family commitments, with only two members failing to respond to follow-up enquiries regarding attendance. She suggested that offering a hybrid option may improve attendance for those unable to attend in person. Roda also noted that technical terminology has always been used during meetings and may not necessarily be the underlying issue. Roda proposed having a test run for hybrid meetings at the March Board and if it is successful, then put this forward for the April Board to change in the constitution.
- 2.9. The Chair concluded that Board members need to take on additional responsibilities, such as writing blog posts to promote WDCO's achievements.
- 2.10. WDCO are still arranging to meet with Cllr Nicholson to talk about WDCO's future. The Chair has been excluded from the next MHDT Board but will speak to Grace next Thursday.
- 2.11. The Chair has spoken with William regarding the door-knocking exercise and clarified that he introduces himself solely as a WDCO representative, and not as someone campaigning for the Labour Party. The Executives agreed that William may continue with the door-knocking activity.
- 2.12. Roda circulated Gareth's responses to the affordability questions to the WDCO Board. She clarified that Hackney is undertaking further work to reflect on lessons learned, including providing details of rents and service charges at an earlier stage.
- 2.13. Omar requested time to reflect on the responses. He expressed concern that the proposals may result in some residents effectively doubling their housing costs, and that Phase 5 tenants are likely to face higher rents than those in Phase 3. Omar intends to review Hackney's response alongside the original commitments made at the outset of the scheme and will provide further comment in due course.
- 2.14. The Chair and Hillary met with Young's to discuss The Naturalist. The Chair reported that it is more cost-effective for Young's to secure the premises by locking the doors and installing shutters than to keep it open. The Chair has a further meeting scheduled with Young's in two months' time and will contact those who have expressed interest in securing a tenant and/or funding, and consider potential options for the future use of the space.
- 2.15. The Chair circulated an email to the Board addressing Age Without Limits Day, Board attendance, the history of Woodberry Down, membership of the MHDT Board, and The Naturalist.

Section 1 - Major Topics

3. February Board outcome

- 3.1. Roda noted that the organisation and timekeeping of the meeting was successful - each partner provided a summary of their report, the presentation from Sarah was concise, all of the agenda items were covered.

4. Unfair Allocation of £68,103 Water Feature Repair Costs to KSS1 Residents

- 4.1. The Chair raised concerns that, if R&R is able to allocate costs to a particular group of buildings, this should be challenged. Clarification is also required regarding what constitutes the public realm and how this should be defined. There are further questions as to whether it was ever intended that ground rents would cover the cost of maintaining the public realm, particularly given that ground rents have reduced significantly and are unlikely to meet such costs going forward.
- 4.2. Roda proposed that these matters be referred to the Estate Management Board. She noted that, at the December Estate Management Board meeting, she requested that WDCO be provided with a map identifying which spaces have already been adopted — and which are due to be adopted — by the Council. The intention is for this information to be brought back to the Estate Management Board to assist WDCO in understanding the implications for future phases.
- 4.3. Oonagh added that the issue has only affected KSS1 because the lease identifies their landlord as a separate entity from Berkeley Homes. This technical distinction within the lease enables R&R to attribute the costs solely to KSS1. She further noted that other parts of the estate are not classified as public realm. Oonagh suggested informing Hackney that these spaces are used by the public and that Berkeley markets them as such, and therefore contributions from Council Tax should be considered. Roda responded that Hackney is unlikely to agree, as it is already facing challenges in funding the maintenance of future spaces.
- 4.4. Roda stated that it would be helpful to review the specific provisions within the lease and to raise with KSS1 whether contributing towards that particular area is explicitly included within their lease obligations. Oonagh proposed that KSS1 should challenge Berkeley on the basis that the decision was made without consultation, and question whether there was an underlying defect that ought to have been addressed under warranty.
- 4.5. Oonagh reported that £96,000 has been added to the Waterside service charge after two residents brought an unsuccessful tribunal case against R&R. Rather than those individuals meeting the legal costs directly, the sum has instead been apportioned across the KSS1 service charge.

ACTION: The Chair to write to KSS1 and ask them to review the relevant KSS1 lease regarding responsibility for the specific pocket of space. And confirm whether contributing to this area is explicitly required under the lease. Also, encourage KSS1 to challenge Berkeley on the allocation of costs without consultation and investigate whether any underlying defect should have been remedied under warranty.

5. Prep for March Board

- 5.1. Berkeley will provide a presentation on the January and February Design Committee outcome.
- 5.2. There will also be a discussion on ways to improve attendance to the Board and if there are suggestions in addition to hosting hybrid meetings.
- 5.3. Roda mentioned that William proposed inviting Millco to the March Board. The Executives responded that inviting Millco does not seem like a good use of time as they have not signed the lease. Roda added that she has been trying get a meeting for the Block D working group in the diary and will chase this up with Caroline.

ACTION: Roda will chase Caroline on arranging a meeting for the Block D working group.

- 5.4. Oonagh suggested that WDCO give some advice to KSS1 on their approach.

6. AOB

- 6.1. Omar asked whether it would be possible to obtain information regarding any apprenticeship opportunities, as a number of young people are interested in learning more about Berkeley's apprenticeship schemes. Roda suggested following this up with Tom.
- 6.2. Omar highlighted ongoing issues at the former Working Men's Club, where squatters have reportedly been holding gatherings every Friday and Saturday night, causing disturbance to residents, particularly those at Birchwood.
- 6.3. Omar reported that the lifts at Maplewood were out of service for the entire weekend, and at Birchwood for half a day. He noted that lift breakdowns have worsened since the appointment of the new contractor and asked for advice on how best to escalate the matter. The Chair responded that NHG will be undertaking a survey in relation to potential 'temporary decants'.